

Bard College  
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# OBSERVER

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The  
BARD

# OBSERVER

VOLUME 101 ★ NUMBER 13

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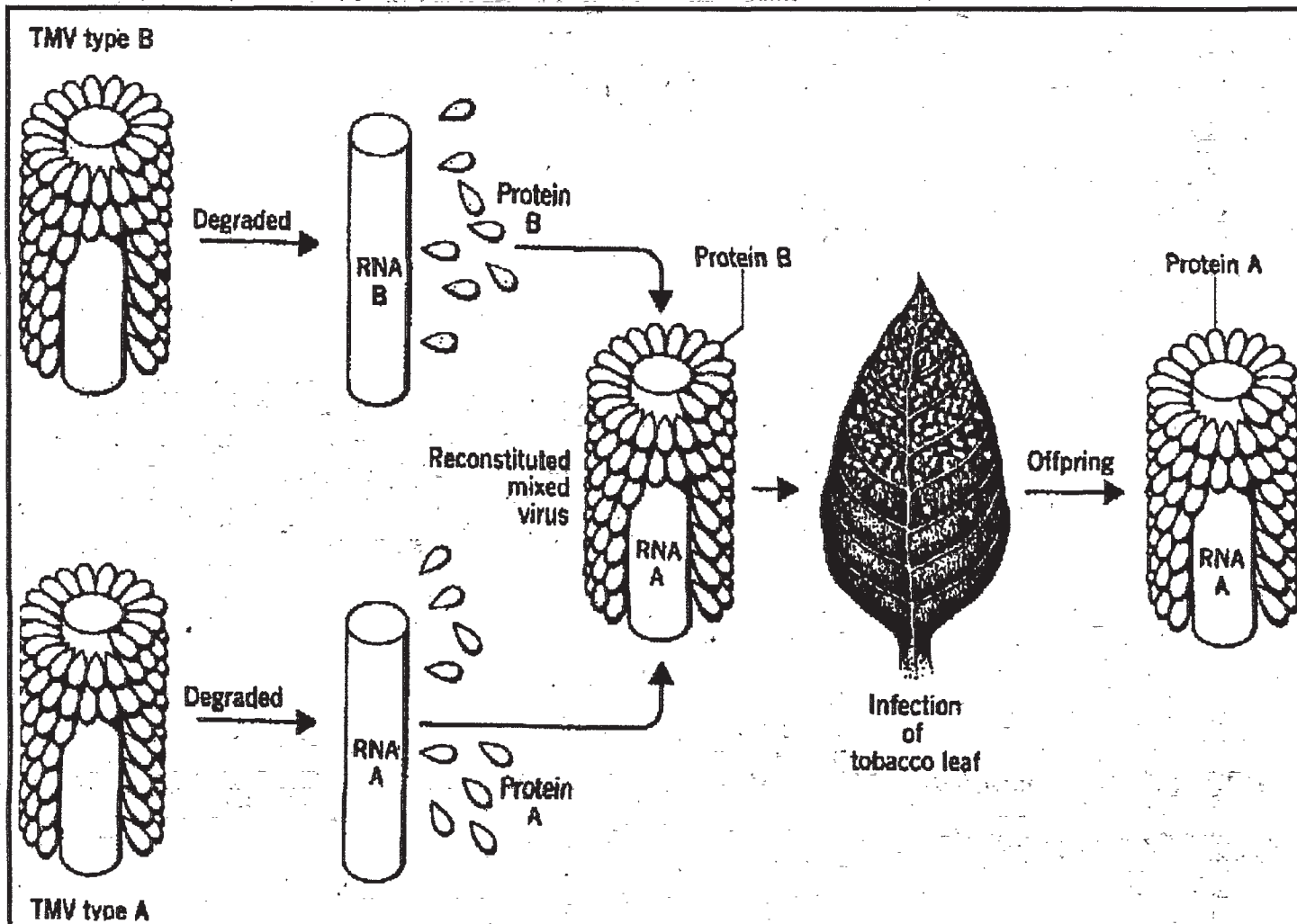
DECEMBER 8 ★ 1993



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An illustration of the experiment revealing that RNA, not protein, determines heredity.

## 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 Malls have extended their hours for the holidays, so (providing you have a means of transportation) there is still plenty of opportunity to make purchases.

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

For Grandmothers: Something hand-crafted (they really like anything you've made yourself; no matter how useless or bizarre) 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 like to 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 "hero 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 text books 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 and 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!



### UPSTATE FILMS

RHINEBECK 876-2515

HOUSE OF ANGELS, 6:45 & 9:15

Fri, 7:00 & 9:15; Sat, 4:30, 7:00, 9:15;  
Sun, 3:30, 5:45, 8:00;  
Mon - Thurs, 7:00 & 9:15

### KING OF THE HILL

2 THUMBS UP!

one of the YEAR'S BEST! - SISKEL & EBERT

Set during the Depression, 1933, Steve (SEX. LIES, VIDEOTAPE) Soderbergh tells the story of an imaginative young hero who uses the audacity and cunning of a child for the grown-up task of survival. PG13

**POSTER AUCTION Sat, Dec. 11, 1pm**

ADMISSION: \$4.50 or \$3 for Members

### The Center for Curatorial Arts Gallery

will have the following hours during intercession:

Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays

1:00-4:00pm

Saturdays and Sundays

1:00-5:00pm

(Reg. Hours until Sun., December 19th)

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



NEED\$? Sell me your refrigerator! Looking to buy one of those nifty-baby friges. Will pay handsomely. Call x7265 or leave note Box #815.

B.R.A.V.E. A student run rape and associated violence hotline. Information, support, referrals. Office Hours: Sun & Mon 9-11pm located in Tewksbury room #87 ext.552 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 Zoltan at (914) 752-7518 or 341-9448.

Housemate Wanted! Starting Jan. — Next Semester. Rent \$250. Own Room. Big House. CABLE. 758-0381.

I am seeking a place to stay in the N.Y.C. area during January while I work as a bicycle 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 encircled/enscribed 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 BPB, WXBC, Jeana, Ingrid, Andy, Matt, Joy, Tanessa, Kat, Gwendolyn, 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. Co back to your bor-

ing 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!

Attn: All Rocky Horror Fans! Anyone interested in organizing and/or performing at a showing (next semester) of Rocky Horror, please let me know NOW! x7300.

Female Cat Found! Young, very affectionate with pink flea collar and 6 fingers on each paw. VERY GOOD WITH KIDS. If she belongs to you, or you want her call for information 752-7110.

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

Will you be living off-campus in Jan.? Would you like a friendly, furry companion? DO you want to make some easy \$\$\$? 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, 9:30-11:30am @ Stevenson Gym. To sign up call x454. (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, N.Y. 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 out 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 "aminals" for me. Love, H.



## Ancient Greek

## Frogs

It's a shame Allan Bloom died before seeing a dozen Bard students perform a play by

Sean  
O'Neill  
Features  
Editor

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 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 Messerle delivered her lines energetically as Xanthias, speaking so proudly at times that one al-

most 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 Raphals led the raucous bunch. And Prof. Chris Callanan (Producer, Director, and Herakles) 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 futility." (Yes, that was pretentious, but just as Friedrich 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 Hannon, Tim 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 disobediently 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 Botstein 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. ♪

**Help feed and clothe supporters and defenders of the Western Shoshone Nation.**

**Defenders of the Dann sisters in Crescent Valley, Nevada are preparing for another cold Winter to defend the people of the Western Shoshone - Donations are Needed!**

**Send any of the following through campus mail (Box 942) or call, 757-4405.**

**-thermal underwear, wool socks, sweaters, etc., hats, gloves and scarves, non-parishable foods, cash donations, binoculars, tents, batteries, flashlights, etc.**

**\*All donations will be given directly to the site by students.\***



## 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 "organules." 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 stud-

ied 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 stimulate 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. ♪



10-87-20

**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!**



## 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. 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, Luis," 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 me. 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."

"Well, the both of you certainly did. Was 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 my 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 intently and then hugs her.

"I'm so 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've 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 Seefeldt, 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 flushed Colby hit him on the head with their rolled up programs, lightly beating him.

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

Her jazz 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 hardest.

After the two other 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. Professor Greene is researching the Yeti, the Abominable Snowman, and I've already agreed to work with her."

"Tibet? For how long?"

"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."

"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.

RHINEBECK



OPTICAL

Dr. J.G. Quintero-Chica  
Optometrist8 Garden Street  
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914-758-5888

## Nefarious Necromancy

Sagittarius (Nov.22-Dec.21): "Why do birds suddenly appear, everytime 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.18): 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 right 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 niggling 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.21-Jul.23): 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.24-Aug.23): "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.24-Sept.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 weeks love life will be like that if you're daring.

Libra (Sept.23-Oct.23): "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 their way.' Look for them.

Scorpio (Oct.24-Nov.21): You little lust puppie—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.



## 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 dynamic wit.

This is my final column. It is sort of difficult to write. It's kind of like trying to have a pithy statement prepared for your deathbed so that people will remark on how profound your last words were. And then your last words usually end up being something like "Dr. Kervrokian, your bill is much too high eyaagghh..."

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-funded 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 this fair campus. 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 ought to take Spanish. Considering all that I have learned, I have decided instead to leave you with a bit of advice.

First, lighten up. No ideology is so important that it is above ridicule.

For you first year students, keep up the good work. Remember that only wussies are afraid to mix drugs and alcohol. You want to be cool, don't you?

Over the past four years I've heard a lot of complaints from the female half of the campus about the male half of the campus. My advice to the females attending Bard is this: As a precaution against sexual harassment throw all of your potential male friends just to see how far you can trust them. Many people will try to tell you differently but men are just pigs. You can trust a man to be a man. Be afraid of men, be very afraid.

As for the male half of the campus, I advise you to be gay, be very gay.

Always remember don't tug on Superman's cape. Don't spit into the wind. Don't pull the mask on the old Lone Ranger. Finally, above all else, don't mess around with Jim. He has VD.

My advice to the faculty is blow off classes, your students do. Oh, and would it really kill you to have students attend faculty meetings? Judging from the attendance at Student Forum meetings you really won't

have a problem with overcrowding.

As for the regular attendees and the Central Committee of the Student Forum, learn Robert's Rules of Order. Robert's Rules have been used for centuries in parliamentary debate in every major legislative body including Congress. Proper enforcement of Robert's Rules guarantees everybody's right to speak unless you're too dumb to understand Robert's Rules in which case whatever you want to say can't be that important anyway.

For the administration, unlock the doors already. You didn't like being locked out of Ludlow a few years back, did you?

Any type of farewell statement would be incomplete without a prediction of some kind. I predict that we all grow up to be miserable failures.

Good-bye Bard.



Greg  
Giaccio

Featured  
Columnist

## Shameless Filler!

I received this document from some friends working in the literary underground. It is the work of a woman who is desperate to release the truth to the public, no matter how inconsequential 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-licker's desk. This gave me the opportunity to read some of Mr. Claus's responses to childrens' letters. I present them here, fully aware of the implications of my actions. An investigation is pending, and I plan to hide out with Salman Rushdie for a few years.

The letters 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.

Thank you for your concern, but I assure you that the elves receive well above Minimum wage. You can tell that nice Mr. Bradford to cancel the subpoena.

Sincerely,  
Santa

Dear Westley,

I understand that you have grown a lot, and I am flattered that you still believe in me. However, I don't think it should be my responsibility to give you what you asked for. Just gather all the courage you can, think happy thoughts, and see your nearest pharmacist.

Good Luck!  
Santa

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.

Sincerely,  
Santa

Dear 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 Christmas list:

Occupant, North Pole.  
Whoomp (there it is),  
Santa

Dear Sarah & Gunnivere,

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.  
Jollity,  
Santa

Dear Sam and Patrice,

Sorry, I don't do weddings. Besides, you're young, yet. Live a little. Let me assure you, there is life after sixth grade, so don't try to cram it all into a few short years.

Love,  
Santa

Dear Christina,

I'm sorry, but I do not have the facilities to issue a quarterly naughty report. But let me say, you have little to worry about.

Merry Christmas,  
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 snack I would like this year. Well, all things considered, since yours is one of the last hundred homes I visit, I think Santa would be extra-special happy (and generous) if you left him a six pack.

Ho Ho Ho!  
Santa

In which  
we  
glance  
beneath  
the  
tinsel

by Matt Gilman

(914) 876-4524

Free Consultation

David C. Shiffman, Ph.D.  
Psychologist

Bard Alumnus, Class of 1961

44 Old post Rd.  
Rhinebeck, N.Y.



## For the common good of both faculty and students

by Renee 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, however, at any time during the meeting, any member of the student 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 the faculty at the meeting when the group of students in question was asked to leave. Those students who base 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 needs 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/internship, to the curriculum, tenure decisions, and good old fashioned gossip. Further, 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 want to be represented by 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 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 committee system unfairly silences 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 proposed curriculum, which asked for the direct participation of the entire community and received an overwhelming 43% response rate, resulted in an entirely new

faculty 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 of an anonymity policy might need to leave the bounds of convention. 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 argue 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 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, we should demand attention — in creative, new, powerful ways. These are all possibilities. We are in a small enough, well enough 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?

## Elections Forum

\*TONIGHT\*

8pm in the Kline Committee Rooms

## Agenda:

1. Hudson-Bard Summer Program
2. School Song Resolution
3. Learning Disabilities Committee Election (2 seats)
4. Drug/alcohol Counselor Search Committee Election (2 seats)
5. EPC Search Committee Election (4 seats)
6. Student Life Committee Election (3 seats)
7. Planning Committee Constitutional Amendment
8. Registration Resolution (a plea to the college to get out course books at least a week before registration)



## Another View

7

## 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 whole-heartedly. Renee writes that the problem is not the nature of the Student Forum and that the 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 singled 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. Therein lies the misunderstanding.

Just for clarity's sake, I will respond to a few of the finer points. Renee says that 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 there 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, as Leon stated, 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 forums are simply wrong." I am not sure exactly why she is putting "right" in quotes considering that we did not use the word, nor did we imply 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.

## Behind the Closed Doors of Faculty Meetings

On Wednesday, November 17 six students attended the faculty meeting at the Levy Economics Institute. Immediately prior to the meeting President Botstein inquired of the students whether they were representing the *Observer*; the students answered they were not. The meeting began and shortly thereafter a professor commented upon the presence of students. Botstein 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 attendance of 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 hesitantly explained that the students were simply interested in the decisions being made by the faculty. A motion dictating 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 Botstein said that there is a procedure for special attendance by students at the faculty meeting. This entails a written proposal to the Executive Committee stating 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 faculty meeting is one setting in which decisions affecting students are made. Naturally we students would like to take part in any and all decisions affecting our college and our education. We do not feel that we should have to justify or prove our interest in particular meetings because the meetings by nature are pertinent to the lives and educations of students.

Within the existing systems of decision making on campus students are virtually powerless. The Student Forum, although possessing appreciable elements of design and representing the hard work of many students, has no binding power. The administration and faculty can disregard at will decisions of the Forum. Currently the only manner in which students can attempt to influence the decision making process at Bard is to convince faculty or administration that they should act in our interest. In essence students are reduced to the position of lobbyists at their own college. 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 to establish a middle ground, a forum in which students, faculty and administration can come together and jointly formulate policy. The Student Forum has always been open to members of the faculty and administration. The same open door policy should be reciprocated. Both the Student Forum and faculty meetings should persist as places of discussion, while the final decision making would occur within the new cooperative body.

We are writing this request because we desire access to the faculty meetings and all meetings at which decisions are made regarding the nature of education and life at Bard College. Admittance to the faculty meetings is the crucial first step of the joint participation in the structural process of decision making.

Signed,

Ross Carlson

Carolyn Dechaine

Tor Loney

Gabriel Miller

Amie Siegel

Thy Y. Lin

Amie Siegel

Signatures of support for this letter have been collected. After meeting today for only three meals over 200 have given their support.

## \*More Elections\*

## Statements of Purpose

to become Student Life Committee Chair  
or Entertainment Committee  
are 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 Bard's 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 return 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.



Eastwood and Costner in *A Perfect World*

Is the screen big enough for both of them?

Well, in a perfect world, this would have been a better movie, to be perfectly honest. But since it

**Shawn Taylor  
Film  
Reviewer**

isn't a perfect world, and we must take what we can get, let's have a closer look at this recently released drama which stars Kevin

Costner and Clint Eastwood as representatives of different sides of the law.

The plot of the movie starts out straightforward enough. The year is 1963. Costner is an escaped convict who takes an eight year old boy hostage as he flees from the Texas Rangers, who are being led in the chase by Clint Eastwood. The viewpoint of the story

shifts back and forth between the hunter and the hunted, and we see the activities that each engage in during their respective parts of the search. This shifting between the two sides is perhaps the film's single biggest shortcoming, for one very simple reason: the scenes between Costner and the boy are intriguing, involving, unpredictable, and complex. The scenes with Eastwood and the rangers are for the most part dull and predictable, with some bad attempts at comedy relief thrown in. The result is that you have one half of one of the best films to come out in a long time, and one half of a seriously avoidable one. Not that Eastwood's scenes are all bad, they're just muddled with attempts to do too many things at once, so much so that in the end, none of them succeeds. The East-

wood section of the movie contains everything from mechanical gimmickry (a mobile home converted into a police HQ on wheels), the token tough woman character (Laura Dern in an uninteresting, underdeveloped role) who comes up against the old male regime (Eastwood and his rangers), the bureaucracy (the FBI jerk who tags along with them), and so forth. There are also hints at subplots which are never fully realized, which only adds to the sense of disjointedness that rules over the "good-guy" segments of the film. Eastwood's character is potentially much more interesting than it ends up being. From the beginning we are aware that he's the man, he's the one who will bring in the bad-guy, he's the one everybody idolizes, but at the same time we can tell he doesn't have a

clue what's going on. This could have been a very interesting contrast to Costner's character, who moves through the whole film with frightening confidence, but among all the aforementioned film flamm, poor Clint comes out looking muddled and out of control. It would have been really interesting to see Eastwood play off against his own screen image as a strong-willed tough-guy, and this section of the film could easily have been devoted to that. Instead, it's devoted to bad dialogue, cheap gags, and a dozen attempts at quick gimmicks. To top it off, the majority of these scenes take place inside of a mobile home, a setting which becomes quite tiresome, and quickly so.

On the other side, the scenes with Costner and the eight year old boy are simply excellent - they

run the gamut from violent to nonsensical to heartwarming and so forth, but manage to remain completely under control, completely consistent. The dialogue is well conceived and believable, the psychology of the two characters and the ways they relate to each other are complicated and well planned, and the performances of the two actors is excellent. Beyond this, the scenery and the variety of background as they move among small towns and rural areas is beautifully done. If the movie had been just Costner and the boy, it would undoubtedly have been one of the best films of the year; as it is, you'll probably find yourself tapping your foot through almost one half of the film, waiting for it to get back to the good part.

## Student Art Show

A stirring in Procter

It is difficult to critique an art show with work done by one's close contemporaries, further-

**Rose Merrill  
Staff  
Writer**

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 9th, 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 student show's pizzazz can only 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 is definitely worth witnessing for oneself - so stop by Procter! If the passion and potential of these student artists is tapped into, encouraged, and blended with a few more years of formal schooling, I have no doubt that many of them will blow aside cobwebs and herald fresh breezes in the art world, or any other world for that matter.

The Independent Performance Club  
presents

6 Studies

In the Olin Auditorium, Saturday, Dec. 11th, at  
7pm

Satre, Pinter, and more...

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If you've been  
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## Sports

9

## Hurrah!

## Injuries, defeats and one brilliant victory

Well, as the sun sinks slowly in the west and we begin to pack up and cackle a fond farewell to our fair 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 their starting point guard and key player Ray Gable. Gable went down with a knee injury early in the Blazer's 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 Jamell 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, foiling the CCNY foilists 7-2. Kapil Gupta and Todd Hefner 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 Puljanowski 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 Pfeffer, 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 1 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 15-8, 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 Hameed went 4-0 against both colleges, improving his personal season match record to 81 overall. He is Bard's MALE ATHLETE OF THE WEEK. He was describes as "playing fiercely in all matches, and [he] is a Pakistani Rap-Master" (joining the ranks of long-time Anglo rap-master Terrence Dewsnap).

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 Hameed tore apart Hamilton's Rap-Master Wannabe Shep Wainwright 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 Stevenson Gymnasium. 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 reknown. Win, and students will speak about you in hushed, solemn tones for weeks to come! ☺

## YOGA IN JANUARY

Erin Schulman will be teaching Mon. evenings.

6:30-8:00pm

\$3/class

If interested, contact 758-7530

## HATHA YOGA CLASSES

For: Students, Faculty/Staff & Community Members

Mondays

Feb. 7th thr April 18th

6:30-8:00pm

10 weeks: \$20

Call Kris Hall ext. 530 to sign up

Physical Breathing Postures

Exercises Meditation

taught by Erin Schuman, M.A.

Happy Chanukah



## Campus Politics

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 welcome.

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 industrious students are defecting from Bard (a.k.a. Nomad College) in even larger numbers than most years. The Administration has been drawing 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 Bard will be lengthier 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, "screw-you" personalities 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 tough times. They must work to defeat the malaise. They should rethink workload expectations; they should cease divorcing their classroom jobs from their largely unexercised extracurricular duties; they should maturely comply 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 students jealous of the talents of the classics department, had a cast 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 "hands-off" attitude once they commute home after classes.

At a recent student forum, students issued a protest vote against the existing practice of allowing a professor under review for tenure to see the names of the students who testify along with their testimony. Faculty reviews are interesting affairs, since professors can always out-vote the student participants on the review committees, as they can do on the hiring committees. Additionally, professors sitting on 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, let's say, the professor will evaluate whether they're successful academically, with the option of looking through the student's files, to judge if the person is being spiteful and unfair.

## One College, Two Visions

Faculty hiring committees have an outlook quite unlike that of Bard's Admissions staff. Professors look for a different outlook from candidates than the type administrators generally look for in students. Just try to recommend a candidate who did not get their doctorate's degree at one of America's most elite schools. Such a 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 make-up of the future population points to a noteworthy schism in campus politics. Should Bard become more of a school about "rigorous

thought", as in the Harvard mold, or should it be more of an 'alternative' liberal arts school, with continued practice in "creativity", in its own mold?

Students interested in influencing campus politics should *write out* their recommendations on how the curriculum should be altered, on what kind of professors 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.

## What's 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 in secret to decide the fate of our college was very interesting. Apparently, students years ago could sit in on these meetings, but the interest gradually died out — perhaps because the meetings are not mysterious, just monotonous. Only an elected student EPC member, however, has had constant access. Ironically, the majority 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. The Dean used an exhausting amount of circumlocution to tell me, in the short space of about ten minutes, that yes, there are faculty meetings, and that no, a person has to petition the Executive Committee for permission to attend beforehand.

So I asked myself whether it was worthwhile to pursue the idea further. After all, the most important influences on decision-making in the college are Botstein and Dimitri Papadimitriou. That is not to question the relevance or competence of the other administrators, 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 legitimize the authority of others. *They* are in control. We ought to be sitting in on their meetings.

I also became disinterested because I didn't want to lose respect for my professors, which was a distinct possibility if I witnessed faculty politics in action. Faculty politics is nasty because the stakes are so small. There are only so many bucks 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 curriculum reform proposal. The college had considered, but then dropped, the option of buying a school in France. Rumors surfaced that the administration was cajoling 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 professor-ships came under the wing of the Multicultural Ethnic Studies program. Plans were agreed to destruct the "old gym" and erect a science facility. And, in the time since September, a seventeen-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 Executive Committee requesting the opportunity to send an *Observer* person to the full-faculty meetings. I argued that that is an important 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, perhaps Bard doesn't deserve to be informed, as someone I respect

pointed 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, unobserved.

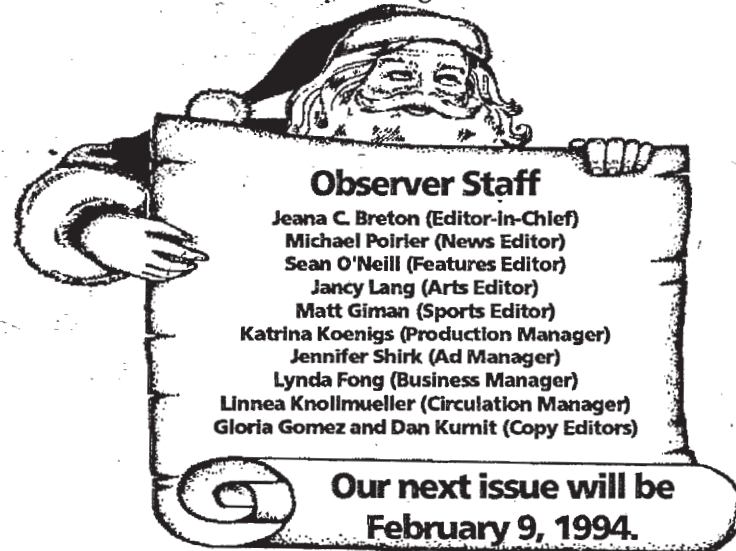
The professors debated the measure for quite a while. Eventually the faculty did decide that one member of the "student press" should be elected by the student forum to observe the meetings, although they were unsure whether the student forums could do that. Subsequently, despite student government opposition, 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 most Bardians will 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 begin anew next semester.



**Observer Staff**

Jeana C. Breton (Editor-in-Chief)  
 Michael Poirier (News Editor)  
 Sean O'Neill (Features Editor)  
 Jancy Lang (Arts Editor)  
 Matt Gimán (Sports Editor)  
 Katrina Koenigs (Production Manager)  
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 Lynda Fong (Business Manager)  
 Linnea Knollmueller (Circulation Manager)  
 Gloria Gomez and Dan Kurnit (Copy Editors)

**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 as accurate as possible. I thought that the report in the last issue of the *Observer* 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 re-thinking 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 candidate. At the present time we do not 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 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 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 effectiveness 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 professionally 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,  
Jeana C. Breton  
Editor-in-Chief

*Happy Holidays to All!*

## Complaints

Musing through the *Observer*, I think it is high time I vented my spleen. There have been a lot of disgruntling things about this paper that have bothered me all semester, and in the face of a dead computer and too many deadlines, it seems the perfect time to browse through and offer commentary.

First of all, does Madame the Nefarious Necromantic Gypsy Queen have it in for me, or what? My horoscope is always awful, and lately even more so. I know things are not always light and happiness, and seeing it in print is no help. Especially today's horoscope, which told me and my starmates to start climbing trees. I don't have time to climb trees. I can barely find both shoes in the morning, let alone stake out a good tree to spend time in. Please, offer a better outlook for me. I beg you.

The calendar. Sometimes things are a little off on this back page (this is kind of understatement). For example, it said that the last Distinguished Scientist Lecture was to be held at the Bard Theater at 8pm. This week it states two different times for the Italian Table. And I don't like the comments on the French and Chinese tables — they are a bit expressive of racial stereotypes, don't you think?

The calendar is not the only example of careless editing. Many articles contain sentences that really need to be cleaned up. Perhaps if the editor were to actually do some editorial work...

And this, the editor, is my biggest problem with the *Observer*. Excuse me, that's editor-in-chief. She has a lot of opinions expressed throughout the paper, and while I disagree with much of what she says, she does have the right to speak. However, she should not do so at the expense of the paper's editing needs. And her opinions...well, let's start with the most recent issue. She complains about the dorms. I liked the Ravines. So they sway a bit — so what? And so her room is a bit drafty — so is my house. Yeah, there are a lot of old buildings here and maybe money is distributed in a beyond-questionable manner at times, but really, it's not THAT bad. She complains a lot, actually, about how we "kids" here at Bard are not nice to each other, and lately about drugs and alcohol here. Look, this isn't Southern Methodist University. This is Bard, and while drugs and alcohol may cause problems for some students they do not for many others, and besides, we do not need someone watching over us. Bard is probably a lot cleaner than it used to be, but that is not even the issue. The issue, I think, is that part of Bard is freedom on our part to do what we choose, to some

extent. Generally, what we do to ourselves is our business. The recent alcohol article said Bard may never be immune to the problems of drugs and alcohol use here. I know problems develop at times, and I know how sad it can be to see a friend overly-frequently strung out on something nasty, but I still think we should have the right to make our own decisions on this. So what if "underage" students drink at Bard parties? Or if people get high? Do not moralize or preach at us. We do not want to hear it. If you want a nice clean school where people are consistently helpful and friendly (as if we at Bard are so awful and rude as recent *Observers* would make us out to be), try a different school. Mount St. Mary's, perhaps. Many of us are not at Bard for Christian values. And many of us are nice people without big smiles and drug-free lives.

More about the recent alcohol article. Yes, perhaps drunkenness/drinking does contribute to less-than-safe sex, but a lot of sexual irresponsibility takes place sober too. If the Health Service is concerned about STD's involving drinking, why not have condoms available (free) at Bard parties? And elsewhere on campus? For on-campus students without cars, getting condoms could be a problem. Health Services may have them, but they are not open in the evenings. Does deKline stock them? Do PC's have them? Condoms should, perhaps, be more available on campus...and how about more of those great huge yellow safe sex posters? The ones that mention frottage?

Alas, I have drifted from my original intent. Ah, the joys of wandering thought. And no, it's not due to drugs (but why must I justify or explain myself?).

Julia Magnusson

Dear Ms. Magnusson:

Thank-you for making some very good points. I'm sorry that you feel your horoscope has been unfair to you as of late; the horoscopes have been written by three different people this semester who have alternated weeks so it is difficult to predict how they are going to turn out. We do not have it out for you, and I hope this week's predictions favor you.

The Calendar: I'm sorry there have been mistakes, but that entire page is a paid ad submitted by the administration; it is not a member of my staff that puts it together but someone hired by Shelley Morgan — complaints about the Calendar should be directed to her. The two times for the Italian Table are correct; 5-6p is table time, and 6-7p is conversation time. Also, the comments under the French and Chinese

Table listings are printed as they were submitted by those sponsoring the tables; I cannot change them and they are not an attempt to be racist.

I try to keep my opinions to the editorial page, where I write things that I hope will inspire debate. I do have strong opinions that I know many do not agree with, but does that make them any less valuable? Dorms: I did not mean to imply that they were "THAT" bad, but to suggest that some repairs still need to be made so that you, I and everyone else can be happier about where we live.

Drugs & Alcohol article: I did not try to moralize or preach; I was simply stating facts. I apologize if you and others felt that I was putting Bard students down; I was not trying to do that either — I was filling space, that's all. It is, however, part of my responsibility as the chief editor of Bard's only newspaper to portray a student perspective of Bard (as opposed to the pretty picture put out by the college). If this causes people to think twice about what may be considered harmful behavior, is it really a bad thing?

Sex: You're right — irresponsibility is probably the biggest problem. Condoms are available at the Bookstore, but that doesn't mean that we will buy them or use them. Condoms should be made more readily available as should information on STD's and safe sex.

Thank-you again for your comments. It is nice to know that somebody cares enough about these issues to write in. And, I will ask my copy editors next semester to be more careful about catching errors.

Sincerely,  
Jeana C. Breton  
Editor-in-Chief

## More...

Dear Bard Observer,

I was slightly upset by Jeana C. Breton's characterization of Robbins as "wretched" (she herself spelled it "retched") in her recent article. True, Robbins does have a few aesthetic problems (peeling paint, etc.) and some heating problems, but, on the whole, it is quite a pleasant place to live.

The only reason people view Robbins as "wretched" is due to the attitude that they seem to have inherited about it. Come by just about any weeknight and you will see a warm fire and people sitting in the lounge quietly studying. If anything, I wouldn't call Robbins "wretched," but a "healthy" place to live due to its social nature. Thank you.

Bill Selman



# CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY THE DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

DECEMBER 8 TO DECEMBER 15 • 1993

## ★ WEDNESDAY. DECEMBER 8 ★

- ★ **Walk For Health.** Sponsored by Bard's Athletic department. **Meet in front of Ludlow, 8:15a.** Walk lasts for 45 minutes, wear comfortable footwear.
- ★ **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.**
- ★ **Documentary Classic.** "Film Portrait," by Jerome Hill. **Preston Cinema 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.** Meets every Thursday.
- ★ **Tavola Italiana, Kline President's Room, 5-6p** All Welcome; join us for conversation at **6-7p.**
- ★ **Der Deutsche Stammtisch--donnerstags, 18Uhr. Kline-College room.**
- ★ **Bisexuals, Activists, Gays, Lesbians, Et al.** 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 ★

- ★ **American Symphony Orchestra Chamber Players.** "Richard Strauss: Favorites and Friends." **Olin Auditorium, 8p.**
- ★ **Movies!** "Delicatessen," Directed by Jean Pierre-Jeunet and Mark Caro. Starring Marie D'Amicq and Dominique Pinon. (1991-comedy-French with subtitles) **Old Gym, 7p and 9p.**

## ★ SATURDAY. DECEMBER 11 ★

- ★ **Poughkeepsie Galleria Mall trip.** Do some holiday shopping in the "City of Sin." **Meet behind Kline at 5p.**
- ★ **Fuente Ovejuna.** A play by Lope de Vega, directed by Erin Baker Mee. **Scene Shop Theatre, 8p.** Runs every evening through December 14.

## ★ SUNDAY. DECEMBER 12 ★

- ★ **Anyone for cricket?** Cricket, lovely cricket...every Sunday **Inside or near Stevenson Gym, 3:30p.** Contact Damath (752-7348) or Shehreyar (752-7275) for more information.
- ★ **Holy Eucharist at Church of St. John the Evangelist, 10a.**
- ★ **The Dance and the Players.** Special photography opening reception by Bard Senior Brad Richman. **Stevenson Gym, 2-4p.**
- ★ **Special Carol Service.** This will take the place of evening worship tonight. **Bard Chapel, 6p.**
- ★ **Fuente Ovejuna.** A play by Lope de Vega, directed by Erin Baker Mee. **Scene Shop Theatre, matinee at 3p, evening performance at 8p.**
- ★ **Movies!** "To Have and Have Not," Directed by Howard Hawk. Starring Bogie and Bacall! (1944-drama) **Old Gym, 7p and 9p.**

## ★ 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 Pulitzer-winning Shulamit Ran, Hayden, Vivaldi, Debussy and two works by Da Capo members. **Olin Auditorium, 8p.**
- ★ **Peer Tutors in the Stevenson Library, Room 402, 10-Noon, and 8-10p and every night except Friday and Saturday: 8-10p.**

## ★ TUESDAY. DECEMBER 14 ★

- ★ **Towbin Poetry Room.** Come listen to Bard's record library of poets and authors. **Olin 101, 6-9p.**

## ★ WEDNESDAY. DECEMBER 15 ★

- ★ **Walk For Health.** Sponsored by Bard's Athletic department. **Meet in front of Ludlow, 8:15a.** Walk lasts for 45 minutes, wear comfortable footwear.
- ★ **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 ★

**WEDNESDAY:** Grand Union Runs: Leave at 6p, return at 7p.  
**FRIDAY:** Rhinecliff: Leave at 4:20p for the 4:53p train; leave at 5:50p for the 6:21p train; leave at 7p for the 7:41p train.  
Poughkeepsie: Leave at 5:30p for the 6:19p train; leave at 7:45p for the 8:35p train; leave at 10p for the 10:45p train.  
**SATURDAY:** Rhinecliff Train Station, Rhinebeck, and Red Hook: Leave at 10a, return at 2p.  
Hudson Valley Mall: Leave at 5:45p, return at 10p.  
**SUNDAY:** Church: Leave at 9a, return at 10:30a for St. John's (Barrytown) and St. Christopher's (Red Hook).  
Rhinecliff: Meet 7:15p and 9:30p trains. Poughkeepsie: Meet the 7:43p, 8:43p and 10:43p train.

**Other Transportation:** Poughkeepsie Galleria trip 12/10, leave at 5p, pick up at mall 9p.  
New York City trip on 12/17, Meet van at 8a for JFK Airport. Students must sign up in the Dean of Students office. Cost: \$10.  
New York City trip on 12/18, Meet van at 10a, leave NYC at 7p. Students must sign up in the Dean of Students office. Cost: \$5.

**Meet all vans or busses in the parking lot behind Kline Commons.**