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Poisons, proteins and progress

Distinguished Scientist Heinz Fraenkel-Conrat

Last Saturday afternoon, molecular biologist Heinz Fraenkel-Conrat delivered the final installment of the Distinguished Scientist Lectures for 1993. Professor emeritus of the University of California at Berkeley, Fraenkel-Conrat's distinctions include the first California Scientist of the Year Award and membership in the National Academy of Science.

Entitled "A Scientist Looks Back," Fraenkel-Conrat's talk described some of the interesting circumstances and peculiar experiences surrounding some of his scientific achievements. His recollections painted a portrait of the bio-chemical scientific community of fifty years ago.

Born in Germany and educated in England, Fraenkel-Conrat left his research position at the American Rockefeller Institute in 1937 after only one year because, "my conclusions did not fit with everyone else's." He then traveled to Brazil to join his family who had fled to South America to flee Nazi repression in Germany. There he worked with his brother in law to study poisonous snake venoms and the production of vaccines.

In those days, what are now known as "molecular biologists" were entitled "protein chemists." Analyzing various neurotoxic venoms, Fraenkel-Conrat discovered that the poison was not a steroid as previously expected, but a protein. Work was also done to break down the venom, which was revealed to be a combination of two proteins.

"What we thought was pure was actually two very different components," said Fraenkel-Conrat.

His investigation of snake venom at the level of proteins set the stage for his next work at the Institute of Experimental Biology at the University of California, Berkeley. (Fraenkel-Conrat would remain a professor at Berkeley until his retirement.) Research foundations attached to public universities were just beginning in those times before World War II.

In 1942, at the Federal Department of Agriculture laboratory, Fraenkel-Conrat commented that he and his colleagues had "visions of applied research." He raised the question of how much a scientist is allowed to pursue research which may not have an apparent utility. Working with chicken feathers and insulin, they investigated how modification of proteins would result in a loss of biological activity.

It was here that he found the self-confessed "high point" of his studies: he met his future wife, who was first described to him as intelligent but difficult to get along with.

Some of Fraenkel-Conrat's most famous achievements have concerned his experiments with viruses. The tobacco mosaic virus (TMV), in particular, was the subject of much scrutiny and discovery at Berkeley.

continued on page 3
The holiday spirit

Gift Ideas for friends, family and others

*WARNING: This is an editorial, not an article.*

What, only seventeen shopping days left until Christmas and you still have not gotten something for everyone on your shopping list? Well, cheer up! The Mall has extended their hours for the holidays, so you have a means of transportation and there's still plenty of opportunity to make purchases.

What do you not know what you should buy? Well, relax! Here's some simple, inexpensive suggestions:

For Grandmothers: Something hand-crafted (they really love you’ve made yourself); or something home-baked (they might not eat it themselves, but they’ll enjoy sharing it with their friends).

For Grandfathers: Books, tools, models of old cars, pipes, tobacco, golf or fishing gear (they may be aging, but they’re still men and they still like to have a good time).

For Mothers: Gardening books or tools (if they like working outdoors in their free time), a copy of your best school paper (they’ll know what you do when you’re not at home), knickknacks, or office supplies (it isn’t just your dad whose paying your tuition).

For Fathers: Anything but a tie! Perhaps a computer adventure game, the latest novel written by their favorite author, or (only if you’re really stuck) gloves and/or a scarf.

For Brothers: Nintendo/Sega games (to keep them out of your hair while you’re home for the holidays), action figures of their “heroes of the week,” or (if they’re in college or about to start) textbooks for next semester (imagine how grateful they will be after they have seen the prices!).

For Sisters: Dolls (but, not Barbie), teddy bears (teddies, if they’re older), candles, incense, craft kits (to keep them out of your hair...), or textbooks for next semester.

For Friends: Something nice, that you can borrow sometime, but make sure they will like it too (one shouldn’t be selfish), or the phone number of a good-looking, good-natured companion.

For Enemies: Coal, toads, or sneezing powder (only you will really know that the gift wasn’t meant to be a gag).

For Lovers: Whatever apparel or tools that you think will make for warm and exciting nights together.

For People You Do Not Know: Anything small (they’ll be overwhelmed that you thought of them no matter what you get).

For Me: How about a nice letter to the editor for a change? Thanks and Merry Christmas!

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UPSTATE FILMS
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KING of the HILL
2 THUMBS UP!
One of the YEAR'S BEST!

The Center for Curatorial Arts Gallery will have the following hours during intercession:

Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays:
1:00-4:00 pm

Saturdays and Sundays:
1:00-5:00 pm

(Reg. Hours until Sun., December 17th)

* Galleries will be closed Monday, December 20th through Friday, January 7th*

THE BARD OBSERVER
December 8, 1993

Office Hours: Sun. & Mon. 9-11 pm located in Tewksbury room 1129 ext. 592 and 553. Counselor may be reached 24 hours 7 days a week by calling security at ext. 440.

Do you need someone to look after you baby, feed you cat/dog, shovel snow in your driveway, organize your computer files, wash your car, cook for guests or edit your memoirs? Second half of December & all January I'm here to do all this & more. Call Zolatan at (914) 752-7518 or 341-9448.


I am seeking a place to stay in the N.Y.C. area during January while I work as a business messenger. I'm a cool guy and more importantly I'll pay rent. Andy Costell 752-7097.

I am seeking any paraphernalia related to the world-famous TV actress, Beatrice Arthur. Any response should be directed to my mailbox, Eric Taylor.

Saturday night at the Rock Party in the Student Center somebody walked off with my silver Zippo. It's encrusted/encrib and has a big-time sentimental value. No questions asked; I'll give you a reward for return. Please, it means a lot to me. Contact Kat Box 794 or 752-7259. Please P.S. If you lost a black umbrella contact me.

The hosts of 2 Hours of Intense Whiplash would like to publicly thank the following people for making our party possible: Albert and Audio Co-op, the BFP, WQBC, Jeana, Ingrid, Andy, Matt, Joy, Tanessa, Kat, Owen, Marilyn, Mary, Noah, and anybody else we may have forgotten. We'd also like to thank Security for their help in getting rid of a few pests. And a big FUCK YOU is in order to the two guys who wanted their money back. Go back to your boring Bard parties, you losers, and leave the real rock music to those who can appreciate it. Look for our show next semester on WXBC. Until then, Anti-Party On!

Attir: All Rocky Horror Fan! Anyone interested in organizing and/or performing at a showdown (next semester) of Rocky Horror, please let me know NOW! 7300.

Female Cat Found! Young, very affectionate with pink bow & white collar. 6 inches and 6 fingers on each paw. VERY GOOD WITH KIDS. If she belongs to you, or you want her call for information 725-7110.

We want you to live with us. We have a beautiful house in Tivoli w/ porch & a lawn & a TV & everything you could want. No smoking in the house, though (we just quit). Reasonable rent, heat's included. Please Call Liz 757-3022.

Will you be living off-campus in Jan.? Would you like a friendly, furry companion? DO you want to make some easy $7? Do you respect the feline psyche? If you answered "yes" to the above questions, please drop me a note in box 751.

Do you need a place to stay between this semester and intercession? Or, Do you need a job during this time? Stay at my apartment for FREE and watch my cats, or, watch my cats and I'll pay you. Call (518) 537-5055 or leave a note in box 438.

SELF DEFENSE WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN Saturday, December 11, 9:30-11:30 am @ Stevenson Gym. To sign up call x654 (by 12/9/93 — Participation is limited to 25). Participants should wear comfortable clothing (pants suggested) and sneakers. Sponsored by: BRAVE and the Women's Center.

Horseback Riding lessons in Tivoli, NY. Indoor ring. $20/half hour. Call Jorge at 757-4400 or Michelle at 203-845-0869.

H. So this is it? I don't know how I'm going to manage this place without you, but you will always be in my heart and on my mind. Too sappy? I don't care; I'm a "little princess." Say hi to the "animals" for me. Love, H.
Ancient Greek

It's a shame Allan Bloom died before seeing a dozen Bard students perform a play by Aristophanes in the original Greek last Monday. He might have rethought his book, The Closing of the American Mind. For this was the spirit of the liberal arts at its finest.

I may have been the only person who came with some hesitation, in the audience of almost eighty people. I had planned to sit patiently and watch my friends until I could decently leave. But I was a fool.

I should have had no reason to doubt. Indeed, the most salient things about the production were its lively humor and charm. The actors mercifully abstained from recitation, and their pronunciation must have been pretty good, since the very head of the Latin Institute in Manhattan laughed throughout its duration.

This adaptation of the first part of "The Frogs" benefited from two charismatic leads, and an amusing Chorus. Mr. Phuc Tran as Dionysus was careful to grasp the comic elements of his part, but not to grasp them so tightly that he would have strangled them. A good thing, too, since this Dionysus was "the god of the theater." Ms. Kelly Messegue delivered her lines energetically as Xanthias, speaking so proudly at times that one almost believed that she had just coined some of the Greek phrases herself. And Time magazine was right. The Chorus of Frogs was a very welcome part of the play, hopping up and down in green get-ups, shouting poetic frog-noises in Greek. They reappeared later, transformed into angelic-looking rockers. Prof. Lisa Raphael led the raucous bunch.

And Prof. Chris Callanan (Producer, Director, and Heraclius) was delightful, both in character and in his revealing costume.

The Frogs was first produced in 405 B.C., when it won first prize in the ancient Greek equivalent of the Tony Awards. Everyone knows that people don't write plays entitled with names like "Frogs" anymore. We are advanced artists, now. We make motion pictures with titles like "Fried Green Tomatoes" and "Mystic Pizza." Yet one could argue that a few millennia from now students will not be performing either "Fried Green Tomatoes" or "Mystic Pizza" in the ancient English.

The Frogs is a satire, and satire as we all know is "anger laughing at its own folly." (Yes, that was Brecht.) Nietzsche abolished conventional notions of morality, so, too, has Bard abolished conventional notions of pretentiousness. And the performers of the play caught the satiric spirit in a superb fashion. Again, the names of those other student-actors are Jake MacPhail, Clinton Adams, John Vawson, Tint Krause, Alex London, Donna Meyer, Rachel Pearsall, Dean Barker, and Jeff Verkouille. (With guest star Sean Callanan.) Driven with masterly nonchalance, these young men and women disbelievingly persist in their aspirations to restore the Greek language to immortal fame.

And now for the Big Question. Why do these students study Greek? For outsiders, it has more novelty than utility, but for classicists, it is their art, just as Mr. Leon Beststein does not live for college administration, but lives instead for his art of classical music, so also is it that these students do not live for "more useful" subjects, but for practicing their art of classical language. It's their thing, so to speak. And, fortunately for all concerned, they do their thing well.

Scientist continued

continued from front page

Fraenkel-Conrat explained that, at the time, it was not known whether or not viruses were organisms or molecules. They were referred to as "organelles." Fraenkel-Conrat's research revealed that viruses are molecular parasites which "have genetic information but have no mechanism to use that information unless they are in a living cell with that mechanism."

By treating the virus with chemicals, it was demonstrated that ribonucleic acid (RNA) was present and that it, not proteins, determines heredity. Looking at the molecular structure of the virus, Fraenkel-Conrat explained how proteins wrap around the RNA. He displayed slides which illustrated models and photographs of various viruses, which ranged in shapes from rods to cotton balls to crystals.

The TMV virus was a pioneer substance for biochemical research. Fraenkel-Conrat listed how this virus demonstrated an orderly arrangement of particles, a sequence which could be studied chemically, and that the RNA carried the biological activity of viral infectivity. As the first nucleic acid analyzed biochemically, RNA, and its cousin nucleic acid, DNA, became the new frontier for genetic research. Previously in his talk, Fraenkel-Conrat mentioned some of his early studies which proved how six different proteins affected different glands of the body, including proteins which stimulated milk production and growth. Some of his associates joked that this isolated growth hormone should be sold to make short people taller. Fraenkel-Conrat conceded that the process would be too expensive and, probably, unsuccessful.

However, the jest prophesied an controversial issue in our own day. Modern science can use the lactogenic protein to increase cows' production of milk by 50%. Someday soon, only the ethical question will remain—whether or not we should interfere with natural genetics once science has shown us how.

The following films are being presented this weekend by the Film Committee in the Old Gym:

Friday Delicatessen
Sunday To Have and Have Not

Come to the Movies!

Please Recycle this Paper!
Another View unbard love by Sean O’Neill

It is intermission at the Bard Music Department’s last open concert of the semester at Blum. Luis Garcia-Renart is outside, talking desperately to Nadine, who is visibly upset.

“I don’t understand, Nadine. You’ve spent the last two weeks creating this piece. You were so proud about it when you told me you wanted to play it. What’s changed?”

“I wrote it for someone,” says Nadine. “Someone I cared about. Someone I thought cared about me. I’m sorry, Luis. Don’t make me play it. Please. This all hurts too much.”

“Oh, Nadine,” he says.

“It’s time to start the second half,” says a violinist.

“Thank you,” he says. “Nadine, I am not going to make you perform, but I think you should know that such a lovely piece written by such a lovely young lady deserves to be heard.”

He pats her on the back and walks in to introduce the performers. She walks on the path to the front of the hall, underneath the windows. The music begins, and she starts to cry.

Minh rushes up to her.

“I don’t want to talk to you,” hisses Nadine. “What are you doing here? Why aren’t you with your new friend Colby?”

“You have to listen to me,” says Minh, in a hushed voice. “It’s all been a terrible misunderstanding.”

“You can say that again. I thought you were my friend. And I thought he honestly liked you. You two made me look like such a total fool.”

Colby and I are not interested in each other. You never told him that you had decided you liked him. He saw you and Basil, and he was jealous. He wanted to hurt you back.”

“Who, the both of you certainly did. Wasn’t it good for you, Minh?”

Colby and I didn’t even kiss or hug, let alone sleep together. I’m your friend, Nadine. Can’t you understand?”

“With friends like you, I can’t wait to meet your enemies.”

“Maybe now you know how Colby felt when he saw you making out with Basil. We weren’t making out, Minh! He was upset over killing that stupid cat. I was trying to comfort him.”

“Was it good for you, Nadine?”

“I told you, it was innocent. Totally innocent!”

“And I’m telling you that it is the same with me and Colby.”

Silence, except for the music.

“Nadine, you have to play the song you wrote.”

“How do you know about it?”

“Luis told me. Please, you’ve figured out your feelings. You have a right to let the rest of the world know. Nadine, that’s why I’m your friend. You’re a strong woman. And that’s not a joke.”

Nadine looks at her intensity and then hugs her.

“T’m sorry about what I said, Minh. You’re the best friend in the whole world. You’re the only real friend I have.”

“That’s not true. You have many friends, Nadine, and they all come to hear you play the piano, and they’re waiting inside.”

“Is Colby in there?”

“Yes.”

Nadine hesitates. But then she follows her inside.

Garcia-Renart stands up, a few minutes later, before the crowd.

“There’s been a change in the order, tonight. I would like to introduce now Miss Nadine Sorensen, who will play an original composition.”

Nadine steps forward to the piano, sits down, swivels her head, shakes her hands, and hops up and down on the stool. The crowd laughs at her familiar ritual.

“This song, I wrote it for someone who has taught me what it means to be in love. This is for Colby Sprague.”

The crowd lets out several half-mocking “ooohs,” and the people sitting next to the shushed Colby hit him on the head with their rolled up programs, lightly beating him.

She lifts her hands, the crowd quiets, and she begins.

The piece is long and intricate, and she builds a steady bass rhythm with her left hand as the fingers of her right hand gracefully strike their keys with seeming abandon. A conversation between the low and the high notes develops. At first, one interrupts the other. Later, the two melodies meld together into one. Nadine ends her piece with a flourish.

The crowd gives resounding applause. Nadine looks at the crowd, and the many familiar faces. She sees Colby clapping the hands.

After the other two performances, many people walk up and congratulate Nadine. She feels quiet and calm, very unlike herself, taking the hugs with thanks. She is surprised to see Basil.

“A fine performance,” he says with a weak smile. He leaves the hall.

Colby walks up and hugs her.

“Did you really like it?” she asks.

“Yes,” he says. “I loved it.”

“I’m sorry about not being more aware of your feelings.”

“Same here.”

“You were incredible,” says Minh, interrupting. “I was sitting there next to tone-deaf James Beale and even he knew it was good.”

“Thanks, Minh,” says Nadine. “This might sound crazy, but I want both of you to visit me over intercession.”

“An uncomfortable pause.”

“What’s the matter? You don’t like Delaware?”

“No, it’s not that,” says Colby. “But I was angry, and I wanted to get as far away from Bard as possible, so I signed up on a program with Professor Greene to do it.”

“How far away is ‘as far away as possible’?” asks Nadine.

“Tibet,” says Professor Greene. “Professor Greene is researching the Yeti, the Abominable Snowman, and I’ve already agreed to work with her.”

“Tibet?”

“Probably until next September,” he says.

“Unless we find the furball sooner.”

“But I thought, I thought . . .”

“I know, but I’ll return. It’ll work out for the best. Remember, separation makes the heart grow fonder. I love you, Nadine.”

“How can you say you love me, if you don’t get out of this stupid mess?”

“I’m sorry, Nadine. It hurts me, too. But it’s too late to get out.”

“T at least I will visit you, Nadine,” says Minh.

“Minh is going to go to France this summer,” says Colby. “Maybe you could do some travelling, too. Even when the money’s tight, things can be arranged. They transferred my scholarship.”

“Come back to my room, Colby,” says Nadine. “This is all too much. There’s too much that still needs to be said.”

Sure, Nadine.

And the three walk off into the night and an uncertain future with only hope, love, and a song to sustain them. A sentimental ending. It must be unbard love.

Nefarious Necromancy

Sagittarius (Nov 22-Dec 21): Why do birds suddenly appear, everywhere you are near? This week everyone will smile at you when you walk down the street, even animals will be happy to see you.

Capricorn (Dec 22-Jan 19): Get in touch with your creative side this week; try using it on your papers and bibliographies, or just in bed with your lover. Do things you’ve only fantasized.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb 19): Do you feel like a load has been lifted off your shoulders? Try doing a tango or a cha-cha, see how much lighter your heart and soul have become.

Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20): Call someone you love long distance, or write them a letter; communication is important now. Make plans soon.

Aries (Mar 21-Apr 19): This week will be glorious if you don’t flake out on your verbal commitments. Remember that ringling promise you made weeks ago and keep putting off. Do it.

Taurus (Apr 20-May 20): I like the new look, take it a step further, take it all a step further, don’t let your fear of the precipice keep you from leaping into your life feet first.

Gemini (May 21-Jun 21): Are you torn about a big decision? Weigh both sides of the issue carefully. Don’t just flip a coin and think about what the consequences of your actions will be.

Cancer (Jun 22-Jul 22): Don’t leave behind everything you care about on a whim, and don’t expect too much from a virtual stranger. Wait till the mood swings stop before burning any bridges.

Leo (Jul 23-Aug 22): “What a wonderful world!” Look around; sure the beginning of winter is stark and cold but there is great beauty in a single snowflake. Watch the wheel of life turn.

Virgo (Aug 23-Sep 22): You know when you bite into a juicy nectarine, and the juice runs down your chin and you catch it with the side of your hand and lick your fingers? Well, this week love life will be like that if you’re daring.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct 22): “Here’s wishing you the bluest skies” Concentrate on the problem areas of your life and change them. I know that better things are on your way.” Look for them.

Scorpio (Oct 23-Nov 21): You little lust puppets—didn’t I warn you about being careful? Don’t neglect other aspects of your life. Don’t forget finals and don’t ignore the emotional needs of your partner.
Another View

Dead Goat Notes

The following column does not necessarily represent the opinions of the Observer staff. It does, however, represent their good taste, high intelligence and diverse wit.

This is my final column. I’ve got to write a lot of pithy statements for your deathbeds so that people will remark on how profound your last words were. And then you write words usually end up being something like “Dr. Kervokian, your bill is much too high anyway.”

I remembered why I came to Bard three and a half years ago. I picked Bard because my guidance counselor said it was too liberal and loosely structured for me. I never once regretted that decision. I had already been accepted early into the University of Miami (please hold down the applause) and my over-paid guidance counselor told me not to expect any better. So I fished around for a while looking for a school that I thought was better than Miami. Just about every school was the same. Boring, Catalogs, boring classes, boring modern and well-structured facilities, boring numbers, and files that sometimes pretended to be students. I knew Bard was different because it had the only form letter that was signed in real ink by a real Director of Admissions. Many people don’t know this but the Director of Admissions at Vassar is just a fictional person whose name was chosen because the printer already had a rubber stamp made out with that signature on it.

But I digress. Now I am about to leave and I’ve learned so much here. I learned that Adolf Hitler was a vegetarian. I learned that my guidance counselor in high school was wrong when he said that Latin was a useless language and that I used to take Spanish. Considering all that I have learned, I have decided instead of leave you with a bit of advice. First, lighten up. No ideology is so important that it is above ridicule.

Greg Giacco
Featured Columnist

Shameless Filler!

I received this document from some friends working in the literary underground. It’s the work of a woman who is desperate to release the truth to the public, no matter how inconvenient that truth might be.

For the last twenty years or so, I have worked undercover with the US Postal Service, North Pole division. My post had only one busy time during the year, and I worked alone at the stamp-tacker’s desk.

This gave me the opportunity to read some of Mr. Claus’s responses to children’s letters. I present them here, fully aware of the implications of my actions. An investigation is pending, and I plan to hide out with Salmon Rushdie for a few years.

The goats below are real. Only the names have been changed to protect the naughty and the nice.

Dear Frances,
Thank you for the list. It will come in handy. I cannot promise a purple pony, but I’ll see what I can do.

Deer Yolanda,
I mark the naughty and nice incidents during the year in my book in indelible ink. However, thank you for the nice eraser.

With love,
Santa

Dear Dwayne,
I know you have doubts about my existence, but please do not address your letters to Santa Claus.

Occasen, North Pole
Whoomp (there it is), Santa

Dear Sarah & Gannivere,
No, the number of gifts given is not determined by the amount of space under the tree, so I suggest you two cancel your secret trip to Rockefeller Plaza.

 yours truly,
Santa

Dear Steven,
Don’t worry about the fact that your apartment complex only has fake fireplaces in the living rooms. The doorman and I are good friends.

Jolliet,
Santa

Dear Sam and Patrice,
Sorry, I don’t do weddings. Besides, you’re young, yet. Live a little. Let me measure you, there is life after sixth grade, so don’t try cram it all into a few short years.

Love,
Santa

In which we glance beneath the tinsel

Dear Robin,
Thank you for your concern. Yes, Rudolph is doing well. He is resting at the Betty Ford Clinic, and his nose’s color has decreased drastically. Soon, he will receive his clean and sober badge, and he will once again join my team.

Mrs. Claus is my designated driver, by the way, and my sleigh has recently been fitted for airbags, you will be pleased to note.

Have a Safe Holiday,
Santa

Dear Beth,
Yes, I can see you when you’re sleeping and I know when you’re awake. However, that’s no reason not to take a bath.

Santa

Dear Samantha,
Thank you so much for the wonderful homemade cookies you left for me last year. They were indeed delicious, and I am pleased you wrote to ask me what kind of drink I would like this year. Well, all things considered, since you’re one of the last hundred holidays I visit, I think Santa would be extra-special happy (and generous) if you left him a six pack.

Ho Ho Ho!
Santa

by Matt Gilman

A page of unedited observations by guest writers

(914) 876-4524
44 Old post Rd.
Rhinebeck, N.Y.

David C. Shiffman, Ph.D.
Psychologist
Bard Alumnus, Class of ’61

THE BARD OBSERVER
December 8, 1993
Another View

For the common good of both faculty and students

by Reneé Cramer

As chair of the Educational Policies Committee, and also as a radical political actor committed to change through direct action, negotiation, and conversation, I must respond to the letter written by a group of students to the Executive Committee, regarding student access to faculty meetings.

Let me begin by pointing out a fallacy in their letter. The letter states, "The Student Forum has always been open to members of the faculty and administration. This must be qualified. Faculty and administration are indeed able to attend a student forum, but at any time during the meeting, one can say 'I have to leave.' The students at the Forum may ask that the faculty or administrator present leave. A vote of the Student Forum can remove any non-member present at the Forum."

This is exactly the same process by which the faculty at the meeting when the group of students in question was asked to leave. The students then had their "right" to attend faculty meetings on an imagined "right" of faculty to attend student forums are simply wrong. There is no such right, nor, in my opinion, should there be. I do not want faculty or administration to be able to sit in every forum meeting that they wish to — we need a space of our own to handle our business, to formulate our opinions and options, before taking those opinions and options to the faculty or the administration.

The Educational Policies Committee does, as the students writing the letter correctly pointed out, have the privilege of a student observer at faculty meetings. We have chosen not to exercise this right for three broad reasons: politics, respect, and pragmatism.

Pragmatism: Not much gets done in open faculty meetings. The really important stuff happens in executive session, closed session, Leon's office, the faculty dining room, search committees, the Faculty Senate, and the squash court. We get more information from, and have more impact with, individual professors and administrators on a one-on-one basis, and by presenting the faculty with well-reasoned arguments, conversations, and resolutions.

Respect: We respect the need of the faculty to have a formal space in which they can meet to air their views and argue with or compliment each other as they see fit. They deserve the privacy to conduct their business without a bunch of eyes upon them. This is their space to do so.

Politics: To be blunt — we all find out quite a bit of "good" information about faculty activity from the faculty themselves. Anyone with a close advisor or faculty mentor knows that conversations can move easily from you project/moderation/tenure, to their curriculums, tenure decisions, and good old fashioned gossip. Better, let’s be honest — the real power at this school is held by a small number of people in Ludlow. Access to faculty meetings will not increase student power. We need to recognize who our natural allies are — the faculty, and work to form strong alliances with them. Showing up unannounced and uninvited at their meetings is counterproductive, and alienates the very people we want to engage.

However, the arguments raised by these students are more subtle than I have thus far addressed, and their ideas are deserving of more attention. They speak to a real problem in Bard's student government — lack of student power.

These students blame this lack of power on representative democracy, "we do not represent anyone — administration, faculty, or even an individual student." I do not see the problem as one of structural democracy — but rather one of a lack of legitimacy given the student body's decisions by faculty, and, primarily, by the administration.

Let me explain.

Bard's student government is neither a pure representative democracy nor a direct participatory democracy. Every member of the student body has a vote in the Forum. The elected members of student government are not "representatives" — they do not cast votes in place of students in any issue. In representative democracy, citizens vote for other citizens, to whom they surrender their right to vote on other issues. This is not the model upon which Bard's government is built.

However, because there are students elected to committees, and those committees voice student concerns and make decisions on behalf of the student body, we can't call the student association a completely direct democracy. Yet I do not feel that the system's shortcomings silence any portion of the student body. Note: ANY student can attend, speak, and vote at every Forum.

ANY student can serve on, or form new committees.

ANY student can call for the removal ("impeachment") of any elected "representative"/committee member.

By choosing not to attend forums, an individual is choosing not to participate directly in Bard Student Government.

EVERY STUDENT (theoretically) has the power to effect change.

The problem is not, immediately, with the structure of our democracy — it is with what happens after we have participated, voted, and voiced our opinions. Sometimes we are not listened to. It is then that we MUST mobilize. Here is an example.

The Educational Policies Committee, in conjunction with the entire student body, and a large portion of the faculty, has had great luck in getting things changed and in mobilizing students. Our fight against the mandatory fee, the pre-approved curriculums, which asked for the direct participation of the entire community and received an overwhelming 43% response rate, resulted in an entirely new policy committee — one which is listening to student opinion.

However, we might be coming against a stronger force in the faculty and administration — one that might require a direct action on the part of concerned students. The Forum recently passed a resolution requesting that the faculty change their handbook, to allow students to submit anonymous letters and testimony in tenure and re-hiring decisions. The majority of the faculty is overwhelmingly opposed to this change, but we are committed to having students' voices heard.

Our efforts on the curriculum stayed within "conventional" bounds - a poll was taken, a Forum held, a report filed, and argument offered. Our efforts on behalf on an anonymity policy might need to leave the bounds of conversation. This would not be because our student government failed — it would be because we were not listened to.

The problem is not our form of democracy, it may lie in the collective answer to the question, "how far are we willing to take things in order to ensure that the faculty and administration respect our democratic structure and the products of our labor?"

I have participated politically and in my communities in numerous ways. I have voted, written letters, brought food to people who took over campus buildings, written press releases, risked arrest in civil disobedience, registered people to vote, and picketed. They are all forms of direct participation. I view the Bard student Forum as one more place to directly participate in day to day life at Bard. It is a place to begin talking, as a community, about what we need to do to make Bard "OURS". The students write, "the faculty meeting is one setting in which decisions affecting students are made." I agree that the Forum is another setting in which decisions affecting students are made — and these decisions are made by STUDENTS. I believe that we can accomplish more by attending forums, and by being willing to put ourselves on the line, in unconventional ways (yes, taking over buildings, student strikes, and sit-ins for the really important stuff) than we can by demanding a presence at a faculty meeting.

I agree that we need a "new structure for decision making." That is a middle ground must be established. This cannot, however, take the place of pre-existing separate spaces for faculty and students. I reject a student need to attend faculty meetings.

However, this rejection does not mean I am not interested in contributing to the solution of the problems raised. What else can be done? Setting up another "student government" committee is not going to help, but we should make every attempt to radicalize the existing structure. I'm in favor of getting rid of the cumbersome parliamentary rules we use to structure Forums; I'm in favor of getting rid of voting on substantive issues, and working to create consensus. I also believe that when we are listened to, we should demand attention — in creative, new, powerful ways. These are all possibilities. We are in a small enough, well-informed, and creative enough community to come together as a whole for a truly participatory experience.

I am going to be here over January, and will be back in February, still as chair of the EPC. If any of this has made sense to anyone, particularly those who wrote the letter to the executive committee, please let me know. As voting members of a 1000 person strong coalition, we do have power. I invite responses, and I invite participation. What can we do?
Another View

One student's response to Renee's letter

by Gabriel Miller

Let me begin by saying that I find it unfortunate that I have not had a chance to speak with Renee as of this writing and the deadline to the Observer. Had we had the chance to speak before her letter was published, I could have told her that I agree with the basis of her letter wholeheartedly. Renee writes that the problem is not the nature of the Student Forum and that participation in the Forum is an important way of participating politically in general. I couldn't agree more. Additionally, I want to thank Renee for the support she has expressed for the discussions on increasing student participation in decision-making at Bard.

Unfortunately, it seems that Renee misinterpreted one sentence in the letter to the Executive Committee. The bulk of Renee's article is a defense and explanation of the Student Forum and a call for radical participation in the Forum and in other ways on campus and in the world. Renee read our sentence, "We students desire participation, we do not want to be represented by anyone — administration, faculty or even an individual student." Renee thought that this statement was a criticism of the nature of the student government. On the contrary! A sentence in that same letter to the Executive Committee which Renee did not discuss describes the Student Forum as "possessing appreciable elements of design... That probably should have been clearer, but what it means, basically is that we really like the Forum, we really like the forum. What we don't like is the fact that its decisions are not binding in any way, shape or form. The sentence which Renee single out is not a criticism of the student forum, but rather it means that we will not be appeased by a single student member or even two on the committees and bodies where the decisions are made. Theremain lies the misunderstood concept.

Just for darites sake, I will respond to a few of the finer points. Renee says there is a "fallacy in their letter." Actually there is not a fallacy in the letter, or at least the sentence she points out contains no fallacy and this should be obvious considering that Renee goes on to say that the sentence needs to be qualified. I invite any relevant qualifications, but that is different from being any mistake made. Renee points out that students can kick faculty out of their meeting too. Renee writes "This is exactly the same process used by the faculty at the meeting when the group of students in question was asked to leave." Actually, it is not the same process. The Student Forum is open, but as Renee says, students can vote to eject a non-student. The Faculty Committee, on the other hand, has never had an open door policy.

Renee talks a lot about rights. She writes "students who base their 'right' to attend faculty meeting on an imagined 'right' to attend student forum are simply wrong." I am not sure exactly what she is putting "right" in quotes considering that we did not use the word right, and by his simply the concept. I think the Faculty Committee should put an end to its closed door policy because I think it would be the best thing for everyone. Of course faculty could still ask students to leave the room for any good reason, the most likely being to protect the privacy of individuals.

This is how the Student Forum stands on the issue, so there is a qualitative difference, this must be understood.

Finally, let me reiterate that the bulk of Renee's letter is based on a misunderstanding of the letter to the Executive Committee. None of the many students who have participated in discussions about increasing student power have suggested "Setting up another 'student government' committee as she suggests. That is simply not the idea. Had Renee attended any of these discussions, which I hope she still will, she would have heard many people praising the participatory nature of the Forum and its excellent potential as a location for doing something to improve Bard.

Finally, I want to reiterate the respect and appreciation I have always felt for the faculty. Renee seems to think that trying to attend a faculty meeting is disrespectful. As one professor pointed out, attending a faculty meeting shows interest in Bard and our education. This interest seems to me to be an expression of respect for the mission of the faculty.

All behind the Closed Doors of Faculty Meetings

On Wednesday, November 17th six students attended the faculty meeting at the Levy Economics Institute. Immediately prior to the meeting President Botselaar informed the students that they were representing the Observer, the students answered they were not. The meeting began and shortly thereafter a professor announced the presence of students. Botselaar stated that the matter was out of his jurisdiction as chair. A number of faculty proceeded to make remarks, most of which expressed opposition to the students attending the meeting. One professor joked that there appeared to be more students and less professors than usual. Another professor was pleased with the student interest and supported their presence with the understanding that students would be asked to step out of the room during the discussion of sensitive issues, as is the case with the two students who have permission to attend in representation of the Observer and the EPC. One student hastily explained that the students were simply interested in the decisions being made by the faculty. A motion dictator that the students leave was put forward and brought to a vote. No count was taken but the clear majority responded in favor of the students leaving while a small portion of the faculty opposed the motion. The students left without argument or delay.

As the students exited Botselaar said that there is a procedure for special attendance by students at the faculty meeting. This entails a written proposal to the Executive Committee explaining reasons for a student's presence at a particular faculty meeting.

What follows is the letter of request now being sent by the six students who attended this last meeting.

*Executive Committee Members*

We are writing to request that faculty meetings be open to student attendance. The results of the November 17th meeting is totally unsatisfactory. Many of the students would like to take part in any and all discussions affecting our college and its policies. Therefore we are making this request.

Within the existing systems of decision making on campus students are virtually powerless. The student forum, although possessing appreciable elements of design, never reaches its full potential. The student forum in itself, administration and faculty can disagree at will decisions of the forum. Currently the only means in which students can attempt to advance their agenda is to attend faculty meetings. We suggest that the faculty consider students as integral particpants in the decision making process. The student forum is reduced to the position of bystanders at our own institution. We students desire direct participation. We do not want to be represented by anyone — administration, faculty or even an individual student.

What we want is a new structure for decision making. Within the current system great power discrepancies exist among the faculty administration and student body. These discrepancies must be eliminated. We want a student body that André Dubreuil describes in his book, "Towards a New Social Contract" as a social contract in which the multiple stakeholders share power and resources. This is the philosophy of the student forum. The Faculty Forum has always been open to members of the faculty and administration. The same open door policy should be extended to students. Both the Student Forum and faculty meetings should present as places of dialogue, while the final decision making would occur within the new collaborative body.

We are writing this request because we desire access to the faculty meetings and all meetings at which decisions are made regarding our education and the daily life of our campus. We believe that the student forum is a small but important first step of the joint participation in the structural process of decision making.

Sincerely,

Bob Carpenter
Caroline Dechamps
The Lassay
Gabriel Miller
Annie Siegel
Paul Siegel

*More Elections*  

Statements of Purpose  

to become Student Life Committee Chair  
or Entertainment Committee  
due to Malia Dumont  

by Thurs. Dec. 9 at Midnight

Elections for these positions will take place outside the post office next Tues. 9am-12noon, 1-5pm and Wed. 10am-12noon*

*Intercession Housing*  

by Matt Apple  

I'd like to take a moment to summarize our housing policy for those staying over January Intercession.

Any student staying at Bard during January must stay in Oberholzer. He or she must remove all desired belongings from his or her permanent room before leaving for Christmas break. Storage will be locked during January, and the student may not have access to his or her permanent room during January.

This leaves two options. A) The student must have a car. B) The student's parents must drive to Bard and pick up the student and the belongings. Once again, Bard is discriminating against those who don't have a car or whose parents are unable to pick them up. This becomes more complicated if a student has a room change request fulfilled for next semester, he or she must remove all belongings before leaving for Christmas. And this will happen during Finals Week.

This policy is unfair. At the very least, students who are staying over January should be allowed access to storage. I don't know how this affects international students who have nowhere to go, but for those of us who have no car and can't afford a U-Haul truck, this is a big problem, one that I think Bard should solve.
Student Art Show

A stirring in Procter

Rose Merrill
Staff Writer

It is difficult to critique an art show with work done by one's close contemporaries, further more an art show in which one's own work is displayed. For this reason I feel compelled to be as objective and anonymous as possible: I choose not to mention specific works or artists, rather I recommend that you check out the work for yourself, and pick your own favorites.

What I like about this semester's student art show, on display in Procter until December 14th, is that it's alive. The work has an energy and diversity that make the two previous shows, Human, Form and Tele-Aesthetics, look positively boring.

The Procter show's pizazz cannot stem from its lack of intellectual pretensions, and "art" imperatives. The pieces are obviously created by curious, young artists: diverse, experimental and, at times, naive.

These works are learning: developing along with the students' ever-expanding intellect. A refreshing contrast to the kind of stagnant art "sprung full-grown from Zeus' head" that is frequently produced by more jaded, money-grubbing, professional artists.

In my opinion the struggle and process from embryo to new born and beyond is what art is all about. Looking around at Bard student accomplishments I would hypothesize that some artists are nurturing fetuses and others are coaching toddlers, but this inconsistency of ability does not detract from the show, rather it adds to its unadulterated honesty. The show seems to say: "This is what Bard art students can do at every level of competence."

The variety of mediums and modes of expression underscores the range of ideas and abilities in the art department. Once again there is a willingness to experiment among the more traditional paintings on canvas, there are unconventional cardboard vacuum cleaners and mosaic-style leaf "paintings". The times when the show is at its weakest are when pieces reveal a student's desire to "run before they can crawl." An artist who doesn't understand basic techniques behind visual communication cannot help but have difficulty communicating complex ideas.

However, even this naive enthusiasm is preferable to the kind of lazy smugness seen in most galleries these days, because at least there is a passion to communicate. Taken overall, the show is not technically accomplished per se, but the evidence of a joy in creating and a curiosity in technique make for exciting, raw energy. It's definitely worth witnessing for oneself so stop by Procter! If the passion and potential of these student artists is ever encouraged, and blended with a few more years of formal schooling, I have no doubt that many of them will blow away cobwebs and bring a fresh breeze into the art world, or any other world for that matter.
Well, as the sun sinks slowly in the west and we begin to pack up and cackle a fond farewell to our fall college for one soul-redeeming month, carrying with us the joys, pains, and residual wussiness of another semester, like a shot out of the blue, here's this week's sports.

Men's basketball is trying to pull itself together after losing its starting point guard and key player Ray Gable. Gable went down with a knee injury early in the Blazers' loss to US Merchant Marine Academy (40-93) one week ago on November 29th. Gable's injury has sidelined him for the rest of the semester, and his progress will be evaluated in January to determine when he can rejoin the team.

This leaves the men with no true starting point guard. The shaky season has become shakier due to his loss, but the Blazers are showing a lot of poise and drive despite their difficulties. Bard has yet to mark up a win, losing to Yeshiva University 45-95 on December 2nd and most recently Lehman College 76-96. Despite this, Bard played fiercely against Lehman, featuring stellar performances by Bucky Purdon and Jameel Kendrick, each with 17 points, and a career high 24 points by Ron Reese. The Blazers next face Mount Saint Vincent College on Wednesday.

**FENCING**

The men's fencing team took their first win of the season when they faced City College of New York last Wednesday at CCNY. The match consisted of nine bouts in each of three weapon-types, combining the victories from each to determine the winner. In Sabre, Bard was defeated 2-7 with victories by Ben Epstein and Stephen Stephens. However, Bard turned the tide in foil, falling the CCNY foilists 7-2. Kapil Gupta and Todd Hefter took all three of their bouts, and Cliff Clark contributed one victory to the cause as well. The match all came down to epee, with an unusual competitor making the difference in the weapons class and the match. Shawn Taylor won all three of his bouts, and Jim Pulnanski won one of his. But Angela Jancius, one of the few women fencers who compete in the epee weapons class, joined the men's team and took one bout to give the team the edge. The final score for epee was 5-4 in favor of Bard, and Bard won the match by a total score of 14-13.

The reason there are so few female epee fencers is because, until recently, women were only trained in the foil weapon class.

The women's team still competes only in foil. The women's team is competing without their captain (and last week's female athlete of the week) Amy Pfeifer, who is out until February with a non-fencing-related shoulder injury. Bard also faced CCNY, and fought a nearly-even match. Nicole Grimes went 3-4 on the day, as did Sarah Grannett. However, the women lost to CCNY by a score of 7-9. This brings the women's record for the season to 1-3.

**SQUASH**

The men's squash team face two opponents on Wednesday, December 1st at Fordham. Despite some impressive performances, Bard lost to both Columbia and Fordham by a team score of 3-6.

Fahad Azizuddin defeated his Fordham opponent 15-4, 15-7, 15-18, 13-15, 15-7, and Amer Latif defeated ex-Bardian Farrukh Khan 18-14, 8-15, 15-8, 18-15. Shehzad Haider went 6-6 against both colleges, improving his personal season match record to 81 overall. He is Bard's MALE ATHLETE OF THE WEEK. He was described as "playing fiercely in all matches, and he was Pakistani Rap-Master" (joining the ranks of long-time Anglo rap-master Terrence Dewsnup).

Later in the week, Bard faced another dual match at Vassar, where the opponents were to have been Stevens and Hamilton. Stevens, hearing of the Bard threat and not being able to counter with their own Rap-Master, pulled out of the event, which Bard won by forfeit. Unfortunately, Hamilton showed and defeated Bard 2-7. Amer Latif sent down his opponent by a score of 15-10, 15-6, 15-8, and Shehzad Haider tore apart Hamilton's Rap-Master Wanna-be Shep Wainswright 15-13, 15-13, 17-16. Just goes to show you, Shep is no name for a Rap Master.

**LASTLY**

There will be a fun 'n' exciting FREE THROW CHALLENGE this Thursday evening in the Stevens Auditorium. Come at 6:30pm to throw a large orange ball repeatedly at a round, netted metal hoop. The best of ten shots wins fabulous prizes and campus-wide renown. Win, and students will speak about you in hushed, solemn tones for weeks to come!
by Sean O'Neill

This Observer reprints the letter of the petition drive that requests permission for any student to attend full-faculty meetings, one of the many expressions by students of dissatisfaction with how things are on this campus that we all have read and heard this semester. I am not associated with these "activists," but I do have some thoughts on campus politics. And, although President Botstein's letter (over on the other page) does not mention these concerns, I believe his message encouraging change is very hopeful and to the point. Perhaps there is a correlation between student dissatisfaction with the atmosphere at Bard and attempts by students to bring influence to bear on professors to improve it. Far too many "thoughtful and perspicacious" students are rejecting Bard (a.k.a. Notad Campus) in even larger numbers than most years. The administration has been打着 in larger numbers of "more dedicated" students with what amounts to buying them off with aid taken from full tuition paying, but supposedly "less dedicated," students. But the "innovative" programs have reached the critical point. Just as the professors claim the right to hold majority votes on all decisions here by arguing that their association with the college is longer than that of the students, professors have a responsibility by the same logic to actively set the tone of the campus for those of us who live here.

Classroom environments that permit the shallow, egotistical, "scream-your-feelings" methodology to dominate will defeat any plans to further bolster enrollment with students truly interested in a shared enterprise of learning. Those with responsibility cannot just financially bribe students to stay, or pay people to "counsel" them through troubled times. They must work to defeat the malaise. They should rethink workload expectations; they should cease divorcing their classrooms jobs from their largely unexercised extracurricular duties; they should manage fairly with policies (such as turning in grades and spring course selections on time) instead of griping about the resultant chaos. I believe that the process of reviewing student "profiles" will reveal that "students who do well at Bard" have been fortunate enough to meet the professors who do work to create an encouraging atmosphere. Last Monday's production of an ancient Greek drama had large numbers of student devotees of the talents of the classics department, and a capacity audience. This morning morning a group of smiling and energetic students applying their knowledge in a humorous way, and had active support by several professors (two of whom participated and many of whom came to watch). Students do have enjoyable relationships with many of their professors, but not with those who have a "handful" attitude once they commute home after classes.

As a second example, students issued a protest vote against the existing practice of allowing a professor under review for tenure to see the names of the students participating with their testimony. Faculty reviews are important affairs, since professors can always vote-vote the student participants on the review committee as they can do on the hiring committees. Additionally, professors sitting in these committees evaluate the "quality" of any given student who submits a certain comment on a professor by asking other professors about the student. If a student harshly criticizes a professor who's up for review, say, the professor will evaluate whether they're successful academically, with the option of looking through the student's files, for examples of being spartan and unfair.

One College, Two Visions
Faculty hiring committees have an outcome quite unlike that of Bard's Admissions staff. Professors look for a different outlook from candidates than the type advocated by students to fit the college. A student professor will never have the same chance of coming to Bard as a student who rejects the "Ivy League mentality." I believe we should be examining the "profiles" of our professors, not for fancy credentials, but for commitment to student life. Yes, an active stance on student-life "has not been a tradition at Bard." But it will best become one if our professors recognize that "teaching and learning" are enhanced outside as well as inside the classroom.

The split in outlooks at Bard regarding the faculty of the future population points to an noteworthy schism in campus politics. Should Bard become another school all "rigorous thought," as is the Harvard mold, or an independent liberal arts college, with continued practice in "creativity," in its own mold? I am interested in influencing campus politics should write out their recommendations on how the curriculum should be altered, on what kind of professors students should teach what topics, on what kind of students should be brought here, and on what kind of people should replace administration Officials when they retire. And they should attend student forums, ("powerless" though such forums may be), to hear opinions voiced outside their own circle of friends:

Where going on?
I first heard about full-faculty meetings in October of last year, and I remember thinking that the idea of all our professors assembling, "out of the ordinary" for our college was very interesting. Apparently, students years ago could sit in on these meetings, but the interest usually died out - perhaps because the meetings are not mysterious, just monotonous. Only an elected student RFC member, however, has had constant access. Ironically, the major- ity of professors frequently fail to attend on their own.

I asked Dean Levine whether I could go to one of these meetings as an Observer staff member. He agreed, and I was given the opportunity to circumscribe to tell me, in the short space of about ten minutes, that yes, there are faculty meetings and any person has the power to petition the Executive Committee for permission to attend beforehand.

I asked myself why it was worthwhile to pursue the idea further. After all, the most important influences on decision-making in the college are Boardmen and Oaters Papadimitriou. That's not to question the relevance or competence of the other administration, who work hard to better Bard. We just have to recognize that Mister B and Mister P formulate the questions, select the issues on the agenda, and legitimate the au- thority of others. They are in control. We ought to be sitting in on their meetings.

I also got interested because I didn't want to lose respect for my professors, which was a distinct possibility if I witnessed firsthand how campus politics is nasty because the stakes are so small. There are only so many books and so many Stevenson chairs to go around, and, since the faculty has no final say in financial matters, professors can't make a bigger pie of resources and can only fight over dividing the slices.

By the time September rolled around, some events had changed my mind. The faculty had crippled, if not annihilated, a cur- riculum reform proposal. The col- lege had considered, but then dropped, the option of buying a school in France. Rumors surfaced that the administration was contriv- ing the faculty into distributing "less A grades" in their courses to make the college seem more "rigorous". (Nonsense, I've been told, professors are grading more stringently because the new waves of students are more clever than previous ones.) The new positions for professorships came under the wing of the Multicultural Eth- nic Studies program. Plans were "agreed to destroy the old farm" and erect a science factory. And, in the time since September, a sev- enteen-member committee has been formed to decide who should become the new head of the Arts Division. Clearly, the professors make decisions affecting students.

Hence the dilemma. On the one hand, "freedom of opinion and the right to be informed go hand in hand." On the other, "faculty meetings are called faculty meetings for a reason."

In September, I wrote to the Ex- ecutive Committee requesting the opportunity to send an Observer- person to the full-faculty meetings. I argued that that is an im- portant part of what a campus newspaper should be about - summarizing what's going on for everyone, so that more than just the few who can go to certain meetings or events are informed. (Of course, considering how few students write for the paper, per- haps Bard doesn't deserve to be informed, as someone I respect is doing out.) One concern was that the presence of a "journalist" would discourage professors from openly speaking on issues and would thus cause discussions of critical topics to be diverted to the faculty dining room, unknown.

The professors debated the measure for quite a while. Eventually, the faculty decided that one member of the "student press" should be elected by the student forum to observe the meetings, although they were unsure whether the student forums would do that. Subsequently, despite student government opposition, the motion carried at the student forum. Now we face students who are not content to let the Observer do the reporting.

The Future of Bard
Ultimately, Bard programs should encompass an ideal of what America is all about, since America has become a part of its leadership. The America I imagine is not a place where each individual speaks and works only with people who share similar physical characteristics and financial backgrounds, or identical principles of moral behavior, all attempting to become closer alike. The American/Bardian I idealize thinks that their life will improve by becoming something new instead of settling for something old. She or he does not get into Bard because of who their parents are, or to learn how to become their parents. They are admitted because of their individual merit and aspirations to become a dream of an ideal future, and have mutual respect for each other.

You laugh. But here's my point: Does Bard today actively promote these values? Are the professors and administrators, and we students, truly willing to put in the effort required? Enjoy the holidays. And let's bring anew next semester.

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Our next issue will be February 9, 1994.
A letter from Leon

To the Editor:

Now that the faculty has permitted — with some exceptions — an observer from the student press to be present at the faculty meetings, I think it is appropriate whenever a report is written that special care be taken to be unbiased. I thought that the last report on the student press was very well done, with one small exception. In the description of my report to the faculty there appears to have been some misunderstanding as to what was being discussed. I announced to the faculty that the administration was rethinking in a fundamental way its student-life policies and staffing. The reason for this review is our awareness that aspects of student life require more attention in the areas of health and advising. Much of the emphasis in our concerns has been placed on the freshman year. The result of this review will be some staff additions and also the moving of one of the senior student-life staff members to an on-campus residence.

Furthermore, a review of dormitory facilities and conditions has begun in anticipation of a program to improve and modernize dormitory conditions. There may be, as well, some new dormitory construction.

This review runs directly parallel to the plan for a new student center.

With respect to attrition, given the College's admissions procedures, we are in the process of finding out whether there is some consistency in the profile of students who do well at the College and those who do not. That profile might be of interest to the admissions office in terms of their assessment as to whether Bard is the right place for any given student. At the present time we are at no time we have any clearly documented picture of the retention patterns after the first and second years.

I made the point to the faculty that this kind of attention to student life has not been a tradition at Bard. There was a time when there was only one person in the dean of students office and when the notion of more staff and a greater adult presence in the dormitories and on campus would have been considered quite unlike Bard and at odds with the conditions with the presumption of adulthood on which the College operates with respect to its attitudes towards students. I also made the point that this heightened concern on the part of the administration was not, in actuality, in conflict with respect for the adulthood of students but rather a recognition of the changing times in terms of the environments from which students come and, most of all, a recognition of the dramatically more diverse student body now attending the College. In the "old days" the overwhelming majority of students came either from New York City or the immediate New York area and then, in diminishing numbers, from the Northeast, and Midwest and mid-Atlantic states. We now have students from all over the country and all over the world. Twenty years ago fewer than 25 percent of the students received financial aid, thereby limiting the diversity of the student body in terms of economic background. Now close to 70 percent receive financial aid. These factors and many others demand that we think through how we approach the professional support of student life in a manner that enhances the effective presence of the primary purpose of the College: teaching and learning.

This process of review is being conducted by Shelley Morgan. I trust that she will involve extensive consultation with representatives of the student body. The simple message is that we think we can do things better, and we hope to learn from what we have done and have not done, all in the interest of doing a better job.

Thank you very much.

Cordially,
Leon Botstein
President

Dear President Botstein,

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my article and for clearing up, for me and our readers, my misunderstandings regarding the last full faculty meeting. I assure you that I will do my best to be more clear from now on. I am also pleased that you are taking action concerning the conditions of dormitories. I would personally and personally be very interested in receiving more information, regarding the review of dorm facilities and plans for a new student center, as these plans progress.

Sincerely,
Jea C. Breton
Editor-in-Chief
**Wednesday, December 8**

- *Table Française.* Berets and baguettes required. Kline Committee Room, 5:30-7p.
- *Chinese Table.* Go and talk in Chinese in the Kline College Room, 6p. You will meet a lot of new friends there.
- *A.W.E. Meeting.* Every Wednesday. Albee Social, 7p.
- *Student Forum.* Please, please, please, please attend. Elections are happening. Possible school song. Kline Committee Room, 8p.

**Thursday, December 9**

- *Song Exchange.* Come learn traditional folk songs or teach the ones you know. Musical instruments optional. Albee Social, 3p. Meet every Thursday.
- *Tavola Italiana.* Kline President's Room, 5-6p. All Welcome; join us for conversation at 6p.
- *Der Deutsche Stammtisch-dinnerstags.* 18 Uhr. Kline-College room.
- *Bisexuals, Activists, Gays, Lesbians, Etc.* B.A.G.L.E. will meet this Thursday Albee Social, 6:30p. All interested are welcome.
- *Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting.* Thursday nights, 7:30p.
- *Bard's Christian Fellowship at the Bard Chapel, 9:30p.* Everyone is welcome, Christian or not.

**Friday, December 10**


**Saturday, December 11**

- *Poughkeepsie Galleria Mall trip.* Do some holiday shopping in the "City of Sin." Meet behind Kline at 8p.

**Sunday, December 12**

- *Anyone for cricket?* Cricket, lovely cricket...every Sunday inside or near Stevenson Gym, 3:30p. Contact Danforth (735-7345) or Sheleyev (752-7273) for more information.
- *Holy Eucharist at Church of St. John the Evangelist,* 10a.
- *Special Carol Service.* This will take the place of evening worship tonight. Bard Chapel, 6p.

**Monday, December 13**

- *Body Image Support Group.* For students dealing with issues of weight, appearance and body image. Come to talk or listen. *Upstairs in the Student Center, 7-8p.*
- *Da Capo Chamber Players.* Free concert will feature works by Poltizer-wining Shulamit Ran, Hayden, Vivaldi, Debussy and two works by Da Capo members. Olin Auditorium, 8p.
- *Peer Tutors in the Stevenson Library, Room 402, 403, and 8-10p and every night except Friday and Saturday: 8-10p.*

**Tuesday, December 14**


**Wednesday, December 15**

- *Table Française.* Berets and baguettes required. Kline Committee Room, 5:30-7p.
- *Chinese Table.* Go and talk in Chinese in the Kline College Room, 6p. You will meet a lot of new friends there.
- *Bard Films.* Each semester's Senior Project films are a real treat. See what the next generation of Avant Garde Film is up to right here at Bard. Preston Cinema 7p.
- *A.W.E. Meeting.* Every Wednesday. Albee Social, 7p.

**Transportation Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Grand Union Run: Leave at 6p, return at 7p.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Rhinecliff Train Station, Rhinebeck, and Red Hook: Leave at 10a, return at 2p.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Hudson Valley: Leave at 5:45p, return at 10p.</td>
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Meet all vans or busses in the parking lot behind Kline Commons.