

Observer



Howard Dean comes to town

Democratic hopeful rallies the troops in Hudson, NY

by **Ethan Porter**

AT HALF PAST NOON, THE BARD CARAVAN OF CARS TOOK OFF, KICKING UP DUST and asphalt on the road to Howard Dean's Rally In The Valley, all of us feverishly excited about seeing Our Man trumpet the good dying liberal cause.

In a matter of months, Dean had sprinted from long-shot feisty radical to the front of the pack. The Dark Age of the Democratic Party just might have a light at the end of the tunnel, or so we loyal liberals all hoped.

The thirty-minute car ride was filled with skepticism and silent optimism. Yes, it appeared that Dean was on his way to winning the nomination, and yes he was, in many ways a liberal, and maybe, just maybe, he was electable. But after four years of the George W. Bush nightmare, to voice even the slightest bit of hope is to risk appearing the fool.

I desperately wanted to believe in Dean. He had separated himself from the pack by passionately arguing against the war in Iraq—certainly an admirable political position. Television made him look like a good public speaker. Although he hails from New

England, no one can mistake him for Michael Dukakis, redux. Consider his position on gun control. The NRA gave him an A rating. Sounds like Clinton and his, at the time among Democrats, idiosyncratic support of the death penalty.

When we arrived, I mistakenly thought we were some of the first people at the rally site. I had never been to Hudson before, and was surprised to find the town rather destitute and industrial. Perhaps this was purposeful, as Hudson is the sort of place that has been crippled by the Bush economic team in recent years. According to the Dean campaign, Dean is the first presidential candidate to come to the town since Robert Kennedy marched through, all the way back in 1968.

A crowd of people was gathering around the warehouse adjacent to the parking lot. I walked towards the warehouse, and saw some sort of rally going on inside. Strange. The rally was not supposed to start for a few hours. A security guard accosted me when I got close.

"Sorry, private fundraiser," the burly guard told me.

"I'm with the press," I told him, showing off the press passes that I had miraculously procured from the campaign a few days earlier.

"Sorry, but you can't go in. The rally is going to start after the fundraiser." Oh. But wasn't Dean all about the common people, inclusiveness and small donations, not elitist fat cats? I digress. I suppose that even a purportedly grassroots campaign needs limousine liberals to keep the engine greased.

The Dean campaign had organized some local musicians and political figures to keep us common folk entertained while The Man (no longer Our Man) did a song-and-dance for a few extra dimes. A few hundred people had gathered in front of the stage the campaign had erected in front of the Hudson River.

The day was ripe for a political postcard signed by Ronald Reagan: perfect shining sun, cloudless sky, with the Hudson lying elegantly in the background. And yet, off in the distance, Homeric dark clouds were gathering, readying themselves to spoil the tofu-and-Birkenstock party.

"Bad folk music," some member of the crowd said to a friend on a cell phone. And bad folk music it was. Living artifacts of the sixties led the crowd in slow, unthreatening hippie hymns. Hope, love, peace, no war, please, Lord. One singer in particular looked so old I was worried he would collapse on stage. This didn't seem like the best way to connect to the younger generation.

The singers on stage, though, were only a reflection of the people in the audience. Counterculture relics were everywhere, the types who had marched with Dr. King and listened to Joan Baez and despised Goldwater, for whom politics still exist in the basic black-and-white divide between liberal and conservative, good and bad, and who see Dr. Dean as the reincarnation of McGovern (although, again, electable). But who should one expect to come out to a rally this early in the campaign cycle, other than political junkies, journalists and an assortment of self-styled radical weirdoes (well, the weirdoes tag would pretty much describe the other two, wouldn't it?).

Yet Dean markets himself as someone different and new, a Yale grad who's really a people's champion. The migrant farmers should be here; the construction workers

should be here. The policemen serving as security should also be cheering him on. Instead, all I saw were white, comfortable men and women, Democratic Party devotees, walking dog chow for Karl Rove and his cronies. Every license plate in the parking lot was from a northeastern state.

I asked one group of cops what they thought about Howard Dean. They glared at me as if I had personally insulted them. One shook his head and let a small laugh loose from his lips.

"No comment," another responded sternly. "No comment at all." The disconnect between the lower working class and the upper-class, predominantly white intelligentsia is rarely as obvious as it is at a Howard Dean rally.

As the rally progressed, and the folk singers gave way to various political figures of relatively minor importance, it became clear that the energy of the crowd was more focused on channeling the hatred towards our current commander-in-chief than the specific policies of Howard Dean. One man, dressed in bizarre red, white and blue shorts hiked up to his belly button was hawking anti-Bush pins and bumper stickers. Tee shirts bearing caricatures of Dubya were everywhere, like the uniform of the modern American liberal.

When the rain began to fall, the dedicated supporters did not retreat to their cars or other forms of covering. Instead, people longingly pointed their heads toward their sky, and drank the rainwater. Finally, after the micro-

phone had broken and been fixed several times, and the rain subsided, Dean strode to the stage. The massive excitement was electric; the instant optimism was palpable. Immediately he began to court the sixties-era liberals in the crowd, reminiscing about that transformative decade in which the civil rights movement exploded and, according to him, a sense of community prevailed in this country.

His brief missteps were forgotten, if they were even noticed at all. In his attack on the tax cuts, Dean asserted that "Bush gave three trillion dollars to Ken Lay," which was probably intended to creatively demonstrate how unfair the cuts have been, but seems like an entirely unjustified, misleading statement in retrospect.

When he spoke about his opposition to the war, the rally briefly became a call-and-response. Despite his emergence as a truly formidable candidate, the Iraq War is still what draws most people to Dean, and what will also, in the long run, send others scurrying away.

"As most of you know, I didn't support the war," Dean boomed.

"I didn't either!" a man yelled, and others followed laughed in concurrence.

Although it has been the chief reason for his early success, the actual motivations behind Dean's anti-war rhetoric have rarely been explored. Cynics say that he opposed the war because he knew such a position would thrust him into the spotlight. Others, less inclined to world-weariness, want to believe that Dean sincerely opposed the war and took a gamble by bringing his opposition to the forefront of his campaign. The reasoning he offered the crowd was sound, if predictable. First, he reminded us of his support for the first Gulf War and the war in Afghanistan. Then, like a master conductor, he roused his symphony of supporters to full volume, by slashing away at the Iraq War.

"This time, the President told us that Iraq and Osama bin Laden were just like that [one in the same]. He told us a week ago that wasn't true. This time, the President told us that Iraq was buying uranium from Africa. He told us a month ago that wasn't true. The Vice President told us that Iraq was about to get nuclear weapons. That wasn't true."

"Impeach him!" yelled the crowd. Dean laughed, before sketching out his foreign policy positions. Earlier in the campaign, after he publicly opposed the war but before he became a major factor in the race, Dean was widely criticized by both the liberal and conservative press for issuing some vague "instructions" to our political leaders on how to best prepare for the day when the American military is no longer the strongest power.

Since then, he has been forced to refine his geopolitical views. The Dean campaign understood that Their Man was in danger of becoming a one-issue candidate. His new platform is difficult to disagree with. Multilateralism, the concept that the Bushies seemed to have skipped over in graduate school, is emphasized in Dean doctrine.

"I think it's time we end a foreign policy that's based on the petulance of the chief executive of the United States," he said, to which the man next to me simply mused in response "Mmm, big words."

Although Dean had obviously recited the stump speech countless times, every sentiment seemed suffused with a refreshing sincerity. Of course, projecting uncalculated sincerity is simply an invaluable political asset, often the product of much calculation. But it's nice to believe in Dean as the maverick liberal idealist with a chance. It's comforting.

At the beginning of the summer, I had a revealing conversation with a national political journalist, who, for the sake of her reputation, shall remain nameless. I asked her what she thought about Howard Dean's chances. "Let's face it," she told me. "He doesn't have a shot at the nomination, let alone the Presidency."

The next day, of course, fund-raising results were revealed to the public, and Dean had, to the shock and chagrin of many, trumped all of his rivals. I was ecstatic when I heard that news, and euphoric upon leaving the rally. I must always remember, however, that even when I am hopelessly entangled in the breathless idealism that politics can become for the young, that politicians are not often what they seem and these supposed "maverick" candidates are usually just good at marketing at themselves. No matter how much I agree with his positions, Dean is not Our Man, and he's not The Man—he is Their Man, the object of all those crafty Wizards carefully pulling the public relations and ideological strings. Hopefully, he'll be residing in the White House soon enough, but he won't save the world.

The disconnect between the lower working class and the upper-class, predominantly white intelligentsia is rarely as obvious as it is at a Howard Dean rally.

"You talk about all the jobs this President has lost," Dean told the crowd, who lustily booed even a mere reference to Bush. "The biggest loss that we've had is our loss of community."

Dean lambasted the Bush administration's stance against affirmative action, and lauded the Supreme Court—which he called the "most conservative since the Dred Scott decision"—for its decision regarding the University of Michigan's admissions policy.

"I am tired of being divided by the Republican Party," Dean said, and the crowd, of course, agreed. "I want a country that's going to appeal to the very best in America and not the worst in us anymore."

He is an undeniably charismatic speaker. Even when he speaks broadly, he is persuasive. There's a magnetizing charm of Dean as a speaker, a sort of accessible, aw-shucks intellectualism. The crowd, which had appeared somewhat sluggish before, now brimmed with energy. Everyone had fallen under the spell of a gifted hypnotist, a hypnotist who speaks of the world as we imagine it could be, and as we desperately want



Uncle Sam gives you a Hummer

Tax loophole might land your very own gas guzzler.

by **Jaqueline Moss**

Everyone who has any interest in politics whatsoever is aware of the \$726 billion dollar tax cut. Most of the quibbling is over the enormous size of the tax cut and whom it benefits. Bush's tax cut would eliminate taxes on corporate dividends and reduce income taxes-which conservatives say will stimulate the economy and created job growth, and liberals say Bush is shoring up his Republican base by enriching the wealthy. However, all this bickering over class warfare has led to oversight of a certain part of the tax cut, which raises the amount small businessmen can write off when buying large equipment such as vehicles and farm equipment. The write-off was originally created to protect small businessmen, entrepreneurs, and small farmers from competition from bigger organizations and companies. However, Bush wants to increase the amount small businessmen can write-off from \$25,000 to \$75,000.

The IRS defines any vehicle weighing 6,000 pounds or more as a truck, regardless of what the vehicle is used for, whether hauling materials and goods or hauling around soccer mom's and their over scheduled kids in the horrific dangers of wealthy suburbia. The Hummer, which weighs in over the militarily modest 8,500 lbs, clearly qualifies according to the IRS. So, the Hummer's price tag (for the H1 base model) is \$98,235 can be deducted up to \$88,722 if the Bush tax cut passes, which means a brand new Hummer H1 will cost less than my used Honda. What's really scary is that because the Hummer weighs over 8,500 lbs, the H1 falls into a heavy-duty category completely separate from other SUVs and so does not have to meet federal safety, emissions, and fuel economy requirements. So, the metal monstrosity I see more and more frequently on the roads is almost

completely unregulated by the government, even unregulated when it comes to safety standards. I find this shocking, especially as I am riding around in a (relatively) little Honda Accord, in a sea of moving metal monsters called SUVs. I might just have to get an SUV for my own protection. I digress. The point is, if Bush's tax cut passes, people will be able to get a new Hummer for a dalliance of a sum, the federal government paying for the lion's share of the cost of the Hummer.

Then the question remains: if people can deduct the cost of a Hummer on their tax forms as a



small-business expense, where will the government make up for the money lost in taxes? Or rather, who will be picking up the tab after everyone buys a Hummer? If the wealthy continue to buy luxury items such as the Hummer, and don't have to pay for it, the money lost in taxes has to be made up, and taxes will probably increase on middle and upper-middle class citizens, who tend to be taxed the most and relieved of taxes the least.

Attack of the 18 inch monster

Varments running wild in Keen South.

by **Laura Bomyea**

Tuesday October 7, 2003 2:55am

It was an ordinary evening, not unlike every other evening, which is to say it was a lot like the past few weeks worth of evenings which have pretty much been the same. I was rolled up in my department store quilt, almost asleep, with visions of my mother's cooking running through my head. I had just begun to plan out my meal requests for my upcoming return to farm country when something suspicious caught my attention; a curiously loud noise like the scrambling of helpless victims being pursued by a bloodthirsty beast.

Being from the middle of nowhere myself, I understand the dangers of living so close in proximity to the evils of the forest. I know what woodland creatures are capable of doing to a human body. Alarmed by the sound of someone running past my door with a squealing, scurrying creature in hot pursuit, I rushed out of bed to come to their aid. It appeared that the beast had lost interest in its victim and was taking a quite disturbing interest in the texture of my door. Terrified, my roommate begged me to spare myself and not open the door to such a ferocious monster. Since she hails from a much safer, more populated area of the country, I felt obliged to give in to her request.

Patiently I awaited the mysterious creature, whose hair raising squeals echoed through the otherwise silent Keen hallway, to move away from the door. I imagined my fearful dorm mates cowering tearfully in their beds as this terrible evil prowled the

halls outside. I set my jaw and flung open the door to confront the brute. The crafty fellow had managed to escape my menacing gaze and as I peered bravely down the corridor I could see no sign of him. Then I heard squealing downstairs and the sound of people running fearfully away from the frenzied animal. I leapt into the hall, ready to rescue my classmates from the murderous fiend. I was poised and ready on the landing when I heard someone coaxing the ferocious creature toward the door. Not wanting to provoke it, I laid low, praying for it to spare my brave classmate and wondering whether to call EMS or ServiceMaster after the savage made his attack. Luckily my prayers were answered and the brute left quietly. Perhaps he knew he was facing imminent doom at the hands of a skilled outdoor survivalist (Girl Scout Merit Badges to prove it) and small-time heroine. Whatever thoughts were running through his mind, we may never know.



On my way back to my room, weary from the night's heroic deeds, I heard the voice of the beast's first intended victim. "I'd never been followed by a raccoon before," she exclaimed, "and I didn't know what to do." She was lucky my friends, such encounters with small, furry, seemingly-innocent woodland creatures do not typically end without bloodshed. May we all understand the great peril we are in every time we walk by the woods. Rest assured that all mass carnage was avoided here, on this ordinary night in Keen.

Any Given Sunday

News Analysis by Patrick Rodgers

Sunday was a special day in the history of journalism. The covers of both the New York Post and Daily News were graced by unrelated tiger stories. Although I did not take the time to check, I feel confident in reporting that it was the first time this has ever happened. While things like corruption, murder, and the Middle East have long since grown accustomed to such accolade, it is refreshing to see that the long shot can still occasionally win out, especially if it's two separate tiger attacks on the same night.

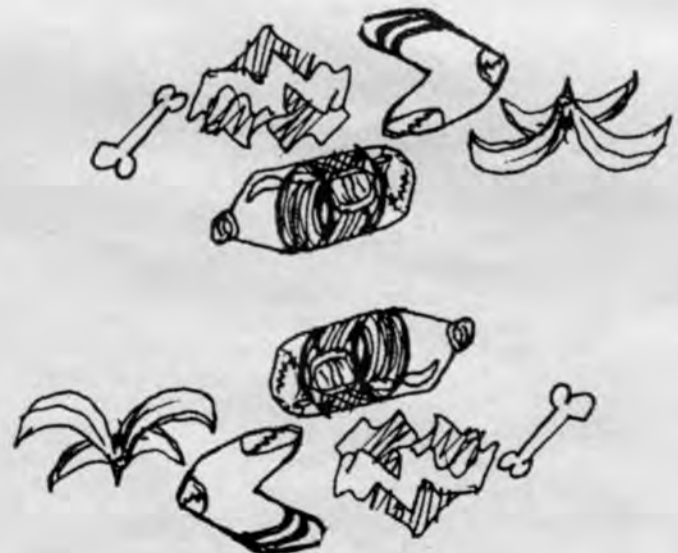
The first was a 400 pound tiger that attacked a man in Harlem. The man kept both the tiger and a 3ft. alligator in his apartment, unbeknownst to his neighbors. The second attack happened when beloved entertainer Roy, of the glamorous duo Siegfried & Roy, rapped his feline assistant several times in the face with a microphone. The tiger, who was apparently dissatisfied enough to not listen the first four times, became enraged, lunged at Roy, and dragged him off stage (There's certainly a moral in that story). Roy was unable to put up any fight, and was immediately taken to the hospital in critical condition. The audience sat stunned for almost fifteen minutes, unsure of whether what they had just seen was part of the act.

My concerns, though, are for his smart-enough-not-to-hit-the-tiger partner and friend Siegfried. Although the two are in their 50s, they still are signed with a major casino for a certain number of shows per year. If unable to perform, I worry that poor Siegfried could be left bankrupt or worse, owing the Casino/Mafia/Corporate Sponsor a favor. In which case he could end up having to kill a man, or star in a TV movie about killing a man, in order to repay his broken contract.

I would like to believe, however, that this gray cloud may still have a silver lining. It could forge a union able to shed light on these dark times, a union mightier than He-man and She-ra: Siegfried and the recently bereaved movie critic Roger Ebert, whose two thumbs have been up since his dear partner, Gene Siskel, passed away. Frankly, I'm sure Siegfried has an interesting take on contemporary cinema and is certainly as qualified for the job as Rush Limbaugh was to be a football commentator. Ebert would be able to console Siegfried through the difficult process of losing a long time partner, as well as look really hot in the white-sequined jump suit. It's a win-win situation. "Siegfried and Ebert;" it just rolls off the tongue like a tiny poem, and how could it be bad if it feels that good?



A composite photo of the new duo of Siegfried and Ebert



the school's looking dirtier every day

The G-Spot

Bard, Filth and Labor: On-Campus Analysis

by Gus Feldman

Student Government Corner

by Andrew Payton

In case you missed our article in another Bard paper, this segment is intended to keep the student body updated on issues existing in our community and those issues being addressed by the Student Government. The aim is to educate, relieve frustrations, tap into concerned individuals, and help various peoples work collectively to foster a strong, active and enjoyable community.

In the other article many issues were addressed: the logic of and inherent problems with the size of the freshmen class, the possibility of a new dorm in Cruger Village, the sorry condition of laundry services, the termination of our contract with Coke, a finals week possibility, the existence of an Old Gym committee, the possibility of a Sunday Times in Kline, and smoking issues.

Some clarifications:

Along with the possibility of a new dorm, renovations may take place on several dorms around campus. The plans are still being formulated and are very tentative however.

Coke, while obviously a nasty corporation, is not being dropped for this reason. In actuality, their services are inadequate and the inhumanities of Coke (check out FLOC) are an added bonus to the termination of our contract. Furthermore, Chartwell's is contracted with Coke, among many other beverage companies. That said, they will also be looking to provide a new beverage company in Kline, the Café, etc. The removal of Coke is not limited to merely the vending machines around campus. As usual, misinformation and lack of communication remain a problem but hopefully that clears things up.

Additional info that might be of interest:

Hopefully you saw SLCers harassing people to fill out polls about individuals' opinions toward Bard. Those results have recently been tabulated and will be published shortly. It will include problems people mentioned, along with things we intend to address or are presently addressing, and even a few humorous suggestions for an honorable mentions list. With these surveys, we intend to help focus on issues most present to the community and, assuming all goes well, make solid progress and change in those areas.

Until then, if you have any questions, concerns, clarifications, etc don't be shy. Let us know at slc@bard.edu. Issues not related specifically to non-academic student concerns can be addressed to the Educational Policies Committee (epc@bard.edu), the Student Judiciary Board (sjb-news@bard.edu), or the Planning Committee (plan-comm@bard.edu). Also, Erin Cannan, our Dean of Students, will be dining in Kline on Wednesdays during lunch hours. Please feel free to stop by and express your mind or simply say hello.

So, I wrote this article and then later realized there were vital unrelated topics that I promised to certain people that I would write about. So, before I "really" start this article, let me just address some shit. First off, Tomatoes wants me to write about unicorns. God Bless this kid and his conceptions of journalism. Secondly, Deadly Divorce is the greatest Bard band to ever grace this campus. Mike Nason, if I don't see you on stage making an Old Gym-full of freshmen girls swoon before Thanksgiving, then I'm gonna have to go to Vassar to see Risky Relationship, and you know I don't want to do that. Thirdly, I don't remember if I promised Lizzy or Vibe, but I just got to say EMS is by far the most impressive Bard club on campus. They are entirely student run and serve the outer community as well. Next time you see a student in a Black windbreaker talking into a walkie-talkie give them a hug. They don't even need to be on EMS.

And I feel like I'm forgetting one more thing... oh yeah Dave End and kickball, what could possibly be more fun?

All right, now I'm ready...

As crisp wind rustles through the delicately changing leaves, and we the sleep-deprived find ourselves relentlessly blowing mucus from our nostrils into napkins and toilet paper, we begin to undergo seasonal transition while Bard is in the midst of greater drastic change.

You may not realize it but Bard is getting dirtier. As the student population has increased, the Botstien Administration has made a series of executive decisions which

have systematically diminished the college's standard of sanitation. With the exception of three employees hired to maintain the PAC, ServiceMaster has maintained the same number of employees at Bard for the past 17 years. Now, compare this to the number of buildings that have been erected at Bard over the past 17 years. Just to give you a taste: Olin, Rose, all of the Village Dorms, Cruger, Keen, Oberhotzer, the

Campus Center, Tremblay, Hirsch, and the new trailers are all buildings that have been constructed within the past 17 years.

According to Tom Hoiland, a B&G worker who started working at Bard as a custodian in 1985, there were three people cleaning Kline. The bathrooms would get thoroughly cleaned twice in the day time and once in the evening. Today, with a much larger student population bombarding Kline throughout the day, there is only one ServiceMaster/Aramark employee who cleans Kline. The bathrooms maintenance have been reduced reduced to once a day.

The fact that there has been no new janitors hired (keep in mind the exception made for the PAC) in combination with the rapid growth of the number of buildings on campus has created our present situation where ServiceMaster/Aramark employees are tragically overworked and cleanliness is put on the backburner. There is one employee who cleans all of Tewksbury. There is Debbie who cleans all of Manor, Fineburg, Barringer House, and the Bertlesman's house in Barrytown. But the worst yet is the single employee who cleans all of Stevenson Gymnasium. The janitor in charge of Stevenson Gym works a grueling shift from 4:30am to 12:30pm. Therefore, from 12:30pm all the way to 4:30am the bathrooms, showers, and sweaty locker rooms get no sanitizing attention.

As much as we would like to place blame for this on the Aramark Corporation (the Philadelphia multibillion dollar service/manufacture company that bought out ServiceMaster in November of 2001. Aramark specializes in everything from food service [they do the food service for the vast majority of the nation's prisons and schools], cleaning service, manufacturing workers apparel, to constructing and servicing corporate conference centers), unfortunately Bard holds responsibility for not hiring more people as buildings continue to be built.

To break it down, Bard holds a contract with ServiceMaster that has been unchanged since Bard contracted out its custodial staff in 1994. When Aramark bought out ServiceMaster, the contract with Bard just transferred over. Bard now pays Aramark a million-dollar annual fee that covers the bare minimum of services. In accordance to the contract, if Bard wants to construct more buildings it is at Bard's

expense to supply additional workers. As much as we would like to hold Aramark accountable for this negligence, Bard's decision not to ask Aramark for a larger staff is to blame.

The employees of ServiceMaster/Aramark, who clean up all of our weekend residues, want to go back to being directly employed by the college. At a meeting with students last Thursday, several employees pointed out the fact that back before 1994, when Bard directly employed its custodial staff the starting wage was comparable to the starting wages of grounds workers for B&G. Now, after Bard has sold out its labor to ServiceMaster, (which has been bought out by Aramark), the starting wage for a janitor at Bard is a mere \$9.34/hr, while B&G grounds workers are pulling in an average \$13.98/hr. But keep in mind this \$13.98/hr is what a grounds worker gets paid before paying for Bard's costly health insurance plan. After paying close to 20% of his/her weekly take home pay for family health insurance, a grounds worker who makes \$13.98/hr only gets to bring home \$11.11/hr. I am sure Botstien is proud!

The starting wage for janitors at Bard is so bad, that the Aramark office in the basement of the Old Gym is constantly having to hire new employees. With such low pay and such a heavy workload, no one wants to stay at Bard cleaning up after us.

Even though B&G's wages beat those of ServiceMaster/Aramark, Buildings & Grounds workers at Bard are far from content. As I hope is common knowledge at Bard by now, the Botstien Administration pays B&G \$3-\$4 less per hour than Marist and Vassar pay their workers. B&G, with their

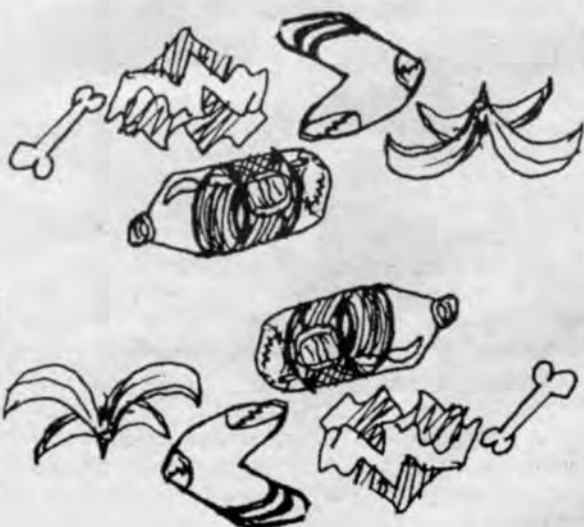


union representatives at their side, have been negotiating with the college for better wages since June. Needless to say, they're still negotiating. The workers have been relentless in demanding more pay and the college has been adamant in saying that they simply cannot afford it. But how much more is it? Frank Vitolo, B&G plumber/research genius, says it will cost the college \$250,000 annually to get Bard workers

within \$.50/hr to their counterparts at Marist and Vassar. While B&G negotiators insist that this is entirely feasible and have actually helped devise plans for Bard to save money (mostly by encouraging them not to hire outside contractors to do maintenance work around campus, but have B&G do it instead), Jim Brudvig insists an additional annual expense of \$250,000 is a financial blow Bard can't afford to take.

After contemplating the fact that Bard B&G workers get paid significantly less than their counterparts at Vassar and Marist, I became curious as to how Bard's top administrators get paid in comparison to their counterparts. The results were interesting. I got the figures from Frank Vitolo, who got them from Guidestar.com, a website that reports all of the financial information "non-profits" such as Bard and Vassar have to make public. In comparison to Vassar, there is little disparity between the wages of their top administrators and Bard's. Believe it or not, Vassar President Frances Ferguson makes more than Botstien. Ferguson pulls in \$280,000 annually while Botstien makes a whopping \$229,467 a year. These are some rich men. Bard's favorite economist, Dimitri Papadimitriou makes \$210,438 while the Vice President of Vassar only makes \$175,000. Trying to find Jim Brudvig's counterpart at Vassar is not easy. From what I hear our Vice President of Administration performs what should be three different peoples jobs. He handles college relations, college development and human resources. While our Vice President of Administration makes \$107,000 a year, the Vice President of College Relations at Vassar makes \$106,000.

Our administrators are getting paid just as well, if not better than administrators at Vassar, while our manual laborers get shafted in comparison to Vassar's. Although I do believe that Jim Brudvig deserves every penny of his hard-earned pay, the disparity workers face is still bothersome. It is very true that Brudvig works extremely hard at a job that is likely the most difficult in the administration. However, Debbie from ServiceMaster works just as hard, if not harder, trying to clean Manor, Barringer, Fineburg and the Bertlesman's house in Barrytown, all in the same day and doesn't get anything close to \$107,000 a year.



Sex Workers' Children: Cheated out of their innocence

The horrid state of Bangladesh's slums.

by **Sania Ashraf, Angelique Ahmed,
Afroza Choudhury and Rubaba Ali**

In certain areas of major cities in Bangladesh, you might spot a girl with her face heavily and provocatively made up, but it is the face of a mere child nonetheless. This is the girl who shyly approaches the doctor and begs him to give her some medicine so that her body fills up fast. Children are raped out of their innocence at a very young age and are encouraged by their very own mothers into prostitution. This they endure under the pressure of poverty and starvation, as an essential mean of survival. The girl cannot tell her own age but she is seven months into prostitution, and had been initiated into it by her own ex sex worker mother. She started menstruating only four months earlier where the average age for it is a bare 13 years old. This girl's mother's weathered face and body bears witness to decades of prostitution, which began when she herself was about 12 years old. Like most of the women in the brothel, she too was forced into it because of poverty. She has intended to give her daughter a different

life but a sudden illness and loss of income changed the circumstances. She says, "It's difficult to keep a daughter out of the trade if she is kept in the brothel" if somebody powerful such as the police, landlords, influential local people or a gangster desires her daughter. She says that about 7 or 8 men visit her each day. "She is young and can't take any more." Her daughter says she knows about AIDS as something that kills people, "I prefer them to use condoms because then I'll not get pregnant...I think syphilis and gonorrhea are two names for AIDS."

Children like her grow up to believe that this is how life is supposed to be since they are never exposed to any

world other than that of prostitution. Children who live in brothels are shut out of schools, which increases their vulnerability to becoming sex workers, because without an education they have fewer job alternatives. Not only that but education widens the horizons for any individual, therefore as they are deprived of it, their chances of starting life in a different way, are small. Due to the absence of recognized father, the children are forced to register with a fake name of their father. Out of 49 children enrolled under the guidance of an NGO, 14 of them made it to the merit list. These children got admission into the schools under the guardianship of the project implementing organization. In Bangladesh, the father is the actual guardian of the child and therefore, his name is necessary for any registration or official purposes, dampening any chances of their betterment by vain paper work. Many NGOs work endlessly to help these workers and their children achieve a better life. If one were to include

those sex workers working on the streets and in hotels, the number of sex workers in Bangladesh would shoot up by several thousands. In the capital Dhaka alone, some 5000 sex workers sell sex on the streets and sadly a considerable number are young girls. Save the Children is involved in and offers to help female sex workers form support groups and advocate their civil and political rights. It also provides non-formal education and vocational training for children of sex workers who are out of school. Along with learning to read and write they develop vocational skills, and learn about their rights to be protected from exploitation and abuse. UNDP has launched a five year project concerning the USD 2,000,000 and the department of social services for the rehabilitation of "Disadvantaged

women and their children" living in 4 brothels in Bangladesh. The project has been designed to provide women with skill training, micro-credit, schooling for their children, health education/awareness, etc. which would be in the brothels, without force and with full co-operation of women.

The recent murder of a young girl Jesmin in Tanbazar—a brothel in the vicinity of Dhaka—has been used to highlight the 'underworld' nature of brothels, and subsequently local community opinion against that has been

strengthened. This has also allowed police and other forces to be deployed in the area, the sole effect of which has been to restrict the women. Many of these women and their children faced starvation from the lack of income since business was totally cut off by the police. More than 50 organizations have come together to express solidarity and mobilize public opinion in support of the sex workers in Tanbazar. The women and children are forced against their will, violating all human rights, right to movement, right to shelter and to security. The scene is unimaginably obscene and from our point of view, we can never picture how it is for a child to grow up in such an environment.

A few of us here at Bard are trying to initiate a difference by helping change the attitude of the youth of Bangladesh and thus improve the lives of the children in the long run. A TLS program has been initiated for this cause. A trip to Bangladesh has been scheduled for this winter where a group of students representing Bard will be working a period of 4 to 5 weeks with an NGO, namely Nari Unnayan Shakti. In our agenda we are planning to help establish mentoring programs, providing with a years supply for hygiene products for all the children under the NGO, provide for a library at the school along with computer options, a television and similar programs that will help in the development of these deprived children. These are our goals, not only for the time that we will be able to visit them, i.e. in the short run, but we hope to bring about a change in their lives in the long run. Help us, if you want, by contributing anything resalable that can be sold in turn to raise fund here at Bard college. Items such as clothes, old stuffed toys, etc will be very useful. Any other help is welcome and desired. We hope that we have been successful in seeking your interest and making you aware of the dark lives that these children live and thus look forward to your contribution to this noble cause.



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Photo: B.M.E. Alwan/Orbit

Bard Democrats on a mission

Bard students look to gather the asses.

by **Laura Bomyea**

You don't have to be an expert political analyst to know that the majority of students at Bard College support leftist politics. The Princeton Review's Best 351 Colleges ranks Bard as the number one school whose "students [are] most nostalgic for Bill Clinton." It comes as no surprise that the vast majority of voters on campus are registered with the Democratic party or with other liberal parties. And yet, before this semester, there seemed to be a definite lack of organized Democratic presence on campus. Enter Adam Langley and Ethan Porter.

At the beginning of the fall semester, Langley and Porter became acquainted with each other at a meeting on voter registration where they discovered their mutual desire for an on-campus organization that, according to Langley, "was leftist and embrace[d] the electoral process." From this came the Bard Democrats, an organization of liberal students on campus concerned with the electoral process and legislative action.

The purpose of the Bard Democrats was stated in their budget request as a campus group that seeks to work "through the traditional political system with the Democratic Party to promote progressive politics." They hope to vocalize what they see as a relatively silent majority on campus and organize opposition to Bush in the 2004 election.

Their immediate goals include educating the campus before the primaries this March, particularly the Howard Dean and General Wesley Clark movements but not those campaigns exclusively. Porter emphasized that the Bard Democrats want to organize the anti-Bush movement under an umbrella organization. Both Porter and Langley see this organization as a long-term establishment. "I think it's a necessity on this campus," states Porter, "we're not going to be a flash in the pan for the next two elections."

"I envision [the Bard Democrats] filling a niche on the left," says Langley, "but it's a relatively moderate organization working on campaigns." Indeed, both Porter and Langley see the organization as bringing together leftist students of all degrees. "We want everyone on campus who is politically interested and politically active to get involved," expresses Porter, "everyone from a moderate leftist to a fire-breathing Marxist is welcome."

Both Langley and Porter wished to emphasize how the Bard Democrats organization differs from the Student Action Collective (SAC), an established political group on campus that seeks to raise campus-wide political awareness. Langley pointed out that the Bard Democrats are a more moderate version of the SAC. "We want to work with the SAC," he said, "but we see

ourselves as more concerned with the electoral process itself and the end result." He also emphasized their desire to organize student involvement in local politics.

The Bard Democrats have lots of plans for this year. Prospective projects include film screenings, letter drives, debates, speeches and public forums. They hope to bring many important speakers to campus possibly including Jason West, the 23 year old mayor of New Paltz; Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) and Jeremy Glick. The purpose of these speeches would be not only to inform students about issues and candidates, but also to emphasize the power of student voting and student participation in politics.

This Tuesday, October 7, the Bard Democrats held a forum in the Multi-Purpose Room entitled "How Vulnerable is Bush?" which explored Bush's declining popularity, issues surrounding the war with Iraq and the Democratic candidates for the upcoming elections. The four panelists, Mark Danner, Professor of Human Rights and Journalism at Bard; James Chace, Professor of International Relations at Bard; Mark Lindeman, Assistant Professor of Political Studies at Bard and Heather Hurlburt, former speechwriter for the Clinton administration from 1996-2001, all gave clear and informative talks on Bush's vulnerability and the current state of affairs in the Democratic Party. The forum seemed to come together with an expression of a need for Democrats to pull together if they have any chance of winning the presidency in 2004. All in all, it seemed to establish exactly what Porter and Langley hoped for their organization—a sense of anti-Bush unity and an emphasis on the importance of the Democratic primaries.

So far, the Bard Democrats have received strong support from the faculty. After the forum, panelist and professor James Chace said "I think it's really important that this is run by students and not faculty. Students complain and they don't vote—these guys are trying to get students to vote."

Allen Josey, Assistant Dean of Students Director of Student Life, was very positive in his critique of them.

"They've been very active from the get-go," he said, "working on films, etc. I've been very happy to see what they're doing... I think they've been doing a great job preparing and educating people about next year's election." Mark Lindeman, another panelist and assistant professor, pointed out that "the turnout here tonight suggests they're already a presence on campus." Though it is still early in the game for this organization, the impression I got from those that I spoke with was that they show definite potential for future, lasting success.



10/03

The Results are in!

The latest Observer survey: real numbers...

by Elizabeth Daley

When I went on my senior class trip in high school, a few of the boys got caught drinking in their hotel rooms. Our gym/health teacher (who also happened to be our senior class chaperone for the trip) gave a speech in which he tried to convey how "H-U-R-T" he was at our irresponsible and illegal behavior. Sadly, much of the intensity of his emotional outpouring was lost because he kept on spelling out words. I don't know how you could be so "S-T-U-P-I-D," he said with tears in his eyes. I am similarly H-U-R-T. I suppose it is silly to explain this in a column, especially when (like the senior class in my high school) most of you will find this funny BUT since I stay up crazy hours to make this here paper for you all you will see these words. Someone returned a survey to me that was really mean. It basically insulted the whole survey and did not even answer any of the questions. I don't mean to sound self righteous but after staying up from 9pm to 8 am doing this newspaper, you have some NERVE to insult that which you will never be capable of. If you think my survey is bad, or boring or "unfunny" WHY DON'T YOU make one? Maybe you can start by at least writing your name on your own critique and take responsibility for your own opinions, or would that be too much accountability for you? Are you afraid that I might be mean to you as you were to me...are you scared? Why don't you send a letter to the editor rather than anonymously bash? It is frankly a waste of my time and a waste of space to address such a heartless and cowardly individual for so long, but it is 2:47 am, I have a test tomorrow in Robotics, and at this point we do have some space to fill. Sorry to rant...now without further adeiu...the results of this survey:

Bard students seem to be from suburban areas these days. They don't have much sex, they claim to be honest, yet most say they know nothing about mesh hats and or Friendster. Bard students think they fit in at Bard but NONE of the respondents were vegans and most were straight. But I guess since we don't have much sex here at Bard, who can really be sure what they like. Just a thought, but maybe if you Bard kids were ok with internet dating or knew about Friendster you might be able to fill the void in your hearts and or sex lives. Maybe not.

Bardians like Pot and Beer primarily, making Bard average in yet another category. However, many Bardians seem to be bilingual even though most went to high schools that masqueraded as public. Sadly, most of you do not like Cheese Whiz OR Cool Whip, what were you all raised on? Carrot sticks? Or maybe you wrote neither because it was such a hard choice....that is what I like

1. Are you a
 - a) Freshman - 35%
 - b) Sophomore - 26%
 - c) Junior - 22%
 - d) Senior - 17%
 - e) none of the above
- 2) Do you speak a language other than English?
 - a) Yes, Si, Oui - 61%
 - b) No! - 39%
- 3) Are you from a
 - a) Suburban -- 52%
 - b) Rural -- 22%
 - c) Urban area - 26%
- 4) Did you go to Public School
 - a) YES! - 91%
 - b) NO! - 9%
- 5) When was the last time you had sex?
 - a) Today, right now as a matter of fact - 4%
 - b) This week - 26%
 - c) This month - 13%
 - d) OH GOD ITS BEEN SO LONG - 57%
- 6) Are you an honest person?
 - Yes - 87%
 - No - 13%
- 7) When was the last time you lied? (for real, not that time you told Jim you actually had already swiped at Kline)
 - a) Right Now - 9%
 - b) This week -- 26%
 - c) This month - 30%
 - d) Today - 9%
 - e) I did not have sex with that woman - 4%
 - f) I don't lie - 13%
- 8) How many mesh hats do you own?
 - a) Mesh WHAT? - 87%
 - b) Just the one that I wear all the time --
 - c) One that someone gave me, I never wear it (over) - 9%
 - d) I bought a few LAST YEAR and I don't wear them now --
 - e) I am currently bidding on them on e-bay - 4%

- 9) Are you on Friendster?
 - a) Yes, I was bored over the summer - 30%
 - b) Yes, I got back to school and I had no real friends --
 - c) No, I rejected that invite - 9%
 - d) Whatster? - 61%
- 10) Are you yourself on Friendster?
 - a) Yes -- 26 %
 - b) NO you fools will never find me -- 4%
- 11) Would you date someone you met online?
 - a) Yes - 26%
 - b) I have - 9%
 - c) No - 65%
- Drug of choice?

Pot - 52%, Coke - 9%, E, Prozac, Adderall, It depends - 17%, Acid, None - 22%
- Drink of choice

Beer - 17%, Wine - 18%, Mixed drinks - 26%, Straight up shots - 30%, none - 9%
- First Drink in grade?

6 (or earlier) - 9%, 7 - 22%, 8 - 4%, 9 - 17%, 10 - 13%, 11 - 13%, 12 - 4%, college - 13%, still not yet - 4%
- Are you a:

Vegan --, Vegetarian - 17%, Omnivore - 83%
- Are you:

Gay - 9%, Straight - 69%, Bisexual - 9%, don't believe in labels but open to all possibilities - 13%
- Do you fit in at Bard

Yes - 87%
No - 13%
- Cheese Whiz or Cool Whip?

CW - 17%
C-whip - 30%
Neither - 52%

NEW CLUBS AND NEW IDEAS.

Crafts, drugs and shameless plugs

by Tavit Geudelekian

Ok, so this is my first attempt at any sort of writing that is meant for mass reproduction and consumption, so I will try to make it interesting (and hope that my copy editor does my poor grammar justice). I have decided that if I get about 500 to 750 words of your favorite Bard newspaper, I damn well better make it about something that will be captivating and accessible to the majority of it's readers. Read: This is a column about Bard. I wear a bunch of hats here at Bard, and so I will use this space to rant for a tad but then try to present y'all with a quick summary of stuff that should be getting a bit more attention (wow, this is turning out to be a really self-conscious article, isn't it?).

Crafternoon! If you haven't heard me screaming about it, it is an arts and crafts club that meets every Tuesday afternoon (4:20) in front of Keen, and Sunday mornings (11:00 AM, when we wake up for it) in Kline. Fun, free, simple, enough.

OETV. Every other Tuesday at 9PM in Weiss Theatre. Olde English screens funny stuff that you may or may not have seen before, and also a new video sketch that we cook up fresh for your viewing pleasure.

The Bard Democrats. A new club I guess, 'cause I've never heard of this established group before (did they apply for money from the Student Government?). Anyway, "Bard Democrats", is the entire purpose of your club to bash, question, or otherwise be completely fixated upon the career, motivations and relationships of our current president? If so, you might also consider presenting your colleagues and community members with information about the plans, campaigns and proposed policies of the political party that you have chosen to represent. Perhaps "The Anti-Bush Consortium" or "Fuck Bush" might be a better name for your group. Personally, establishing a politic based upon the shortcomings and errors of another seems to me as empty and paradoxical as say, TLS laundering money to non-Bard students to go to some random

dessert in California and build a sculpture for a hippie festival. Stake your claim! Inform us of YOUR politics! I'm sure I can rely upon my fellow sheep free thinkers in this wooded liberal enclave institution to provide me with all the Bush and Dick bashing that I can handle.

FU&40's. Never say die!!! Deep underground now, but still claimin' solidarity. Find us.

Foursquare All-Star's. You know when you go to foursquare and there are always a bunch of kids who always get to the A square and manage to stay there? That would be an All-Star. They pull the ill moves, the crazy tricks, and all the other stuff that makes the crowd cream and scream. Soon, and very soon an All-Star game will be in effect, so keep your eyes open, 'cause if you aren't paying attention they won't hesitate to take you out and claim your square. By the way, an All-Star game is in the works, so keep the ears to the wall for that one!

Tavern. A simple, albeit wonderful institution (my apologies to the majority of my reader's, it's kind of an inside job, very Ocean's Eleven, you know?).

Mother Ming is in position, as usual, for an amazing set and some funky happenings. An unmentionable got his shit kicked (and rightfully so!). I guess that will about wrap it up for this issue. I know that this whole piece seems really schizophrenic (if you don't know me well) or very masturbatory (if you do). But either way, I've got to wrap it up cause its almost 10PM and I've got a place to be on Tuesday nights, when the administration isn't looking. So until next time, peace. P.S. I have gotten into the weird habit of saying "yo" as goodbye, so if I say that to you and then walk away, I'm really sorry. I don't know how that shit got started.



Come on down and write for the Observer!

I did it and look what I got, a giant pencil and a new haircut.

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A Magic City Production

By Henry Casey

Bland Champ

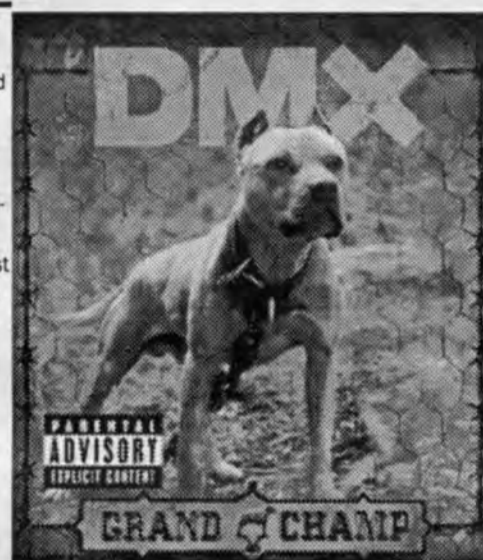
The title "Grand Champ" is given to a dog after he/she wins five competitions. DMX (Earl Simmons)'s new album is called Grand Champ and since it happens to be his fifth album, he is a Grand Champ. If only the dog comparisons and references that could be made had stopped there, it might have been a tolerable album. The first single of the album is called "Where The Hood At." It was pretty good and lead me to think this album might be decent. But the first track kills all of momentum, wasting almost a minute having Earl talk about how he trusts dogs more than humans. Maybe that's because dogs won't have to listen to this album.

The album has too much filler. There are 45 second long sections of songs that are basic and quite boring beats. André 3000 of OutKast recently said in a magazine: "hip-hop is dead." He must have been listening to this album. Even the new 'Mike Tyson of Rap,' 50 Cent, cannot save this album. He guests on yet another anti-Ja Rule song called "Shot Down" and is even more boring than he was at the MTV Video Music Awards. "Shot Down"

is used as a marketing gimmick to associate an older rapper with the new it rapper, but it is filler as well. The chorus of "Dogs Out" is nothing but filler. It samples a child singing "and the dogs are out" over and over again. I think the artistic geniuses known as The Baha Men already alerted us to that matter.

My suggestion? If you like DMX, then download or purchase the single "Where The Hood At" from Apple Music Store. Ninety-nine cents isn't too much. Otherwise, just don't give Simmons any of your cash and help put the dog to sleep! DMX counted this "5th win" before the show had even begun, so he's no Grand Champ, just a little barking Chihuahua.

If you have any questions, comments, or recommendations for something to review email me at fakeplasticme@mac.com.



MATHEMATICS: LOVE HELL or RIGHT

By Patrick Rodgers

Mathematics, the long time Wu Tang DJ and part time producer, comes out swinging for the fences with its first solo project, Love Hell or Right. Mathematics, along with a host of MC's ranging from the Wu family to newcomers Eyes Low, Buddha Bless, and Icarus da Don, bring a brand of ruckus that gets little kids brought indoors. The album is everything you love about good ol' east coast hip hop. "Pimpology 101" is a Jay-Z classic caliber beat that'll make your neck sore, full of funky horns and topped nicely by Buddha Bless on the mic. On "Hav Mercy," Killa Sin drops his brand of street bible wisdom over a lush guitar sample that comes off sounding like a Nas track. The tracks featuring the Wu Tang Clan, ("Respect Mine", "Da Great Siege", and "Always N.Y.") sound like that Wu Tang of days gone by, bringing back memories of middle school. Even the skits are short and unintrusive, proper interludes and not just obnoxious filler.

The only really skippable track is "Thank You" (da DJ's version), a mild remix of the Wu's "Clap" off The W. It just wasn't that good a track to begin with. The other tracks featuring the Clan are solid, RZA influenced loops that sound like Wu Tang B-sides. The rest are a range of tracks that give the album a nice flavor, including the funkier-than-thou "Gangsta," and the slower, reggae-soul feeling track, "Real Talk." It was released by High Times Records, the label offshoot of the magazine, so you know you can chill to it whether your in the sunlight, moonlight, or streetlight. It sounds like a Wu Tang album (really what Iron Flag should have sounded like) and is definitely a more successful attempt to get the whole Fam out than Wu Chronicles or Killah Bees. This is definitely an album worth buying.



Dashboard Confessional

By Andrew Raposo

A Review of Dashboard Confessional's A Mark, A Mission, A Brand, A Scar.

Like a flash of lightning, the first cut drops and we know before we can hear the thunder clap, that this is unlike anything Chris and Co. have ever done before and Great Scott! It Works. "Hands Down," the opener to this eclectic, often dizzily overt sixth album by Dashboard Confessional, speaks volumes of the band's bold new direction. With echoes of Ian Dury, "Hands Down" plods and skips like an acid washed disco freak-out hosted by Caligula at Mystic Seaport. The very first line of the album: "I Throw Craze and you know the party just went downstairs."

Changing pace with no significant repercussions, "Rapid Hope Loss" replaces the Albini-esque drums of track one with a less obtuse 808 accompanied by acoustic guitar, and an organ with her Leslie cabinet. Cozy and familiar, this song conjures an imagined Jeff Mangum failing to choose whether or not to listen to either I See A Darkness re-recorded by Amon Tobin, or Donovan remixed by Ralph Hutter. A song of moving on, or catching up, this track is one of the more misguided. Those who long for the more tick, tick, boom they've come to expect from Chris Carraba will not be pleased with this second cut. It is commonly held that an album's weakest track is reserved for the number-two slot.

Unfortunately, there are a few other disappointments, but not in such unsuccessful ways.

Apparently, music was meant to buzz and howl, and rock and roll is here to stay awake all night because track three, "As Lover Go," a whopping 9 minutes 46 seconds, keeps the album's eyes on the prize. Imagine if you would, Can's Mother Sky redone entirely by Arthur Lee. Over an oscillating bass-line, and drums of death, cello and Harmonium smash and crash while Carraba, as subdued as ever, warns, "Its Not Free/To be Free."

On the other side of what was once the Berlin Wall, a cleaner, prissier Carraba bellows his vocals on the fourth cut, "Carry This Picture." Inspired by a 2001 trip to Eastern Europe, this song delves darkly into heroin abuse and those who slip away never to return. The backbone of this song is the thump, thump, thump of the kick drum that ceaselessly reminds us of PIL's Flowers of Romance without any of the repetition. A better song could not be found on this record, if it only had five songs.

The fifth song is the stand-alone, hear-me-and-your nose will bleed, clincher. Bend and Not Break is only one note in its entirety. The drums are somewhere between Ringo Starr and Kid 606, and Carraba has never sounded more like Dez. The surprise, surprise of this song is that it was guest produced by X's John Doe. You try figuring it out. This is the one and only true love song on the album. Your girlfriend will tell you she hates it.

The truth, is the middle part of this album, tracks six to ten are some of the better songs, but the influences abound a little too well. I hear everything from brass band, to more disco/electro, and track eight's "Morning Calls" is an inordinately beautiful song that reminds me strikingly of Fischerspooner's cover of Wire's "The 15th" but done only with guitar, bass, and drums and a little bit of piano. These songs sparkle and fade, but you'll want to see them to do that again and again.

Track 11: "Hey Girl," is sticky and goopy like a preening Iggy Pop jumping up and down on a 202 while the alarm clock radio blears Pavement's Two States. This song could have been written by Serge Gainsbourg if he were American, sang in English, and loved being eaten by a black hole at the heart of the Chicks on Speed galaxy. One word: Freedom.

The second to last song on a record is usually the albums softest part, but center of this tootsie pop is iron clad. "If You Can't Leave it Be, Might as Well Make It Bleed," is only 53 seconds and damned if you do, this is Germ's "What We Do Is Secret," backwards and forwards only done acoustically. I count eight different guitar tracks, but how many do you count Mr. Johnny Marr?

"Several Ways to Die Trying" is an imagined suicide told from the garage's perspective and is inconsequentially forgettable. Carraba only says four things on this song, I'll leave you to jump to your own conclusions (or off them). As far as I'm concerned this album truly ends with a whimper, but such things have been known to signal a new life being made. Powerful, is this album. Powerful like the bit in the maw of the drill. You let it do the work for you.



DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL
A MARK • A MISSION • A BRAND • A SCAR



Se Pierde en la Traducion

By Connor Gaudet



Scarlett Jo.

Sophia Coppola's new film *Lost in Translation* leaves me feeling like I've been punched in the stomach. This, to me, is the mark of a good film. Bill Murray pulls most of the weight in this film with a brilliant performance as "Bob Harris", a waning movie star in Japan, Harris is shooting a whiskey ad campaign and attempting to temporarily escape from his wife and life back in the states. Scarlett Johansson's portrayal of "Charlotte" (a recently married woman trapped in her life and searching for answers in self-help books on tape) plays well with Bill Murray's talent. Though twenty-five years her senior, Bob is still in Charlotte's position in life: unhappy, searching for answers but never finding them. The pair are quickly drawn to each other due to their mutual dissatisfaction and their desire to live freely and change.

Coppola uses space much to her advantage. Though surrounded by towering skyscrapers, and looking out onto a seemingly endless cityscape, the characters are

themselves constantly crammed into hotel rooms, and tight little hallways, leaving the viewer with a sense of entrapment and claustrophobia. Coppola also uses windows and reflections very nicely in Bob and



Charlotte's contemplative moments.

The love that Bob and Charlotte share is a very innocent love and Coppola is very careful not to push its boundaries. In order for their love to exist, it needs to never be mentioned or acted on, creating an incredible tension between the two. They form an interesting father/daughter-esque relationship that is caring and protective, but never too intrusive. It is soon obvious that they don't allow themselves to go any fur-

ther because they realize that they are still stuck in their lives and are unable to leave them for good.

The result forces them into an acceptance of the consequences of decisions made long before they ever met. Our only resolution is something whispered by Bob into Charlotte's ear, unheard by the viewer. Make of it what you will. Sometimes two people meet just long enough to change each other even if they cannot share the same path forever. It sucks a lot and you can bitch and moan, but the reality of life is that sometimes what we want and what needs to happen are two different things.

Maybe it feels like I got punched in the stomach because I have achingly similar blood on my hands right now. It kind of hurt to watch. Maybe at another time in my life it would have felt like someone stepped on my foot or poked me in the eye or gave me a wet willy. Regardless, I feel that it was a beautifully shot, well directed, and very well acted film.



Bill Murray



By Kitty Litter

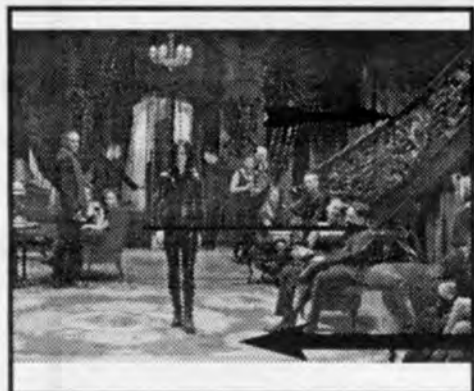
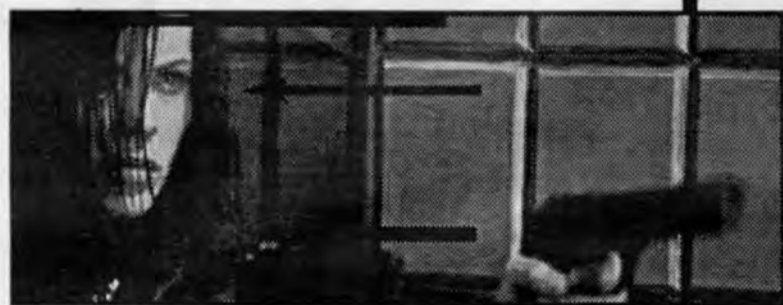


It's not as gory as Hershel Gordon Lewis, but of course no gore movie in mainstream cinema today is and as gross as *House of 1000 Corpses* was, even that didn't make me hurl. But despite a sick desire to only see blood, *Cabin Fever* was a satisfying screen scream. There is something innately disturbing about fatal flesh eating diseases that really can get under your skin. So yeah, the killer isn't a crazed psychopath, a talented serial killer, a birth defect out to avenge and murder the hot dames who giggle behind his back, or a hysterical woman with large smothering breasts. No, it's a very contagious illness. It's not even really a fever, but that's really not the point. The film has some decent suspense, and friends killing each other. The characters are shallow yet surprisingly appropriate.

I mean character development isn't the point obviously, but characters fit their parts and are good enough stereotypes to get "college-get-away-in-a-cabin" across. So anyway, the gore (when it actually occurs) is quite nice and several scenes frequently flash back in my head, which is a good sign. Then there is the ending, which ladies and gentlemen, is a very good ending—much better than either of *28 Days Later's* two attempts at ending that sad-zombie movie. So go see *Cabin Fever* on the big screen, because that's more fun. Sneak in if you can, because 8.50 just sucks for anything playing in the mall, and don't drink anything but beer.

Underexpectations

By Chelsea Doyle



The legends of vampires and werewolves have fascinated and horrified people for decades. There have been countless movies, books, television shows, glorifying the stories of Dracula and the many full moon monsters. There are people that worship the idea of the vampire, wishing they could be one. Vampires are just so damn badass it makes some people squeal just to think of pointy teeth. I squeal. It was with a certain amount of giddiness that I found my way to the theater to watch *Underworld*, the newest film that celebrated not only the world of those lovely blood suckers, but their rivals, the werewolves (called "lichens" in this film).

The plot is pretty simple ... until about halfway through the movie. There has been a war between lichens and vampires that has lasted for centuries (although no one really remembers what started it). Then the lichen leader Lucien is killed. The vampire who killed him, Craven, is now the leader of the vampires and he is such a fop that one wonders how exactly he managed to kill anyone, let alone a werewolf. So it is not much of a surprise when the heroine of the movie, Selene (a lovely, serious Kate Beckinsdale), unveils the truth; Lucien was not killed at all! The lichens then go after a regular human doctor named Michael for some secret reason. Attractively empty and played by Scott Speedman, "Michael" has the amazing ability to look wide eyed and completely dead pan no matter what happens to him.

Vampire: We're going to kill you Michael.

Michael: Oh.
Lichen: We're going to kill him first.
Michael: ...oh.
Selene: I love you, Michael.
Michael: Um...when did that happen?
Selene: I don't know. We only had two or three scenes together but it is needed for the plot. Shut up and keep looking cutely clueless for the camera.
Michael: Can do!

I think this movie was made purely just so it can be shown yet again how cool vampires and werewolves are. They are even better than before because hey, we have special effects now that would make Anne Rice go "ooooo mamacita." But I found myself asking things like "Why are they all using guns? Are we in the Matrix? Vampires don't have reflections, so why does Selene? Why are they so easy to kill? Since when did werewolves become more like hyenas and less like wolves?" Unfortunately these questions were never answered in the incredibly strange and weighted down senseless plot, and I was forced instead to accept that this C movie was hyped up for no reason. True, action sequences with guns will always be cool, and vampires will be awesome no matter how easy it is the bitchs lap them into submission, but overall, I would say this movie is rental only. *Underworld* set the viewers up for a sequel, which could pull a *Blade 2* and actually be better than the first, but we will only have to wait and see. Or rent in a few years when we are bored. The pessimism in me suspects the second option.

Christian Marclay, Footstompin', from the Body Mix series, 1991. Record album covers and thread. Collection of On view at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, from September 28, through December 19. 845-758-7598, e-mail ccs@bard.edu, www.bard.edu/ccs/exhibitions.



Christian Marclay, Virtuoso, 2000. Altered accordion. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; gift of the West Coast Acquisitions Committee of the American Friends of the Israel Museum.

How We See Sound By Chiara Issa

Bard's Center for Curatorial Studies (CCS) is currently exhibiting the multi-media works of Christian Marclay from the 1980s to the present. Marclay is an artist who uses all types of media. He is known as a DJ and experimental musician, but over the last twenty years he has produced a wide variety of visual arts including sculpture, installations, photography, and video collages—to name a few.

Central to Christian Marclay's work are associations between sight and sound. His work emphasizes what we see when we hear a sound. The sounds he uses range from a door slamming, someone singing, a guitar being dragged, or a phone ringing.

The exhibit begins with a TV monitor displaying a video that consists of movie clips of phones ringing and telephone conversations. This video brings the viewer into a new frame of mind in which sound is being visualized. The visualization or re-visualization of sound follows the viewer throughout the entire exhibition as Marclay forces us to re-think how we perceive what we hear through what we see.

In the 1980s, Marclay became known for DJing with broken and scratched records, and in this exhibit, he

has taken the broken record to a whole new level. In the exhibit there is a record that evokes a puzzle, made up of many different colored pieces. What is most amazing is that not only is the record Marclay created awesome to look at, but he has created a record collage of record pieces on a record that can be played! It is a super record of sorts. He understands the connection between hearing something great that is also cool to look at—it's like getting a pressing of your favorite record on pink vinyl.

Although you can play Marclay's reassembled, collaged records, you cannot play his altered instruments. Drumkit (1999) is a 13-foot high drum set. It is truly inconceivable until you stand beneath it and feel it looming over your head. What is even more inconceivable is the sound that might result if these drums were played. Along with Drumkit, Virtuoso (2000), a 25-foot long accordion, is another unplayable instrument that is a spectacle to see. Drumkit and Virtuoso force the viewer to ponder how playing instruments such as these would be possible, and what sounds would be created by doing so.

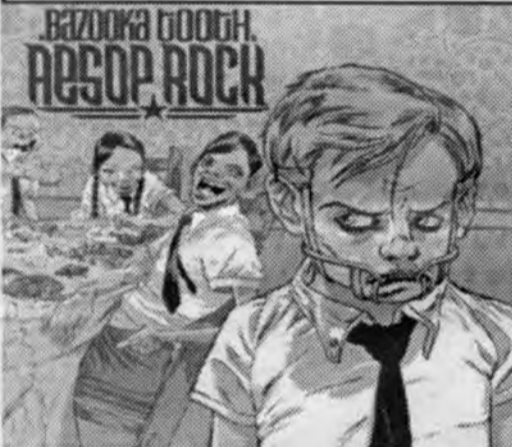
Another highlight of Marclay's exhibit, are his Body Mixes, which use record covers as a medium. Marclay creates

album cover collages that are reminiscent of the 1980's music and social scene. A somewhat funny Body Mix is Marclay's Footstompin' (1999), a three-piece album cover collage with the inside of Michael Jackson's "Thriller" record exposed connecting MJ's head to a dark skinned woman's body in underwear whose legs are connected to a Caucasian woman's legs from the back of Roxy Music's record "The Shock of the New."

A major part of the exhibition is Marclay's Video Quartet (2002). It is a four screen projection of old Hollywood film excerpts featuring people playing instruments, singing, or creating some kind of sound. It is astounding to see because you do not know which screen to look at since each clip changes so quickly.

The only downfall in the exhibition was the way it was curated. There was no real flow from each room into the next. His work was not well connected until the last three rooms which featured Tape Fall, Virtuoso, and Drumkit. It looked as if some of Marclay's pieces were simply put up on display, making the "trip" through the exhibition a little awkward.

Overall, Marclay's work was appreciated. This exhibition is definitely an experience that everyone should have at least once.



Showers of Rhyming Shrapnel

By Henry Casey

At the end of the album's second track "N.Y. Electric", with his molar cannons firing like chain guns, Aesop Rock fires a scream out of his lungs "BAZOOKA TOOTH, BITCH!" If they were lucky enough to be in the blast radius, the music business just got knocked on its red demonic ass. If you haven't heard Aesop's rocks before either, then be prepared to listen and listen hard. Aesop stands out from the pack of whack tacky rappers with

his complex phrases. His latest album is "Bazooka Tooth", if you like hip-hop you should buy it.

Like all musicians should, Aesop has taken his new album as a time to evolve his sound. The music behind his vocals does not sound exactly like Aesop's past records ("Float", "Labor Days", "Appleseed" or "Music for Earthworms"), so even his fans might require more than a single listen to comprehend this. This is because Aesop has taken over the production duties from long-time producer Blockhead. His sound has made seems more instrumental than ever, not relying on slow moving low-key beats. Aesop has proven he can run pentagrams around that repetitive background.

As I've said before, Aesop is as complicated as it gets, so it might be a while before you distill the sentences out of the songs. You can be entertained by just listening, and without trying to piece it all together you could

become enthralled with just the man's speed and his growl (some have even gone as far to say that his voice is an instrument by itself). As with all his albums, Aesop is proof that not all white MC's have problems with hate and rage (Eminem), or are undereducated hicks (Bubba Sparxxx). In a recent interview he says he does not read much, but I get another image when I hear thousand syllabic raps, naming everyone from Pol Pot to Maurice Sendak.

The song that got me the most is "Babies with Guns" which I currently believe is an attack on how this country loves guns so much. We've seen a lot of this in other media, post-"Bowling For Columbine", but I don't think many rappers have been anti-gun lately. Aesop Rock takes the anti-gun lobby further and paints a depressing image of a child at your door with a gun to your head, "Somehow they smuggled tommy guns and crack into the nurseries / there's a fuckin' baby at the door askin' for wallets / and those ain't twin beanie babies in his pockets / in 2010 sonograms show the magnums born directly on the fetus / evolution for the young killer convenience". It took me about 7 minutes to write the last quote because this is so hard to hear, but when you piece the hyper verbal puzzle back together, the reward is definitely worth it.

My suggestion: buy this album ASAP, it might be hard to find, and you might have to order it off of the internet (I recommend the online store www.thegiantpeach.com), but you should be listening to Aesop Rock, the last remaining poet in Hip-Hop. As always, send one to fakeplasticme@mac.com if you got something to say.

Movie Rental Wonder

By Chelsea Doyle

I do not know about anyone else, but I am getting rather tired of the one day rental policy that the Red Hook movie rental place has adopted. While it is rather inexpensive, I found it wholly unsatisfying, since it is very common that plans change and sometimes when you rent a movie, you cannot get to it until several days after. It often happens that once you realize that ten page paper was due the same day of said rental, but you just forgot about it! Then there is money wasted, you do not get to see your movie, and it overall just sucks. Well, I came across a lovely invention that a website has come up with, called Netflix. At www.netflix.com, you can find thousands of DVDs that are available for rental. Anime, comedy routines, and other movies that you thought you would never see available anywhere else aside from that strange little rental store back home. Well, look no further, Netflix has everything.

The process goes like this: You sign up for a free trial, which eventually leads into a twenty dollar charge per month if you like what you are getting. I know that sounds like a lot of money per month, but if you are willing to dish it out for unlimited DVD rental and speedy delivery, it should be worth it. Once you are signed up, you make a list of movies you wish to rent and place them in the order of which you wish to watch them. The first three movies from your list will be shipped to you, no postal on your part needed, and you can keep these three DVD's as long as you wish. Once you are done with them, you send them back through Campus Mail (for free), and the next three movies on your list will then be prepared. Once Netflix receives your watched movies, the new ones will be delivered within two days. Pretty much, you can have three movies to watch every single weekend, with no late fees or pressure on your shoulder. I sound like a telemarketer, but it really is a pretty great system as long as you are willing to pay the money in the first place!



Garlic Breath

By Jamie Newman



To some, Garlic is just a vegetable found in many foods, from pasta sauce to pad Thai. To others, it is way of life. A testament to everything good and pure about the world. The Hudson Valley Garlic Festival is the Mecca for the garlic cult. They come from all over the eastern seaboard to celebrate their favorite flavor. The garlic fest is not simply a small gathering of likeminded garlic aficionados, it is an extensive assemblage dedicated to fun and garlic. The Festival is in its 15th year, in which time it has grown to be the second largest garlic festival nationwide. It boasts an astounding 250 booths, selling an array of products ranging from garlic fudge to garlic soap. So when you come home from an exhausting day of garlic worship, you can scrub out the odor of garlic with your new garlic soap. It would appear that some people just want to preserve that unforgettable scent.

Upon arriving at the Garlic Festival, you come to the realization that the garlic is no laughing matter. Garlic is serious business in Saugerties, New York. It would appear that the whole town has come to a halt, in celebration of their vegetable of choice. Parking is at such a premium, that they run shuttle buses from the center of town to the garlic festival, which takes place on some farmland on the outskirts of Saugerties. The garlic shuttles take you to the festival entrance, where you pay five dollars to enter the garlicky goodness. Entering the festival, you might think that the garlic theme is just a way to spice-up a typical small-town fair, selling thousands of items that you never knew you needed. However, once you wade through the initial section filled with scented candles and precious stones you are met with the pungent aroma of garlic. This is where the real fun begins. From garlic lectures to garlic goddesses, the festival has something for everyone (as long as garlic is your game). My first priority was finding garlic sausage, but I was quickly diverted by the wide array of free samples. If you go to such a festival, you must immerse yourself in the culture, try to absorb everything it has to offer, especially if it's free. Our entourage of garlic-lovers did just that.

First, we paid our respects to the Garlic Goddess, Pat Reppert, who started the festival back in 1989 as a small get together devoted to the venerable vegetable. Little did she know that fifteen years later, 40,000 people would be traipsing through the mud in appreciation of her vision. After our brush with greatness, we did the ceremonial walk around the grounds, sampling everything from garlic fudge to raw garlic. I found that I like Russian Red garlic better than the Italian Red, but that nothing could compare to the special heirloom brand created by a man who goes by Garlic Bob (seriously). Another favorite food of the festival is pesto, and there were roughly ten different booths boasting the best-o. However, there was a consensus among our group that Saugerties' own store BudaPesto had a superior brand of pesto. One of BudaPesto's owners attributed this to "a special type of garlic and extremely fine olive oil." Whatever it was, I was willing to shell out seven bills for a small container of it.

As our walk around the festival continued, I realized the extent of people's obsession with garlic. People were walking away with bags and bags of raw garlic. Some people looked as if they had waited all year for a new batch of their favorite garlic, running up to the booths in a frenzy. Everyone knew the lingo, and spoke of each type of garlic with a respect seldom given to other vegetables. It was then I realized why this was such an important event. Garlic is used in every type of cooking, and to find a superior strain of garlic is to improve everything you cook. Once someone has found their special brand of garlic, they cannot bear to use another kind. Some have said that the festival is a celebration of the self, for the pungent aroma of garlic might leave you sleeping on the couch, alone. In a sense, the Garlic Festival is a great place to assemble, a place where social distinctions lose all value—where the yuppie, the farm worker and the hungover bohemian can come together to honor a very special vegetable. It gave me plenty of time to collect my thoughts and clear my sinuses. So next year, when you find yourself waiting for something to happen at a school where very little does, go down to the Garlic Festival, the Goddess will be waiting for you.



Garlic Goddess

Get Off the Internet!

By Elizabeth Daley



whats her face

Are you ready to look "so good?" Well, compared to the girls in Teen Girl Squad, (a flash animated cartoon whose main characters include So and so, What's her face and The ugly one), I suppose we all look "So good." TGS brings back memories of my formative years. While others dated boys on the football team and laughed at girls with bad teeth, I secretly wore headgear to sleep ever night and prayed for boobs. I feel that I am a mixture between What's her face and The ugly one. The ugly one has really great glasses and vintage style while What's her face's non-chalant attitude reminds me of my own. Teen Girl Squad can be found at www.homestarrunner.com and in high schools across America circa 1999. DAG! Teen Girl Squad is wiggity wack, not just the regular kind.



cheerleader



the ugly one

music video answers to questions such as: what would Destiny's Child sound like if they were kittens in Northern England? The Adventures of Blode and Food and others who have names like "Davey Pants" are fun for the whole family. **Rather Good** provides information about the dangers of Spoons and the worse dangers of the defective Spoon Guuuuuuuard.

www.whatsbetter.com

So someone had the nerve to put the Free Press and the Observer in some odd competition on this website that allows you to vote on what you think is better. A friend alerted me to the fact that we were losing this competition and then told me he was having a moral dilemma because he had to vote on what was better: Nazi's or Slavery. He said Nazi's. I think Slavery.

www.drivenbyboredom.com/bling.htm

I stumbled upon this site when I was looking up the phrase "bling bling" in google image search (don't ask why). Apparently, a group of white teenage boys from Georgia believe they are "tru thugz" and "ICY Hot Stunaz." Each of the three 'Stunaz' members has his own profile where he gets to expound on his likes and dislikes. Freeze's dislikes include "White people, bad table manners and rappers that don't be flashin their phat ice." I understand entirely! It is awful when phat ice is not seen! At 16, Ben Rudolph aka "Blade" is the only member of the triad old enough to drive but sadly he failed his drivers test. "Flame" believes that "8th grade ho's don't know what they is mizzin" when they reject him. Are these kids fo realz? The Stunaz have

received many angry letters from people and usually respond to them with: "shut the fuck up biotch, you a ho," or occasionally: 'I can't believe you could be so cruel as to call us queers and use this word in such a way that it offends a whole sexuality. P.S. you do not even know how to use the word 'your' correctly. If it means 'you are,' there should be an apostrophe after the 'r.' The more literate responses to letters are supposedly written by a college educated older brother of Flame. If this site is a hoax, it's a weird one.



Urban Cowboys: Professional Bull Riding in Albany

By Patrick Rodgers



Professional bull riding conjures images of Texas, cowboys with button-up shirts and ten gallon hats; of bleachers lined with cheering fans and concerned wives; of a tradition born in Mexico and able to cross borders long before NAFTA was even a glimmer in a politician's eye. It's warm summer nights under starry skies, drinking cheap beer, hollering, hooting, and yee-hawing until it's time to go home. In Albany, things are a little different. The starry sky is blocked by the dome of the Pepsi Arena, the long stretches of countryside are traded for a square of dirt spread out over the concrete floor, and only half of the crowd really ever knows what's going on at any given moment. But the beer is still there, and for a few short hours the residents of Albany learned what it was like to be country.

We arrived a few minutes late, with hopes that, like Monster Truck races, professional bull riding would not be worried about punctuality. We got our tickets and made our way to the beer stand for a couple of Bud tall boys as the first notes of the national anthem went ringing out across the seats. Almost everyone was still at the beer stand, hats off, the shimmer of patriotism in their eye. Fortunately, love of one's country and drinking has gone hand in hand since McCarthyism. We found our seats as the cowboy's prayer started; a rodeo clown asking for thanks and forgiveness while praying for the safety of all of the riders and those who would have to drive home after a few more giant beers. The solemnity of the moment was shattered by a five-second burst of Def Leopard, a rider was introduced and the gates were opened, unleashing the bull, who bucked furiously trying to rid himself of the rider and the rope tied around his genitals. He succeeded, and the rider was left scurrying away from what the emcee referred to as "the 1800 pound Suppository."

For those of you unfamiliar with the world of bull riding, the whole system is scored by points for the longest ride. Scoring starts after eight seconds (remember that Luke Perry movie). Any rider who cannot hang on that long does not score. Each rider is assigned a bull for the night, and has two rides to get the highest score possible. The prizes go to the winners of each of the two rounds and the highest combined score. The total purse: \$5500. Not bad for 18 seconds worth

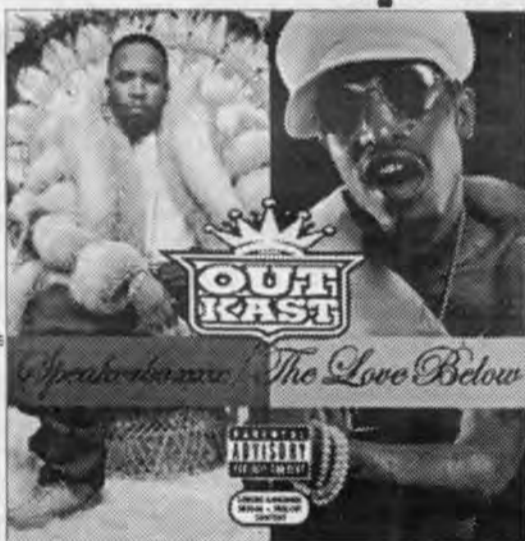
of work, unless you are the guy who gets tossed and then gored by the bull, then the only consolation is to receive the loudest applause as you are carried out of the ring.

The evening is directed by two emcees. One is an older fellow in a ten gallon hat and gray suit who sits above the action and is responsible for introducing all of the riders and giving a short biography of each, including hometowns and bull riding accolades. The other is a rodeo clown, who never gets near the bull, instead choosing to try to rile up the crowd and tell jokes. The two have a sort of vaudeville-esque, buddy-comedy rapport. Their main responsibility is filling the time between rides, mostly with slapstick humor, dry jokes about their wives, and an occasional shout out to the good Lord Jesus, who seems to have an intimate friendship with the rodeo clown. They keep the humor wholesome and family-oriented, but do manage to work in a few dirty jokes to keep the adults chuckling, and the kids shrugging their shoulders. The rodeo clown hadn't slept well the night before, which may have affected his performance. Apparently, the girl in the room next to his was eating candy bars all night. He knew because she kept yelling "Oh! Henry. Oh! Henry."

Just as the gates open, short bursts of music drown out the humor and the cheering. Foghat, The Cars, Kid Rock, Bon Jovi, and countless others lend to the rider's adrenaline as he clings to the rope loosely tied around the bull's neck. The crowd shifts between excited (when someone has a good ride, or Brickhouse plays) and mildly apathetic (when nothing happens except the lifting of 16 oz. plastic cups to mouths). The clown struggles to keep the crowd's attention, but we aren't in Texas anymore. This is a Nascar crowd. Sure they like it fine, but they're mostly in it for the crashes. In states where things like this matter, each rider receives a hardy cheer—after all, he did just try to ride a disgruntled bull. Here, it takes a few drinks to unite the crowd, finally rewarding the riders who score with applause and the two who almost die with loud cheers as they are carried off. After it's all over, and the winner is awarded his prize, everyone files out, returning to their cars amidst the hoots and hollers of drunken college students swept up in the urban cowboy frenzy of bull riding in downtown Albany. For a brief moment, one can almost see what it might have been like to leave the Coliseum after a great gladiator battle. Not exactly, but sort

Outkast's *Speakerboxxx*/*The Love Below*

By Tal Rosenberg



disc group release with each artist on individual discs. On paper, Andre's *The Love Below* would appear to be the better disc, since he possesses much of the musical talent and forward-looking philosophies.

Which is why Big Boi's *Speakerboxxx* is one of the most entertaining and enjoyable surprises to come out this year. Big Boi's rapping which was always great, is now one of the best in hip-hop. He can change his flow, rhythm and voice constantly, sometimes in the first thirty seconds of a song. Not only are his talents astounding, but his content is thoughtful and sincere. On "Unhappy," he raps: "Now what used to be a happy home done turned into some bad shit!/Graphic language, mild violence and the silence of the fams!/No members to remember, but I know just who I am/I've grown into a man and like my nigga said we executed the game plan."

Speakerboxxx's production is equally as imaginative as Big Boi's rhymes. Mostly produced by Big Boi with some other producers, *Speakerboxxx*'s beats always own some off-kilter arrangement, unusual instrument, or crazy effect that separates the song from any conventional hip-hop song. Check out the futuristic carnival ride through "Church," the spacey keyboards on "Reset," or the early-90's Andre-produced booty bass romp, "Ghettomusick," (the craziest song Outkast has ever done). *Speakerboxxx* looks back on hip-hop while looking forward at the same time. Big Boi invites Ludacris and Jay-Z to spit some of the best verses either of them have done on his album. I mean, Ludacris says: "Y'all drivin' Subarus, stuck in your cubicles while I'm stuck in the air with weed crumbs under my cuticles." That's fucking ridiculous! And that's what *Speakerboxxx* is like—the craziest party Miami has ever had, and Bamboo's daddy is the main attraction.

If *Speakerboxxx* is for bumping in the club, then *The Love Below* is for the bedroom. Andre's disc is a goofy, sexual romp through old Prince records and 60's

chart-toppers. Produced entirely by Andre himself, each song on *The Love Below* is completely different from the next, with elaborate productions, lavish arrangements, and ebullient, ridiculous lyrics. From the opening lounge-jazz of "Love Hater," to the pseudo-Sign O' the Times "Happy Valentine's Day," Andre is always pulling tricks out of the hat. For those of you who haven't heard "Hey Ya" yet, you're missing out on what is probably the best pop song of the year, with acoustic guitars that practically beg you to clap your hands. I'm still shaking like a Polaroid picture. Andre's *The Love Below* is the perfect complement to *Speakerboxxx*. Both albums combine to show the two separate directions Big Boi and Andre have decided to take, but combined as one package, both discs show the unified vision of Outkast, providing the listener with a better idea of what the group wants to do.

Is *Speakerboxxx* better than *The Love Below*? Is this the end of Outkast? I don't know the answer to these questions, but I do know that *Speakerboxxx*/*The Love Below* is one of the best albums that I've heard recently. I also know that the type of imagination, ambition, and risk that Outkast maintains on this double-disc creation is very much absent in popular music today, and that alone should be applauded.



In 1993, two young men named Andre Benjamin and Antwan Patton formed Outkast. They released *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* as two 18 year-old, southern, lightning-quick emcees rapping over slick, G-Funk production. Ten years later, Antwan Patton (Big Boi) is an even better rapper. He likes early 80's electro, southern booty bass, and golden age hip-hop. Andre Benjamin (Andre 3000) has given up rapping, and is playing instruments as if he were a one man Stevie Wonder/Prince collaboration.

What the shit is going on here? How did two young Georgia hustlers evolve into space-age musical gurus? By pushing their musical vision to the limit. Over the steady course of ten years, Outkast's four albums (prior to *Speakerboxxx*) have slowly evolved musically, lyrically and contextually. This evolution culminated in 2000's *Stankonia*; a record that defied what hip-hop could do by combining psychedelic, techno, Dirty Bass and funk. Outkast were already in the future with *Stankonia*, how would they possibly find anything that would beat that?

Andre said in a recent interview that he didn't feel like rapping anymore, that he wanted to be more musical. Hip Hop, to Andre, is currently too limited for him to push his vision forward. Over the three-year break between albums, Andre and Big Boi decided to pursue their separate musical ideas. They split up and decided to record their own albums. The twist is, they packaged these albums under the Outkast name, making a double-

Israel and Palestine

The dangers of exaggeration in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

by **Jesse Hochheiser**

There seems to be a contingent of outspoken students at Bard who harbor a degree of hostility towards Israel. This first became apparent to me at the budget forum, where I was surprised and dismayed by how adamantly people were angrily shouting about the 'fucking apartheid wall'. My primary concern is that people whose hearts are in the right place will jump on this issue with a skewed understanding of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. It is not my intention to give a historical overview of the conflict, but rather to encourage my fellow students to look at the issue with an open-minded spirit that is reflective of Bard and the learning experience in general.

I strongly believe the Palestinians have a right to their own state comprising the West Bank and Gaza Strip in their entirety. I also believe Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state without its citizens living in fear.

However, from 1948 to 1967, the only force preventing the Palestinians from having their own state was the surrounding Arab states.

The Arabs are the one's who were responsible for maintaining the status of Palestinians as refugees for almost 20 years. I believe the reasons for the Arab states' actions were twofold. First, the establishment of a Palestinian state would necessitate their acceptance of Israel's existence. Their refusal stems largely from anger caused by the idea of a non-Muslim power in the region. Second, Arab leaders found the sorry plight of the stateless Palestinians a useful distraction from their own repressive regimes. By emphasizing xenophobic tendencies, Israel could be used as an outlet for anger and frustration that Arab citizens might feel toward their own totalitarian government.

Every Arab country, where abuses of the citizenry are widespread, is run by a non-elected leader. Egypt has abolished prison floggings only since 2001, and abuse and torture of criminals and homosexuals is not uncommon. Our pal Saudi Arabia, whose oil helps run our country, uses torture and punishments that can include amputation, and, of course, is one of the most repressive countries in the world for women. Saudi Arabia has also executed at least 3 homosexuals in 2002 for their sexual orientation. While on the topic of homosexuality, it should be noted that gays often flee the Palestinian territories to Israel, and at least 3 have disappeared for insulting their family's 'honor'.

In the current conflict security is a prime consideration for Israel. To understand Israeli concerns about security, it might be useful to consider our own security situation. After September 11, security in America was drastically increased. The Patriot Act was passed under the guise of providing better protection for American citizens, even though many of its provisions are blatantly unconstitutional. Suspects, typically Arabs and Muslims, have been detained for extended periods without being charged or having access to legal counsel. A less serious, but more

widespread change in security measures has airline travelers now reporting hours early to the airport in preparation for the often humiliating screenings. For example, the 75 year-old United States Congressman John Dingell was forced to take off his pants at Reagan National Airport last year because of metal implants in his hip. In my hometown of Washington DC, security increases are even more noticeable. The entire atmos-

I strongly believe the Palestinians have a right to their own state comprising the West Bank and Gaza Strip in their entirety.

phere has changed from a city of open access to barricades around notable government buildings and metal detectors and x-ray machines in museums and many public buildings. All these measures and more have been taken after only one terrorist attack. Yet, in the last three years in Israel, there have been over 100 suicide attacks, as well as many armed attacks, and untold numbers of foiled attacks. There is no arguing that Israel faces a real and continuous threat from terrorism. Israel's security measures do not arise out of a vacuum. The checkpoints and restrictions placed on Palestinians have predominantly been put in place since the beginning of the second intifada in 2000. If Israel is to continue to allow Palestinians to enter and work in Israel, there is no viable alternative to time-consuming security checks.

The security fence is unfortunately a necessary measure. It was an idea originally proposed by Israel's left, but was then perverted by Sharon in its cutting into the West Bank. It is a non-violent means of keeping future terrorists out of Israel, and the concept's effectiveness is demonstrated by the fence around the Gaza Strip, where no suicide attackers have come from in the last 3 years. However, the ultimate responsibility for terrorism lies on the Palestinians themselves. It is their continued support for attacks on civilians - including children - that allows groups like Hamas to function so well. The Palestinians must show the world that they are not a morally bankrupt society. However, I believe that Israel should take

action on its own and relocate the settlers into Israel proper, and pull back to the Green Line, along which the security fence could be built.

In analyzing the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, it is important to not simplify the complex issues into black and white, nor to rely on hyperbole to evoke an emotional response. The idea of calling a protective fence an 'apartheid wall' is ludicrous and is part of the ongoing campaign to demonize Israel. Throwing words around with such serious implications diminishes the significance of what these words represent. South African apartheid was a unique and terrible thing. People should be wary of falling into these psychological sand traps that rob terms of their meaning. This disingenuous attempt to make the conflict seem like a racial issue is especially ridiculous because Israel is far more ethnically and racially diverse than any Arab state. Israel has sizeable populations of Arabs, Druze, Christians, and Jews who hail from places as disparate as Argentina, Ethiopia and Iraq. The most recent terrorist attack as of this writing clearly notes the hate involved in terrorist attacks. On October 4, a suicide bomber struck a restaurant in Haifa, killing 19 people, six of them Israeli Arabs. The restaurant was jointly owned by Jews and Arabs, making it a prime target for Islamic Jihad, which, like Hamas, opposes co-existence between Jews and Arabs. This is not an act of despair, or frustration, but of political cynicism and intolerance.

One question that should be asked is why is this conflict focused on so much? Why have Americans forgotten the fragile Afghanistan, and that we are stuck in a quagmire in Iraq, where American soldiers die every week? Why was so little attention paid to Sierra Leone, where horrific violence has killed nearly one million people in the past few years? What about the continuing brutal Russian

crackdown in Chechnya where massacres, rape, and disappearances were used as tactics of war? Do none of these issues count in the world?

If, like myself, you have a strong interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, at least support a group that promotes a just and peaceful settlement. It is easy to fall prey to

groups spouting rhetoric and inflammatory slogans, but these organizations only increase divisiveness. I would urge people who are truly concerned to look at such websites as peacenow.org, and for Jewish students to sign the call at btwshalom.org, which supports repatriation for the settlers into Israel proper. Our support should be for those whose goal is promoting peaceful co-existence rather than irrational vilification and hostile exaggerations. Both sides have legitimate grievances; neither is without blame, both are deserving of a better future.

...in the last three years in Israel, there have been over 100 suicide attacks...

the drab report

by Tom Mattos

I wish this installment of the Drab Report could be more interesting and thought provoking, but I have a cold in my head, and it's difficult to concentrate on "the struggle." When there is snot dripping from my nose like a leaking faucet, and sneezes continually bomb my head every two minutes, I start turning crazy. For example, while I was thinking about what to write, I decided that if my snot was combustible, I could become rich, as there would be a ready domestic supply of natural fuel. Then I could be president.

Nonetheless, I do have an interesting anecdote for this issue. Dear reader, if you haven't yet read Laura Bomyea's article about the raccoon, please do. I assume that this little column gets read last (if ever) out of everything in this paper, and that for most, it is read while sitting on the toilet. I'm okay with that. At least I have a sure context.

The other night, after I wandered home drunkenly at about two a.m., I sat down to watch my nightly installment of "The Good the Bad, and the Ugly." I soon noticed a flit-fluttery flap flapping above my head, running the length of my room. I stared at this small creature and tried to discern what it was. After deciding that it was too big to be a moth or other insect, and too fucked up to be a bird, I decided that it was a bat. I decided to fight the bat. I chased the bat with a microphone stand. The bat was winning. He dive-bombed my head a few times. Then I called security.

Security showed up in a timely fashion. Trooper Rob Ploss came armed with both a tennis racket (a goddamn TENNIS racket!) and a sidekick. Rob quickly assumed charge of the situation.

Before I relate the conclusion of the incident, I must interject. The bat, who I have now named "Raskolnikov," has been the subject of much ado and debate, so much that I feel slighted by the community's apparent lack of concern over my personal well being. It is quite obvious what Rob intended to do to the bat, considering that he brought a TENNIS RACKET which he uses FOR KILLING BATS. Most of the first reactions have been "why did the bat have to die?" or "Couldn't you have caught it in a receptacle?" The answer: NO. Bats are flying mammals (contemplate: flying mammals), and those gothic drooling bastards carry RABIES. And I wanted to sleep. So I didn't have any problems with a dead bat. And I won't in the future.

Rob stood poised in the middle of my room, watched Raskolnikov fly past his head once, twice, thrice and then smote it with a perfect forehead that would put Anna Kournakova to shame. Raskolnikov's body catapulted out of the room, and came to rest in the middle of the kitchen floor. The only way it could have been more impressive is if Rob curled his lips, muttered "back to the hell that spawned you..." and took a bite out of the dead, hairy body.

The point is, folks, security is bad ass. They respond well to any situation, and have a knack for improvisation. For this they should be saluted. The Observer has been closely monitoring bat related calls in hopes that the ridiculous scene could be witnessed again and recorded for all to see. Just before our deadline we got what we needed...

A worthy informant called me in the office on Tuesday, October 7. "If you wanna see Gilbert nab a bat head to Shelov 302." I ran full speed to the scene, and, to my surprise, I arrived before security did. The OBSERVER has better response time than security... hmm... interesting. Anyhow, Gil was not armed with a tennis racket. He was not armed at all. In this situation apparently they called service master too, and the two formed a coalition against the bats. I was snap snap snapping with the digital camera, and they were looking for the bat. Much to my disappointment, Gilbert announced "It's just scraps, no bats."

At first I thought of asking him what "scraps" were. But then I realized that I didn't want to know. You should go home and check your room for scraps.

Raskolnikov's brother is after me, and he will stop at nothing.

Kill... the..... bats.

The opinions and ideas expressed in the *Observer* do not necessarily reflect the views of the *Observer* staff. Each writer is a member of the Bard Community who publishes his/her views at his/her own discretion. If you would like to express your opinion in the *Observer*, send it via email to observer@bard.edu, by campus mail to *Observer*, or drop it off at the office in the basement of Tewksbury.

Bard College Rising up the Ranks

Bard's rankings rise, but is this a true reflection of the school?

By Jacqueline Moss

The seniors are always bemoaning the loss of Old Bard, repeating phrases like: "when I was a freshman...", "the administration never did that...", and "it builds character"-no, that last one is something my dad always says, although living in a construction zone, having to tackle people to register for class, and living in dorms which only sometimes have heat and hot water is bound to build something; maybe character, maybe anger. But, despite all the senior's cries of the corruption of the spirit of the school, and the admission of more "mainstream" kids-whatever that is-is definitely improving Bard's rankings and prestige.

At least according to the numbers.

The numbers, that is, the college rankings and the propaganda disseminated to those anxious, over-trained trick poodles masquerading as over-scheduled high-strung high school seniors desperately trying to get into the best and most prestigious colleges and universities (breath) ranks the hippest, most selective colleges and universities, and lends cruel hope to under-qualified students.

Recently, out of curiosity, I went the Princeton Review website*, and looked up Bard's stats. I was extremely amused to see that Bard was given a 95 for selectivity (which I assume is very selective), that 70% of freshman graduate in 6 years (thank you, super seniors), and surprised to find that Bard awards doctoral degrees (is that what they do in Blythwood?). But the two most amusing things I discovered about my own beloved and hated school, were what the so-called students had to say about the student body, campus life, and academics, and the rankings. According to students, the student body at Bard is composed of kids who "didn't really fit in during high school" (surprise) but feel at home with the "leftist white woman who goes to the Green Party rallies weekly" and the "friendly white guys with dreadlocks...whose joys include learning, music, and getting stoned with close friends." (I'm shocked). The

student speak on the academics made me spill my safely-bottled water in mirth. Of course, students said some very nice and even some true things about the academics here (that's what made me decide to come to Bard), but...we'll you see in the quote: "students here love the school's 'general looseness, which makes it easy to do things—start a club, get a tutorial, make your own major, whatever.' Recounts one student, 'I wanted to transfer

at other colleges, there still remains that fact that the administration is pretty ineffective and doesn't communicate well with the students. Though whoever said that registration is a nightmare is right on there. Come registration, you have NO friends.

The Campus life description is even better: "Because Bard is located 'an hour from the nearest town that has more than 100 residents,' the school 'tries to be its own entertainment.' "Try" is the right word. Whether Bard succeeds at being its own entertainment...well, I'll leave that up to you guys.

Ok, now that I've had my rant, I do love Bard. If I didn't, I wouldn't be here. Yeah, I bitch and moan just like everyone else, but its only because I love Bard so much, I want it to improve and learn and grow...well, hopefully improve. The thing is, Bard, by becoming more selective, upping tuition, and shifting the kind of student they recruit, is participating in a vicious and vigorous campaign to make more money and gain prestige. Colleges are business, and even though Bard's slogan is "A Place to Think", remember, it's a slogan, and slogans are used to advertise.

Bard is now #30 in the U.S. New's and World Report's America's Best Colleges (Bachelor's), and is climbing further and further up that glided ladder every year. Yes, Old Bard, whatever that is, is disappearing, and it always will, because the college is constantly changing. I don't resent the disappearance of Old Bard, but I do resent the school for pretending not to be a business (when it is), not communicating with the students, and not informing the students about what's going on with the college. I want the college to stop pretending to be something its not, and to be honest with the students, who are, after all, the lifeblood of this institution.

*all quotes are from the Princeton Review Website: <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/research/profiles/generalinfo.asp?listing=1024046<ID>

I want the college to stop pretending to be something its not, and to be honest with the students, who are, after all, the lifeblood of this institution.

credits so I walked into the registrar's office and was out in five minutes. I wanted a Hebrew tutorial, I found the professor in his office, and he arranged it. . . . Every time I've needed anything, people have graciously given me their time and their advice, minus formality and bureaucracy.' According to students, the only exception to the rule is course registration, which is a nightmare. Professors sit in their offices, and it's first come, first served. Registration opens at noon. People camp out outside the offices up to six hours ahead of time. It's like a Star Wars premiere." Um, can I ask a question? Who is this kid? Obviously, this student, who says its so easy to do anything here, hasn't been to the war zone that is budget forum, or hasn't tried to wade through the red tape one has to go through to make your own major, and definitely hasn't tried to get anything done in a timely fashion. Granted, I think there is a lot less red tape here than there would be



Dear Ms. Lonelyhearts,

My boyfriend used another girl's name in bed. Does he always have this bitch on her mind or was this just another one of the effects of a Budweiser?

- Liza Minelli

Dear Liza Minelli,

Some say that alcohol brings out the subconscious, whether you believe that or not isn't up to me. This boy of yours has obviously got some claustrophobic issues being with one chick and needs to feel free to express his passion for some T&A, you shouldn't get so hot and bothered about his fervor of the female form. You know he fancies you if he stays with you, and if he didn't after that night of vocal verity, well you might take what some say more literally than before.

- Ms. Lonelyhearts

Dear Ms. Lonelyhearts,

I wanna kick it to this stone fox that I see everyday in Kline smoking nonsmoking-what's a good pick up line?

-Henry Gwazda

Dear Henry Gwazda

Wanna be in my moderation project?

-Ms. Lonelyhearts

Dear Ms. Lonelyhearts,

I banged my neighbor this weekend and now he won't talk to me. What's up with that?

-Sara Tremb

Dear Sara Tremb,

This is a very frequent occurrence among college students, often times it is due to the fact that boys get nervous around very sexually flirtatious girls and they don't know how to react under the circumstances and simply evade them. It could be in-part due to the lack of interest the boy has toward you and he doesn't want to address. Or it could be because your inadequate in bed, this latter possibility seeming to outweigh the others, yet a combination of all three is not to be ruled out.

Ask Ms. Lonelyhearts: Observer@bard.edu

the Guy@KLINE

Q: If you were the Governor, what would your first move be?



Clear the air over Los Angeles.



Find John Connor.



Terminate the Jews. (say what?)



Flex



Do the robot.



Crush your enemies, watch bow before you and hear the lament of the women.

Maximum Security Bard

All thats missing is the bars, not wait, we have those too...

By Silence NoGood

Have you ever realized that this place is JUST like high school, except you couldn't for the life of you figure out who's the most popular kid. We have these little groups of friends who only talk and sit together, and sit and gawk at the other groups. If you haven't realized it, we're not very nice people, but I wouldn't expect to find nice people in a prison. Do you know that you pay 40,000 a year to go to prison? Sure, you might say, "Silence NoGood, you piece of shit...you're so bitter and resentful at Bard because you aren't getting laid and no one wants to talk to you!" And maybe that's so...but Bard's pretty prison like if you ask me. I mean, take for example the cell like quality of Robbins. Didn't they hold crazy people there back in the day? And they still hold crazy people there. They line you guys up in that cattle call to receive your prison food and let me just tell you that dating at Bard is exactly like dating in prison...it just makes you feel violated. The lights flicker, the place is extremely unkempt because of lack of help, the internet (if you can call it internet) is a disaster of loose wire. Now I want you to remember when you were a freshman: you were all smiles, trying to meet new people, experimenting with everything, trying to get your hand in everything you could think of...you were happy and drunk. And then sophomore year hit and you were just drunk. Bard had stolen your soul! That's what living in prison does to you; it skews your sense of reality. Bard isn't the real world...and if you think it is, then may something have mercy on your Bard owned soul!

So you hypocritical jerks, take my advice: go off campus for a weekend, go somewhere you wouldn't think to go. Go to a frat party! Get with some drunken chick that doesn't talk about saving the whales and actually shaves her legs. Don't be yourself for a little while and Bard's charms will have no affect on you and you'll get out of here alive.

But is it Art?

What is art? Are we art? Is art, art? Art?

By Alissa Bernard

I've been wandering around Bard lately, trying to decide what art is. So far, I've only concluded that art is probably anything. Everything, even. If it causes a reaction, it's art. I look at some of the pieces in the Center for Curatorial Studies and I am reminded of the artist who put his own shit in a jar and sold it for a ridiculous price to some rich idiot. What a statement to make. I wonder if the guy who owns it understands that he's a part of that statement. Maybe that's the point.

But is it art?

What pisses me off the most is the fact that this aimless statement-making, this worship of the difference-for-difference's-sake has become such an important part of the Bard identity. I hear people describe a dance major's choreography as "so Bard" and I want to vomit. (Especially since that means it's laughable at best.)

I look and I look, and "pornographic" is the only word that comes to mind. "Pointless". That's the point.

I feel used.

Now I wonder why my work isn't in a museum. Of course I have no work, but judging from what I see around me I could put together a solid portfolio in under ten minutes. Better yet, I'll do a performance piece. I'll put myself under glass; I'll sit naked in the dreaded Center for Curatorial Studies and watch the art. People will watch me watch. Pointlessness. That's my point. It's never art. That's the art of it.

from the mind of a madman

by Laurence Laufer ESO.



Elephant Scuba.



LELO3

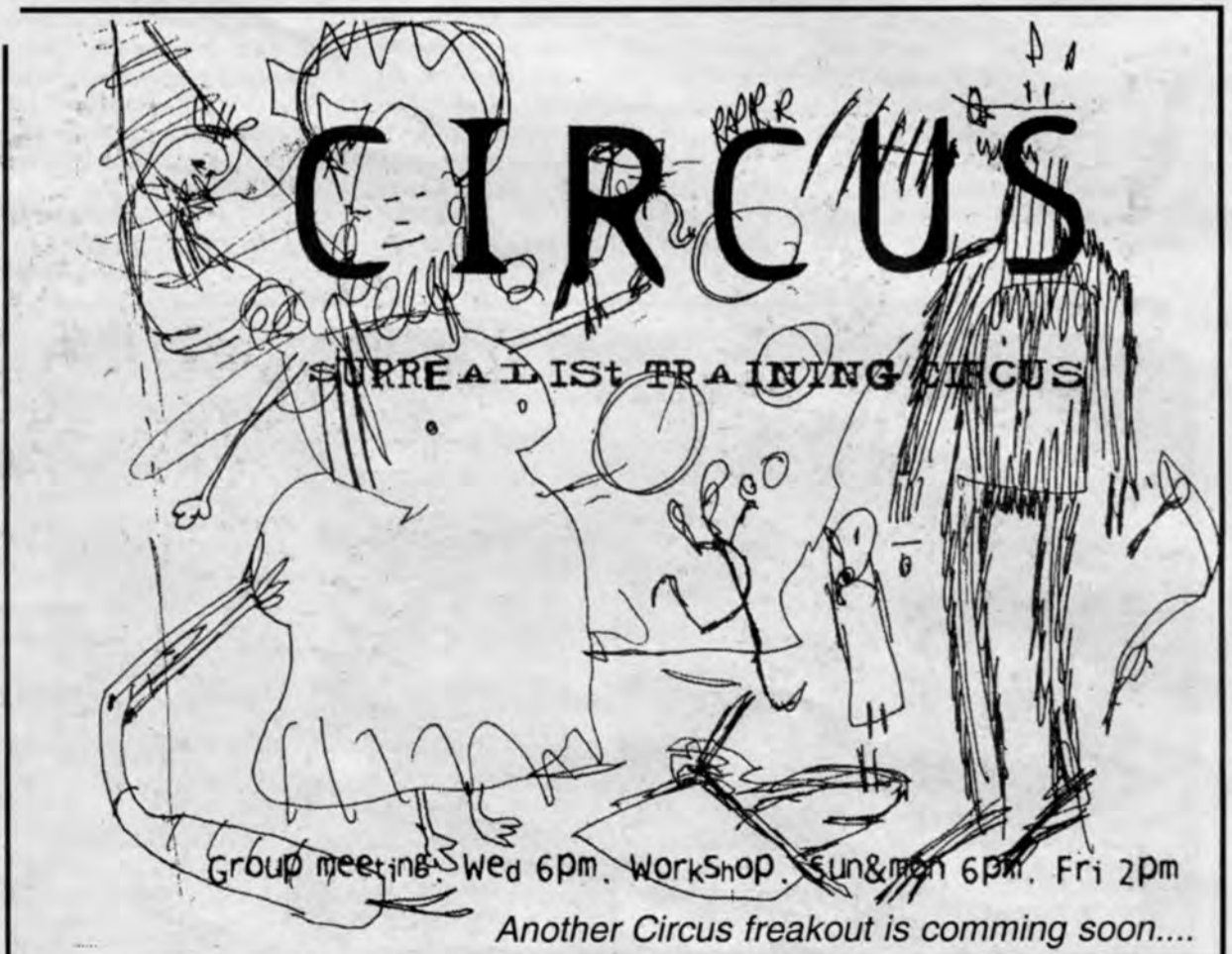


This Winter: Giraffe-neck sweaters instead of turtle-necks



Bad Snakes on X-mas.

LELO3



Group meeting: Wed 6pm. Workshop: Sun&Mon 6pm. Fri 2pm

Another Circus freakout is coming soon....

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H O R O S C O P E S

by **Madame Babarosky-Smith**

Libra: September 22-October 22

Travel much? Your geographical mileage is so vast and comprehensive it's hard to imagine that there's much of anything left for you to see. Two words for you my friend, two words: Stay Local. This is a month for you to stop exploring every other region of the world and start paying attention to your immediate surroundings. This includes people you've shirked and roads you've always assumed lead nowhere worth going. Sure, you've seen the pyramids (or other such thing), but have you really paid attention to what's right in front of you? Try it, it will be good.

Scorpio: October 23-November 21

Did you ever feel like it would be easier without a body? I don't even know why I'm asking that question, I'm an astrologer, I KNOW you have. Well unfortunately, there will be no change in your physicality this month, you'll still be encased in flesh, but with the upcoming eclipse, be aware that if you exude and vocalize your true self (ie your brain thoughts) you'll be heard in ways that your body never can be.

Sagittarius: November 22-December 21

Well, hmmm. Simplicity sometimes confuses you more than complexity. You tend to question things that come too easy or question how things become easy in such a way that it's virtually impossible for anything to come naturally to you. Though being aware of circumstance and reality is generally a good thing, this time you may be taking it too far and in the process fucking it all up. This new project, location, relationship, color scheme or what have you is inherently good...perhaps not the answer to your life's biggest questions, but regardless, it is worth exploring. Stop the play by play inner commentary and just sit back for a minute (or a week) and bathe in the actuality of events!

Capricorn: December 22-January 19

The one thing you've wanted for months and months is within your reach, or within your ability to get over. Take these dreary days ahead to either grab or let go. Either way it will be worth your while. For no matter how exactly it plays out, you will be happy by the end of this month because of what you do with these coming days.

Aquarius: January 20-February 17

Be a social butterfly this month. If you have a functioning kitchen, start throwing dinner parties, people will come. Not only will they come, they'll compliment your cooking as well as conversation. No kitchen? Well start asking people if they'd like to go out to eat-wherever your wallet will allow. You will have a good time, I swear it. Getting invitations to do things you'd usually refuse? Well now is the time to broaden your concept of activities you're willing to partake in. Smile at those kids you've meant to, they may not smile back, but they will notice your effort and might perhaps reciprocate in the weeks to come!

Pisces: February 18-March 19

Swim with the fishes, go go go and swim with the fishes. When the opportunity to go into the water is given to you, take it! Magical things will happen within the H2O for you.

Drink plenty of it while imbibing alcohol and pay attention. If asked to take a bath, take it, if tempted to ask for someone's company in the shower, ask!-just don't be creepy about it.

Aries: March 20-April 19

Keep looking behind you this month. Of course, I mean figuratively, not literally. There is no stalker type in your future, but there is a meaningful bout of nostalgia and introspection in your immediate cosmic vicinity. Think back as far as you can, remember then try to surpass that memory and go deep, deep down inside your sensual remembrances. There will be emotional dredging and organizing, but you will emerge as if from a long long and peaceful sleep...sand in your eyes but a smile on your face.

Taurus: April 20-May 19

Watch every movie you ever meant to watch, you will find inner cosmic messages that directly relate to your current life's situation. Pay attention to the bit characters as well as the stars, importance is not always correlated properly to pay check or screen time.

Gemini: May 20-June 20

Feeling a bit stagnant are we? I see a major upheaval in some part of your life, watch out for its effects. I suggest you make your living space as comfortable, safe and cozy as possible, for you're going to want to hide/hibernate there for the next few weeks. When you do go out, make it meaningful. No wandering, no flitting from one location to another. This is a time for deliberate actions and careful ponderances, you will be fine as long as you remember this.

Cancer: June 21- July 21

This is the month for you to get a pet. From a goldfish to an elephant, whatever you choose will be with you for many a year to come and they may end up loving you more than your parents do.

Leo: July 22-August 22

Lion's feelin' a bit weak these days huh? Your confidence is at a rather low point. This is, in part, due to the change of seasons and your lack of true productivity. You may feel as if you're constantly doing things-but re-evaluate whether these are the things you really want to be doing. To advise you to prioritize is not really what I mean to do, as much as simply point out to you that your energies are being diverted by tasks and expectations which have little to do with what you're really good at.

Virgo: August 23-September 21

Not to delve too deep into your personal life or anything, but this month is a very biologically and intellectually fertile time for you. Make sure to wear or have him wear a condom, unless you're interested and ready for the baby that will surely follow. In terms of intellect, this is the perfect span of time to start really reading those books you've been skimming for the last four months. The language and information will seem much more stimulating and will lead you to bigger and better thought processes and projects.

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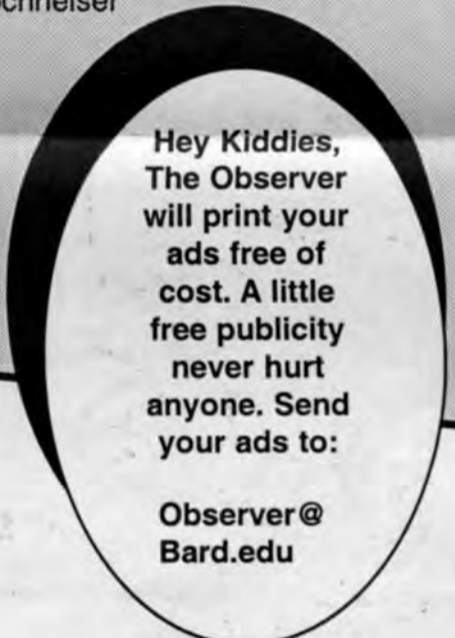
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