Fun With Finance

As one leaves college and enters the mainstream of America, one must come to the important realization that money is all-powerful and extremely useful. Rather than delving into what the latest information about the food service is let's examine some important aspects of financial planning.

Preaching about how to make money from scratch is the stuff that economic voodoo masters. For now let's say that the majority of students will eventually graduate. But not all. The secret of wealth is not getting a great job the first time. The secret lies in getting a job and learning what to do with your income. Saving money is key. Too often the bright and idealistic among us get a reasonable job, then rush out to get all the essentials that the advertising media has sold them. But if they can't afford it now, credit, the holy matriarch of the deficit economy, is available. The American dream has become a reality of new cars, new homes, new apartments, and electric appliances of every sort. There's nothing wrong with that if you can afford it, but if you are living on someone else's money, the first time you are unable to make a payment, you will find out that the creditors own your slice of the American dream.

Economic disasters attack from every direction. Unemployment, sudden illness, marriage, pregnancy and, even car repairs can cause terrible ripples in the money stream. The key here is investing time in thinking about the consequences of your actions. "It's a lot easier to scrimp and save is you are a solitary mouth to feed. The easiest way to save money is by not trying to impress people. It's a hard road. Pick up lines like "Hey baby, want to see my Porsche?" work much better than "Hey baby, want to see my T-66?"

I digress. In this issue we will examine mutual funds. Over the past ten years mutual funds have found themselves in a good position to create high returns for their clients. Putting some of your investment capital into this kiddy fund is always a good thing. Provided you can find a good one. The performance of a mutual fund in economic disaster is the best indicator of its dependability. Last October, when the stock market went its comeuppance, certain funds managed to stem the disaster. The best among these were Shearson Lehman Multiple Opportunity (+0.02, return percentage), Righttime (-1.66), and Valley Forge (-4.65). Some of the worst hit funds were: 44 Wall Street, Equity (-49.62), USAA Gold (-40.95), and Financial Strategic Gold (-40.78). The average drop for stock funds was 23.11 percent.

So much for bad news. The October battle did not lose the war for many funds, and they have reinvested in stocks that are now nearer to their appropriate values. Some of the overall top performers over the past year include: Dreyfus Strategic Aggressive (its net assets of 122 million earned 28.01 percent increase); Deltcap Concept I Series, whose net assets of 99 million earned a 14.71 increase; and Franklin Custodian-Dynasty, with net assets of 33 billion, earned 12.64 percent increase.

These are just suggestions based on past performance. The best way to shop for a mutual fund is examine the kind of investments to see if your potential fund is buying into. Diversity is always important. The most attractive thing about the Dreyfus funds, for example, is their ability to switch to gold, bonds, utilities, or oil. Whatever looks best in the present financial environment is exploited.

The need to shop wisely when investigating a

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Aftermath of Snow War

by Christopher Scott Martin

Annandale-on-Hudson. Last Tuesday was the first major snowfall of the season and the time for the third annual Bard/Moonie snowball fight. The tradition was started by ex-Dean of Students, David Parker, in order to promote better understanding between Bard students and the Moonies, who operate a commune down the road from the college in Barrytown. The tradition has held well until this year.

"When the fight was over, I looked around for my roommate Jerry, but I didn't see him," stated sophomore Catherine Punt. "I figured she had gone off to the coffee shop or something, but when she didn't show up for three days, I really began to worry. It was then that I found out other students were missing too."

Reportedly, the snowball fight was going well for the Bard team from the start. They had entrenched themselves at the top of the hill below Stone Row dormitories and had several solid snowballs and a good supply of ammunition, while the Moonies were on the unstrategic bottom of the hill by Annandale Road. About an hour into the fight, it was apparent that the number of combatants on the Bard side was thinning. "At first I thought, you know, that people were just getting cold and were leaving," said junior Erich Caruso, a regular participant in the fights.

"None of us dreamed that we were being kidnapped one by one by suicide squads of Moonies disguised as Bard students. It could have been me."

There is as yet no proof that the Moonies are behind the disappearances. Police are investigating.

"Yeah, everybody blames the Moonies," commented Dutchess County Sheriff Ian Bing when asked about the investigation. "The kids probably just got together and took off for Boston or something. We'll look into it, though."

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More Snow
Financing

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A mutual fund rests in the knowledge that all funds are not alike. Over the past ten years the average fund has performed well, netting 33% compared to the S&P 500 which has netted 31%. However, over the past five years S&P has done better, and especially in the last year the market has outperformed the funds. Instead it should sharpen the buyer. Out of over 800 mutual funds to choose from, only 10% are where the smart money should go. These funds generally have $100 million to work with, and have little or no charge for buying into or out of them.

The final tip about mutual funds is never take anyone's advice as law. Find out about what you are getting into before you spend the money. To recap; Get some money and invest that money wisely.

Not all money should wind up in mutual funds either. By placing eggs into multiple baskets the greatest safety is assured. As a suggestion: 35% of investable income should go to a mutual fund; 20% should go to an international bond fund; 25% should go into the domestic market; and 15% should go into the international market. As a safety, spending a buck in the Lotto isn't a bad idea.

Next issue: the merits of insider trade rumors for giving employers anxiety attacks.

Learning

continued from page 2

You hate. You will never learn to like the teacher, but you will learn to hate the subject. Never put your faith in human nature. Never trust anyone you think has your best interests at heart.

Take a nap each day. That's why they invented classes.

Eat food unfit for iguanas, then complain about the wait to get it, and the size of the portion.

Maintain your ideals, but be sure the price tag is well-marked.

Be kind to strangers; ignore the people closest to you.

Speak not unto people that God rendered tasteless.

Let the lazy and unfit for academic life goof off and get by for three and a half years, then demand results. Fail the little buggers; after all there is a fortune to be made in creating your own customers.

And the number one rule: Money is life. Lie. Rob. Cheat, steal, connive or even work to get it. There is no substitute.

What's it like to be part of the Observer staff?

It's an adventure!

It's expense accounts, business lunches, exotic travel, meeting attractive people, accumulating experience and being a working part of the world's best little newspaper.

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Observer Classifieds

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GAPL UnInc.: Cold soda to drink! Unhealthy junk-food to eat! Computer disk to save your worthless thoughts upon! Up-to-date PM records by people you've never heard of! All for only slightly insane prices! Tewksbury 219, open most nights until midnight.

Spooky-Peep: Why ever did you have to be born a freshman? CSM

Bard Weekly: Thank you for not publishing. From the community, with love.


Everyone: Quality Is Slavery. — EIC, TBO.

Dear Blonde: In the night my soul cries out for you. In the sunshine my essence cries out to you. A screaming inferno of words cannot escape. I cannot find the courage to unleash the desire. Loving you is killing me. I hope it never ends. — hopeful romantic


WANTED: a beautiful, sensuous, intelligent, interesting, caring, loving, wealthy woman to take me home for the summer, sleep with me, and buy me lots of neat stuff. Send application, references, and photo to the Observer care of "Optimistic".

WANTED: Slave labor. Must be willing to freeze to death walking around campus, chase and detain psychopaths, and deal with hostile administration. Apply to security.
Why We Are, What We Are

What is the function of a college newspaper? Initially, it is designed to take up room in desolate and otherwise vacant mailboxes. Ideally, it is supposed to represent a forum for issues that are of concern to the college students. This is most useful to editors of major newspapers as it keeps the amount of childish rhetoric reduced to those peoples who do not have a collegiate blackboard to express their ideals. The founders of the college, and those persons who pump money into the system probably envisioned a journalistic body of excited students, who not only expressed a desire to explore the limits of their ideas, but wished to experiment, work, and learn from the field of journalism. Any such persons holding such convictions surely had their dreams shattered by the track record of the Observer.

Looking back at the early days of the Observer, and especially at my early years with the company, people in support of this newspaper were numerous. The first meeting of the paper traditionally brings hordes of concerned students who have always dreamed of working on their college paper. The enthusiasm is incredible until the second week of school. Discovery and rediscovery syndromes attack the first weekend of the new term. The veterans rediscover the comforts of rampant binging on sex, drugs, and alcohol. Responsibility is shirked as people remember that they are on a four-year vacation. Others discover subtle rules about working on a newspaper that they never expected. The most notable discoveries include one's inability to remove office equipment, the unreasonable nervousness of spending the entire budget upon a toga party, and the fact that the really cute guys and girls don't spend their time in a dreary basement office. Nightly parties designed to abuse sex, drugs, and alcohol are generally better crowd drawers.

To be the Editor-in-chief of the Observer requires a dedication to the principals of journalism. It also requires an aversion to abused parties. Actually it requires the beautiful people's avariciousness to my invitation. Vengeance is its own reward and as a result I intend to bring a new style to the Observer. Primarily the greatest effort of this new style will be a paper every two weeks. The basis of this soon-to-be-great achievement lies in a great compromise, and an adherence to the first commandment: every two weeks regardless of content, and even if we have to print blank pages. The compromise, as you now realize, is quality. However, quality it's cracked up to be, and honestly, to paraphrase a presidential hopeful (hal! I'm in charge now) I heard the curious among you ask, "That's nice; but what does it mean to me?" Good question. It means that in the absence of actual news the editor is likely to go on in long-winded and utterly pointless tirades. Since most of you have gone through freshman seminar, you'll more than likely be used to this. Another important point I should make is that my cynical wit is not intended to be malicious. If any persons, groups, or nations become offended, I'd just like to say life's tough.

At this point I would like to address the principles of journalism. The art of journalism is best expressed by its placement as the fourth estate. As I subscribe to the ideals of newspaper mogul Rupert Murdoch, the Observer shall not attempt to rise above its station. However, this does not have a great effect upon the editorial policies of the Observer.

As usual we are more than willing to print articles and letters that have opposing viewpoints. A mix of ideas helps represent the campus. Expletives will not be pubbed in their original form. As usual they will be partially blocked (**K* th**) or otherwise transformed. Although the Observer does not regard itself as a forum for artwork, it will be open to relevant forms of artistic expression. A poem about a relevant social or political issue or alternatively a drawing of the same, will always be considered. Photographs are an important part of any newspaper, a picture is worth a thousand words, and in our present format a thousand words is worth 143 square inches. As such we hope to make a photographic talent of the community, and plans are in the works for several photographic contests.

On behalf of the entire staff, such as it is, I hope you enjoy the new direction of the Observer. We also hope you will contribute and help to make this paper a growing part of the community.

The Bridge From The Bottom

The Bard Observer
Established 1895

This Paper was brought to you by...

Michael Damato
Editor-in-Chief

Pete Stone
Managing Editor

v1 Production Editor

Christopher S. Martin
Photo Editor

Michele Norris
Managing Editor

Jim Hart
Associate Editor

And I wish to thank all the little people too numerous to be mentioned here. God bless you all.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: FEBRUARY 10
Letters, We Get Letters

Dear Editor,

There is nothing more terrifying than a first date. How can I avoid making the wrong impression?

---RVS.

Yes, Virginia, there is no disaster that can compare with the first date. Natural disasters cause nature to go berserk. People don’t call them to invite you to an apocalypse. You don’t have to smell nice for a hijacking. People aren’t concerned with table manners during an earthquake. You don’t have to be charming and witty during a fire.

Impressions are important. Here’s a list of things to do if you wish to create a bad impression.

1. Describe in detail any problems in your family, your illness, or dieting.
2. Leave a copy of Modern Bride out.
3. Mention your love for expensive sports cars, especially when you are driving a Peugeot.
4. Say hello to 42 other women while on the date.
5. Describe all past boyfriends as mentally unbalanced.

For men:

1. Point out every attractive woman you pass.
2. Casually mention that your last girlfriend was a model, and that she posed for fashion magazines.
3. Then mention that you’re not into looks anymore.
4. Be subtle about how much money you have. If you have the adjuster make an appointment for the insurance company.
5. Then say you left your gold card in your other pocket. It will go up the check.

On first dates people generally don’t say their money. "I need time" usually means time to find someone else. "Go slow" means go away. "I don’t want to tie up my life" means you’re an anchor I don’t want around my neck.

These are the three lie lines that everyone uses on the first date. "It happened a long time ago and I’m over him/her now." "I don’t care where we eat." "I usually don’t act like this." "You’re not fat." "Really, you look fine." "I’ve never told this to anyone before." "I had a hard time telling you about my Mom/dad/child/etc."

Finally, there is one rule that should always be observed. Never under any circumstances say, "I make a great second impression."

10 Things That Make Me Laugh, Part one of a series

I talked to my friend Milt over January. Since he is a loyal Cornillian and would-be journalist, we eventually got into a debate about freedom of expression. Milt felt that the larger institutions of America provided more freedom of expression because the individual had to struggle. I believe that hiding from whatever forces-besides the man—was easy in Cornell. Milt stated that as such he was immune to the tribulations of the world. Therefore he was free to walk up to the President of Cornell and say, "I don’t like Raymond Johnson." I was so taken aback and surprised to see him in the quiet close sector of Annadale, I was equally free to walk up to the President of Bard and say, "I don’t like Raymond Johnson."

A friend of mine from back home ran into some trouble with the law when backed into a stationary telephobe. Whether or not it was because he had been drinking can only be assumed. Regardless, the DMV refused his license until the courts might decide otherwise.

Someone up there was looking out for him, for as the trial came, the files of records were lost. My friend went free thinking that things were looking up. Months passed. He was picked up out ofobre speeding in upstate New York, and because he was driving outside the limitations of his license, his license was suspended.

To understand the ramifications of this, one must understand the scope of my hometown. Manorville was created based upon the saying, "You can’t get there from here." It’s a six mile walk to the nearest bus station. Trains do not run in Manorville. Cold weather makes it impossible to walk or ride a bike anywhere. And finally, there is nothing in Manorville. In other words, if you don’t have a license, you don’t have a life.

College was thirty miles away for my friend. However, this didn’t seem to matter because work was ten to fifteen miles away, and with no job, he couldn’t get the money to go to school. The put undue strain on the already tense relations at home.

So, what the justice system seemed to miss, nature grasped and wreaked vengeance upon. I never realized that my hometown could become a prison.

Another thing that makes me laugh is certain people’s knowledge of events. A year or so ago I was sitting in a film class, watching a documentary on the 1960 elections, and the race between John Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey. The film depicted the midst primary, and Humphrey’s subsequent success. Humphrey was depicted in such a positive light that a woman sitting behind me was inspired to ask, "When was Hubert Humphrey President?" Sometimes I worry about the future of America.

What We Learn

A wise man once wrote that all of life’s rules were learned in kindergarten, that there was a proper balance of goodness and sharing in days of utter simplicity. If you do not consider the force the rules we live by, but the rules change when we add twenty years. Caring about human beings is replaced by jurisprudence, and its own way college opened my eyes to this. What was once a naive campus with friendly ideas evolved into a lycanthropically grow jungle. The simple ones with no particular place to grow up don’t see that four years at Bard is a lifetime of experience in the big world. As such I’d like to offer my views of what I’ve learned here.

Never be afraid to criticize. The more you denigrate the work around you, the better yours will appear.

Make good friends. Friends who have cars, money you can borrow, stuff you can use, and shoulders you can cry on. Be sure to use them more than they use you. Talk about friendship lasting forever, knowing full well that you never want to see these people again.

Spread rumors faithfully. If you hear about someone’s sexual inadequacies, be sure to tell everyone you know. Why would someone tell you if it wasn’t true?

Act really concerned about the problems of your acquaintance from the very beginning. Apparently, they know that they can bring their problems to you. Then talk about that person behind their back. Everyone appreciates new gose.

Make a lot of promises, then forget to deliver.

Never fall in love with Art or Philosophy majors.

Never study a subject you like with a teacher continued on page 4