

the

BARD

Observer

BARD COLLEGE / SINCE 1934 / Wednesday December the 13, 2006

Bard to Participate in RecycleMania

By Katy Kelleher

For the first time ever, Bard is participating in RecycleMania, a nation-wide recycling competition. RecycleMania is a friendly competition among colleges and universities in multiple categories, including: the largest amount of recyclables per capita, the largest amount of total recyclables, the least amount of trash per capita, and the highest recycling rate. In the 10-week period between January 28 and April 7th, Bard will be competing against schools like Harvard, Yale, Tulane, etc. in efforts to promote recycling and other environmentally friendly practices on campus.

Although Bard is generally a pretty environmentally conscious school, the percentage of our total waste recycled is embarrassingly low. Multiple programs have been introduced to help deal with this, including appointing a BERP (Bard Environmental Resource Person) to every dorm; however, we continue to generate excessive amounts of waste. RecycleMania is designed specifically to increase student awareness of sustainable living—both through recycling and through other small changes, like using the shuttle instead of driving and buying locally grown food.

Bard's official goal is to raise our percentage of recycled materials to 19% of our total waste. Considering that winning universities have a recycling rate of 30% or more, this is certainly a modest goal. However, even if Bard doesn't win RecycleMania, in participating we will gain a better understanding of where we are generating the most waste and how to change the habits

of students and staff. Most of the trash on campus comes from residence halls and dining halls, so students clearly have a lot of control over what goes in the trash and what is recycled. RecycleMania needs the help of faculty and staff, but it is up to us (the students!) to make the biggest changes in what we throw away.

So, a quick lesson on recycling: Blue bins are for the fREeUSE store, Red is for news paper, Yellow is for all other paper, Green is for plastic and glass containers and Black is for garbage. Also, we are competing in the food waste competition, so only take what you can eat and make sure you leave all your leftovers on the tray to be weighed and composted. If your dorm is missing a bin, put in a service request for a new one.

Multiple contests and gift-certificate giveaways from local businesses are helping to promote RecycleMania on campus. BERPs and RecycleMania coordinators (Thomas Demasi and I) will be giving away prizes to students caught green-handed in the act of recycling. We have already started several contests to promote RecycleMania, and new ones will be announced from now up until April 7th, when RecycleMania ends. Our sponsors include: The Hook Deli, Max's Memphis BBQ, Taste Budds, Village Pizza and many, many more. So keep an eye out for contests on campus, and you could win a free meal.

RecycleMania is going to need the help of all students and faculty to be a success, so if you see someone who is not recycling, let them know how important it is to think green. RecycleMania is one of the few inter-collegiate competitions we have any chance at winning, so let's go Bard, Recycle On!

Push for More Science and Math Majors Continues

By Grace Dwyer

The Gabrielle H. Reem and Herbert J. Kayden Center for Science and Computation is the latest in a series of efforts to support—and promote—Bard's commitment to the sciences. Featuring nearly 10,000 square feet of laboratory space and an area of 42,000 square feet total, the new building will house innovatively designed classrooms for biology, computer science, and math.

New facilities are only one part of the Science Initiative at Bard. The result of a 1999 panel of prestigious external professors and scientists, the Initiative was designed to update the division of Science, Mathematics, and Computing, and attract more science majors in the process. And indeed, through changes such as increases in faculty, a modified curriculum, and satellite programs with institutions like the Rockefeller University, it seems to be succeeding. Though only 13 percent of this year's incoming class reported an intended major in natural sciences and mathematics (compared to 25 percent in literature and languages, 22 percent in social studies, and 21 percent in the arts), this number continues to increase every year.

"Ultimately you want to have a graduation class each year to be balanced, so you have a quarter of the kids graduating in each division," explained Janet Stetson, Associate Director of Admission. Although intended majors were once for the most part equally distributed over the four divisions, Bard's growing reputation as a bastion of the arts and humanities in the 1960s led to a distorted applicant pool. Efforts such as the establishment of the lucrative Distinguished Scientist Scholarship (every year between ten and twenty committed math and science majors receive this full-tuition, four-year scholarship) sparked a rise in science-minded applicants, but this number had reached a plateau in the late 90s until the first mentions of the Science Initiative. "The word now on the street is that Bard is a good place to study math and science," said Stetson. "With this building, people will also now be able to come on the campus and see that we really put our money where our mouth is."

In addition to increasing Bard's desirability for science and math majors, the Science Initiative is designed to

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B&G Contract Negotiations Stall

by Hannah Sheehan

In Tuesday, December 5, members of the administration involved with negotiating the new contract for B&G employees put their final offer on the table. On Monday, December 11, the union voted it down.

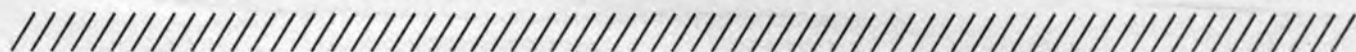
According to one union officer, who asked that his name be withheld from the record so as not to further complicate ongoing negotiations, members found the proposed pay increase and healthcare benefits disappointing but satisfactory; it was the college's refusal to budge on the issue of retirement that had them voting 'no.' Currently, Bard contributes to the retirement funds of its employees one percent of their income for every year they have worked at the college. First year employees receive one percent, second year employees receive two percent, and so on, until the tenth year of employment, where the percentage

no longer increases, but plateaus. What the union proposed be included in the new contract was a starting percentage contribution of ten, which would increase to 12 by year two. As of the latest contract proposal, the administration has refused to alter the system.

Over the last five years, the administration's budget has increased by 54 percent. Yet, since 2001, B&G's budget has only gone up by two percent. In light of the disparity in the direction of funds and resources along with the massive recent additions to the campus in the form of ambitious building projects, starting wages ranging from \$10.82 to \$11.32 per hour in a county where it takes \$15.17 to survive, and an expired contract, negotiations for a new one have become increasingly problematic.

As of now, it is unclear what will happen next. Union members say that talks will most likely resume over intercession.

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Report Finds

Ideology Undermining President's AIDS Relief Program

A Speak-Out on World AIDS Day

By Michael Brown

A November report from the Center for Public Integrity details how the \$15 billion dollars pledged to fight AIDS by the Bush Administration has been largely ineffective in solving the AIDS crisis, due in large part to the prerequisite for faith-based abstinence only education. Following Bush's request at the 2003 State of the Union Address, Congress created the "President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief-PEPFAR-, a program similar in substance to the agenda for reproductive health education implemented domestically in the last decade.

It appears as though some organizations with little experience in HIV care are receiving large sums of money based on their ideological ties and it remains unclear whether this money is being effectively spent. The report cites organizations such as Food for the Hungry and the Orthodox Christian Charities as groups that started stand-alone HIV programs only after the distribution of PEPFAR funds began.

According to the report, some of the most problematic policies stem directly from PEPFAR's policy of "Abstinence/Be Faithful education." Often children are not taught of condoms

in a school environment, even though they are already sexually active. Condoms can only be distributed to "at-risk" teens outside of public schools. In countries like Uganda, one of the 15 "focus countries" specially selected to receive the majority of money from PEPFAR, the rate of new HIV infections has nearly doubled since 2003, when the emphasis on youth abstinence began.

Another inflexibility in the program is in regards to sex workers, who are often one of the most at-risk populations, especially in underdeveloped countries where sex tourism is more prevalent. The program requires that any country that wishes to receive aid must sign an "anti-prostitution loyalty oath," a declaration that they oppose prostitution. Under such conditions, there can be no regulation of the sex worker industry, a complete denial of one of the more important aspects of the spread of HIV. The report from the Center of Public Integrity came to the conclusion that, "PEPFAR has proved at times to be too simplistic and narrow to deal with the complexities of the epidemic" further adding, "ideology has at times trumped science in the Bush administration's rules, regulations and support of the organizations that have received taxpayer money."

On Dec. 1, World Aids Day, I had the chance to sit down at the day's speak out with various students who had been involved in AIDS education projects in the local area and internationally. The discussion ranged on a variety of topics, from experiences working with affected populations to the

current politics of the PEPFAR program to the development of new methodologies to be introduced in the near future with the intention of stopping the spread of the virus.

Bard students Nick Shapiro and Mariah Ernst talked about their experiences working with teens last year in Indonesia on the island of Bali, helping former heroin addicts affected by AIDS develop a curriculum for teaching secondary school students about reproductive education and healthy living. They explained the challenges of starting discussions about AIDS in a culture where talking about sex is often considered taboo. Ernst insisted that their relationship with the culture was "very complex," and that considering that they were coming in and organizing a curriculum for people who had been working on the issue for some time before, they had consistently ask themselves, "What right do we have to be here and how can we do things as appropriately as possible?"

Nick Risko, another Bard student, detailed how the issue of a simple condom demonstration became a very political issue in his experience working this past summer in Tanzania, a PEPFAR focus country. He detailed how public schools would not allow the demonstrations at all, and for private schools it was up to the individual headmasters. "The idea was that this would encourage them to have sex, but if you ask any of these same teachers and headmasters, which we did, at what age people start having sex. They would tell us that most of these kids are sexually active at 11 and 12." They were also strictly prohibited

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EXPERIMENTAL GEOGRAPHER SPEAKS TO STUDENTS

BY FRANK BRANCELY

Trevor Paglen, artist, geographer, author of the two-volume study "Secret Bases, Secret Wars," and of the more recent "Torture Taxi," is widely considered an expert on covert military affairs. Paglen presented a lecture in Olin to a crowded audience of students called "On the Trail of the CIA's Rendition Flights," and was described by Tom Keenan (Professor and Director of Human Rights) as being active in a relatively new field of human rights "detective work." Paglen explained the nature of his latest work with co-author A.C. Thompson, the winner of a 2005 George Polk Award and staff writer of the San Francisco Weekly.

Thompson, with his considerable expertise in engineering and aviation, was crucial in assisting Paglen by collecting data on various planes. He was in the process of developing software capable of listening to and identifying the engines of numerous types of aircraft at a base in Mercury, Nevada when, as Paglen stated, "something caught his eye." Startled by what would seem a subtle detail to the untrained eye, Thompson discovered four planes, all different from the majority coming and leaving the airfield, and each with a very curious history.

Amassing data on these aircraft, it was only a matter of time until Paglen and Thompson struck gold. These out-of-place commercial planes shared flight routes to one horrifying destination, a site largely unknown to the American public until recently: Guantanamo Bay. These flights, Paglen noted, constituted the beginning of what has become the increasingly controversial American "War on Terror."

Paglen analyzed media attention in the public and private sphere, examining the invention of titles such as "unlawful enemy combatants," and probing questions like how to create a class of people whose status is ambiguous. Paglen and Thompson combined their collective faculties at a time when



Limit-telephotography involves photographing landscapes that cannot be seen with the unaided eye. The technique employs high powered telescopes with focal lengths ranging between 1300mm and 7000mm.



A limit-telephotograph of a secret military base.

"we noticed people were being found missing from all around the world." Observed Paglen, "airplanes became important... the CIA is NOT a military agency but a domestic organization that doesn't have to follow the same rules." With civilian aircrafts, the CIA was allowed to fly supposed suspects of terrorist activities to bizarre territory.

Paglen's presentation was exceptionally detailed and included vivid accounts of the paper trail, the equally thorough investigation of the "ghosts" who authorized these flights, and an introduction to some of the men flown to these secret detention centers which, added Paglen, are not limited to Guantanamo but exist all throughout Europe and even the Middle East. Paglen concluded that covert action which "by definition is illegal" has "grown to be unprecedented," noting that "people are continuing to disappear," that diverse people are involved in this matter with the result being an "informal economy of violence." His presentation provided a disturbing insight into the secret world of shady politics, a realm rarely encountered by the average American.

New Human Rights Exchange Program

AT SOUTH AFRICA'S UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSTRAND

By Jason Mastbaum

The International Human Rights Exchange (IHRE), starting in July 2007, will be offering a semester-long program on the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) campus in Johannesburg, South Africa. The university's main campus is in the Milner Park section of the city.

Students who participate in the program will take four courses. First off, there is the core course titled Human Rights: Perspectives from the Disciplines. This course will be broken into various two-week segments, with each segment being taught from a different disciplinary background. Two additional courses are elective seminars picked out of three available seminars. Finally, there is a semester-long practicum (internship).

The internship will be taken with an NGO or other organization in the Johannesburg area that deals with human rights. Possible internship opportunities include the Red Cross, the Foundation for Human Rights, and the Zimbabwe Election Support Network. For students not wishing to take an internship, there is an option to replace it with a normal Witwatersrand course.

The Bard-Wits program is looking to draw about a 50-50 split of students from African universities and North American undergraduate students, and indeed, as Emilie Dickinson, coordinator of the program at Bard, has said, there will be 22 Wits students and 22 North American students at the program in Summer '07. The program wants to foster dialogue between students from very different backgrounds. To this extent, housing will be in dormitories mostly filled with Bard-Wits program attendees. Most students will be sophomores or juniors, but for seniors graduating at the end of the year, the program will consider applications from recent graduates. Additionally, there were over 1,500 international students—about as many students as there are at Bard—from over 90 countries registered at the school in 2005. The Bard-Wits program is an opportunity to get a truly diverse, multi-cultural experience.

An obvious concern about going abroad—and not just to Johannesburg—is keeping safe in your temporary home. Access to the campus is restricted, and no one is allowed on campus if they have not been pre-approved to

go to a certain location. Normal precautions about carrying cash and other valuables should be observed when in Johannesburg. Also, at night security will escort students so they don't have to walk alone in the dark, and the campus is packed with emergency phones.

The Bard-Witwatersrand looks to be a very rewarding experience. The program's site seeks, "Students with a commitment to social justice and/or a history of academic or personal involvement with human rights issues are particularly encouraged to consider IHRE...we [also] encourage students of all backgrounds to apply—no previous study of human rights is required."

Finally, a brief word about applications is in order. The program works on the basis of rolling admissions, so the sooner your application gets in prior to the March 1st deadline, the better, especially considering that there are only 22 spots available for the entirety of North America. Dickinson suggests that candidates apply as early as January. The program will work with you to transfer as many of your financial aid packages as possible.

And there is good news to be had for those not interested in the IHRE program—Bard students can directly enroll at Wits as a PIE student. In fact, several Bard seniors were at Wits in Spring '06 via this opportunity to directly enroll there. Go to <http://www.ihre.org/home/> for more information. Emilie Dickinson has offered her contact information for anyone interested in studying at Witwatersrand. Her e-mail address is dickson@bard.edu and her campus extension is x7076.

BSO PLANS CONFERENCE FOR SPRING SEMESTER

By Meghan Black

Black in the 21st Century: Defining and Re-Defining Blackness, Free Speech, and Race in the Classroom was a conference organized by the Black Students' Organization which was slated to take place over winter intersession from January 19th to the 21st. They had planned to bring in several high caliber speakers including Ewure Osayande, M1 of Dead Prez, and hopefully Ruth J. Simmons President of Brown University, Kwame Appiah, and A.J. Mayer who would confront the issues of "identifying as a Black person in today's society."

With this conference, BSO hoped to open up discussion with the Black student body on campus as well as in the greater Hudson community including those of other ethnic backgrounds as well. "We plan to discuss the current climate that exists on many of our college campuses and current events that affect us as students of color," say BSO in their project proposal. Gerald Pambo-Awich, one of the co-heads of BSO, feels that it is "important to look at the different arguments for what being black is such as what it means when a Black student is told they are 'acting white.'"

BSO's greater mission is to foster an environment where students both of color and non-color feel able "to engage in issues relevant to the black community," said Linda Tigani, the other co-head of BSO. "Race is such a delicate issue," said Pambo-Awich, "that often students are hesitant to approach the topic." This conference would significantly help to solidify their mission and open up a dialogue about the Black students' role in the classroom regarding "course work, career choices, and their overall growth," said Tigani. In addition to this, the conference would strengthen ties between Bard students of color and organizations in the surrounding area as well as among students, faculty, and the administration on campus.

"The Student Planning Committee has been trying to encourage more educational events in addition to entertainment-based venues and BSO's conference is very much in harmony with these wishes. The Planning Committee was overjoyed that BSO wanted to do a conference," said Karen Soskin, chair of the Student Planning Committee. "In the past BSO has planned some very successful hip-hop events and film screenings, but this conference will add a whole new dimension to their

contribution to the Bard College community," Soskin added.

However there are questions as to where BSO will get the appropriate funding for the event. The request was voted down at last Wednesday's student forum. The club, in light of not receiving funding for the dates set for intersession, decided to reschedule the conference after it was discovered that the Reserve Fund, due to guidelines set forth by the student body last Spring, was not an appropriate source of funding. Soskin explained, "The [Planning] Committee was initially split on the decision about whether money from the Reserve Fund could be allocated towards an event that would be held while Bard would not be in session; however, we soon realized that we had already set a precedent last Spring, when the Planning Committee turned down a proposal from the Hurricane Relief Club for the same reason," said Soskin. In the end, it seemed it would be best if the conference took place in late January or February when more students would have access to it. Although ineligible to receive money from the Reserve Fund, Soskin pointed out that funding could be solicited in the Spring from the Convocation Fund or the nearly \$14,000 held in the Emergency Fund.

"The Reserve Fund, which stands at approximately \$30,000 at present, is composed of Student Activities fees rolled over from the past 10 years. Accordingly, last Spring, the student body decided that this money must be allocated to proposals that represented not one-time events, but large-scale, potentially long-term investments for a club that would occur mainly on-campus and while school is in session," continued Soskin.

Tigani and Pambo-Awich said that they were unaware of these guidelines until the end of their planning process, despite the fact that Pambo-Awich is a member of the Planning Committee this year (he was not a part of the committee when the conditions of the Reserve Fund were established last Spring). They felt it would be beneficial if such rules were more widely circulated and made available to club heads. Soskin contested that the guidelines had been clear at Club Head meetings as well as the various student forums held since the inception of the Reserve Fund.

Tigani expressed her concern over the fact that the budget of organizations such as BSO, ISO, and LASO had all had their budgets decreased this semester due to similar procedural miscommunications. This was the first year in which a club head day meeting was required in order to fully secure club funding. She also lamented the fact that the BSO will now be forced to ask potential speakers from around the country to reschedule based on the conference's new time in February.

BSO still hopes that the event will take place before the end of the school year and that the conference will continue to be an annual event in the future. BSO will proceed with fundraising, communicating with potential speakers, and organizing in the coming weeks.

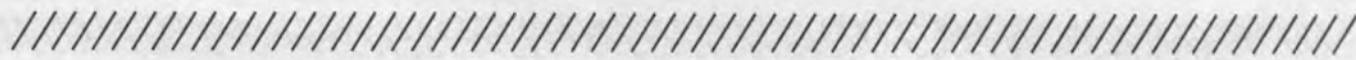
The Interdisciplinary Studies Committee



Wants YOU!

Are you involved in an Interdisciplinary Program at Bard? Do you have something important to say about programs like Gender and Sexuality Studies, American Studies, Studies in Race and Ethnicity, Science, Technology and Society or Integrated Arts? Would you like to be involved in the process of shaping the future of Interdisciplinary Programs?

The Student Association approved the formation of an ad-hoc Interdisciplinary Studies Committee to discuss these issues and to be involved in ongoing conversations with the Faculty Government and the Administration about these programs. If you are interested in being involved with the committee or if you have a concern or idea you would like to have addressed by the committee, please feel free to e-mail the Educational Policies Committee (epc@bard.edu) who will gladly pass your thoughts along to the co-chairs of the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee. Members of the committee will hopefully be appointed before the end of this semester.



Middle States Commission Wrap-up

By Oliver Traldi

The Student Association and Central Committee discussed at the last student forum and the subsequent Central meeting a strategy for including student views in the Middle States document, a self-study necessary for continued accreditation that describes in-depth the workings and culture of the college in a meaningful way. The self-study both qualifies the College and its students to receive federal financial aid and offers a set of action points to strive toward over the next ten years or so.

The consensus at both meetings was to develop a two-pronged approach. First of all, we decided to add to the Middle States document so that it includes more information reflecting actual student experience, and at least some sense of the structures and processes in which students participate on a day-to-day basis. On the other hand, the self-study process itself is highly partitioned, demonstrating the sorts of issues that the Middle State Commission views as necessarily or

heavily pertinent to an assessment of Bard's healthy, functional performance. For better or for worse, it seems as though a number of the issues students would like to raise as part of an institutional self-examination don't quite fit within the sections established for the report. So we resolved also to offer a separate document, not as lengthy nor as all-encompassing as the report itself, but at least enough to speak as a student body.

At the next Student Forum, which will take place on Wednesday December 6th at 7PM in the Kline committee rooms, the Central Committee hopes to put wording for both documents before the Student Association. Any students who wish to read the report in whole or in part should ask at the Dean's office in the basement of Ludlow, and any students who wish to add to or amend either the original document or the Central Committee's additions should certainly come on the 6th.

Other topics that will be under discussion for the Student Forum include the thirty-thousand-dollar Reserve Fund, the SMOG expansion, interest in a TV lounge, and the election of a Peer Counselor representative to the Student Life Committee. This will be the last forum of the semester; the next will be the spring Budget Forum in early February.

World AIDS Day

Continued from page 2

from distribution of condoms, despite the admission of teachers that this was what was going on.

Risko is also the head of the Bard Health Initiative, a TLS project that works primarily with local underserved populations, giving science students a chance to explore more social aspects of medicine. He discussed the considerations that the project has made specifically towards AIDS testing in the local area. "We deal primarily with access. When we've talked about going down that route, you always have to worry about when you get a positive test result, how you're going to take care of these people, and how they are going to have access to treatment and counseling." He explained how complicated the issue of AIDS testing can be for populations that often lack basic healthcare, and would likely be stranded with a positive result.

Earlier in the day Ernst and Shapiro had been circulating a petition to support research for Microbicides, a substance that is being promoted as female friendly way of avoiding HIV transmission, although it still does not yet actually exist (hence the call for research). In theory it would be a gel applied to the vagina before intercourse that would kill HIV. It is being supported because condoms are something that the male often has sole control of. It is a technology that is supposedly 5-7 years away from creation. It still has yet to be determined whether it will be oil or water based, an important consideration for instances where a condom is used. Microbicides main function is when condom use is not a possibility. Shapiro explained, "Even once it is developed to its fullest, if it is, it is still going to be a secondary means of protection. Condoms are still going to be better."

A move to raise awareness surrounding the issue of HIV testing among Bard students themselves is being pushed by Shapiro's recent request for \$750 dollars from the reserve fund. He hopes to be able to fund a number of Bard students to get anonymous testing done at the Planned Parenthood clinic in Red Hook. Health Services on campus does not offer HIV testing due in part to the fact that by law, insurance companies have the right to raise an individual's health insurance premiums merely based on the fact that they have been tested, no matter the outcome, as if such an action were implying at-risk behavior. For this reason anonymous testing is usually preferred.

The only place in the local area that can legally offer such testing is Planned Parenthood. Shapiro urged people, as voting citizens, to take seriously the issues healthcare policy as they stand now in regards to HIV: "Illuminating the faults in the insurance system is a matter of showing that there are structural problems that we have to overcome that we do have influence over."

Risko claimed that universal AIDS testing was a necessary step to further prevent the spread of HIV. He acknowledged that certain human rights groups are putting up barriers to this approach, reasoning that forcing people to be tested without any subsequent recourse would only serve to stigmatize them, and possibly expose them to discrimination. Still, Risko saw it as an important long term goal, "HIV testing shouldn't be an exceptional test, where you have to go to special places to get it done. It should be standard battery, like medical

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THE STATE OF LABOR AT BARD

* BY JIMMY SHELTON *

Labor relations on campus have been a huge issue this semester. The teach-ins, petitions, and protests outside Ludlow that have been happening since September have made it abundantly clear that an ethical contract for B&G workers (and all campus employees, for that matter) is something that is important to the Bard student body. However, when Bard College made its final contract proposal to the B&G negotiating committee on Tuesday after months of administrative squirming and stalling, it seemed clear that this message had been wholly disregarded by Jim Brudvig and the rest of the Bard administration.

This final proposal includes a good health care package and wage parity with Marist College buildings and grounds workers, but not much else. The contract that was offered responds minimally to the specific labor issues on campus that have been vocalized most over the past two years (health care and living wage), and fails to respond at all to the underlying sentiment behind all this student/labor activism, which is that the Bard community demands ethical treatment of all its employees. When inspected a bit more closely, the contract that Ludlow has proposed proves to be utterly patronizing and offensive to both students and workers, and leaves one wondering just how progressive Bard really is.

In regard to earnings, the new contract proposes B&G wages be increased over the course of four years to levels on

par with Marist College, where employees make a living wage. However, the annual wage increases are spread out in such a way that B&G workers will not even be making a living wage until the fourth year of the new contract. This seems to be a slap in the face to all the students who signed petitions and rallied outside Ludlow demanding a "Living Wage... NOW!" not to mention the B&G workers who will struggle for the next three years to make ends meet, in many cases working two or three jobs simultaneously.

In regard to retirement, the Bard administration refused to budge on its position. B&G had asked that their retirement package be brought up to par with the rest of the campus. Under the current system, it takes a B&G worker ten years to earn the same amount in retirement savings that a non-union campus employee earns in a single year. B&G did not ask for a superfluous 401(k) plan, they merely asked to be treated like all other workers on campus. Apparently this was asking too much.

In regard to retirement, the Bard administration refused to budge on its position. B&G had asked that their retirement package be brought up to par with the rest of the campus.

The most disturbing aspect of this contract, and arguably one the most troubling realities of Bard labor in general, has to do with the staff down at the post office. The postal workers already earn the lowest wages in the entire B&G department, but Bard has now decided that under the new contract, in order for the postal workers to get their wage increase and earn a living wage, they must take on more

responsibilities in the post office and begin delivering mail all across campus on several occasions throughout the year.

This manual labor has never been part of the job in the past, and for Ludlow to suddenly make it a necessary condition in order for these employees to earn a living wage is a despicable act of blackmail intended to demoralize workers and weaken union influence on campus.

You may be asking, why would the postal workers, of all people, be singled out as a group to be subject to this kind of intimidation and administrative bullying? The answer remains unclear, though I'd bet it has something to do with the fact that the postal workers here at Bard happen to be the only female employees in the entire B&G bargaining unit. (Is it purely coincidence that they're also the lowest paid?)

Despite being touted as a progressive institution, Bard College appears to be following a strict corporate model, where employees are treated as commodities and ethical labor practices are disregarded. Earlier this year, Jim Brudvig insinuated that student opinion has no impact on the decisions the Bard administrators make in regard to labor issues on campus. This seems to have held true, considering how this contract proposal fails to respond adequately to months of student activism. However, rather than view this as a failure, I think we as students need to view this as a challenge of sorts.

These are not the kinds of power dynamics that should exist on a progressive college campus.

Our voices may not matter to Jim Brudvig and the rest of the Bard administration now, but these labor issues are not dead on campus yet, and are certainly not the only issues in which student opinion has been marginalized lately. We must consider this kind of behavior on behalf of the Bard administration to be absolutely unacceptable.

If any significant change is to occur on campus, we must continue to make our voices heard, and impossible for anyone to ignore.

Here's to **OBAMA** in '08



Summer 2004. John Kerry is running for president. While I'm eager to defeat George Bush, Senator Kerry isn't exactly the most inspiring candidate to get behind. He speaks in ho-hum platitudes, doesn't propose anything particularly bold or ambitious, and he seems to be as much against the war as he is for it. Somehow I get sucked into the campaign nonetheless, and in late July I find myself in Boston at the Democratic National Convention.

Throughout the convention, one could hardly walk a few feet without having the following conversation:

Person A: It's a drag we've nominated this suit, isn't it?

Person B: Yes, but supposedly the convention keynote speaker is going to be pretty good.

I had heard about this much-hyped keynote speaker from my boss a few weeks prior to the convention. She had gone to undergraduate school with him, where he had been president of student government. I asked her if the excitement surrounding the keynote speaker was warranted. She smiled and told me that not only was the excitement warranted, but no matter how high the expectations, the keynote speaker would exceed them.

My boss was right. The keynote speaker during the 2004 Democratic National Convention was Barack Obama, then an all-but unknown candidate for the U.S. Senate from Illinois. His speech—I don't know if it has a formal name—shook the convention center to the rafters. I was in the very last row of the nosebleed section, but Obama made me feel as if I am right next to him. All around me, people were shaking with delight, some were tearing up with joy, even awe. This wasn't just a speech. This wasn't a religious awakening. The next night, at a 7/11 in New Jersey, I eavesdropped on the conversation of

two kids, probably in high school, who were, quite clearly, very stoned. For a moment, they both ceased discussing the merits of the slurpee, and recalled that only twenty-four hours before, they had heard "the best fucking speech in the world."

Today, only a little more than two years after that speech, all signs point to a presidential run by Senator Obama. He's busy talking to political operatives in the key primary states of Iowa and New Hampshire, and he's frequently visiting both states as well. There's also his new book, *The Audacity of Hope*, which sits on top of the New York Times best-seller list and like his last book, *Dreams of My Father*, has been received positively by critics. Early polling of the race for the Democratic nomination have him trailing the far-better financed Hillary Clinton by only a few points. Considering that no one knew who Obama was only a few years ago, and Clinton has been in the most public of spotlights for more than fourteen years, the fact he's keeping pace with her is quite an accomplishment.

In interviews, Senator Obama says he is undecided about whether to run for the presidency. He is young, and he hasn't yet completed one term in the U.S. Senate. But I'll say it here now: if he chooses to campaign for president, Barack Obama will win the Democratic nomination, and he will win the White House. In some respects, looking at the political scene as of this moment, it's difficult to imagine how an Obama candidacy results in anything less. His path to the nomination is easy to foresee: after holding his own in Iowa, Nevada and New Hampshire, he'll sweep the southern primaries on Super Tuesday and wrap up the nomination in March 2008. The

general election, especially if McCain or Giuliani gets the Republican nod, will be trickier, but against the aging McCain or the semi-unstable Giuliani, the young, serene Obama will shine.

That he will be able to comfortably sweep the southern primaries, and that I can rather comfortably make such a prediction at this early time, is testament to Obama's extraordinary skill set. Like no other politician of this era, he can inspire hope in an audience, and he can even—gasp—convince an audience that government can be a force for good. Or, as John McCain's lead political advisor put it: Obama is a "walking, talking hope machine," and "the most interesting persona to appear on the political radar screen in decades." The Democratic presidential contenders all have appealing qualities. But Barack Obama's abilities make him seem world-historical.

So, if he runs, Obama will win. But there's more on the table than that. For the past fourteen years, Democrats, liberals and progressives of all stripes have stood idly by as one Democratic torchbearer after the next worked to compromise basic values in the name of short-term electoral victory. Obama is different. He opposed the war from the beginning, at a time when doing so in many parts of the country was tantamount to political suicide. He doesn't talk down about government. He also has the kind of background that separates him from the pack. After college, he worked as a community organizer in low-income neighborhoods and registered 100,000 people to vote. Imagine how many people, turned off by politics for so long, would register if he ran for president.

ORWELL, LANGUAGE, & POLITICS

BY JAMES MOLLOY

In his famous 1946 essay, "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell argued that modern English is full of bad habits that prevent us from thinking clearly. It could have been written in 2006. We write and speak in clichéd metaphors, idioms, and phrases that pop out of our mouths and pens, ready-made. But when we take these shortcuts in expressing ourselves, Orwell argues, we obscure the meaning of what we are trying to say - even to ourselves.

These "bad habits" include: dying metaphors (e.g. play into the hands of, bend over backwards, the bottom line, no strings attached, hotbed, toe the line), verbal false limbs (e.g. make contact with, give rise to, give grounds for, play a leading role), pretentious diction (e.g. extraneous, extradite, clandestine - words with Latin or Greek roots that sound more 'academic'), and meaningless words, or words like "fascism," "freedom," "justice," or "patriotic," that have been used, and abused so often and for so many different ends that their meanings are entirely amorphous and vague, associating little more than a basic value judgment, such as whether or not what it describes is desirable.

We use these ready-made phrases because it is easy to. We all have our own. It saves us the trouble of struggling to find the right words to describe what we mean. Writes Orwell, "[The ready-made phrases] will construct your sentences for you - even think your thoughts for you, to a certain extent." All we have to do is open our mouths or uncup our pens and let our brains run along their familiar routes.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in public politics. Politicians are always regurgitating their latest phrases and feeding them to the newspapers and TV's. Perhaps you will recognize a few of these: "war on terror," "Islamic extremism," "axis of evil," "spread of democracy," "enemies of freedom," "ideologies of hate." The politician who stands at a podium every day and uses this kind of repetitive language has gone some distance, Orwell writes, "toward turning himself into a machine." By repeating his phrases at speech after speech, his words are dissociated from any meaning. "The appropriate noises are coming out of his larynx, but his brain is not involved." He is not thinking - he cannot be. And as we listen to him, neither are we.



The sort of reasoning displayed in the phrases above relies on setting up basic opposing binaries, for example: "good and evil," "terror and freedom," "totalitarianism and democracy," "liberal and conservative." Binaries are useful in common speech. They allow us to make generalizations, and categorize information efficiently. But as they are used above, they represent a radical over-simplification. We are left with a choice between two meaningless words, as Orwell calls them - a choice, therefore, that has no meaning. For example: "with us or against us," "stay the course" or "cut and run."

We would prefer not to think. The inaccuracy of modern English prevents us from thinking clearly, but our language is inaccurate because we do not want to be thinking. This is not just slovenliness. It is not just habitual. We would rather make a choice between two obscurities. Doing so provides us with a kind of order. We like to feel as if we

We like to feel as if we understand something, and political language allows us to feel this way, but we do not.

understand something, and political language allows us to feel this way, but we do not. The fact that we are not simply being fooled - that in many ways we are choosing to think simply or not at all - places the responsibility for a degenerate politics on us.

"Political language," Orwell writes, "is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind. One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits." The same advice is no less relevant today. Overcoming bad English means overcoming bad thought. Thinking, speaking, and writing clearly, therefore, are the primary political acts.

At a time when the English language is experiencing more abuse than (perhaps) ever, when its words are being broken like walls between fiction and reality, it might be worth reading Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" again.

ROOMS AVAILABLE FOR SPRING

SEMESTER in 3 bedroom/ 1 bath house in Red Hook 10 min from Bard. Includes washer/dryer, full kitchen, cable/internet, 1 car garage, walking distance from Hannaford. \$450-675/month + utilities. Call 914-525-6009 or e-mail jh178@bard.edu

APARTMENT FOR RENT

We have a \$500 garden apartment (private entrance, private bath), a \$400 bedroom (both + utils) sublet available in our awesome house (built in 1820) for a car-owner in Upper Red Hook starting immediately and going through May 31. Contact Josh at js997@bard.edu or 718-753-5038.

Looking for a house or apartment with a big living room near "downtown" Tivoli starting next fall (or summer) for at least 2 people. Contact Marten at melder@gmail.com or 302-249-9367.

Science Majors, Continued from page 1

enhance campus-wide exposure to science for non-majors. Opportunities to interact with students of different interests, a wider course selection, and a relatively new laboratory science distribution requirement all endeavor to redefine the traditional liberal arts education and overcome student prejudices against the tedium of standard introductory courses. As Matthew Deady, Professor of Physics and Director of the Physics Program, elaborated, "We tend to think that the sciences are going to be something that's really important to [the non-major] so we try to design courses that are going to be compelling; a course like Human Disease, a course like Genetics and Cancer, my course on Acoustics."

President Leon Botstein expressed his rationale for the attempt both to court science majors and inspire non-majors to a greater involvement, saying, "Science is important for understanding politics; it's an important basis for democracy. Having a basic grasp of science is part of our duty as citizens. How are we to understand global warming, the war in Iraq...when we have to rely on experts?"

As Bard's allotment of science and math majors continues to increase, the science department still struggles with its ability to affect in a significant way the educative formation of students in all divisions. As Deady articulated, "We don't know how to answer the question: 'What do we want all students to come out of Bard with?' We would like to have the science equivalent to First Year Seminar - not in terms of a class but in terms of a goal. What we've been doing is trying to give enough things that different students are going to get what's right for them...I guess our main challenge is always giving students what is best for them and figuring out how in advance to identify that. And the better we get at doing that the more Bard is going to be perceived as being a school where it's strong in science whether you're a science major or not."

The Gabrielle H. Reem and Herbert J. Kayden Center for Science and Computation is due to open Fall Semester 2007.

the Observer

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The opinions expressed herein do not reflect the views of Bard College, and are not necessarily the views of the Editors. But they might.

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This issue, The Sex Column has a delicious surprise for our readers. We recently sat down for a hot and heavy interview with the sexy and single Marielle Dutoit. You should talk to her too, she's pretty cute.

1. What is your year?
2009
2. What is your pet peeve?
Disney character sweatshirts, inconsistent verbal inflections, tassles.
3. Out of all the presidents, which would you boink?
Theodore Roosevelt; because he carried a big stick.
4. What is a secret addiction that you are ashamed of?
Cannibalism-Thursdays.
5. If you were a teletubby, which would you be?
Idyllically, I'd have the sagacity of Po and the vogue panache of that purple one.
6. If you were a playboy playmate, which month would you want?
I would be featured every month because if I was playmate I would seize power, become the Playmatriarch, and head an unstoppable oligarchy of hair bleach and silicone.

The Sex Column

Dear Sex Column,

I have been hooking up with a guy who has a really beautiful dick. I love giving him head, but the one time we had sex we didn't use a condom. I don't want to have unprotected sex again. Should I just put a condom on him next time or should I ask him to put the condom on himself?

From, Latex Lover

Dear Latex Lover,

Protection and safety (condoms or dental dams) are the responsibility of both parties. Personally, I prefer to put the condom on my partner because I like to know that it is properly on. But sometimes the moment does not always allow for this to happen. You should just follow your instincts. Pick a certain time when you are comfortable asking, "Do you have a condom?" or come prepared and whip it out yourself.

For condom application:

1. Open the condom package carefully, making sure the condom does not tear. Do not unroll the condom before putting it on. Drip a couple drops of lubricant on the head of the penis before putting on the condom.
2. If the penis in question is not circumcised, pull back the foreskin. Place the condom on the head of the penis.
3. Pinch the tip of the condom and roll it down the shaft of the penis until you reach the base. (Note!!! The condom will not roll down if it is put on backwards. Take off the condom and throw it away. Start again with a new condom. Do not pass Go. Do not collect \$200.)
4. After condom application, pinch the tip of the condom again to make sure there is space at the tip for ejaculation and that the condom is not broken.

If he refuses to put on a condom, explain to him why safe sex is important to you (i. e. STDs, pregnancy, or splooge in your moo-ha). If he still refuses, tell him that he can fuck his own

hand.

SIDENOTE-

Dental dam application is a bit trickier to maneuver.

For dental dam application:

1. Open the dental dam package carefully, making sure the dental dam does not tear. Drip a couple drops of lube on the clitoris that shall be pleased.
2. Coordinate who is to hold the dental dam. Some people prefer to have the person giving head hold the d-dam, some prefer to have the person receiving head hold the d-dam. Either way it needs to be held down.
3. Go at it.

Useful information to think about:

*Condom types are a matter of preference. Condom companies make thinner condoms for enhanced pleasure, condoms with lidocaine (a local anesthetic that desensitizes the penis), condoms with studs, and condoms with extra lubricant. (THE DIMESTORE NOW HAS FREE CONDOMS!!!! Check out an order form in the post office).

*Latex d-dams protect against STDs more affectively than polyurethane d-dams.

*Lots of lube always helps.

*Check your condoms expiration dates!

*Always make sure you have more than one condom on hand, just in case the only one you have breaks or is defective.

*Never re-use condoms.

This is more information than you really needed to know. But it doesn't hurt. Good luck.

Love,
Fiona

(This column was written with the help of Genya Shimkin.)

Observing Nakedness

THE NAKED NEWS SHEDS THE TRUTH

By Lisa Shifra Dratch



When I was in 6th grade, my homeroom teacher described me at parent-teacher conferences as a disrespectful brat who appeared unable to take anything seriously while expressing consistent disregard for authority. This week, as I prepare to organize the tenth issue of the Naked News, it occurs to me that some members of the Bard community might feel that the description of my character noted above is just as applicable today as it may have been back in middle school. Therefore, I felt compelled to share some insights into the Naked News with the seasoned readers of the Observer, not so much in the interest of rectifying negative opinions of myself, but rather to elucidate the shimmering fact that the Naked News is about more than my (or any other writer's) personal obnoxiousness.

It is true that the Naked News was first conceived out of dissatisfaction with the Observer and the Free Press. It is entirely untrue that those feelings arose out of disrespect for those publications. We (me and the other original Naked Newsers) simply were not satisfied with having only two papers -which for all intents and purposes publish very similar types of news. Our goal has always been to publish stories which contain content or tone that would/should not be published in

the two aforementioned publications. Hence, the birth of Bard's only satirical newspaper.

What is important to understand is that the Naked News is structured around a point of view concerned with

This controversy has, in a sense, transformed our little publication into a post-modern performance piece on the discourse of discourse (and frankly, it's getting a little old).

mocking the idea of 'objective' journalism. We do not strive to be fair, even-handed, warranted, or justified in our pieces. On the back of every issue the reader will find a disclaimer that might as well read, "Please do not take us too seriously." With this in mind it is understandable that, due to the fact that we also comment on real issues with real passion, confusion has arisen among the ranks of our readers. Perhaps Jon Stewart (god to all comedians wondering why the hell they are being yelled at for irresponsible journalism) said it best when he described The Daily Show as "a comedy show about things we care about. So naturally, it's informed by relevant issues and important information." The Naked News is very similar, in that it responds to realities of campus life in a way that, at the end of the day, remains satirical.

It is ironic that The Naked News has, since its conception, been embroiled in a constant debate about its practice of allowing writers to use pseudonyms. I originally thought that our pseudonyms would help clarify the joke. I couldn't imagine that anyone would attribute credibility (especially about news) to the opinion of an imaginary character. However, people continue to argue that they hinder discourse. This controversy has, in a sense, transformed our little publication into a post-modern performance piece on the discourse of discourse (and frankly, it's getting a little old).

Much of the negativity directed towards the Naked News has focused on our propensity to publish unfavorable reviews of both artistic and administrative performances. Our policy for determining who or what constitutes an appropriate "snarking" target follows the fairly typical "public figure/event" standard. We don't diss people who are just eating in Kline or anything.

It is my sincere hope is that these comments have served to clarify the intent of the publication and to nullify some of the negativity that may have resulted from misunderstandings. I am very proud of what the Naked News has thus far achieved, I am excited to see what the future holds. At the same time, I accept that some people will never get the joke and will continue to lecture the Naked Newsers and me on standards of journalism.

To those people, I can do no more than hand them copies of the Observer and the Free Press and say, "dude, we already have two papers that to a damn good job of providing real news to this community. In the interest of avoiding redundancy, we had to be fuck-ups. That's our niche."

REPORT:

ASO to perform at

by Carl Kranz



After months of speculation as to which famed act will perform at SMOG, reports state that the American Symphony Orchestra will perform there sometime during the spring of 2007.

"Not only are we pleased to be chosen to headline SMOG," said Leon Botstein, music director and principal conductor of the ASO, "but it is also an honor to perform in such a hallowed concert hall with the likes of Wolf Parade, Man Man, Black Dice, and many other accomplished musical acts having performed there over the past few years."

According to the head of SMOG, Brandon Rosenbluth, the process in finding the right group to perform was not an easy one.

"We spent a lot of time looking for the right group, the right sound, for the spring. We were thinking of quite a few bands, but when it came down to it, we felt that the American Symphony Orchestra would be the right fit for this upcoming semester."

This will not be the first time the American Symphony Orchestra will perform at SMOG, having done so in 1999. However, this year's concert will be much more in order this year.

"Back at the '99 show, we allowed people to bring alcohol into SMOG with them to see the ASO play, but the show had to be cut short because the orchestra complained that people had been too rowdy. Of course, I've heard differently from those that were at the show."

However, Botstein argued that Rosenbluth was downplaying the severity of the incident seven years ago.

"Mr. Rosenbluth was not there firsthand to see the dramatic unfolding of the event. Malt liquor

bottles were heaved at the orchestra after we finished warming up. They believed it was our act, shouting, "We've heard that already," and "Not original." We had two violinists and a clarinetist rushed to the hospital for serious head trauma. In fact, one of the violinists fell into a coma for over a week."

However, due to Bard's new dry campus policy, the ASO will gladly perform at SMOG once again: "We never really wanted to not play at SMOG. We just wanted to keep our performers safe."

Rumors that the American Symphony Orchestra would play at SMOG ran rampant across campus over the past week, with the students somewhat divided in opinion.

"I'm really excited that the ASO may perform at SMOG," said junior Reed Sharpton. "I mean,

sure, lots of people have seen the ASO perform, but I'm gonna be able to see them in SMOG. I can't wait to tell that to my friends back home. like, 'Hey, have you guys seen the ASO perform?' and they'll be like 'Yeah,' and the I'll say, 'Yeah, but have you seen them perform at SMOG?' and then they'll be all like, 'What? No way! You saw them in SMOG?' and I'll be like, 'Yeah.'"

Other students were not looking forward to the idea of the ASO performing at SMOG.

"What? Wait, for real?" asked senior Noah Weston. "We're booking the ASO to perform at SMOG?"



"[It is] an honor to perform there," says principal conductor



That shit is whack. Oh, and read my three articles and comic strip in this issue's Observer. The comic's mad funny, son. Word."

The biggest question that remains is who will be booked to open for the American Symphony Orchestra.

"We would have like someone just as big in celebrity to open for the ASO, but because we won't have much money left to spend on other groups, we were thinking of just having a Bard band open for them, like Palimpsest, or Five Limbs," added Rosenbluth. "Hopefully, we'll get more money next semester so this won't be a problem. But if we don't, I'll be okay with it. I mean, the Wine And Cheese club needs money too."

Last Moments of a Love Affair

By Tom Shepherd

"YES. No. No. We don't need any. No. No. He doesn't need life insurance."

Mary Lind hangs up the phone and gazes deeply into the photograph of her beloved. 'A beautiful man.' Those eyes. Penetrating gray eyes hidden behind wire frames with newly polarized lenses to reduce direct, harsh sunlight to his eyes during clandestine trips to Iraq. 'My diamonds in the dough,' she says to herself looking at his face, remembering when he pounded it into a funny shape for her when she came to the office visibly upset about his decision not to provide bullet proof vests to combat bound soldiers. 'Oh Donald,' she said, and he responded, 'Call me Donny.' She had to fight her urge to say, 'I love you. I want to have your fourth child, twice,' because she realized how illogical it was for such an old man to have another child.

'No. No. He's not here. But he doesn't need any. No. He's got enough cell phone service. No, he won't need to make calls from the moon. No.'

She hangs up, sighs, and absentmindedly twirls her finger in the phone chord, and thinks of their first meeting. He'd walked in shortly after noon with a mustard stain on his shirt. She remarked, 'Farsighted,' noticing the lenses of his glasses. Yes, he said and blushed, telling her that even his wife could never remember his farsightedness. They shared an intimacy, an unspoken bond since the very beginning. Her, forty-three years old, and him, seventy-four, and both were mad for each other. He stared at her for several seconds. His eyes seemed to say, 'You are a bit fat about the edges. But you're beautiful,' and he undressed her with a gaze that said, 'I was wrong. You're rubinesque. But still beautiful.' He took off his glasses, moved close to her. He reached out to her face. But being farsighted, he misgauged where her face was and punched her in the right eye. He apologized and they laughed. With a black eye, she desired him.

That is how it began, she remembers.

"No. He doesn't need health insurance. I'm sure it's part of his severance package."

She hangs up. Sounds come from behind the closed door, and she tries not to run in and help him. She tries to let him be. My Rummy, how will I spend my days? No man is as good as you. No man is kinder. No man more emotionally intelligent and aware of the immeasurable depths of a woman's heart. How many women had he seduced before her? Thousands, she thinks, looking at his photograph, noticing his jaw proudly jutting out. No one will see the Rummy I saw on the day Saddam was found huddled like a dirty animal in some hole in the desert. He burst in from his office.

"Mary, he's captured. Today is a great day for the American military, for my legacy." He stared at her.

"I love you Mary. I love you. I love you. I love you."

They shared sherry and an apple she had brought for lunch. After a few glasses and much laughter, his gnarled, gingerroot hands, gently cupped around her ear and he proceeded to whisper tender sweet-nothings as John "Cougar" Mellencamp's "Jack and Diane" played in the office.

He is so warm, she thinks. She wants to run in and tell him this, to say their love makes her think of the warmth romantic movies create. But she knows Donald hates movies. That he is a realist and preferred Tolstoy and Eisenhower's military memoirs to Hollywood's light romantic fantasies. She had read Tolstoy and Eisenhower's memoirs, listened to McArthur's farewell address, and she found them deep. She cried over them. She cried over him; she found him like his interests. Deep. 'So deep,' she would think to herself on days while he was out of the office visiting troops, 'that the measure of this man is beyond measure.' And she would think how immeasurable his immeasurableness was. She would think of memories only they shared during trying times. He had romantic stoicism. When he squinted to read documents late at night a triple chin would envelop his proud jaw. She was not repulsed. She found it irresistible and charming. Only she knew about it. It was her secret just like his odor, an amalgam of flesh, baby powder, and strong, athletic smelling cologne she later discovered to be a stick of Old Spice deodorant he rubbed on his neck before meeting with foreign dignitaries.

"No. I don't think his marriage is falling apart. No. I don't think he wants to sue America for wrongful firing. No. No. Yes...I do love him."

She hangs up the phone and switches it to silent. What happened? Why did I tell the solicitor? There's no sense denying, she thinks to herself. I love him and why shouldn't a noble creature be loved? The sounds behind the door have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Epicapella

Dan "Danjo" Whitener's Moderation Concert
with Acappella music featuring members of the Bard Acappella Group and Solo Voice featuring Eva Sun at the piano

THIS WEDNESDAY 12-13
BLUM HALL at 8:30



The Surrealist Training Circus's Fall performance was held outside Kline Nov.28

Photo by Ed Hall

ME AND BLACK DICE AND THE DEVIL

by Michael Newton



At Smog this Sunday past, under a video screen draped like a banner of war, the members of Black Dice, while remaining almost wholly still, conveyed the message of their power with the eloquence of generals. As is appropriate to the sense of reversal implied by their name, what they produced was almost, in a sense, not music.

There is harshness in Black Dice that is not present in other music. They have found a land of their own, staked and named it. It is fitting that their logo is a video screen and that this video screen produces subliminally violent patterns because the currency they deal in is caustic noise. Noise, real guttural, visceral, metallic noise, is dangerous in songs precisely because it contains an element of what is antithetical

to music. In order to deal with it most bands encase it in a more traditional pop structure. Or unable to deal with it they become the ruined cities through which it, like a plague, runs unabated. Animal Collective is an example of the former, Wolf Eyes the latter. Black Dice however, to judge by their live show, are able to control and combine these disparate and harsh elements in a way that alchemists were only in legend able to achieve. The disorientation produced upon first hearing them live is replaced by the disquieting realization that one is listening to a band which has harnessed an incredible and ugly power. The music of Black Dice replicates the staggered awe felt upon observing the tremendous scope of destruction produced by battle.

Presented with what in the end amounts to an intricate tapestry of disfigurement, the audience doesn't have

a chance. The crowd at Smog was reduced, by degrees of seduction, into a single entity, a mass of subjects. Listening to Black Dice means entertaining a worldview in which torture noises are valid composition. What this music really hints at is the possibility that this worldview springs not from an imagined reality, but rather our own. It is a bewitching message to hear and Black Dice rides in on a conquistador's horse to deliver it. On Sunday night they became foreign generals who, on the eve of war, delivered a rallying sermon to a conscripted army. We were the soldiers who, although unable to translate every phrase of that foreign language, were roused by its very cadence, so stenorian, so redolent of marble columns and the blotting of the sky.

Thank god for Black Dice. They will most likely thrash around for a few years, never really make it big, and then skulk back to the woods to die. However this is fitting because, besides from providing a morbid wonder, that is what monsters do.

stopped. Moments later, "Hi-yah," and the door slams open against the wall. The force dislodges a stuffed zebra head that he had given to her as a gift from one of his African safaris.

Donald comes out seconds later with a large cardboard box in his arms.

"What was that?"

"The zebra head."

"Oh, you know, it's from Asia." She knows that there are no zebras in Asia, but she loved it when he Donald said Asia. It made him sound distinguished. She does not challenge his blunder.

She can only see some photographs of his wife and children poking out of the box, but she knows everything that was in his office is in that box: a loaded 9mm, a half-drunk bottle of Johnny Walker Black she had given him after Operation Shock and Awe, a stapler, a couple of socks, a toothbrush and toothpaste, steel toed work boots, a bullet proof vest, a stuffed possum named Randy that he'd found wounded while patrolling north Washington D.C. late at night. Pathos made him shoot it; love made him stuff it. Such humanity, she thinks.

He stops. She looks to him. He looks to her. Both look at each other despondently. There is a lot of looking happening.

"It can't continue," he says to her. "We need a fresh perspective. I've my wife Joyce and our kids Valerie, Mary, and Nick, and their children. They won't understand; I need to stick this thing out."

Her heart pounds; his heart pounds. Her palms sweat; his palms sweat. There is a lot of pounding and sweating happening.

Her love is leaving her forever. He can do nothing but leave. It is his duty. But someone else will come. It is their duty; it is the problem of the job. It wears on you, and duty carries you away broken and abused. She sees this now looking at him. Sad and tired looking with puffy bags beneath his eyes grants him a deep weariness. A wrinkled, gray wool suit from Sears or Meris Warehouse hangs making him seem thin and frail.

She remains attached to the cabinet post. Not to the person. She has loved others before him. Frank Carlucci, Dick Cheney, Lee Aspin. All were men with wonderful glasses and

depth. 'I can't love a Secretary without glasses,' she thinks. 'Only the myopic one's have cunning and urbanity.' They have all shared sherry with her, all whispered sweet-nothings softly into her ear with cupped hands, and, as they napped beneath the titanium, bomb resistant desk installed by Caspar Weinberg in 1983, she etched their doomed relationship into the desk. Each time she would scratch it out. How many times would her etchings be scratched out? She had hoped she would never have to do it again.

"Be kind to me," he says in an imploring voice. "Understand my position."

She fights back tears and runs to pick up the zebra taxidermy that he'd knocked off the wall.

"Yes, yes," she says holding onto the zebra head. "Yes, but they won't understand you the way I understand you. Oh Donny."

"Don't say that Mary. Not now. It hurts too much."

She has heard this before. Carlucci, she remembers. But she does love Donald, and hopes he will drop his box, leave Rudy and his 9mm, and take her in his arms instead. She dreams he will carry her in his arms through out the Pentagon's seventeen and one half miles of office space, and shout to his former underlings, "This is Mary Lind. She is my Mary Lind. I love Mary Lind." She will smile with her large teeth, blush, and all the women will stand, applaud, and congratulate her. They will then go five minutes south on the highway to Pentagon City and maybe to Crystal City. He will buy her a beautiful ring, slaves, and a plantation.

He will propose to her at the Cheesecake Factory. They will get married at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers at Arlington Cemetery in the fall because the foliage is astounding and it is a very quiet place.

She again remembers that he is a realist, and that reality says you can no longer legally buy slaves. However, he stands looking at her, perplexed and pale, embroiled in a battle between passion and duty.

"Will you wait for me?"

"How long Donny?"

"Until we meet in Heaven."

"If you get there Donny. If you get there," she repeats, echoing herself in a sad tone revealing the tormented heart.

He begins to walk toward the door. She knows he will not come back. They never do. Only one has, Cheney, but he'd sent rumors around the Pentagon saying she was a whore. He was heartless and without tenderness. But she loves Donald and knew he was honorable and noble and would never do that, despite her proclivity for septuagenarians with glasses and a love for combat.

"I love you Donald," she whispers to his photograph. He turns, thinking he has heard her say the words he so badly wants to hear. Words that would release him from his life and into her fantasies. They make eye contact. But being uncertain and lacking courage, he only gives a weak, trembling smile.

"Goodbye, Mary." He yells, "Hi-yah," and kicks open the door. Thud! The door strikes a man and knocks him unconscious. It is incoming Defense Secretary Robert Gates who has come to see if Donald has cleaned out the office. He walks out, steps over Gates, and she hears his footsteps as the door clicks shut.

She notices the zebra head now lying on her desk is staring at her. She sees the light blinking on the silent phone. She clicks on the ringer and lets it ring for a few moments before answering.

"Hello," she says with a tear falling down her cheek. "No. No. He's gone, he's left for good. No, he won't be back soon. Yes. I'll tell him if I see him around. Yes, goodbye," and she keeps the phone up to her ear and says into the empty air, "We need you Donald. America needs you Donald. I need you." She wishes there was insurance for a broken heart but there is nothing, and she goes to the titanium desk and scratches out her etching, "ML+DR=Heart 4Ever".

She stands up and looks out the window knowing she will be looking toward Pentagon City and will dream for hours because Gates is unconscious. But she is grateful that Donald could at least give her that, time to dream about what might have been if only the voters would have stayed the course. She loathingly stares toward Capitol Hill. Curse America, she thinks.

{ Bobby Review }

BY THOMAS HOUSEMAN

Films that are personal to their writer or director often walk a thin line between greatness and mediocrity. If someone working on a film is passionate to the point of obsession, they will have a strong vision for what they want their film to be, which is crucial for a great film.

However, the image of the film in their head may blind them to the film's reality, and they will be unwilling to correct flaws lest it interfere with their vision. Emilio Estevez's first film in sixteen years, Bobby, falls into this category. Estevez chose to make this film about the events at the Ambassador Hotel on the day of the assassination of Robert Kennedy because of his passion for the man who might have changed the face of American politics, and that passion is visible throughout the film. Sadly, it seems that Estevez's passion impeded Bobby's ability to achieve its potential. Because his vision hindered the creative process of filmmaking, the result is a labor of love that could have used a little less love and a whole lot more labor.

On June 9th, 1968, Robert Kennedy won the California Democratic Primary election, positioning himself to take the democratic nomination. Kennedy was seen as a visionary, a man behind whom the nation could unite, a man who could end the Vietnam War and solve racism (or so Estevez would have you believe). Bobby follows the lives of countless patrons and employees of the Ambassador Hotel (literally, it's too many to count), which was Kennedy's headquarters. The stories range from that of a hotel manager (William H. Macy) having an affair with one of his employees (Heather Graham), two volunteer organizers (Joshua Jackson and Nick Cannon) who believe that Kennedy will save the nation, and a young bus boy (Freddy Rodriguez) who desperately wants to leave work to go to the Dodgers game.

There is no plot in Bobby, or at least far less of one than any of the other big interweaving plot ensemble films like Love, Actually, The Great New Wonderful, and Crash. The film, rather simplistically, chronicles the day of a group of people at the Ambassador Hotel. Occasionally there is conflict, but that seems to be more incidental to the film than the driving force



behind it. Estevez seems more content to explore the issues of the time, ranging from racial tension to the revolution of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, than to string together any sort of plot, or have any of the characters grow or change from beginning to end. "What's the point?" is a question one might ask half an hour into the film, and after almost an hour and a half more (the film runs at 112 minutes,) you will realize that there really isn't any. The assassination of Robert Kennedy and the direct aftermath is one of the few touching moments, but it also highlights the pointlessness of the entire rest of the film. Then it's finally over,

and you can go home to do something more worthwhile, such as clipping your toenails.

With so many famous actors in the film, a few of them were bound to give good performances, which keeps the film at a level that is watchable, if not exciting, entertaining, or thought provoking in the least. The two best performances in the film, surprisingly, are by Demi Moore and Nick Cannon. Moore, who plays singer Virginia Fallon, is given one of the few intriguing plot lines, and doesn't waste it; her emotional rollercoaster as she tries to come to terms with fame and its downside is touching. Nick Cannon (of Drunken Fame) plays a political volunteer trying to deal with his cynicism about the direction of his country who places all his hopes on the soldiers of Bobby Kennedy. His reaction to Kennedy's death is one of the best moments of the film. Anthony Hopkins is very good, as is Laurence Fishburne in what is sadly an utterly pointless role.

Emilio Estevez tries to do something with Bobby, and he deserves credit for that. But ambition can only take one so far without direction, and Estevez has no idea what to do with his ode to Robert Kennedy, except to paint the man, who is spoken of but rarely seen, as deserving of sainthood. Other than taking place in the same location, none of the stories relate to each other, and few go anywhere. Bobby's worst flaw, however, is that despite Estevez's obvious passion for his story, he doesn't seem to actually say anything. His film is not inspiring, heartbreaking, or eye-opening. It just meanders along, drawing to a close only after its audience has grown impatient. Had Estevez been able to detach himself and look at his story objectively, and then focus it to give the film some sort of linear plot, Bobby might have been very good. But as it stands, it is a sloppy, disorganized, and utterly directionless film that wastes the potential of a fascinating premise.



The Fountain Review

by Mischa Nachtigal

The Fountain is not a movie. Sure, you could classify it as a member of the science-fiction-fantasy genre and follow the structural weaving of three parallel storylines. But that would not do this film- I mean, this experience- justice.

Hugh Jackman stars in all three storylines. The first features him as Tomas the conquistador in the year 1500 fighting for his queen (Rachel Weisz). In the second he's Tommy Creo, a contemporary doctor bent on finding a cure for his wife's (also Weisz) cancerous tumor. The third one has him as a futuristic space-wandering Tom Creo floating through the galaxy in a large biosphere. Writer and director Darren Aronofsky (Pi, Requiem for a Dream) weaves a rich tapestry between the three temporal scenes.

This is not a popcorn-flick; The Fountain will force you to think. You cannot sit back passively and expect a clear plot and resolution to be laid out. The beauty of The Fountain is that it forces the viewer to be engaged in order to interpret the themes presented. That's right, I brought out the dreaded 'I' word, interpretation. The storyline of the pursuit for the Fountain of Youth and the Tree of Life that's meant to link the

film together is not what should be focused on to find enjoyment in this cinematic piece. What Aronofsky has done is paint an intriguing thematic portrait about the cycle of life and death, and how love can make someone unwilling to accept simple mortality.

The film was mired in the equivalent development-Hell when concerns arose over the script and budget. Originally set to star Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett, the film was shelved while Aronofsky turned the story into a graphic novel. Eventually, things were settled when Aronofsky realized that the special effects he wanted could be produced in a much cheaper, studio-friendly fashion. The influence of the graphic novel can be seen though Aronofsky's delicate and deliberate framing of the camera throughout the film.

The images in The Fountain are amazing and breathtaking when seen on a big screen. Interestingly, none of them were produced with CGI. The visual effects of space were achieved by using photographs of microscopic chemical reactions, underwater shots and various lighting techniques. The results are simply gorgeous to behold.

All these epic shots have resemblances to 2001: A Space Odyssey, a comparison that while not entirely fair is apt in one sense. When 2001 originally came out, it was critically panned and only later recognized for its ambitious nature. The Fountain

has seemed to split film critics evenly in half. On the site Rotten Tomatoes that accumulates movie critiques, The Fountain is stuck at the 50% mark. I do not mean to suggest that The Fountain will eventually become as lauded as 2001, but that it is a similarly personal movie experience. The ending to The Fountain is ambiguous and requires the individual viewer to decide what happened. The truth is that this film is more like a piece of art than a movie, it's an artistic experience that just so happens to be produced on the medium of film. The focus when watching The Fountain should be on how the themes are presented and how the images, acting and writing all complement them.

Like any film, The Fountain has its flaws. It's easy to call the somewhat flat dialogue a bit pretentious and dismiss the ending as being too obscure and hard to comprehend. If you do see The Fountain, it's important that you not go in with any preconceived notions of what a movie should be. Simply sit back and view The Fountain as you would a piece of art. Observe the magnificent images and interpret the themes that are being illustrated. Art requires you to think and react to it, so does this film. Don't worry about what it means on a general level, as Kubrick himself once said (and I'm horribly paraphrasing): "No one goes to a concerto of Mozart and asks 'what does it mean?'" It's really not that complex, just view it as a piece of art, something to undergo and behold.



Joanna Newsom

Y'S

by Ted Quinlan

Joanna Newsom has really done something here. I wasn't the biggest fan of "The Milk-Eyed Mender," her first album, but it had its moments. Sometimes listening to Joanna Newsom is a chore, just because there is only so much harp and screeching one man can take. However, "Y's" cleverly fixes both of these problems. With the help of Van Dyke Parks, the crazy American composer known to most for his work with Brian Wilson on "Smile," Newsom transcends the novelty aspect of her music. The harp is balanced by string arrangements and her squeals are used sparingly, making their presence more substantial since the listener is allowed some breathing room. Instead of sounding like a 10 year old with black lung, Newsom actually uses her talents to blend her voice with the music; not drown it out.

So it all sounds nice. It is smooth, comforting, and warm. Whatever adjective you can use to describe Santa's bed would work here. I guess big would be a way to describe Santa's bed too. And this album is big. It may have only five songs, but with each song averaging ten minutes, this album is an investment. This fact means a couple things. First, it means that one cannot really just sit and listen to a song or two and call it a day. Second, it means one has to actually listen to the songs. They are long for a reason and it isn't until that reason is discovered that they are really enjoyable. Chances are a quick listen to a few parts of each song are going to reveal the real beauty. When a song is around sixteen minutes long, it takes a real commitment to enjoy it.

So, is this album just too much work? Is it all worth it? Well that is really up to the person listening isn't it? All I can say is that this album bodes well not only for Joanna Newsom, but the whole modern folk scene. It sets a standard that cannot be ignored. By challenging people to listen to this behemoth, Newsom has also challenged songwriters to scorn convention of attempt something new. If long, semi-symphonic folk music does not sound appealing, at least know that it is for the good of everyone that this album ignites something in somewhat popular musicians, so that the quality of this album may be heard throughout the world of music.



Luomo

Paper Tigers

by Andrew Worthington

Luomo is one of many pseudonyms that is used by Sasu Ripatti when he makes his crazy European electronic music. Drawing from house, techno, ambient, and other electronic music of all shapes and sizes he is an immensely prolific artist. Luomo (or whatever name you'd like to call him) appears, from all the various and obvious Internet sources I employed, to be one of the exciting up and coming musicians in European electronic music.

A little too intense and Euro-centric for my taste, it is hard to tell whether or not Paper Tigers, the artist's newest release under the name Luomo is successful or not. The only track that I personally found appealing was "The Tease Is Over," where he uses a delicate classical piano against his pulsing industrialized electronica; it almost seemed like former beauty was met coldly by futuristic inevitability. The main lesson wrought from this album was its reinstatement of my own ambivalence towards heavy Euro electronic music, but fans of this genre might well be pleased.



Peter and the Wolf

Lightness

by Elvia PW



I seem to have found one of those rare songs that makes me completely and undeniably happy every time I listen to it. It's the third track on Peter and the Wolf's recent album, **Lightness**, and it's called "Safe Travels." Ten seconds into this song and I am wading through a marshland wearing red galoshes, butterflies swarming overhead, a pine tree forest on either side. Know what I mean? Maybe not. And my friends don't get it either; none of them really like it. But I am completely in love, and I'm on a mission to marry the guy who sings this song.

My future husband is Redding Hunter, better known as Red, who collaborates mainly with girly singer Dana Jean Clementine on the album. (I'm guessing Dana Jean is my main competition.) His voice has been compared to that of Cat Stevens, though I would say he leans more in the direction of a Devendra Banhart who doesn't sing, you know, all freak-folkey. Peter and the Wolf is signed with Whiskey and Apples Records, who advertises itself as "DIY. Music," whatever that means. Red and Dana Jean are from Austin, TX, and apparently they are very strange. Specifically, they are self-proclaimed "occult enthusiasts." They wear mostly black, and they only perform in churches and graveyards, which is creepy. Somehow, their creepiness just intrigues me further.

I will admit that besides "Safe Travels," **Lightness** is not the most exciting CD ever. The rest of the songs are pretty similar to each other—Red's slow singing with Dana Jean's soft crooning in the background with a few chords plucked out on the guitar. But while the songs are simple, they are simple in a comfortable way. They are comfortable and safe like a log cabin hidden in a pine forest, and warmed at the fireplace of lovely lyrics like "I should listen more carefully/You said our love was like the bonsai tree," from the song "Bonsai Tree." Someday, when I marry Red Hunter, he'll write songs like this about me. Until then, I'll be listening to **Lightness** on repeat and dreaming of pine forests.

Swan Lake

Beast Moans

by Andrew Worthington



If the most talented indie musicians from a country together collaborate, the results should result in a solid disc of art. Such is the case with **Swan Lake**, an indie rock powerhouse from British Columbia, Canada that features members from **Frog Eyes, Wolf Parade, and the New Pornographers. Daniel Bejar, Spencer Krug, and Carey Mercer are the core members of this catalyst of underground hipster genius.**

Despite the notoriety of the band member's other projects, this sideshow hasn't garnered the fame that might have been expected. Too often potentially powerful side projects fall to the wayside, lost beneath the shadows of neglect and commerce, but **Swan Lake** appears to be ready to establish itself as a legitimate group.

Swan Lake's newest and first disc, **Beast Moans**, is blessed with excellent production and a gold mine of songwriting. The concept behind the album is vague, but it rests on a scattered, indirect, and emotive antipathy towards their respective artistic gifts as well as the fame and fortune

that have come with those gifts. "The Freedom" and "Petersburg, Liberty Theater, 1914" are the climactic tracks on this disc, but obvious brilliance is shown on all tracks, including "Are You Swimming In Her Pools" and "Shooting Rockets."

The album is reminiscent of the wealth of ability that exists in **Animal Collective**, and the sound bears many resemblances as well. Much like the aforementioned group, the musical power comes as no surprise. I found that while **Swan Lake** is successful in compiling strong indie music, this disc left me wishing for another release from this band. I am not sure whether that rests on the strength of this album or on the knowledge that these people can make even greater music.



Cake on Cake
I Guess I Was

by Ted Quinlan

Cake on Cake. Cake on Cake. Just say it. Imagine such a thing. A cake (with frosting and everything) on top of another cake. Two cakes. Then imagine eating that for a half hour. That is what **Cake on Cake's "I Guess I Was Dreaming" sounds like. Now it is everyone's own choice as to whether they want to eat that. Personally, I can't stand it.**

This album is the pinnacle of cutesy music. Everything from the Casio drum beats to the various bell noises, this album screams socially confused girl in high school. Maybe that's why I don't like it. I'm not a confused young girl. I'm not saying all confused young girls will like this, but I know that there are confused young girls that would love this.

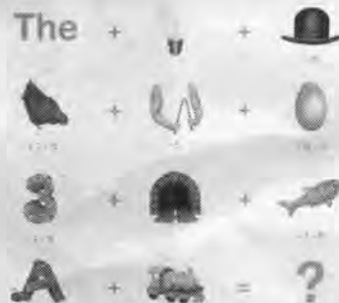
Anyway, This music is basically trying to be as non-threatening as possible without seeming un-hip. It is very hip. In my opinion though, it isn't very good.

So, what can I say about **Cake on Cake** that is positive? The fact that they are non-threatening means that they are easy to listen to without having to pay much attention to them. I can bare them, but I don't want to get involved. Beyond that I can't really praise this album. I think it is boring and sometimes infuriating in terms of its persistent barrage of cuteness.

Whitey

The Light at the End of the Tunnel is a Train

by Justin Leigh



The electro-rock sounds of **Whitey's** new album "The Light at the End of the Tunnel is a Train" is a sonic journey you ought to embark upon—and other clichés. Rough around the edges, yet

rhythmically simple and effective, **Whitey** is reminiscent of the thick drumming and faded vocals of **Joy Division** and **Interpol** while retaining a danceable beat that resonates through even the most half-assed speaker setup.

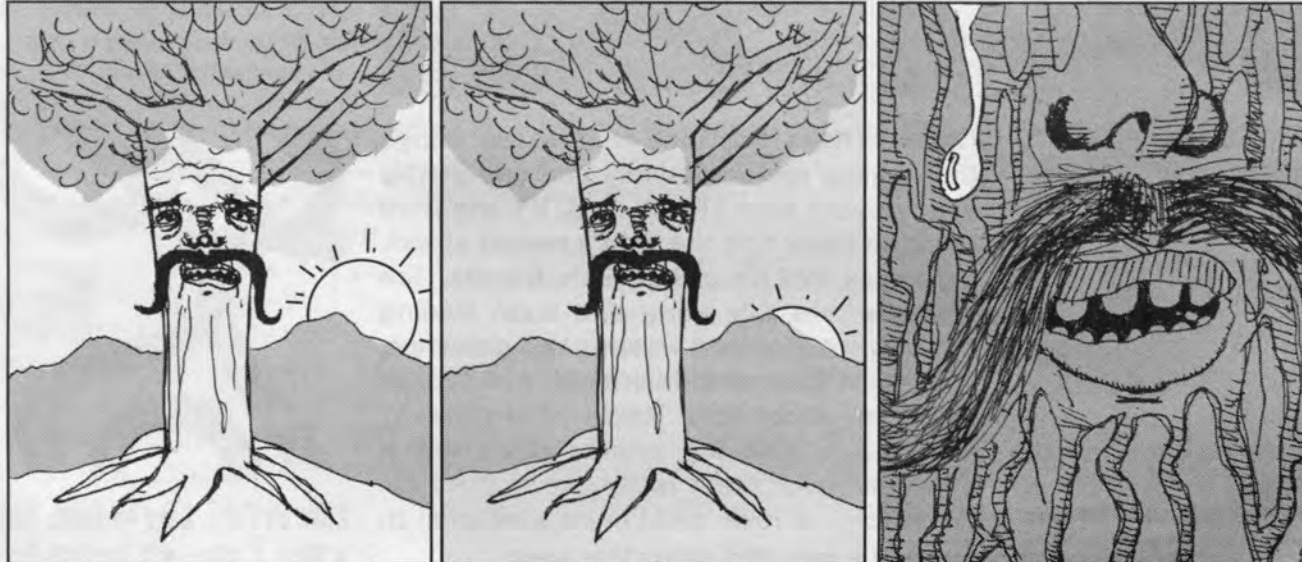
Sounds may loop ad nauseum and synthesized tones may leave you with musical nostalgia, but the album succeeds in its ability to reignite the British techno-electro-pop-rock tradition, with passion and forcefulness. "The Light at the End of the Tunnel is a Train" carefully combines a thick rhythm, subdued lyrics, and choppy drumming into an all-too-familiar musical experience.

Whitey articulates a musical exegesis that not only longs for an almost-forgotten musical past, but it sparks a possible new direction in its genre. Shedding its mytho-musical chains and transcending the electro-musical norms, **Whitey's** album exists as a musical entity of hindered originality and superceding significance. No, I'm kidding. But it's a good album. Check it out.



COMIX

THE ADVENTURES OF TREE FACE!



- Mekko HARJO



- Tyler Dorson



- Dick Richards

MOVIE SCREENINGS

Wed 12.13	Thur 12.14	Fri 12.15	Sat 12.16	Sun 12.17	Mon 12.18	Tue 12.19
Avery 7pm VERTIGO (1958) --ALFRED HITCHCOCK PERSONA (1966) --INGMAR BERGMAN	Avery 7pm TONIGHT I'LL POSSESS YOUR CORPSE (1966) --JOSE MOJICA MARINS FEMALE TROUBLE (1974) --JOHN WATERS Olin 102 6pm THE BEST OF YOUTH (PART II) --MARCO TULLIO GIORDANA Preston 8pm RAINMAN (1988) --BARRY LEVINSON	WEIS DELTA FORCE (1986) --MENAHEM GOLAN DELTA FORCE II (1990) --AARON NORRIS INVASION USA (1985) --JOSEPH ZITO	NO SCREENINGS LISTED	WEIS ONG BAK TAI WARRIOR (2003) --PRACHYA PINKAEW DRUNKEN MASTER (1978) --WOO-PING YUEN ENTER THE DRAGON (1973) --ROBERT CLOUSE Avery 7pm EXISTENZ (1999) --DAVID CRONENBERG	NO SCREENINGS LISTED	Avery 7pm MONSOON WEDDING (2001) --MIRA NAIR