

Bard College
Student Newspaper Archive
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OBSERVER

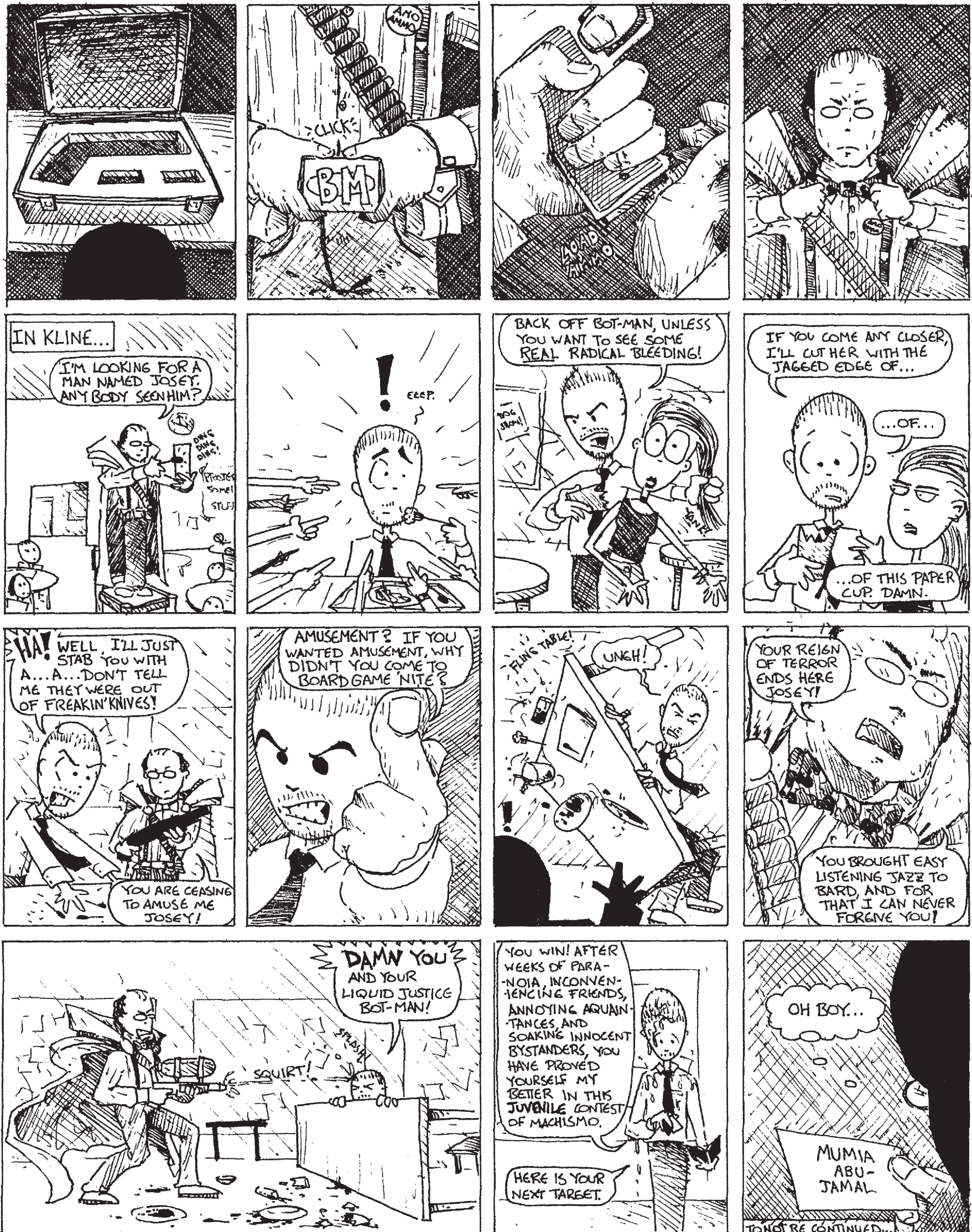
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BOT-MAN: WETWORKS

Bot-man, Volume 3, Issue 3, 1998



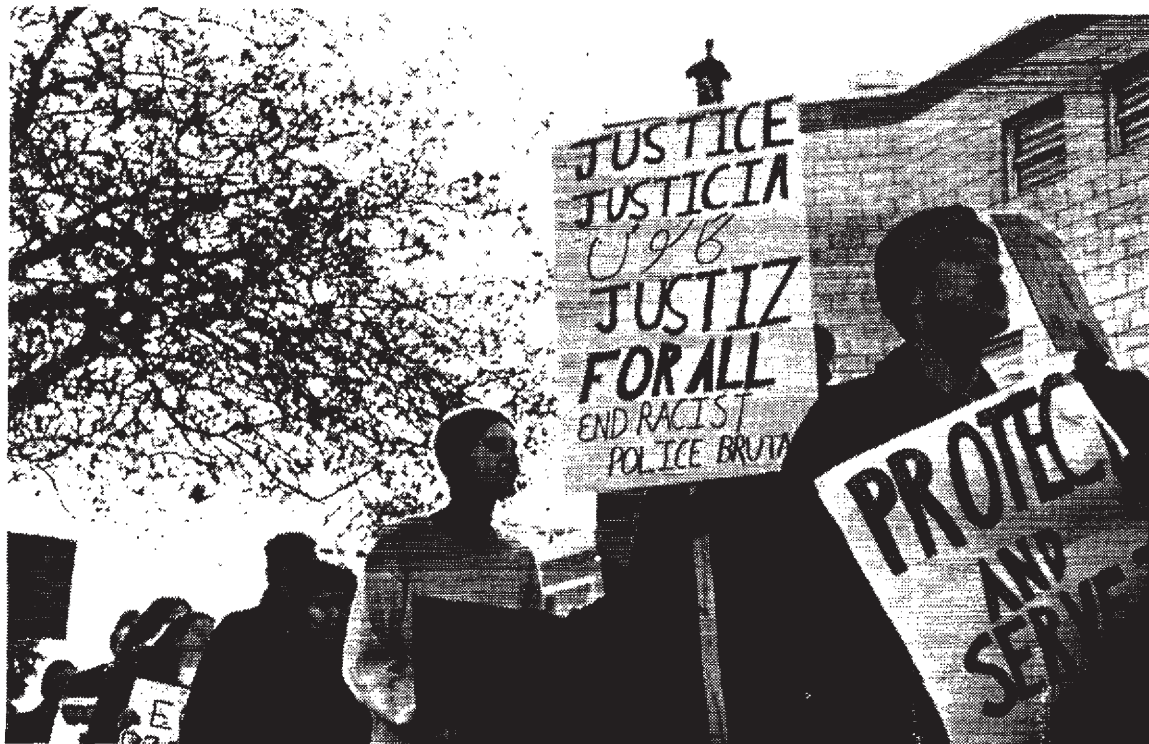
Written & created by: Chris Van Dyke, John Holowach; Copyright 1998 Holowach/Van Dyke; Drawn by: Chris Van Dyke
Special thanks to: Allen Josey, for being forced to appear in this obligatory sequel; Morgan and Mulzer, for helping with last minute brainstorming for extra wacky dialogue to pack each panel; all the insanely paranoid individuals who insured that my life as a hit man would be short and sweet (my homework thanks you); and as always, Mumia Abu-Jamal, for being someone who leads to college student protests, and thus an endless source of entertainment.

"News is whatever sells newspapers; *The Bard Observer* is free."

THE BARD

OBSERVER

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MARCHING FOR JUSTICE: Bard students staged a protest in Poughkeepsie on November 6, in front of the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office.

Hundreds from Bard Community Protest Racism and Police Brutality

In wake of student's arrest, Bard examines protocols, Resident Director Fegan resigns

By AMANDA KNIPEKAMP & JESSICA JACOBS

ON NOVEMBER 6, nearly 350 Bard students, faculty and administrators gathered before the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office in Poughkeepsie to rally against racist police brutality. For almost two hours, the protestors marched and chanted in front of the building, voicing their anger at the recent arrest of Mario Bourdeau. The Students of Color for Racial Justice, a group of student activists, organized transportation and provided signs for those in attendance.

During the rally, student leaders wearing white arm-bands directed the protestors, leading chants and ensuring that students maintained a peaceful protest. Speeches defining the purpose of the rally were given by Marguerite Wade and Hector Anderson (see speech on page 3), both students of color at Bard. "If you are here today, showing your support, you are saying that racist police brutality will not be tolerated," said Wade at the rally.

Yet, the rally's impact on the future conduct of Sheriff's

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5,000 March for Mumia

New developments in prisoner's case spark international mobilization, protest

By NICOLE COOK & MICHAEL HAGGERTY

FIFTEEN BARD STUDENTS traveled to Philadelphia on November 7 to protest the recent decision by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court (PSC) to deny prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal a new trial. The Bard students, organized by the Student Action Collective, joined nearly 5,000 demonstrators who hailed from cities as distant as Detroit and Paris. Activist Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and other Mumia supporters spoke passionately about Abu-Jamal's precarious fate and the manifold implications of his case. The demonstrators then marched to City Hall, blocking traffic all the way. Similar rallies and marches were held throughout the world that day.

"If we're going to save him, it will probably require civil disobedience, strikes and boycotts," said Bard student Susie David, who attended the rally and stressed that the urgency of Mumia's case warrants "drastic measures."

On October 29, Judge Ron Castille of the PSC denied Mumia a new trial, effectively paving the way for Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge to sign a death war-

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Sister Cities Dinner Raises \$1,000 for Hurricane Relief

Sickness, shortages of water, food, and medicine cripple Central America

By STEPHANIE SCHNEIDER

THE ANNUAL SISTER CITIES Dinner/Dance, held on November 7, could be called a success. Everyone seemed to enjoy the meal, the dancing lasted until midnight, and Bard's Sister Cities club raised about \$1,000. Yet despite the lightheartedness and revelry, the attendees did take time to reflect on the true purpose of the dance: fostering support for the city of Larreynaga, Nicaragua. In light of Hurricane Mitch, this support and friendship is all the more crucial.

As well as selling raffle tickets to raise emergency funds, the Sister Cities club displayed newspaper clippings describing the devastation felt through much of Central America. Almost daily since the hurricane, news agencies have brought more news of the deaths and photographs of the destruction. As a *New York Times* news account explained, "It was the rain, not the winds, that did the most damage. Torrential downpours spawned floods and avalanches that killed more than 10,000, erased villages, devastated crops and destroyed much of the infrastructure in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua." (11/9/98)

In addition to the damage to crops and infrastructure, the storm caused a health crisis due to poor water sanitation. CNN reported that in the capital of Honduras (Tegucigalpa), residents bathe and wash clothes in "rivers contaminated by corpses and by chemicals from a factory upstream, destroyed in the storm. Skin infections abound." (11/11/98)

Hospitals are also suffering from the lack of sanitary water. In Tegucigalpa, "the hospital no longer has running water, and sanitary conditions are so bad that doctors have canceled all but the most urgent surgeries." (CNN).

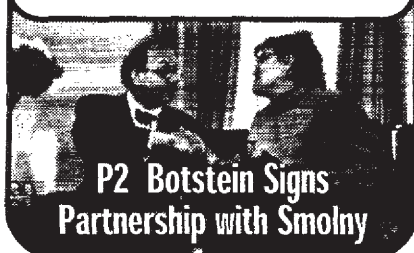
"Our biggest concern," said Dr. Carlos Hueso, the director of the hospital, "is that the consumption of our water can lead to epidemics, especially of cholera." Moreover, "Because the incubation period for dangerous diseases like dengue fever, cholera and gastroenteritis is several weeks, the worst may be yet to come." (CNN, 11/11/98)

Though Honduras was the hardest hit of the

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OPINIONS

Smolny College Agreement Cemented

Russian liberal arts institution but one of many schools now guided by Bard's new Institute for International Liberal Education

WRITTEN BY JESSICA JACOBS REPORTING BY KERRY CHANCE

IN A MOVE that Leon Botstein called "a great contribution to idealism in education," he and Ludmilla Verbitskaya, Rector of St. Petersburg University, signed a document on November 11, formalizing Bard's role in the establishment of Russia's first liberal arts institution, Smolny College.

The mission of Smolny College, grounded in the basic elements of Bard's curriculum, contrasts with the current system of Russian education. In traditional Russian institutions, students train for specific careers by concentrating on highly specialized majors. Classes are usually large lectures, characterized by no individual attention and very little writing. Smolny College, however, will teach its students "the spirit of entrepreneurship, of adventure, of going through the process of deciding for yourself what you are going to do in life, habits that are different from what was once the case in the former Soviet Union," President Botstein said. "[Smolny] will allow young Russians to control and make decisions about their lives that are more effective and correspond more to reality."

Although Smolny graduates may be better prepared to face the world, their "reality" differs greatly from that which Bard graduates encounter. Elaine Smallen, Assistant Director of the Institute for International Liberal Education (ILE), explained that there is "a greater responsibility for their students to earn a satisfying income quickly, to uphold the spirit of the society in very depressing times. Americans are in a much more stable economic environment, so we may have a career in our minds that we feel we can fulfill that over time. [Russians] have a greater burden to fulfill more quickly."

Along with these economic concerns, those who participated in the creation of Smolny considered the larger impact it will have on the Russian system of education. "If successful, [Smolny] will make an important contribution to reform in Russian education and to democratization because other people will be interested in an emancipatory education that encourages students to think for themselves," said Susan Gillespie, director of the Institute.



A HANDSHAKE BETWEEN CULTURES: President Botstein and Rector Ludmilla Verbitskaya finalize the pact between Bard and Smolny College.

Gillespie also emphasized the opportunity that Smolny offers to students who want to study abroad, though Smolny is only one of the many study abroad programs available to Bard students.

The Institute for International Liberal Education, founded last July, is behind the creation of these programs. Along with the partnership with Smolny, the ILE currently provides exchange opportunities in Zimbabwe, South Africa, France, and India, and is currently investigating a joint venture in Vietnam. Smallen said that one of the main objectives of the institute is "to expand the practice of liberal education internationally where it's needed and where it did not exist before."

Realizing this objective involves collaborating with schools in "very unusual and dynamic periods of social

and political change," said Gillespie. "We could lay a real foundation for solving larger problems." This ties into another function of the ILE: to raise questions about international education in the greater educational community. "I think that, at this time in history, international education can be different than the way people thought about it in the past," Gillespie said. "The world is small now and it is easy to communicate and go places. What I really envision is that international education is a way for students to begin a conversation with students and faculties from other countries and look at things differently."

For any students considering these programs, Smallen emphasized that "the experience of another culture directly... expands us as spiritual, emotional, intellectual human beings."

Sister Cities' Dinner/Dance Raises Funds to Combat Devastation

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countries affected by the hurricane Mitch, Nicaragua also suffered a catastrophic degree of damage. According to Pamela Townson, the Sister Cities coordinator, any statistics on damage reported in the United States should be multiplied by ten. She stated in an email, "While I am a pessimist in my personal life, I am a true optimist in the work that I do, but I am afraid to say that the situation here makes me think Nicaragua will never be able to recoup from this disaster. Last night it rained again non-stop for 12 hours in Leon, not tremendously strong but steady rain, which can only worsen the situation, if that is possible."

On November 3, the papers in Nicaragua reported another great disaster caused by the storm. According to Townson, "Las Casitas had another landslide... bring[ing] the total to more

than 1,500 dead and many missing. Horrifically, while mass graves are being made and cremations are being performed, there are still a great number

"...I am a true optimist in the work that I do, but I am afraid to say that the situation here makes me think Nicaragua will never be able to recoup from this disaster," said Pamela Townson, the Sister Cities Coordinator

of rotting bodies... The stench of decaying bodies is starting to filter into the outskirts of Leon [the town in which Townson resides]."

Last week, Townson visited Larreynaga for the first time after the storm. She reported that "there is

a total of 1,509 people affected in Larreynaga by Mitch, out of a population of approximately 2,800." Specific damages include 12 houses in Larreynaga that are totally lost and another 18 which are partially ruined or affected out of a total of 404 houses. Eighteen water wells are contaminated with feces and two have collapsed completely, leaving only four to be used. Fourteen bridges are partially destroyed, five roads damaged and 75 percent of the crops are lost. The health center is undergoing shortages; it has only a "limited amount of medical supplies, enough to attend 30-40 cases of low-intensity illnesses." There has been no electricity or running water since October 26 and two communities are still isolated and unreachable due to high water levels and washed out roads.

For anyone interested in sending emergency relief aid, Townson recommends sending a check to the Bard Sister Cities Program.

NEWSBRIEFNEWSBRIEFNEWSBRIEFNEWSBRIEFNEWS

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER REPARTÉE

Q and A with the landscape architect, civil engineer, et al. of the proposed Bard Performing Arts Center will take place Friday, November 20, in Olin 102, at 3 p.m. "It's a meeting to ask questions about the plan," remarked Jim Brudvig, associate vice-president on finance. The center's proposed building site is a matter of great contention. The administrators of Montgomery Place believe the center will disrupt their northern vista.

LECTURE ON AFRICAN ECONOMICS

Economist Eiman Zein-Elabdin will give a lecture enti-

itled "Africa and Economic Development: Discourse and Reality" on Thursday, November 19, at 7:30 p.m. The lecture will be held in room 115 of the Olin Language Center, and is free and open to the public. Zein-Elabdin is an assistant professor of economics at Franklin and Marshall College.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY CENTER FORMED

Bard College has named Dr. Joanne Fox-Przeworski director of its new Center for Environmental Policy. Dr. Fox-Przeworski, former director of the United Nations' Environment Program for North America, will take her position at Bard early in 1999.

"With the appointment of Dr. Fox-Przeworski, Bard will significantly enhance its contribution in the area of environmental research and policy, locally as well as globally," said Robert Martin, Bard's dean of graduate studies. "Her experience at the United Nations, her academic background, and above all her passionate concern for the environment make her perfectly suited to lead Bard's new center."

The Bard Center for Environmental Policy will take the place of Bard's current Graduate School of Environmental Studies (GSES) after a transition period of several years. The future graduate program of the Center for Environmental Policy will shift to an academic-year calendar and will focus on science-based policy on environmental issues.

ZINE LIBRARY BRINGS SPEAKERS

This coming Saturday, November 21, the infamous Zine Library is bringing two artists to Bard: Tammy Rae Carland and Kaia Wilson, the founders of *MR. LADY*, a lesbian-owned record label and distributor of work by independent video artists and film makers. Tammy Rae Carland is a visual artist who teaches photography, video, and digital imaging; she will present and discuss her video work. Kaia Wilson is a musician with the release of two solo albums under her belt. She has formerly been part of the bands Team Dresch and Adieckid. On Saturday, she will perform with her band, the Butchies.

News Briefs Compiled by Jessica Jacobs

Arts Center Impact Statement Accepted by Red Hook Board

Informational meeting to be held Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. in Olin 102

By DAVID PORTER MILLER

CONTROVERSY CONTINUED TO BUILD over the fate of the Bard Performing Arts Center over the past two weeks, as the release of the Bard-commissioned Draft Environmental Impact Statement to the Red Hook Planning Board was met with accusations by neighboring Montgomery Place of improper conduct on the part of the College. The allegations were intended to forestall or derail the project by persuading the board to reject the DEIS.

On behalf of Montgomery Place, attorney George Rodenhausen alleged that digging in an area where a parking lot for the Frank Gehry-designed Performing Arts Center will someday be (and which has previously been parking for the Avery Center and Blum Institute) constituted pre-construction for the facility and was thus in violation of zoning laws, according to Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration Jim Brudvig. Among the evidence presented to the Planning Board Monday, November 3, to accept the DEIS were photographs of bulldozers on the future lot. President Leon Botstein denied the allegation, claiming that crews were installing larger sewer pipes between the sewage treatment facility behind Blum and Avery and the rest of the campus. This work was completely independent of the Performing Arts Center project, he said, and was necessitated by "more students flushing more toilets" as the college expands.

Rodenhausen also claimed that the DEIS was incomplete because it did not mention a smaller, 200-seat theatre, also designed by Gehry, which was planned for the space between Blum and Avery. This project is on hold indefinitely due to lack of funding, and Brudvig scoffed at the idea that intend-

ed future projects would need to be addressed at the same time as a project with immediate plans. The smaller theatre has been in one or another stage of planning for 20 years.

Brudvig responded that the decision not to proceed with that project in the present was made in December of 1997 and had nothing to do with Montgomery Place.

"I regret that they've taken such an aggressive position. It is hostile... unneighborly," said Botstein in an interview Friday. The appeals, which were issued without any attempt to contact and consult Bard about the particular grievances they discussed, represented the increasingly aggressive tactics of Montgomery Place in its efforts to prevent the building from being constructed in its presently-intended location.

Botstein contrasts these tactics with what he sees as Bard's policy of being "transparent about the process."

The Planning Board rejected both of Montgomery Place's appeals and accepted the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. "Accepting" the statement does not imply that the board agrees with the findings of the study or that it will approve the project.

A public hearing about the project is scheduled for December 7 at 7:30 p.m. Gehry, the building's Santa Monica-based architect, is expected to attend, as are landscape architect Laurie Olin, who is also a respected historical preservationist, and the many of those involved in the DEIS.

Botstein remains confident about the results of the process. "Owner's rights have huge momentum," he said. "We are the owners."

Brudvig has organized an informational meeting on the project for this Friday, in Olin 102, at 3 p.m. Laurie Olin and selected environmental specialists will attend.

Protest of Brutality

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Department officers has yet to be seen. In addition to this public display of outrage, representatives of the Dean of Student's Office have established a dialogue with Sheriff Fred Scoralick. According to Dean of Students Jonathan Becker, Bard hopes to revise and clarify existing protocols for officers coming onto campus. In a letter to the editor of the *Poughkeepsie Journal*, Becker and student Gabe Hindin wrote, "Bard has long maintained good, cooperative relations with the Sheriff's Department. We sincerely hope that we can work together to ensure the safety and security of all members of the community." The letter, which also expressed concerns about the *Journal's* incomplete coverage of the arrest, was not published.

At the rally, Wade pointed to another consideration. "This is not just an external issue, this is an internal issue as well," she said.

The arrest raised questions about the preparedness of both Bard Security and the administration for a crisis. The administrator-on-call who witnessed the arrest, Resident Director Neal Fegan, whose response to the event was severely criticized by students, has since resigned. With the information currently available regarding the conduct of the security officers present, Teresa Vanyo, director of Human Resources, said, "We do not feel that sanctions are appropriate [against the involved officers]. For the future, we will be doing more training."

Bourdeau's case is currently being reviewed by a grand jury. After the grand jury hearings, the Sheriff's office will begin investigations into the conduct of Deputy Sheriff Enkler, the arresting officer.

Editor's Note: The following is the text of a speech given by Hector Anderson at a rally conducted by Bard students in front of the Poughkeepsie Office of the Dutchess County Sheriff, on November 6 to protest racist police brutality.

I WAS NEITHER SHOCKED nor surprised when I learned that a Black student had been beaten by a white police officer on the campus of Bard College. What surprised me was the amount of people who were stunned, the amount of people who believed it to be inconceivable. What shocked me was the passive language used, which described it as a "racially charged incident." Which made it seem as if what happened was some minor occurrence not worth noting, instead of the extremely brutal and racist attack that it was.

When one really thinks about it, with the exception of those without televisions and radios, who have never bothered to read a newspaper or a magazine, can a person really be all that surprised when they hear about a vicious attack enacted by a white police officer against a person of color? Has it slipped from our minds so quickly the tragedy that had befallen Anthony Baez because of a football hitting the windshield of a patrol car? And what about the horrors suffered by Abner Louima? And what about the less publicized victims? For example, the Asian American male in California gunned down in the summer of '97 because he was, and I quote, "holding a stick in a martial arts fashion."

So surprise I can not understand, but what I can understand is anger. And this anger is justifiable on two accounts. You should not be angry only because a Black man was beaten by a white police officer. You should be angry for another reason as well. You should be angry because it happened again. Deputy Sheriff Enkler's "behavior" wasn't "inappropriate," it was racist. Deputy Sheriff Enkler's "actions" weren't "improper," they were malicious.

So is that why we're here, because a white police officer abused his power again? Because another white police officer thought he was above the law? Or because we will not tolerate such officers displaying this type of violent behavior, which is founded upon racism?

A Black woman who found out about the beating of this Black student at Bard College confided in me: that this has raised serious concerns in her mind because she is raising a black child, a boy. When an injustice such as this occurs, knowing that an officer like Deputy Sheriff Enkler exists does not allow the mind a moment of peace for a person of color. It sounds like I'm over-exaggerating, doesn't it? A few of you might even go so far as to say I'm picking on him. HE WAS JUST DOING HIS JOB!

But do officers like Deputy Sheriff Enkler have training manuals that state during a routine stop for a traffic violation if the accused is non-white they have the option to mercilessly flog this person, as if they were chattel, with a nightstick to their satisfaction? Or, that if a non-white male is in your custody, if it is to your liking, you and your fellow offi-



THE POWER OF SPEECH: Hector Anderson speaks at the rally.

cers may take the liberty of doing unspeakable things to him with appliances that may be found in your local hardware store (ex. a plunger)? Or, that if a non-white male is struggling to break free of a chokehold, it is not because he can not breathe, proceed until he no longer resists?

The reality is: laws do not exist which allow the constitutional, civil, and human rights of people of color to be violated by anyone; and the threat of bodily harm at the hands of police officers like Deputy Sheriff Enkler persists. People of color continue to be plagued by a relentless onslaught of racist police brutality.

Deputy Sheriff Enkler's job is to uphold the law - not to break it. And if Deputy Sheriff Enkler were just doing his job on October 24, 1998, there would be no need for any of us to be here. But the fact of the matter is we are here. We all recognize that the beating of Mario Bourdeau by Deputy Sheriff Enkler is not an isolated incident, but a specific form of police brutality that has become too commonplace in communities all across this country. And, furthermore, by the numerous and diverse assortment of people that have assembled here today, all of us are making it perfectly clear that such wrongdoing will not go unchallenged. This rally is a response not only from the students of color attending Bard who are outraged by this injustice, but also from white students who are appalled by Deputy Sheriff Enkler's racist behavior.

Yes I said "white" students. And I am fully aware that the word "white" is taboo. It usually labels the speaker who utters it a militant, a radical, a separatist, a segregationist, a racist or,

better yet, a reverse racist, especially if the speaker is Black. For this is a society where race/color doesn't matter, and in this colorblind society we are all equal as human beings. Yet, I remember hearing a person of color saying: If you don't see color then how can you see me? And, furthermore, if you don't see color, how can you truly comprehend the reason for us being here today? So of course I have to point out it was Black Bard student who was violated. And I have to state it was a white police officer that assaulted him. And for this same reason the word student will not suffice. It is indeed necessary to say white students and students of color. Because, in essence, all I am saying is that there are both white students and students of color who recognize that the assault on this Bard student was racially motivated. Not just students of color, but there are also white students who are able to recognize that what transpired was racism in its purest form. Not just students of color, but there are students of color and white students attending Bard who agree that Deputy Sheriff Enkler's savage conduct revealed its racist nature.

I have told you this because I do not want this rally to be misinterpreted as a hate filled lynch mob, being led by students of color out for the blood of a white police officer. To the contrary, this is a rally that has been organized by students of color, enrolled at Bard College, who wish to inform the public of an injustice. This is not a lynch mob, it is a rally composed of concerned citizens who came to be informed; concerned citizens who want to see justice prevail; concerned citizens who refuse to take a neutral or a passive stance when an officer like Deputy Sheriff Enkler is brought to their attention; concerned citizens who are distressed due to the knowledge that their tax dollars are financing racism by providing a salary for an officer like Deputy Sheriff Enkler; concerned citizens that can only be comforted by knowing that they are not sanctioning Deputy Sheriff Enkler's unlawful and racist behavior. And this can only be achieved by depriving him of his salary, which can only mean one out of two things, his resignation or his dismissal.

And is this too much to ask? Is there any explanation that can be given as to why not? Shouldn't officers like Deputy Sheriff Enkler know that repercussions will follow each and every time they commit such a heinous act? Wouldn't this rid them of the notion that they are above the law, and reinforce that they are subject to it like everyone else, and can not misuse the authority they have been granted no matter how tempting the urge?

Being that police officers are public servants who we are suppose to be able to rely on because it is their duty to serve and protect us, there aren't any reasons that can explain why we are in need of Deputy Sheriff Enkler's services. Officers like Deputy Sheriff Enkler are major disappointments that help to destroy the sense of trust that some of us still have in the police. We do not need officers like Deputy Sheriff Enkler. And I hope I speak for all of us when I say: We do not want officers like Deputy Sheriff Enkler.

Mumia Case Protested

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rant. Ridge, an ardent death penalty supporter, has signed 95 death warrants in his three years in office and has vowed to sign Mumia's immediately (Abu-Jamal has been on death row for 16 years). Judge Castille was formerly selected as "Man of the Year" by Lodge #6 of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), an organization that took out a full page ad in the *New York Times* this July demanding Mumia's immediate execution.

Five of the seven judges on the PSC (including Castille) are endorsed by the FOP.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL has been on death row since 1982, when he was convicted of murdering police officer Daniel Faulkner. Mumia has always maintained his innocence. His case has raised numerous concerns about racial inequality in the U.S. judicial system. Abu-Jamal's court-appointed attorney was given neither the resources nor the time to prepare an effective defense, the attorney himself admitted during the proceedings. Mumia was absent for much of his own trial, as Judge Albert Sabo frequently removed him from the courtroom.

Sabo, denounced by district attorneys for his pervasive pro-prosecution bias (*USA Today*, 12/31/97), has presided over 31 death sentence verdicts in 25 years, more than any other judge in the United States. A former member of the Fraternal Order of the Police, Sabo was forced to retire last year by court administrators.

According to *The New York Times*, Judge Sabo's behavior at a 1995 hearing demonstrated that he was "openly contemptuous of [Mumia's] defense...[Sabo] sustained virtually every prosecution objection while shooting down almost every defense objection...[Sabo] turned his back and walked out of the court room as defense lawyer, Rachel H. Wolkenstein, was addressing him about a legal issue" (7/30/97). During a hearing, Sabo fined Leonard Weinglass, Mumia's primary lawyer, for contempt and had Wolkenstein removed from the courtroom in handcuffs.

Responding to allegations of Sabo's biased behavior, the PSC asserted, "There were certainly instances in the record where the judge displays [sic] displeasure or impatience, [but] we cannot conclude that any of the rulings were legally improper; Judge Sabo displayed no such adversarial position towards Appellant."

IT WAS NOT until the summer of 1995, when Governor Ridge signed a warrant for Abu-Jamal's death, that doubts concerning the legitimacy of the trial began to gain international attention; activists throughout the world mobilized to stop the execution. Ten days before the appointed execution date of August 17, as Philadelphia was embroiled in protest, Sabo granted Abu-Jamal a stay of execution, postponing the date because of "the lack of time higher courts would have to review the case."

"It makes you wonder," said police officer James Green, annoyed at this postponement of Mumia's execution, "maybe we should have executed him at 13th and Locust where he executed Danny Faulkner. (NYT, 8/8/95)

IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, numerous Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) hearings have been held. Lawyer Weinglass has presented convincing evidence that Mumia's trial was racially and politically motivated, and that the police coerced witnesses to alter their accounts of the murder.

The political climate in Philadelphia for the past 20 years is an important key to understanding what many have called the "railroading" of Mumia through the court system. Three years prior to his arrest, the Philadelphia Police Department, under the command of Frank Rizzo, fired a barrage of bullets into the house of the revolutionary black liberation organization, MOVE. During the conflict, a police officer was shot and killed, in what was arguably friendly fire. Nine MOVE members were subsequently imprisoned for the crime. This spring, Merle Africa, one of the MOVE 9, mysteriously died in prison.

While the major media organizations in Philadelphia marginalized MOVE, Mumia Abu-Jamal, then president of the Philadelphia chapter of the prestigious National Association of Black Journalists, exposed police and prosecutorial wrongdoing in the attack on the MOVE organization. Mumia was considered a "voice for the voiceless" for his reports on police misconduct and racial discrimination in education and housing under the jurisdiction of Mayor Rizzo. Mumia's reporting spurred an unprecedented suit,

filed by the United States Department of Justice, to end the notorious brutality of the Philadelphia police. In this manner, Mumia's unrelenting brand of journalism indicted the legitimacy of the very police force that was later to accuse him of first degree murder.

MOVE came into conflict with the police again in 1985. After a lengthy conflict, Philadelphia authorities bombed the group's row house, killing eleven MOVE members, including five children, and burned down the entire neighborhood, which consisted of 250 row houses.

EVEN BEFORE HIS JOURNALISM CAREER, Mumia's political activities were extensively monitored by the FBI. The Bureau started a file on Mumia when, at 15 years old, he co-founded the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panthers. The 700 pages of FBI surveillance records do not indicate any instances of criminal activity on Mumia's part. Judge Sabo refused to admit this file as evidence at Mumia's 1981 trial.

The prosecution, however, was allowed to use Mumia's past Black Panther Party membership in its effort to establish premeditation during the sentencing phase of the trial. Premeditation is necessary for an indictment of first degree murder and a sentence of death. However, a 1992 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Dawson v. Delaware*, held that a



FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE: Max Rubenstein protests in a recent Philadelphia march for Mumia.

defendant's exercise of free speech and freedom of association (in this case a white-supremacist) could not be used as an argument for the imposition of the death penalty.

THE FRAGMENTARY DETAILS regarding the events of December 9, 1981 paint an uncertain picture. Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner was shot and killed on Locust Drive. Just prior to this, Faulkner and William Cook (Mumia's brother) were arguing on the sidewalk. Cook had been stopped by Faulkner for driving the wrong way down a one-way street. Mumia noticed the scuffle as he drove down Locust Drive in his cab. He pulled over and ran across the street to see "why my brother was getting beaten up." In a matter of seconds, both Mumia and Faulkner were shot. Police who came on the scene just after the shooting found Faulkner lying on the street, Cook against a wall, and Abu-Jamal sitting on the curb with a bullet in his chest.

The police immediately accused Mumia, a man with no criminal record, of shooting Officer Faulkner in the back and then again in his face. Ostensibly, Faulkner shot Mumia just before the former fell to the ground. Faulkner's partner, Officer Wakshul, accompanied Mumia to the hospital and wrote in his report that "the negro male made no statements." However, at Mumia's trial the police and prosecutors alleged that Abu-Jamal made a loud confession at the hospital. When Mumia's attorney tried to subpoena Wakshul at the 1982 trial, prosecutors claimed that Wakshul was on vacation. He was actually at home. When Wakshul was brought into court in 1995, he testified that, despite his own statement, he had heard Mumia confess. The officer attributed the discrepancy to having been "emotionally overwrought." The PSC found this excuse credible.

THESE ARE NUMEROUS other points of contention:

A medical examiner's report, first entered into official record in 1995, identified the bullet removed from Faulkner's brain as a .44-caliber. The gun that Abu-Jamal had in his glove compartment (he had a licensed gun because of two prior armed-robbery incidents in his cab) was a .38-caliber. Abu-Jamal's court-appointed attorney said that he did not see that portion of the medical report, so he could not raise the point in the 1981 trial. On the night of Faulkner's death, the police never tested Abu-Jamal's gun to see if had been fired recently.

Yet "in contradiction with the preliminary autopsy report, police ballistic experts later said [the bullet] was 'consistent' with a .38-caliber" (NYT, 7/30/95).

William Singletary, an eye-witness, told detectives that he saw an individual flee the scene, leaving Mumia, his brother, and Faulkner behind. Singletary testified at Mumia's PCRA hearing (1995) that police had torn up the two statements about the fourth person. Singletary further testified at the

hearing that the detectives held him at the police station for hours, intimidating and threatening him to such a degree that he left Philadelphia. However, the PSC agreed with Judge Sabo that Singletary, a man with no criminal record nor clear motive to lie, was not a credible witness.

Cynthia White and Robert Chobert, two of the prosecution's key witnesses, were both criminals. White was later released on no bail from a serious felony charge at the request of the Philadelphia Police. Chobert, since his testimony, has been allowed to drive a cab without a driver's license.

Veronica Jones was another key witness for the prosecution in 1982. However, at a 1996 PCRA hearing, she testified that the police strongarmed her into changing her original statements with the threat of taking her children away (Jones was a prostitute at the time). At the PCRA hearing, Jones told the court that on the night of the killing she had seen two men running away, contrary to her earlier, coerced testimony. Immediately following her revised account, in what the *New York Times* called a "bizarre twist to a celebrated case" (10/2/96), Ms. Jones was arrested for having written a bad check two years before this new testimony was given.

REMARKABLY, Mumia has used his prison experience to become an eloquent inside critic of both the penal and justice systems. Since his incarceration, Mumia has written three books, including *Survival Is Still a Crime* and *Death Blossoms*. A series of his commentaries were recorded in 1994 to be aired on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered." However, under pressure from Philadelphia's FOP and then-Senator Robert Dole, NPR canceled the series one week after publicly announcing it. The American Bar Association (ABA) and other organizations such as the Prison Radio Project criticized NPR's capitulation to political forces. The ABA called the cancellation "exactly the kind of censorship of unpopular speech the First Amendment was designed to protect against" (*ABA Journal*, June '96).

In response to NPR's decision to cancel his series of commentaries, Mumia released a statement observing that "It is clear that, in my case, the title 'All Things Considered' did not mean all." The commentaries were later published under the title *Live From Death Row*.

SINCE THE PENNSYLVANIA SUPREME COURT'S judgment, the trajectory of Mumia's legal process has come alarmingly close to an end. Attorneys for Mumia have filed an application with the PSC for a rehearing of Mumia's appeal. This filing allows the case to remain in the state court system for the time being and delays Governor Ridge from signing a death warrant. However, if the rehearing is denied, Mumia will have 30-90 days to file a *habeas corpus* motion in the federal court. Because of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (EDPA), which was hastily signed in 1996 by President Clinton in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, Mumia's chances in federal court are slim. A section of the EDPA demands that federal courts accept the facts and interpretations of law determined by state courts (as long as they are not "unreasonable"). In essence, the process of effective review is greatly impeded.

The last step in Mumia's potential appeals process is the U.S. Supreme Court, a body currently comprised of conservative judges. The Court accepts very few death penalty cases. If Mumia's case is granted review (certiorari), the Supreme Court may have to rule on the constitutionality of the EDPA, a possibility that has enormous implications for a period where "tough on crime" has become the watchword of politicians and legislators.

IN A STATEMENT issued from death row, on October 31, Mumia said, "I am sorry that this court did not rule on the right side of history. But I am not surprised. Every time our nation has come to a fork in the road with regards to race, it has chosen to take the path of compromise and betrayal. On October 29th, 1998, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court committed a collective crime. It damned due process, strangled the fair trial, and raped justice... A court cannot make an innocent man guilty... The righteous fight for life, liberty and justice can only continue."

ANOTHER DEMONSTRATION in the fight to save Mumia is scheduled for Thanksgiving Day in Philadelphia; arrangements for Bard students to participate are in progress. For more information, stop by the Student Action Collective (SAC) Center, a reading room and meeting space for activist organizations, in the basement of the Old Gym. General SAC meetings are held on Thursdays at 9 p.m. Updated details on the Thanksgiving rally, as well as information on other ways to support Mumia, can be found on the website of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal at <http://www.mumia.org>.

WXBC Snags on Tech Complications

Organizers are optimistic. They have conducted interviews and now plan to have the station fully underway by next semester

By CIPRIAN IANCU

A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL and logistical setbacks still impede the start-up of WXBC, Bard's fledgling radio station. As of the week of November 8, Allen Josey, director of student activities, and the student organizers still await the arrival of vital equipment. According to Josey, only after the equipment arrives can the radio engineer make the final connections required to make the station operational.

Josey expressed frustration at the difficulties WXBC has faced, noting that these are only the most recent steps in what has been a long and difficult process. One problem the station confronted, according to Peter Rinko, general manager of the station, was the theft of all of the station's equipment, requiring the most recent purchase. Funding from the Planning Committee, Student Activities, and an Alumni grant, made that purchase possible.

Meanwhile, Rinko and the other



THE SEAT OF POWER? WXBC is not yet operational.

student organizers interviewed over 70 applicants for DJ positions. Of these, 45 were selected. "We tried to make it fair," Peter said. The most important criteria for selection, he noted, were ideas and experience. The selected students will be volunteering

along a particular schedule for air-time, organized by Matt Hayes, program director. DJ's will have complete control over the music played during their air time.

Rinko is pleased with the diversity of musical interests among the DJ's hired. He is also excited about the contribution the station will make to the Bard community, providing a new media resource for many of the cultural events on campus. Program ideas he has to complement normal programming include jazz shows, discussion forums, comedy, and commentary.

He also noted that the station did not previously have a rigid management system. He and seven other students approached Allen Josey last year to express interest in reviving the station.

Amidst all of the excitement and planning, Allen Josey stresses that there will need to be time after the equipment is in place for everyone involved to become accustomed to its regular use. All DJ's will have to be trained in operating the equipment, and all the plans

and procedures will have to be modified in response to the complications of operating a radio station. He expects the technical issues to be resolved soon, but sees the students requiring, at the minimum, the rest of the term to, as it were, "get their feet wet."

Nonetheless, the complications the radio station face contrast with the evident seriousness of the time and energy so far invested by the organizers, causing much of their frustration. According to Hayes, "the real setbacks have been with the engineer, who works with mainstream commercial stations, and is doing this almost as a favor. Allen and the rest of us have been doing our part since the beginning, and these setbacks are in no way indicative of the interest and commitment at Bard."

The station will transmit an AM signal when it is operational, and will be receivable primarily on the Bard Campus. According to Rinko, an FM signal would require an extremely expensive license, and would place the station under FCC regulations.

Aqueous Assassins: Death Comes To Us All

One hundred and thirty Bard students accepted the challenge: to kill their assigned targets and remain alive 'til the end

By PETE RODRIGUEZ REPORTING BY GREG JOHNSON

Georgia Mastroieni stepped out of Bluecher. It's a wooden-seeming, prefabricated, split-level dormitory floating over a ravine; they say stilts hold the thing up, but don't believe it.

The door, as it's supposed to do (for security reasons), swung behind Mastroieni and locked. Only after the metal-on-wood click sounded did she hear footsteps. Immediately, her hand shot into her pocket.

"I was fiddling with my keys, and I could hear him running behind me," she said. Mastroieni must have looked over her shoulder—a mistake costly in time—when she reported that the approaching figure wielded "a giant-ass super soaker."

Despite her foolish glance, Mastroieni opened the door in time, and the assassination was thwarted. Her assassin will surely factor in his target's speed with keys next time.

Eddie McKeever decided never to be alone. He hired bodyguards and set up an elaborate system of signals between him and them. Feedings worried him. His bodyguards were to scan Kline Commons while he took his meals, leaving him to watch his etiquette instead of his back.

But McKeever's McMercenaries were overmatched. A certain femme fatale was too stealthy.

"I was bucked in the back," he said, "and my bodyguards didn't do fucking diddly squat!"

As per the rules, the assassin advances, assuming McKeever's target as her own. In other words, do not feel too sorry for the victims. First, note that they were well enough post-assassination to speak with the Observer. Second, know that they are willing players in a war game.

Doubtless written in a damp room on a small desk with a quill and blotter by a ninety-sixth-generation descendant of Sun Tzu, Assassins: Rules of War sets forth the warrior's code. Among the more interesting rules are:

(9) "You may only assassinate someone with a focused beam of water or a balloon.... You may not simply throw a glass of water on someone or spit on them. Urine [presumably the act of urination] is only legal as a last resort."

(10) "If someone is shot in the rain, the honor system must be used. Any serious disputes should be settled in the usual way (rock, paper, scissors)."

(13) "There is no protective gear. If you are shot



THE COLD EYES OF A PROFESSIONAL HITWOMAN: Many students took up arms (squirt guns and water balloons) in a game of Assassins.

while wearing a raincoat, you are still dead."

The assassin must carry the card with her target's name on it. If she cannot produce the card after a killing, the assassination is void. The target must be shot on his body but can be shot anywhere on his body. He or she need be shot only once. The shoot-

Landy accounts for his own survival simply. "I never go to Kline. I haven't gone in two weeks. I haven't checked my mail in two weeks." So much for his three grand in meals.

ing of items carried by the target is not lethal. The target is absolutely safe only in his dorm. He can, however, be dragged into the open, which includes balconies and porches. But the target can defend himself; a shot from him stuns the assassin for one hour.

Each player contributed one dollar to the pot.

Winner takes all, except the \$10 that went to photocopying.

Each player is both hunter and hunted. The game is a circle of death. One hundred thirty players began. Ten remain. Among them is one of the masterminds, David Landy. He and Alex Barr created the game to play it. To keep themselves honest, Landy said, they had a third person, Nick Corrao, assign targets—a dubious measure, since Corrao himself is among those still alive.

Landy accounts for his own survival simply. "I never go to Kline. I haven't gone in two weeks. I haven't checked my mail in two weeks." So much for his three grand in meals.

Of course, victory depends on many things, not the least of which is chance. As the McKeever incident illustrates, prudent steps often fail. Perhaps the winner is, like Landy, in hiding. But instead of hiding up in a dorm room, maybe he's trapped in the woods, legs caught in a rodent den. He's visible—a sitting duck—and standing out from the trees like spats at an Iowa picnic.

The Tempest: Nearly Gag and Frill-free

Two recent Bard graduates, Jeffrey Lewonczyk and Hope Cartelli, direct literal interpretation of Shakespeare's masterpiece

By PETER MALCOLM

AS I STOOD UP to leave the Cocoon Theatre after watching *The Tempest*, I heard a girl say, "That was really easy to understand." And it was. It was a simple, clear interpretation of Shakespeare's famous play. Nothing was taken away and little was added. Shakespeare is often treated like a Christmas tree on which to hang ornaments; directors festoon his comedies with physical gags and adorn them with quirky characters. In this case, the tree stood on its own. This production was designed for newcomers to the brave new world of Shakespeare.

One example of this production's lucid storytelling was Prospero's explanation to his daughter Miranda of how he lost his dukedom. When Prospero mentioned his brother Antonio, this evil usurper walked on stage, so that there was no question whom he was talking about. The show was full of these kinds of signposts to guide the audience, such as when Ariel waved her hand in front of Gonzalo's face to show us that she (Ariel was female for this production) was invisible.

Although it was a fairly low budget production, the island's fairies and spirits ingeniously compensated for the lack of technical support by creating atmosphere and sound effects. They made all the noises, from thunder to howling winds, and sang all of the musical pieces a capella. When not taking part in the central action, they stood at the back and the sides of the stage, behind the translucent curtains that served as the set. The fairies formed shapes with their bodies, and their ongoing, slow movements added an effective mystical quality to the island.

All of the performances were clear-cut and easy to follow, while avoiding the use of stereotypes. Gonzalo (Noah Sheola) was old but not doddering, Stephano (Jeffrey Bard) was drunken but not swaggering, and Antonio (January Morelli) was a bad guy but not rotten to the core. The two directors, recent Bard graduates Jeffrey Lewonczyk and Hope Cartelli, played the leads, Prospero and Ariel. Lewonczyk said that they wanted to "play it straight and let the show speak for



THE SOUND AND THE FURY?: Two Bard alumni staged *The Tempest* in the Cocoon Theatre. Fairies created sound effects and evoked atmosphere in the background.

itself." This was evident from the way he played Prospero; he made a good foil for the buffoonery of the other characters, focusing more on the original words than on their dramatization. Cartelli had more fun with her part, portraying a snakelike Ariel who played with her words and undulated as she danced around the stage. She and Lewonczyk "decided to embrace the script," she said. "We wanted to put the focus on the story and the acting."

Overall, the jokes were not milked as much as they could have been. Trinculo, Stephano, and Caliban (played by Danny Bowes, Jeffrey Bard, and Claire Titelman, respectively) made an amusing comic trio, but the comedy was still somewhat stifled. Because of

the show's loyalty to the script, jokes that Shakespeare obviously meant to be funny came across as hilarious. But the supplementary gags that these three added were small and underdone. Comedy suffers when performers overdo it, and this production certainly avoided that fate. However, they went toward the opposite extreme, ultimately detracting from Will's commedia dell'arte style slapstick humor.

Lewonczyk and Cartelli directed and produced this show themselves. They knew at the outset that it would have to be low budget and no-frills, and they made good use of the resources available. The result was not laugh-a-minute comedy, but was indeed *The Tempest* as the bard intended it.

Reliving Log-Cabin Memories in Scheff's

Nearby restaurant combines friendliness and service with an eclectic atmosphere, enhanced by an plethora of novelty breads

By STEPHANIE SCHNEIDER

EATING AT SCHEFF'S Kitchen is like revisiting one's childhood—if one grew up in a log cabin.

Then again, I must make it known that Scheff's Kitchen does have some universal appeal. It's filled with refrigerator artwork and toy catalogs with which almost anyone could relate to his or her own experiences. When the staff says, "Make yourself at home," they really mean it.

The pioneer feel comes through in the woody interior and the one room layout. I must say, it is a refreshing change to eat in a place that is only one

The only separation between the dining area and the kitchen is a few carefully arranged shelves filled with all sorts of interesting items. My favorite aspect of the shelves is the many cans of condensed milk.

room. By this I mean that the only separation between the dining area and the kitchen is a few carefully arranged shelves filled with all sorts of interesting items. My favorite aspect of the shelves is the many cans of condensed milk. A restaurant that seems to favor this delicacy so much has to be a great place to eat.

The one room layout was so special because it broke down the borders of the customers and the proprietors. I could see everything in the kitchen; it was like being in my own kitchen. The staff certainly

helped in establishing this home-like atmosphere, being perhaps the friendliest people I've ever met. When the lady asked me how I enjoyed my meal, she actually waited around for me to answer.

And the answer was of course a resounding yes. It was simple, rustic and perfect. The menu, written on a chalk board, mainly consists of sandwiches and breakfast items, such as French toast, which I've heard is divine but haven't had a chance to try yet. After perusing the menu, I realized I could only choose one item, which stood out from all the others: breakfast pie.

Now, don't conjure up awful images of weird quiches with unidentifiable vegetables or flavorless cheese. Don't think either of Mangia's experimental breakfast pizza, which consists of a pile of scrambled eggs dumped onto a pizza crust. (Please don't think I actually ordered this—I am only familiar with this monstrosity because it was offered to me for free.) This was different: it was made with care and feeling. The delicious focaccia-esque crust was topped with melted cheese, tasty identifiable vegetables and only a few bits of scrambled eggs.

After such a delightful experience, I couldn't leave empty-handed. I took home a beyond-belief, moist ginger spice bread to extend the experience into the outside world.

Now, the final straw that convinced me to become a Scheff's Kitchen superfan was the option on the menu that read, "Novelty breads." Luckily, I inquired. The very friendly lady showed me pictures of bread loaves that were in the actual shapes of alligators, iguanas and turtles. (They make fish as well, but no photographs were available.) This is

a guaranteed success if served at any party or just kept around the dorm, perhaps shellacked to make a great conversation piece.

Scheff's Kitchen, the new breakfast place of choice, is located on Route 9 towards Germantown. It is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.



THE PENULTIMATE ROADSIDE ATTRACTION: Scheff's place on Route 9.

AMANDA KNIERAMP

RESTAURANT REVIEW

STEPHANIE SCHNEIDER

When We Dead Awaken Provokes Varied Opinions

Is it to be hailed as a success then? "There is something hidden in everything you say, Irene," says Rubek in Ibsen's play

By LUIS MORENO

"From the very beginning my work has not been a labor of haste... be patient—and perhaps I do have a kind of right to ask this, since even more patience is required to carry through the project—be patient, then, and attentive."—Søren Kierkegaard, "Armed Neutrality"

I SAW *WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN* twice, on its opening night, Saturday, and the following night, Sunday. After these two nights, it seemed right to start thinking and not fret anymore, as I had already been enticed to use my mind in the viewing of the play. The nature of the performance, its unifying element, was what made the show a brilliant experience: its attack on the willing mind.

The performance at the Bard Scene Shop Theatre of Henrik Ibsen's last play, *When We Dead Awaken* ran November 7-11. It was directed by Jeffrey Sichel, director of two previous Bard shows, *Pelleas et Melisande* and *Don Giovanni*. Performing were Helena Grillo, as Maja, Rubek's young wife; and Wendy Hart, as Irene, Rubek's old model. Also starring were Youssef Kerkour as Rubek, an aging sculptor; Tomasz Gubernat as Ulfheim, the bear hunter; Willa Bepler, as the Nun; and, in his Bard stage debut, Anthony Rivera as the Bath Inspector. The set was designed by David Maxine, the costumes by Angelina Avallone, and the lighting by Andrew Hill (all comprising a design team that has been with us for the last two semesters).

The music was composed and performed by Sean Price. The set was a combination of upstage scaffoldings with shadow screens, a small river crossing the stage diagonally, surrounded by gravel and stone, and the main set piece of planked walkways, rising above the gravel and enclosing it in a U shape, connecting two inset mud baths, and a shower. The audience sat on one riser above the stage, looking down on the performance.

The play was published in Copenhagen, 1899, and was the last of Ibsen's plays. His works include *A Doll's House*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Wild Duck*, and *Peer Gynt*. Ibsen was a playwright of both social realism and intense poetic symbolism. However this work falls into its own category. In a way, it is a solitary masterpiece of Ibsen's drama, bringing elements of the artist's own life into the complex plot. It is necessary to see Rubek, the aging sculptor, the center of all relationships in the play, as Ibsen's self-projection. Rubek's

Consistent with Joyce's perspective, the questions that arise, the poetized philosophical core of this rarely performed play (there have been three performances in the U.S. in the last 20 years, including this one) make it stand as a beacon among this kind of epic theatre.

question "What is the matter?" of Maja, his disillusioned and apparently neurotic wife, becomes a broader question, directed to the audience, to the world, or to Ibsen himself. Maja's reply is poignant: "Don't you hear the silence?"

"Ibsen's plays do not depend for their interest on the action or on the incidents. Even the characters, faultlessly drawn though they be, are not the first thing in his plays. But the naked drama—either the perception of a great truth, or the opening up of a great question, or a great conflict which is almost independent of the conflicting actors, and has been and is of far-reaching importance—this is what primarily rivets our attention." So wrote James Joyce of *When We Dead Awaken* in 1900. Consistent with Joyce's perspective, the questions that arise, the poetized philosophical core of this rarely performed play (there have been three performances in the U.S. in the last 20 years, including this one) make it stand as a beacon among this kind of epic theatre. It reverberates throughout the conscience and the active mind of the viewer, as it asks direct, powerful questions of the audience, such as, Do you care to listen? Do you

enjoy simply being entertained by a play, or are you willing to plunge into it, no matter what form, and suffer the consequences?

The actors were extremely successful in achieving their goal of creating an experience that "challenged the expectations of the audience," as Prof. Sichel put it. The actors were determined to let the words speak through them, not just through their intentions. I was immediately drawn in by the clarity of their voices, betraying a deep understanding. This grasp of character was even a little underplayed. Commendably, there were no constant shrieks of excessive passion, no over-acting; all avoiding, though at times with little margin, the dangerous trite melodrama possible with a text such as this. Overall, however, all who were able to look past the dramatic demands of the show into its substantive aspects enjoyed themselves immensely.

All the actors interviewed stated that the complexity of the play created the need for them to "tone down" and be selective in their performance, or risk overwhelming both themselves and the audience. This accounts for the points of unclarity and unavailability one felt during the weighty pauses, the drawn out performance, as we were drawn into their world. The actors' command of fluidity nonetheless slipped at times, becoming monotonic and arid, even infecting the transitions between acts.

The mud baths during the show did not distract; rather, their union with the wooden set worked in terms of the color and oppressiveness of the surrounding space. They provided a frightening and jarring metaphor for both the immersion into sculpture and the soul, and then death, the return to the ground, the unavoidable and deathly union between artist and artwork. The mudbaths offered unity and the understanding between complex worlds. The lighting was used to purposeful effects: as actors passed into different bends of the planked walkways, the lights softly faded the previous region into shadow. The tone of the lighting was good; dark enough to define a brooding mood, amidst the smoke and the music.

The music was unfortunately unimpressive and somewhat boring. Nonetheless, it suited the beginning and the end of the performance, and its great crescendos, samples, and voice compositions were attractive. The music did contribute to a mellow, pensive mood, though it fell limp within the performance and lost the interest of the viewer.

The first act provided tension from the first moment, as it began amongst mist and warm light, with Maja curled up at the foot of her bath, opposite Rubek, lying pensive. Maja sits, slowly trembling, the voices crowding her head, until she softly explodes and lets out a gasp shattering the initial mood and beginning the dialogue. It was only after a few minutes into the play, when Kerkour and Grillo entered the mud, that their true forms became apparent. The honesty in their words allowed the relations between them to become fluid and chilling. In the context of the performance, Maja became a messenger, saying that, while our encounters with the real world may be brutish, we nonetheless have a self-willed freedom. Maja wants to do things, but in an unsophisticated manner. She was almost crude to the viewer; unrefined, and funny.

Here we also encounter the white-clad and looming figure of the inspector, who makes his rounds, aiding Rubek and Maja into their respective baths in as ritualistic a manner as possible, like a priest giving the last rites to the sick. Rivera's tone was affable and servantly, equally obscuring of meaning, but agreeable and in control. The inspector had his authority where it was demanded, and became, eventually, both real person and nebulous presence, conscience and projection. This was most expressively demonstrated in the fantastic interaction between Rivera and the Nun, in the second act.

The duo of Irene and her companion was one of the most enticing and attractive of the play. The quiet but powerful traveling shadow, controlled and manipulated the fragile but flammable Irene, who stood as a little girl in her white hat, impenetrable and innocent to the mind's eye, before suddenly becoming a woman, and immediately drawing our attention.

The Nun's relation to Irene was strong and pervasive. Later in the act, the two would become beautiful, strange, living statues of smoky nature, breathing more of the unsaid into the play. The greater power of the Nun in this respect was that even when motionless, Bepler shone from under and through her mud shell, with a presence that infected and coated the entire act and the entire space. The Nun seemed to bring storms with her, even the potential storms found in Irene's history. It showed no little skill that she, and the inspector as well, could speak symbolically, in repetition, and be concerned with the underlying and unobvious. What they presented, they did well, though they left me wanting to receive more from their performances.

Hart and Kerkour have together wrought a great, deep performance. Kerkour's internal submissiveness in rehearsal came forth, and in this performance may have been more appropriate than ever, as it showed

And so it ended, and exhaustion set in. But with it came the feeling that one had truly been to the theatre and had experienced something provocative, sublime, intrusive, tedious, obsessive, and romantic.

Rubek wrought and torn by his passions. Irene held immense power over him—she brought him awareness of the truth he had lost in his life and his art, in return for his "possession" of her soul. Wendy became a burning torch, a clear voice of rendering. Her performance was clean, disturbing, real.

Rubek was childlike, though an artist in despair, spent, and at the end of his days. Kerkour made him simple in appearance, even simple in tone, while struggling with something unseen. This presented a problem in his performance. Since it was not convincing to hear Rubek speak, he seemed cold and distant, shifting from a childish demeanor to one of absolute control.

Ulfheim was the one truly unique and solitary character of the play, the only one with no double (save perhaps Maja). He seemed to represent, very powerfully, the neanderthal, his speech bearing an almost non-poetic, poorly enunciated intonation. This change, this departure from the vocal mood that pervaded the show, left many people with a good taste in their mouths, anxious for more. For me, the taste was odd. I am still unsure of what I think of Gubernat's performance, though I commend him for making me so troubled.

In the final scene of the play, the greatest passion in the characters finally emerges. Rubek and Irene, in a moment of absolute self-glorification, of Zarathustrian ascension, came too close to that triteness, becoming even corny. Climbing the stairs to the final rest, we hear Irene screaming that she will follow Rubek "freely and gladly, my lord and master!" The difficulty of such a dialogue was apparent.

Soon after they disappear into the heavens, we hear a frightening rumble, a crash, and an enormous white sheet, representing an avalanche, slides down and lands behind the feet of the Nun, who stands immobile at the foot of the mountain, clad in her original black. On hearing the rumble, she opens her mouth and utters a piercing scream, a human scream, not of shadow or image, but real and jarring, and then, silence. *Pax Vobiscum*, prays the Nun.

And so it ended, and exhaustion set in. But with it came the feeling that one had truly been to the theatre and had experienced something provocative, sublime, intrusive, tedious, obsessive, and romantic. It was a great play, a great cast, and one of the most intellectual productions I've seen. Theatre should not be cheap, half-assed entertainment, should not be a low aesthetic hoop to jump through, should not be a passive game to play with little effort. It's heavy. It's not easy to understand. It's a thinking art. It uses human subject matter and provokes one's sense of being as self, as a human, if one lets it. This play raised all of these gravestones, and gave one new ideas.

By SCOTT STATON

UNVEILED EARLIER THIS MONTH, Beck's new album, *Mutations*, is one of the year's more controversial releases. Recorded live in the studio with his touring band, the album was originally slated for release on the indie label Bong Load. Somewhere along the way, Geffen Records fought with Bong Load for the rights to the album, finally getting the album after paying Bong Load off. Despite all the trouble over gaining possession of the album, Geffen insists that *Mutations* not be considered the follow-up to Beck's highly praised *Odelay*. They ask instead that it be considered Beck's follow-up to *One Foot in the Grave*, a refinement of that album's sparse, traditional folk.

With this in mind, the lo-fi, back porch-feel of that album is substituted with slick production courtesy of Nigel Godrich (producer of Radiohead's *OK Computer*), self-conscious eclecticism, and a stronger sense of melody. A sample-free album, concentrating on folk-based compositions, *Mutations* has some great points. "Cold Brains," a sincere folk ballad featuring a glockenspiel and an impressive harmonica solo, kicks off the album nicely, while Beck incorporates elements of late-60s era Beatlesque raga on "Nobody's Thought But My Own," a droning piece complete with sitar and tambora. Unfortunately, the album is weighed down a bit by Beck's musical eclecticism. What's so remarkable about Beck's previous work is his ability to bring together disparate stylistic elements. *Mutations* instead finds him visiting those styles separately over the course of the album, threatening its consistency to some degree. For instance, "Cancelled Check," despite being a good song, finds Beck self-consciously shifting into country mode, and the album's low point, the bossa nova-like "Tropicalia," is nothing more than a shameful sibling of his "Deadweight" single. *Mutations* ultimately remains true to Beck's subversion of pop conventions while managing to distinguish itself in his catalog. While not without its faults, the album is nonetheless another fine release from one of modern music's more significant performers.

After a three-year hiatus, Mercury Rev has returned with what must certainly be one of the year's best albums. On *Deserter's Songs* the group abandons the kitchen-sink chaos and noise of earlier releases, delivering instead a collection of lush, orchestrated pop music. The album's bold nature brings Van Dyke Parks to mind, similar in feel to the best of his work. The group's extensive use of Mellotrons enhance the album's gentle melodies with moving symphonic arrangements, achieving a delicate sense of grandeur. Over the course of 11 tracks, the cinematic nature of *Deserter's Songs* develops amid short instrumental interludes, revealing a strong sense of craft both within and among the songs. Two guests from The Band sit in on separate songs, Levon Helm contributing his distinctive drumming style to "Opus 40" and Garth Hudson helping out on tenor and alto sax for "Hudson Line." The charm and scope of *Deserter's Songs* are far removed from that of most modern rock albums, and the result is an impressive work made all the more refreshing by its unpretentious accomplishments.

By MARYMARY STEIN

I AM UPSET BECAUSE I hardly ever masturbate anymore. When I was 15, 16 and 17, I masturbated nightly and let me tell you, some of that sex made me have orgasms that were the strongest/most powerful/craziest/best ones that I have ever had. Other people are nice, but there is nothing as subtle and specific and accurate as working myself up into a climax and losing my mind as I blast alone into the cosmos. I told my friend that I thought masturbation sometimes feels better than sex with another person and he said, "Coming in a girl's pussy feels better." Interesting...

Once, not too long ago, I had a practical seizure when I came and banged my head against a wall hard as I spasmed. My memories are sweet of all the great times I have had jerking off, but somehow, these days, I start to touch myself and I find myself so disinterested that I fall asleep or else just stop. Maybe if we had a VCR at our

BECK MUTATIONS



It comes as an excellent surprise to come across a live album that actually stands as an artistic statement... *Live at the Royal Albert Hall* is an album for Spiritualized fans and non-believers alike, a live album with the ability to actually convert.

ably confident outing, *Bring It On* opens with "Get Miles," a spaced-out blues number that features Ben Ottewill's distinctive voice, a sort of bourbon-soaked hybrid of Tom Waits and Eddie Vedder. Needless to say, in order to enjoy *Bring It On*, the listener must grow accustomed to Ottewill's vocals; his resonant voice conveys much of the work's emotional breadth. Ian Ball, the group's other singer/guitarist, balances Ottewill's delivery over the album's course with thin, affected vocals more readily identified with British pop groups, featured best on "Whippin' Picadilly," one of the album's stand-out tracks. Layering percolating rhythms and electronic effects onto what begins as an anthemic acoustic-based number, the song is indicative of the band's ambition. "78 Stone Wobble" sounds almost Beefheartian in its approach, and "Tijuana Lady," while cheesy in its emotional baladry, is actually moving. *Bring It On* is an unlikely

Random Reviews: From Beck to Spiritualized

update on roots-based rock, shocking in its modern feel; the album sounds strangely like "space-age classic rock." It's not for everyone, but those who give it a chance will find the album genuinely rewarding.

Stereolab's prolific nature has always been a good thing. It seems that even when on tour they always manage to find time in the studio, releasing limited-edition seven-inches, compilation tracks, and remixes. *Aluminum Tunes*, Stereolab's third *Switched On* singles compilation, is further evidence of the group's productivity. The double disk comp opens with the entirety of *Music for the Amorphous Body Study Centre*, an EP recorded for a Charles Long art exhibit released originally in 1995 but never widely available in the U.S. After that, there are plenty more gems to enjoy: unreleased from the *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* sessions, "Golden Atoms" captures the group in their most effective drone stage, and "One Small Step" from the promo-only *Laminations* is pop as only Stereolab can deliver it. Perhaps the album's only drawback is its size; two disks of Stereolab outtakes and obscure B-sides is a lot to take in. Any Stereolab fan will want to own this stuff, however, and its release will effectively tide over the public while they prepare their new album. As of this writing, it features Jim O'Rourke sharing production duties with John McEntire and is looking to be a triple LP.

Generally speaking, live albums are an evil of the recording industry, the result of money-hungry marketing designed to drain cash from the wallet of any diehard fan. It therefore comes as an excellent surprise to come across a live album that actually stands as an artistic statement, and a grand, awe-inspiring statement at that. *Live at the Royal Albert Hall* is an album for Spiritualized fans and non-believers alike, a live album with the ability to actually convert. The double-disk album contains the almost seamless 90-minute set in its entirety, featuring most of the songs from Spiritualized's *Ladies and Gentlemen...* album as well as two each from *Laser Guided Melodies* and *Pure Phase*. Played with a four-piece horn section, a string quartet, and a 12-piece gospel choir, the experience is nothing short of divine. The album is neither excessive nor indulgent; Spiritualized manages to reinterpret the songs in an interesting fashion while constructing a completely new context within which to listen to their music. J. Spacemen has often said that his group's music is better captured live than in the studio, and *Live at the RAH* is testament to that fact. Forget Kiss's *Alive!*, Frampton's *Comes Alive*, Cheap Trick's *Live at Budokan...*, this album sets the standard by which all live albums should be measured. Released in a season of live albums (Pearl Jam, Portishead, the Rolling Stones, 311, and Hanson are all releasing live albums within the next couple of weeks), *Live at the RAH* will have no problems distinguishing itself.

Masturbation Frustration

house I could rent *New Wave Hookers* and think about B.C. and that would be nice, but I should be able to have fun without having to pay for it. What is my problem?

I took an informal survey of people who went through my house so that I could gain a little perspective on my neurosis for this column. I told them of my masturbation frustration and asked them to answer the question, "How often do you masturbate?"

The answers were varied.

One woman told me she has masturbated every day consistently since she was 13; and she sleeps very soundly too. A young man complained that he did not masturbate as much as he used to, but then he said that he was in the three-or-four-times-a-week category and that he usually masturbates every night, but he just happened to be busy this week. Another

woman told me that she hardly ever masturbates because it makes her feel secretive and dirty.

I think that my main problem is exhaustion. The moron idiot who works at the Bard counseling services told me that "not sleeping is worse than not eating," and this is probably true. If I pleased myself and relieved a little tension, I would relax more and get more rest, but I am trapped in an obnoxious cycle where I am too tired to do the work needed to get off and I am too restless to sleep. So I can't sleep and I can't orgasm and I am completely unable to release the energy that is making me so wired and so frustrated!

(Author's note: This column is meant to start an ongoing conversation between people about various issues. Please feel free to comment on these articles. Send ideas and questions to P.O. Box 850)

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MODEST MOUSE BRINGS THE RUCKUS

Modest Mouse played the same song twice in the Old Gym last Thursday. What the hell was that? Many were shocked, others embarrassed, at the band's display of machismo rock and out-and-out rudeness. Not only did the lead singer pick a fight with a student, he and his cohorts attempted to set fire to the Old Gym as well as their own equipment. The indignant musicians also managed to destroy their own camera.

For someone who came into that show entirely indifferent to Modest Mouse, they really proved to me

that they are overpaid, loud mouth dilettantes," said Lukas Alpert, the aforementioned student.

Still, those in attendance, including many students from outside of Bard, seemed to enjoy the show. What Dave Janik of the Entertainment Committee characterized as "a wank-fest" was very well received. By the end of the show, Modest Mouse, who began their set as a trio, had grown into a formidable army of eight, with two drummers, four guitarists, and some guy with an eyepatch. The origin of these people has not yet been determined. The Entertainment Committee made

enough money from the show to be able to bring Will Oldham to Bard; he will perform December 6.

KIND OF BLUE TO BE PERFORMED AGAIN

The Bard College Student Jazz Ensemble and the Thurman Barker Trio will perform a tribute to Miles Davis Thursday, December 3, at 7:30 p.m. in the Old Gym. The student ensemble will perform Davis's album *Kind of Blue* and the trio, featuring Bard Assistant Professor of Music Thurman Barker on percussion, will play a short set of other Davis compositions. An open microphone session will follow the performance for those who want to partake in a jam session or read

poetry. Admission to the concert is \$2 for the public and free for Bard students.

SOMEONE ELSE YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF Each semester, Professor Bradford Morrow brings acclaimed writers to visit his Contemporary Innovative Fiction class and to give public readings. Diane Williams is the third such writer this semester, and the last in the series. Author of *Excitability*, from which she will read, Williams is said to "[conjure] up an edgy, jagged state of mind, a lurching consciousness in a culture of speed and amnesia" (*New York Times Review of Books*). The reading is in Old Room 102 on November 23, at 2:30pm.

Orson Welles Meets *Deathstalker*

Drug Deals Of Yesteryear Throw Light Upon the Present Day

Touch of Evil starts off with a bang. Not the big bang, of course, but one of sufficient size to destroy a car, kill its two occupants and completely ruin the honeymoon of drug enforcement officer Mike Vargas and his bride Susan (Charlton Heston and Janet Leigh), plunging them both into a mess of intrigue and violence on the Mexico/U.S. border. Visually, the film is breathtaking; one of the first shots lasts over three minutes, and the surreal camerawork makes Tarantino's look like a cheap rip-off. I'll remember for a long time the shots of people walking down empty streets while litter floats around their ankles, the head

instead of moving straight ahead, it seems to go around in a series of loops and circles so complex that it (once again) makes Tarantino's circuitous plots look amateurish and disappointing in comparison.

Touch of Evil does have its flaws. For one thing, even after being re-edited to comply with a fifty-eight page memo by Welles, it's difficult to follow the plot unless you're on your toes. Fortunately, the cinematography and direction make it worth your while. Perhaps a larger problem is that the movie is dated. I sat with my mouth open, amazed at the tiny circumference of Leigh's corseted waist. Even in her underwear, she looked like an escapee from the tight-laced days of the nineteenth century. And I'm certain that the scenes involving drugs will have many people giggling, groaning, rolling their eyes and saying, "Fer cryin' out loud," at least inwardly. At the same time, some of the issues that the movie deals with seem to be ahead of their time. Conflicts between Mexicans and Americans, police corruption, planted evidence and drugs are usually considered the property of later times and movies, but they are all dealt with in *Touch of Evil*. The result is a period piece that seems to transcend the passage of forty years.—Anne Matusiewicz

Drecky *Death Stalker* Films Bask in B-Movie Splendor

Considering the season, the options are many. I could discuss the thrills of Hitchcock films or the evolution of slasher films; the humanity of the *Evil Dead* series' Ash (Bruce Campbell) or *Dead Alive*; R-rated vs. unrated; Fairuz Balk in *The Craft* or Tim Burton, the master of spooky flicks. Yes, there are many appropriate subjects on which I could write.

Instead, I think I'll write a nice article about *Deathstalker*. A series of films so pure in their awfulness that they should be labeled a controlled substance, these flicks are vaguely set in the Middle Ages, in a sort of alternate universe in which magic is the major form of power and everyone is scantily clad. They all have several things in common: bad acting, miniature budgets, leather clothes, lousy swordfighting, footage from Renaissance fairs, and inane death scenes which involve whacking with swords, groaning, and occasionally letting out a mouthful of grape Kool-Aid before the victim keels over and reappears as an extra in the next scene. But the four movies are really quite different, which is to say that the *Deathstalker* is played by three different guys.

The first *Deathstalker* features Rick Hill as the "big and dumb yet mildly funny Deathstalker." The film was made in 1984, and is memorable largely for the appearance of Barbie Benton as Princess Codille. The plot: *Deathstalker* goes and, uh, there's a tournament and an evil sorcerer, and three powers to be

united. And a guy who looks stunningly like Luke Skywalker with brown hair, but then again *Deathstalker* looks like He-Man, so it all works out.

The second *Deathstalker* flick is the best or worst, depending on your point of view, but at any rate it features John Turlusky as the "Deathstalker who gets all the good lines." I like him. Also, the evil sorcerer has a passing resemblance to David Bowie, or somebody. And Monique Gabrielle has a double role as a princess and... a princess. One's good and one's bad, but they both made my head hurt. Also, there are outtakes at the end.

The third *Deathstalker* is okay. It's neither bad nor good. John Allen Nelson, the "Deathstalker who is sort of a watered-down John Turlusky," searches for the lost city of Erendor. The film is most notable for the evil sorcerer, who looks sorta like A. D. Skinner from the *X-Files*. Be prepared to duck the excellent enunciation of the major characters.

And, finally, *Deathstalker IV*. This one has an evil queen instead of an evil sorcerer, but it's Rick Hill and a tournament again. That's about it. They even stole bits of the first *Deathstalker*, so prepare to be offended.

A series of films so pure in their awfulness that they should be labeled a controlled substance, these flicks are vaguely set in the Middle Ages, in a sort of alternate universe in which magic is the major form of power and everyone is scantily clad.

The thing about the *Deathstalker* series—besides all the 80's hair—is that, despite its badness, one is still tempted to watch. Just as I'll eat an entire bag of cheddar-flavored popcorn every time I go to the video store, knowing that I'll feel sick for the next hour, these films seem to call me. I've chosen them above *The Breakfast Club*, above the *Godfather*, even above *Indiana Jones*. Then I wind up regretting it approximately ten seconds after inserting the tape into the VCR. The pain is enormous, and even worse because I am the only person to blame, except for the hundreds of people who made these movies.

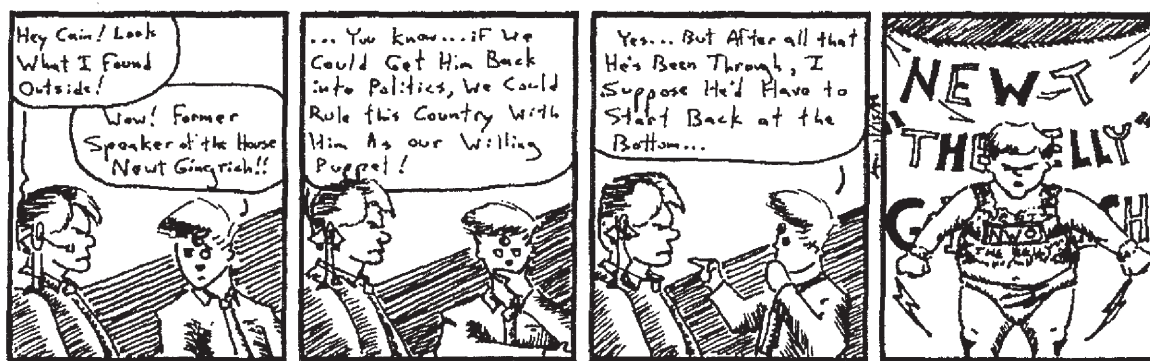
In short, I urge you strongly to never rent any *Deathstalker* film, and if you do, never watch it... unless it's really late at night or you're out with your friends and in the mood for a hideously bad flick to make fun of, and even then, be aware that the latest crop of "horror" films could never dream of introducing you to the terror of *Deathstalker*. 'Tis the season, varlet.—Anne Matusiewicz



of a murdered man peering over the headboard of a bed, and Susan Vargas hysterically screaming on a fire escape while her oblivious husband drives past below. Fans of old-time celebrities will have a field day; besides Leigh and Heston, Marlene Dietrich makes an appearance as a Madam, Orson Welles (who also directed) plays a corrupt cop, and keep your eyes peeled for Zsa Zsa Gabor's few seconds as a nightclub owner.

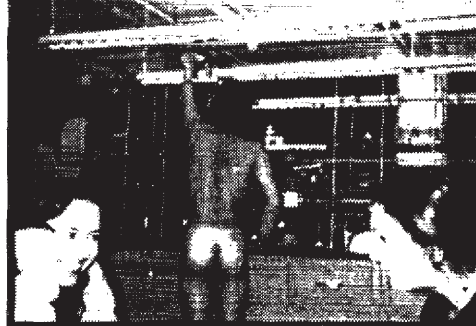
About half an hour or so into the movie, Susan and Mike are separated. Mike is dragged unwillingly into the investigation of the two murders, and Susan (in a situation which seems to be the basis for *Psycho*) is tormented and finally kidnapped by the thugs of a local gang leader. The story isn't quite that simple, however;

The Dancing Paperclip of Tormented Souls / by Morgan Pielli



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BETTER SEX THROUGH CHEMISTRY



NEXT SCIENCE CLUB MEETING
TUESDAY, Nov. 24, 7 p.m., Hegeman 102

The Perilous Flight of the Worm— Herr Dan Desmond: A Retrospective

By Nick Jones

DEM DENG shang shoo shoo,
Wooga beep beep baggle bum.
(as I think back on the boy, I see clearly, the man.)
—ancient proverb

He is the rose of which Axl sang. He is the mighty Mississippi that blues men rocked beside as they sang their bittersweet dirges. He is the cancerous sugar substitute we love to hate. He is asshole incarnate. He is the quintessential boy, and would be the ideal Greek, if the Greeks wore little German schoolboy outfits. He is our very own scapegoat and idol: Dan Desmond.

To this hardy soul I give tribute this month, in celebration of his twenty-first birthday. Now he will be able to legally drink, closing forever the chapter of his youth and ushering him violently into the world of adulthood, where he will feel pressured and trapped, like a blind animal being herded down the iron gilded streets of time. At the end of this blurry street, the final paragraph awaits: death, either slow or bloody. I may not be around to write the epilogue to Dan Desmond's life, but I apparently have enough free time right now. Actually, I've been pressured into doing this by Dan himself. Well (place Spanish phrase here) Dan, this was your life.

Flashback. Egypt, 1347 B.C. The king of Egypt, later to be incarnated as Dan Desmond, lays siege upon the wandering Jewish nation, beginning a three million year war, which has still gone unnoticed. His throne is eventually usurped at the hands of his own son.

Flashback. New York, 1973. In karmic retribution for his evil deeds, the man who is to be Dan Desmond is born into the seventies and, due to an unexplained hormone imbalance, is full grown two months after birth. However, he is unable to speak, walk, or even dance. Leading a brief and painful life, his karma burns off in the disco inferno as he watches from the sidelines.

Flashback. Monson, Massachusetts, 1977. Nestled in the apple scented-hills of Western Massachusetts, a newly married couple gives birth to their first and only son. The boy's father, Paul, a U.S. Marshall, names him Dan, after his favorite news anchor, Dan Rather. Desmond, which was not the family's true name, was the suggestion of Dan's mother, Kathy. In a dream she foresaw that her son would eventually attempt to be a rock star, and saw the name "Dan Desmond" surrounded by lights. The family's real name is Dediculous.

And thus was our hero's last incarnation, in a small town, in a lame state rife with puritans, with nothing to do on the weekends, and no one to hang out with except rednecks and witch-hunters. How did he make it so far? To Bard, of all places? Was it a fluke, a random mix-up of paperwork, that allowed this country bumpkin into our sanctified halls, where the best minds in the country labor tirelessly in the pursuit of academic excellence? Were the admissions inspectors overtaken by his Puritan mind-control? Bribed? Threatened? Surely there must be some mistake! But this was no mistake, my friend (the papers have been inspected and re-inspected), because Dan was born with two special gifts. One: he is really good at science. Two: he was born half worm, and thus possesses the ability to burrow through any substance except steel, plus shoot special mud-rays from his eyes. Neither his mother nor his father are worms; his father is a U.S. Marshall as I have said. In fact, Dan's mutant powers were acquired before birth, when a disoriented nurse, thinking she was giving Dan's mother a shot of epidural for labor pains, actually injected her with worm DNA! The genetic information miraculously passed through her own system with no effect. But, in Dan's developing cells, still without antibodies to

defend themselves, the worm DNA somehow became grafted to his own, spawning a creature half man, half worm!

His parents suspected early on that something was wrong with their baby son. Worms would crawl into his crib at night, but, rather than being bothered than them, baby Dan would cry when his flustered parents tried to remove the pests. In contrast to the worms, Dan was deathly afraid of the family canary, a phobia he has yet to completely subdue. When the time came to crawl, rather than use his hands, Dan would attempt to drag himself with his chest, flopping around like a fish until he was picked up or hit his head on something. And of course, the telltale sign that something was amiss came when he began



shooting mud out of his eyes. As Mrs. Dediculous recalls, "It was his fourth birthday. We had invited some of the neighborhood children over and were opening the presents. Kiss was very popular back then, and we had told everyone that they should get Dan Kiss action figures. I forgot to tell them not to get the cat guy—you know, the drummer. Dan hated

When the time came to crawl, rather than use his hands, Dan would attempt to drag himself with his chest, flopping around like a fish until he was picked up or hit his head on something. And of course, the telltale sign that something was amiss came when he began shooting mud out of his eyes.

the cat guy. Well, anyway, as chance would have it, he got two cat guys for his birthday that day, and no Gene Simmons. Oh boy, was he mad! His eyes just started glowing with this strange brown light. And then, suddenly, there was mud spraying all over the place. The cake, the guests, my linen—everything!—ruined!"

It was Dan's account of growing up half worm in a small town that grabbed the eye of admissions inspector Don Termite. "I was just touched," he said,

"by the whole essay he wrote...it was all so sincere, so heartfelt. And I thought to myself, for however small a town and lame a state this guy is from, I'll bet he could contribute a lot to Bard."

However, things were not perfect. The sensitive small town boy who wrote the essay had little resemblance to the misguided deviant who arrived at the gates of Bard. Years of frustration and alienation had taken their toll on Dan. He had turned to punk rock, the only subculture which seemed to have no qualms about accepting a worm-man (the preps called him dirty, the homeboys called him slimey). It was better to be known as Punk Rock Dan, he reasoned, than his earlier nickname: Worm Man Dan. And while Bard students were at first frightened by his metal spikes and cotton patches, which said typically punk rock things like "I'm going to kill you," people adapted soon enough. In less than one semester, Dan went from "that dangerous looking guy" to that "skinny lifeguard with the fine girlfriend." Yes,

not only had Dan overcome a primordial fear of water, he then went on to court fellow mutant Candy, whose lovely form was imbued with the genes of a dolphin. (They met in the pool.) But oh, how do dreams fade fast. Following their breakup, Dan's perfect world began to unwind, spiraling into an orgy of drugs, punk rock, and unprotected sex.¹ Dan eventually landed in the hospital after a five day heroin binge during reading week. Dan's chemistry professor, alarmed that her usually punctual student had failed to come to class Monday, inquired with his P.C. and found that he failed to return to Bluecher as well. Nearby, a shivering, emaciated Dan Desmond was found trying to burrow his way through the concrete floor of his jail cell. An intense five month recovery followed, according to Dan as a time, "where the truth finally broke." Dan never again returned to heroin, but to this day he still maintains a tenuous relationship with punk rock; fortunately, not real punk rock, just sissy bands.

It was during his difficult convalescence that Dan was first introduced to Nate Schwartz, now Editor-In-Chief of this newspaper, and also half-worm. Nate had heard rumors of an underground worm community in Berlin, and convinced Dan to join him in an exodus to the Fatherland. Reasoning that it would be cheaper to go with Bard, the two worms first underwent the legendary German Immersion Program, taught by academic mammoth Franz Kempf. A summer of spiritual and sexual discovery followed, which both worms will never forget (nor Devon White, who was also in Germany and made very interesting discoveries).

There you have it—Dan Desmond up to the present day. You'll know him when you see him, he's the one dressed like a little German schoolboy. With tight pants and an ass to match. But don't be deceived by those pretty brown eyes. Underneath the calm pools surges an untidy river of rage, flowing directly from his very soul. Few people can fathom the intensity of one born with such maladjustments. Only I, who have known Dan since freshman year, and am now writing his biography (*Heart of Brown*, to be released in March by Penguin Books), can truly understand him. I have held the man's head as it belated to the heavens, and coaxed the worm to courage as it burrowed deep into my bosom. I have fished him out of pools of his own vomit. I have cheered as he defeated Vassar in the Alpine Skiing Tournament. Where others have faded into the darkness, I have been his only friend. I, who have kept his darkest secrets safe, by concealing them behind layer upon layer of subterfuge and fiction.

SPECIAL Next Issue:

True Confessions

Mike Pagliarulo and "The Woman in Me"

¹ Dan has never had unprotected sex and is currently single.

Living in the Villa Borghese: Ravine Review

My roommate has scabies again. I shaved him, but he's still itching. How could there be scabies in a nice place like this?

By HOWARD MEGDAL

'Twas the night before Christmas
And all through the house
Not a creature was stirring
Not even a mouse.

I BRING UP THIS FIRST PASSAGE of a *goysische* poem because it quite clearly didn't take place here at Bard College. It certainly didn't occur here in the Ravines. After all, the mice are a pretty much constant here, jumping without warning onto the stove and even advising us to cook our pasta longer. As far as no stirring, when a house is built on chopsticks, there's always stirring, but only when we, the residents of a Ravine House, exhale.

I will not tell you which ravine I actually live in. (I do not wish to invoke the wrath of the mice.)

However, regardless of the structure you actually reside in, every resident shares the common bond that there is a better than even chance that your

Someone wanders the hall scratching, or offers to sell his or her soul for ointment, and we in the Ravines look at each other with a knowing look, a look that says, "That's probably scabies, but it could be lice."

remains will soon be found at the bottom of a wood-ed abyss.

During L&T, at our first opportunity to meet Leon Botstein, I botched the chance that he will ever invite me to his house for tea by asking (and I'm paraphrasing), "So Leon, how come you've put me in a disease ridden, vermin infested deathtrap, and

where's my tuition actually going? I mean, obviously not the food!"

President Botstein explained to me calmly and patiently that it is actually more "stable" for the buildings to be placed on "rotted sticks," because the "overpopulation" of the freshman "class" made it "necessary" for about a "third" of us to be "liquidated." His answer, while quite witty and full of irrepressible academic charm, left me somewhat unsatisfied. (But not my father. He'd side with Leon Botstein in any argument. Leon could be advocating the return of Hitler to power in Germany, and my father would say, "You're going to argue with him? He's been on C-Span!")

Of course, the Ravines occasionally give us that itch to get away. Actually, it's simply an itch. That would be scabies, the official disease of the Ravine Houses. Scabies are bugs that infest areas I'm not allowed to mention in print, and there they reside until presumably they move to Florida and learn to play shuffleboard. (It's not exactly clear what ultimately happens to them, since no one's been cured here.) They are transmitted through extremely close skin-to-skin contact, which happens a lot here at Bard College, due to our, um, lustful appetite for, um, skin-to-skin contact. (We're all adults here. I'm referring to sex, as opposed to other skin-to-skin contact, such as full contact yodeling.)

It has now become the insect version of the Scarlet Letter. Someone wanders the hall scratching, or offers to sell his or her soul for ointment, and we in the Ravines look at each other with a knowing look, a look that says, "That's probably scabies, but it could be lice."

Yes, lice is a problem here too! But who cares? We're all going to die soon anyway! I mean, Tremblay was being held up with duct tape for about a month! Now,

I may not be as learned as Leon Botstein (and the sad thing is, I have an immense amount of respect for him; he's one of the reasons I came here, and now he'll hate me, and I'll never get invited to have coffee with him, or discuss music, or anything!), but it seems to me that duct tape is simply not an ample means of support for a building! With people in it!

Of course, on the plus side, "It's cozy!" Cozy! Gosh, do I love euphemisms! (Editor's Note: The author lost coherence about a paragraph ago. It's not you.) You know what "cozy" is a euphemism for? Lots and lots of vermin! Here is a list of Bard College housing option euphemisms. You got them in the mail, all of you. Tell me I'm not right.

Word	Actual meaning
Cozy	Diseased
Communal	People will steal things from you at will
Quiet	Extremely loud
Smoke-free	People should not hesitate to smoke
Substance-Free	There is a lack of a substance at all times, but that substance is neither drugs nor alcohol
Quaint	You will not be able to fit a midget in your room

The Ravines are all of these, and more. I've had enough. I'm going to fix myself a snack. The mice are probably cooking their dinner right now! Maybe they'll let me have some.

(The author wishes to apologize to any mice he may have slandered, and humbly requests that they let him back into his room.)

Putzheads, Demagogues and Glitter: Elections 1998

Probing the mind of the American voter, the Observer's political analyst develops elaborate, meaningless theories

By HOWARD MEGDAL

IN THE AFTERMATH of the 1998 elections, the very pundits who predicted the doom of all Democrats rushed to explain the mood of the "American voter." When I speak of the voter, of course, I refer to the one man in Des Moines, Iowa, who actually voted. Turnout was at a new low, breaking the previous low of three.

No one could understand what had happened! This was to be the great American rejection for Bill Clinton and everything he stood for! Yet it was clear from the poll numbers that Americans side with the Fonder-in-Chief. Sixty-five percent or so still favor the job Bill Clinton is doing. Seventy-four percent are against impeachment. And a whopping 97 percent feel that "a blow job is wonderful, even if given by someone on the tubby side."

As a result, the Democrats gained six seats in the House of Representatives, to bring the Republican edge down to just 12 votes. Meanwhile, the Senate, which many predicted would have as many as five Republican gains, remained at a standstill, 55-45. Henry Hyde, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, saw this as a clear voter rebuff of the impeachment process, and said that in the future, his inquiry will be limited to "things Bill Clinton has actually done wrong." The charges of obstructing justice and perjury have been scaled back to three lesser charges: undertipping, eating less than 100 percent of the FDA requirement of riboflavin, and fondling a double chin without permission of the Attorney General.

The big loser in all of this? Newt Gingrich. In the wake of such a resounding defeat for his party, Gingrich decided to give up control of the speakership in a statesmanlike manner when it became clear that no one was going to vote for him anyway. Gingrich resigned from Congress altogether, but has begun to plan his 2000 Presidential campaign, in which he will run as a crossover candidate, able to appeal to both men and men with trucks.

Who else were the big winners in the 1998 elec-

tions? Well, in our home state of New York, Governor George Pataki was reelected by a two to one margin, despite the fact that most New Yorkers couldn't pick him out of a police lineup. In a bitterly contested senate race, incumbent Senator Alfonse D'Amato, despite running a campaign so above partisan politics that he often referred to his challenger as both "Putzhead" and "Congressman Putzhead" in the same day, was defeated by Charles Schumer. While we at the *Observer* take no special joy in

Senator Alfonse D'Amato, despite running a campaign so above partisan politics that he often referred to his challenger as both "Putzhead" and "Congressman Putzhead" in the same day, was defeated by Charles Schumer.

Alfonse D'Amato's defeat, we wish to restate the fact that the senator lost to help clarify his abject failure. He didn't win. Senator Alfonse D'Amato is now former Senator Alfonse D'Amato.¹

In California, Gray Davis defeated Dan Lundgren to win the governorship, and Barbara Boxer defeated challenger Matt Fong in a senate race, sweeping the top offices for Democrats. In an unrelated note, the intensely disputed "Proposition 6" (whether to make the selling of horsemeat a felony) was narrowly passed, according to published reports.

The day was not by any means a clean sweep for Democrats. Independents did well, too! Angus King, the only third party governor in America, was reelected in Maine, and joined in Minnesota by new governor Jesse Ventura. Ventura, a former professional wrestler, has gotten a lot of negative publicity about the fact that a pro wrestler cannot effectively govern, at least not unless he is wearing tights. However, we here

at the *Observer* wish to express support for Jesse Ventura, and we ask him in return not to hurt us.

To be fair and nonpartisan, a descendent of George Bush was elected to every governor's chair in America. They are all frontrunners for the Republican nomination for President in 2000.

What's next, politically? Well, the impeachment hearings will probably allow us another chance to see Linda Tripp! As well, many Republicans have already started campaigning for the Republican nomination. Dan Quayle, running as a "new," or "previously defeated" Republican, vows that if elected, he will "make a lot of comedians very happy." John Ashcroft has already gained the support of both Missouri Republicans and their pets. Steve Forbes, running with the political handicap of not having a soul, vows that he will spend all of his own money to "deport the poor people."

On the Democratic side, Al Gore has been campaigning for the office of the President continuously since 1988. Yet his inability to move the muscles in his face could hurt him at election time. House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt is running for president, apparently on a dare. Will a dark horse step in and sweep away the Democratic metaphor like a groundswell of bubbling cliches? Bill Bradley, the former basketball player and New Jersey senator, has not announced he will run, but keeps going to New Hampshire, pointing to himself and clearing his throat suggestively. He's one to watch. We here at the *Observer* wish to extend a plea to former governor of New York City Mario Cuomo: please come back! We'll do anything! We need you to run! These candidates are a joke!

The *Observer* is entirely nonpartisan, and does not endorse candidates.

(The author of this piece does not necessarily share the opinions of the *Observer* staff. But he might. And you'll never know! HaHaHaHaHa!)

¹ Note: Chuck Schumer won in his election bid over Alfonse D'Amato.

Even Gandhi Would Be Pissed! And the Man Never Eats Out

By HOWARD MEGDAL

I AM NOT, by nature, a muckraker. I am not saying that there is anything wrong with raking muck, or anything else for that matter! (I'm trying here not to anger B&G, who will no doubt respond to any offensive comments by getting security to put the boot on my grandmother, rendering her useless.)

What I am saying is that I simply do not find all that many opportunities to raise hell. A firestorm of protest would, quite honestly, make me fear for my life. This comes from a Jewish mother who warned me against such dangers as firestorms, stray cats, and brushing my teeth too vigorously.

I suppose my tendency to be, in the words of an ex-girlfriend, "conservative by extremely liberal standards," leaves me as a bit of an outcast. I mean, I really like Leon Botstein! I never get angry with him! (Okay, here's how establishment I am: I've read *Jefferson's Children*.) I haven't gotten a single parking ticket. In short, I'm the type of student Bard's administration is dying for, handsome, charismatic, the perfect young man to lead a video tour of Bard for prospective applicants.

Which makes this terrorist threat so disturbing. Because I'm going to have to blow up deKline if they continue to ruin my life.

Now, before I begin to tell you exactly why I'm

I was given my coffee for free. Of course, as a gentleman of the press, I know what that's all about! A little hush money to keep this scandalous little nightmare of caffeine and chronological depravity silent!

going to blow up our beloved coffee shop, I must explain that this act of extreme violence has been precipitated by only a few people. Most of the people at deKline are wonderful, friendly people. I count them as friends. However, as to not create infighting among the deKline people, I will not single anyone out, but refer to them as a collective model deKline worker, or *The Angel of Coffee*. The people that bring shame upon the house of deKline will be known by a collective name: *Lucifer*.

Let me further explain that I am a coffee addict. This is a term thrown around a lot, like "love" and "impeachment," that no one really understands. Of course, some do. Any girl who's ever been in bed with me knows what love is ("It's somewhere else!" they exclaim.) By the same token, I know coffee addiction. When I do not have coffee for more than two hours, I begin to drool, vilify tables for being "uppity," and utter the word "eggplant" out of context.

Therefore, when choosing a college, I had three major demands, in this order:

1. An open-late coffee shop
2. A good education
3. A college not in Utah

Many of these demands have been met here at Bard. Of course, such schools as Harvard or Yale meet the same three demands, but I wasn't interested in the whole Ivy League scene. (Note to readers: Of course I was! What are you, crazy? Anyone who says they weren't simply couldn't get in, on account of low grades, lousy test scores, or a poor letter of recommendation from the President of Yemen.)

Several times I came to the coffee shop at five minutes to one on a night they closed at 1 a.m., or ten minutes to two on a 2 a.m. closing night, to find them already closed. This I could forgive. After all, these are students running the place, my fellow Bard students. They work hard! The need to study! Frequently the Tivoli bars run out of Heineken! I would be the last person to propose such draconian policies as making them keep deKline open until its posted closing time.

However, I must admit, when I showed up at 11:30 p.m. last Saturday night, fully two and a half hours

before they were scheduled to close, and the doors were locked, I got angry. Of course, that was just the beginning.

I thought perhaps they had simply forgotten their posted hours! In an effort to be helpful, I began to pound on the door. When that failed, I moved to the window. At that point, I spotted Lucifer. Lucifer at this point (for the record, this is absolutely true) dove behind the counter. Lucifer, who is supposed to be serving me my much needed coffee (and let me emphasize, I needed this coffee; behavior, as always without coffee, had turned irregular, and I was trying to get my friend to invest in egg futures), hiding like Bert the turtle! *What do you do when customers attack? Duck and cover!*

I began to panic, and ran around to the back, intent upon calmly and cogently bashing down the door. So Lucifer sent one of her lackeys, who, for benefit of this article we will call *Spawn of Satan*, to the door. She opened it a bit, peered out, and said, "What is it?"

WHAT IS IT? Well, let's see, you're open until 2 A.M., you have big signs everywhere that identify you as a COFFEE SHOP, it's 11:30 p.m., two and a half hours before you (hypothetically, of course) close! What on earth could I possibly want????!!

"I was hoping to get some coffee," I replied, surprisingly calm. "You see, I'm an addict."

Spawn of Satan looked at me dubiously and let me in. I began to make my coffee, and, as I did so, decided that there had to be an important reason for deKline to close. I begin to worry. God forbid something had happened to my Angel of Coffee; she is so nice to me! I asked, out of compassion, yes, out of love for humanity, "So why did you guys close up early tonight?"

"I have preserved this quote word for word, so you can understand the full force of the reply."

"No reason. We just decided to close early tonight."

At this point, Lucifer enters from the back hallway between Kline and deKline, glares at me, and continues cleaning up. Lucifer (Of course, to reiterate, Lucifer could be anyone, and is not real) is not a Bard student, but is in a position of authority at the coffee shop, as best as I can tell. Lucifer glares at me, with a look that says, "You should be thanking us for doing you a favor!"

Now, is this any way to conduct business? Once, for a charge of one dollar and two cents, I had but a dollar on me. This is the same Lucifer, who said, "Well, you owe me two cents then, or it's coming out of her pocket," and pointed to my beloved Angel of Coffee, diligently working and friendly! Now, if it were Bard students running deKline so poorly, from a public relations standpoint, I could understand. None of us will be able to get jobs after graduation anyway. But this is what this pretend woman does for a living!

I was given my coffee for free. Of course, as a gentleman of the press, I know what that's all about! A little hush money to keep this scandalous little nightmare of caffeine and chronological depravity silent! Well, I've got news for you, sister! Like the greatest journalists, Woodward and Bernstein, Walter Krontite, and the *Weekly World News*, I do not sacrifice my god of integrity before your false god of Columbian mammon! Juan Valdez will not muzzle the truth!

Let me just reiterate that this article is in no way intended to lampoon anyone real. I am actually a sweet person, whose idea of a vicious practical joke is to go make faces at chickens on a rotisserie. But addiction brings out the most extreme feelings in people. So if you attempt to strike back against me, Lucifer, I will, in the words of Samuel L. Jackson, "strike down upon thee with great vengeance!" Then, having spent the last few hours bombing, pillaging, and committing other crimes against your little coffee shop, I will search for some French roast in the scorched earth that remains. Or possibly I'll search in Red Hook. I just don't know how I'll be able to tell the difference.

Tiger vs. Tiger: Exxon Seeks Damages From Cereal Giant

By NICK JONES

LAST WEEK, Exxon filed a lawsuit against Kellogg's, claiming that the company's mascot, *Tony the Tiger*, too closely resembles their own mascot, the Exxon Tiger. In addition to charges of copyright infringement, Exxon is seeking compensation for considerable trauma suffered by the Exxon tiger, whose sense of identity has been "decimated." When asked what prompted the suit, which came after years of peaceful coexistence between the tigers, Exxon attorney Jim Boucher reported: "we just noticed him. If we had noticed him before, we would have sued him then, but we just noticed..." The bottom line is [Exxon] cannot afford to be associated with a cereal company." Exxon is requesting that Tony be reconceived as some other jungle creature. When asked what this might be, Boucher suggested a tarantula, which also begins with the letter T. Kellogg's has not shown enthusiasm towards this suggestion and is counter-suing Exxon for tiger rights.

Kellogg's demands that the Exxon tiger be redrawn and that Exxon refrain from using the color orange, which they claim is signature to their product. This was abandoned, however, when a patent holder called to assert his copyright of the color orange, as well as the word "tiger." Mr. Gates has preferred to remain unnamed, but, unfortunately, his request is not legitimate, as the writer of this article has ownership of the name "Gates."

Understandably, there has been exponential confusion regarding copyright privileges, but as the law now stands, ownership is guaranteed to artists at the moment of conception of their work. Many protective parents have inquired into the possibility of patenting their children. Sperm donors have expressed concern over liability if their seed grows up to rear end someone in a parking lot, or go on a shooting rampage, rendered mentally unstable by, say, the lack of a father figure. To both of these parties, the American Patent offices has replied an assured "no," though attorneys are working to expand the law to include human beings.

As regards the Tiger vs. Tiger case, reports are mixed regarding which tiger came first, although Exxon is promising to produce photographs of ancient cave paintings, in which their mascot is depicted pumping

God, who was subpoenaed, has given the following written statement: "The Earth was made in seven days. All the species of tigers combined were made in less time than it takes to tie your shoes, and simultaneously."

gas, beside an "all rights reserved" symbol in the year "2000 B.C."

God, who was subpoenaed, has given the following written statement: "The Earth was made in seven days. All the species of tigers combined were made in less time than it takes to tie your shoes, and simultaneously."

Both Exxon and Kellogg's attorneys have requested this testimony be stricken from the record, due to its obvious Judeo-Christian biases, which they claim carry no credence in a case of trans-national, trans-cultural corporations, which may legally refute the existence of god.

Both parties immediately issued statements refuting the existence of god, and are now seeking more scientifically oriented witnesses, such as Carl Sagan, who is dead.

If Sagan's Big Bang theory is correct, however, it would grant copyrights of the universe to its creator, the universe.

Tony the Tiger and his Exxon counterpart have both declined to comment, as they are fictional cartoon characters.

You Could Be Having Sex Right Now

BUT NO, YOU DIDN'T WRITE to Miss Lonelyhearts. Thanks a lot. Now the ruthless and cold-hearted editor has unleashed the hounds to collect my articulate responses and I have no letters to which I can reply. Did I mention that this is an advice column? I know that there is someone out there whose life is a traumarama-drama and that they are just dying to share it with someone. (Who knows, I might even be able to help.) (This isn't a desperate plea, this is a calculated dare.) Bring it on, baby, I can take it. There just has to be a few of you out there who are getting more play than a beach ball, and I want to hear about it. Action like that is just asking for advice like mine. Too much action breeds drama, and drama festers until you have to do something about it. And honey, that something may as well be writing to me.

On that note, since we don't get to talk about you, let's talk about me. I'm sitting here with my Irish Breakfast tea, my hair pulled back, and my glasses on. I'm not having sex right now, I'm attempting to write an advice column with no one to advise.

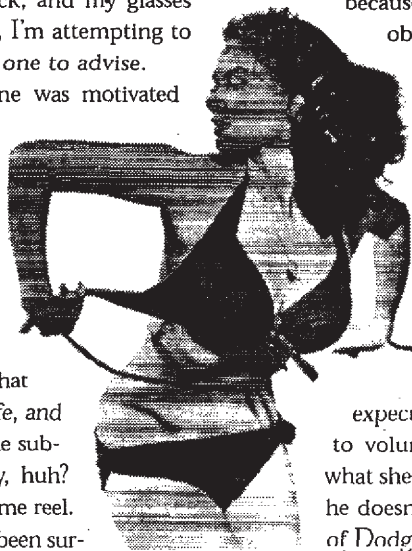
So, after realizing that no one was motivated enough to seek my advice, I had to tackle the age old question faced by advice columnists everywhere: should I invent a person and a problem? I thought about this extensively; many a sleepless night was I up consumed with what I would do. Look what you have reduced me to. Finally, I decided that I would just use someone in my life, and they would unwittingly become the subject of my column. Pretty sneaky, huh? Sometimes my own genius makes me reel.

It seems to me that lately I have been sur-

rounded by people who are confused. Now I know that (at Bard) this is nothing new, but I swear it is now worse than usual. They're confused about the relationships in their lives. They don't know what they want, or they know what they want and they can't have it, and this confuses them. I think everyone around me is in transition.

One person that I am thinking of is confused about her relationship with a young man who has been her friend for a long time. Suddenly, this young man found himself a young lady. My friend, although not out of the picture, is definitely on the back burner. So she is confused because, although this has been going on for a while, he still treats her badly. He has no sense of reciprocity. To him the past means nothing, so he moves on thinking that he remembers, but he doesn't remember the right things and so he can't reciprocate in the relationship

because he feels like it has become an obligation. Their relationship has become one-sided, and he still feels like everything he does for her is forced. So I suppose her question to me would be to ask whether she should talk to him, or ignore him, or simply go on existing and continue the relationship. I think the most reasonable course of action in this situation is to sit him down and explain that she expects him to care about her enough to voluntarily give an equal amount to what she is putting into the relationship. If he doesn't I'd tell him to get the fuck out of Dodge. (Send letters to P.O. Box 7850)



Analyzing Kovel's Defeat in Senate Elections 1998

By SUSANNAH E. DAVID

IT WAS PERHAPS no surprise that Joel Kovel, Green Party candidate and Bard professor, was not elected to the U.S. Senate on November 3. This fact, however, does not properly convey the results of his run for office. During a conversation on November 4, Joel emphasized that many of his goals for this election campaign were met. His most important goal was to get his message out; he wanted to raise the issues of the ratification of the Kyoto accords, the transition of the indus-

Joel spent four months speaking around the state, attending demonstrations and protests, and putting on his "Schumato" puppet show that dramatizes the lack of democratic process within the media and the extent to which it is controlled by corporate interests.

trial sector to renewable energy sources, universal health care such as exists in every other industrialized nation in the world, and the possibility of a viable third party alternative to our terribly corrupt, undemocratic two-party system. To further this end, Joel spent four months speaking around the state, attend-

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Feeling a Tad Bit *Dumb in the Heart*? Penguin Puts Penache in Intern(ship)

Savvy Bardian descends from the Zarathustrian heights to mull about in the agora of inchoate genius: the realm of the Heart

By CAP'N COOK

"PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE READING about things that are sad." Such is the wisdom that none but a hardened mass-market editor can dispense, with a lipstick-cracked smile, as she welcomes a fresh-faced intern into the seedy world of publishing.

This past summer I was one such intern, at that paragon of paperbacked integrity known as Penguin-Putnam-forever merging Publishing. My power-suited boss Michaela espoused her theory of contemporary readership after I turned in a review of what I thought was a fairly good manuscript. The manuscript was comprised of vignettes told by a female narrator who grew up with a schizophrenic mom. "It was sassy, witty, and bitter-sweet," I wrote, "and has the potential to appeal to a mainstream, female audience." Michaela, whose hair, teeth, and complexion are each differing hues of yellow, appreciated my review and, in good humor, explained that "mass-market" tends to steer away from subjects that evoke sadness. Sadness is the stuff of Penguin's literary division.

But what is an internship, if not a lesson in the dulled tastes and mediocrity that a capitalistic enterprise produces? It was an education, a Bildung amongst Romans, and all in all, not a bad way to come to the realization that I do not want to end up in the corporate publishing world. At least, not for a great length of time. Ironically, these are also the sentiments of Michaela's assistant, my assigned mentor for the internship.

Sophia was one of many editorial assistants in her early '20s who slaved away at a salary about 5k short of her age. She had graduated from Columbia University one year prior having double-majored in lit and film. I could easily relate to her, and she told me straight out that there's a high rate of turnover in publishing. Thus, it's an industry full of youth; I was not the only one donning a backpack at work. In my excursions to the copy machine downstairs in the art department, I encoun-

tered many a disaffected, goateed guy who probably made indie films at night. I especially got a kick out of the romance assistants, those long-skirted-colorful-earrings-kooky-glasses-types, who drink Diet Coke religiously and work with the inspiration of Fabio posters adorning their cubicle walls.

But, of course, hallway observation was peripheral to my true education as an intern. Busy Michaela had Sophia assign most of my duties, which was fine by me. My primary task was reading manuscripts and subsequently writing on-page reports of them. The crux of the report was a summary, but I was afforded one paragraph of personal input. Being but a humble undergraduate, I felt an initial reluctance to critique. But soon enough I disassociated the authors' names from actual faces and was able to be honestly callous in my lines of commentary.

Anyone would have been merciless in critiquing "Dumb in the Heart," a romantic thriller (I guess) in which a girl named lone (intentionally decapitalized) is abandoned and sent to live with her older brother, fresh out of the navy and ready for some lovin'. The pair falls in love and the reader is confronted with the repetitive, bland sex scenes that constitute a 100-page honeymoon. Eventually lone becomes haunted by ridiculous ghost "shapes" of her chiding, dead mother and gets out of a psychiatric hospital only to marry her brother. And then she kills herself. Believe you me, the story was handled with none the genius of V. C. Andrews.

Besides doing these reports, I did the usual mundane office activities that any temp or assistant has faced: filing, putting together sales kits (collating, in essence), and photocopying like mad. On Mondays I got to sit in on editorial meetings. On a peripheral chair, along with Sophia and the other all-female assistants—suspiciously, the gender ratio of the actual editors was almost equal—I listened to the editors discuss what they were reading, always with an eye to a work's marketing potential. One potential project was contingent on Bruce Willis signing

on to do a movie tie-in. I sat there and smiled, visions of Armageddon floating through my head.

Thanks to a Classics editor's decision to prematurely huff out of her career, I got a room of my own by the second week, and damn, would Ms. Woolf had been proud. I had my own voicemail, email, and Internet access. In many ways it was like playing office. There I was surrounded by the very Signet classics that I had (barely) read in high school, swiveling around in my own gratuitously air-conditioned sanctuary, slurping coffee out of a company mug. Occasionally a passer-by would look in, unaware of my minor professional standing (or the schmaltzy medical mystery manuscript in front of me), and I'd give him or her that knowing smile and half-wink (faked to perfection) that said "yeah buddy, I understand Joyce."

All in all, it was a good way to spend the daylight hours of the Big Apple, despite a tragic lack of pay. For my extensive services at Penguin I was afforded but \$28 a week to cover my travel to and fro (while Providence ostensibly provides the rest). Now this was for at least 28 hours a week, making for a rate of pay at which all but Michael Knight would cringe. Alas, Penguin forced me into a criminal lifestyle. It just so happens that at the big P there were boxes of discarded books all over the building, which any employee could take as her own. I bagged up as much as I could carry and then trekked down to the Strand where I sold those bad boys for top dollar, surely violating some system of royalties. I made an additional 20 to 30 dollars on days that food was running low and my arms were feeling strong. I also worked part-time at the *Lion King* musical to supplement my income, which by my standards is criminal...but that's another story.

Oh, and for all those aspiring to an experience such as mine, send out exaggerated resumes to as many publishing companies as possible by the middle of April. I sent out at least a dozen, and Penguin was the only company to write back and request an interview.

Letters to the Editors & Bard Community

Dear Bard Community,

The town meeting held on October 27 regarding Mario Bordeau's ordeal the Saturday prior was informative and productive. It drew our Bard community closer together to resolve this current dilemma. Before, during and after the town meeting, there was a great deal of rage expressed. Although there was every reason to be angry with the situation, there has also been misguided rage towards our surrounding community, all police officers, Bard administrators and security. The 'conspiracy theory' surfaced numerous times at the town meeting. What has been done, is done. The facts that the county deputy made racial remarks and used unnecessary force are clear. As a community, we shouldn't dwell on anger, but focus on a reasonable solution. Upon returning to my dorm, I have given this situation considerable thought, and have reached the following conclusions: First, the Dutchess County deputy who made the arrest should be suspended for his actions of both racism and brutality. Second, the Bard staff members and administrator should not be forced to resign...

Words of racial bigotry are in poor taste but are not against the law. However when these biases interfere with the police officer's ability to properly perform his duties to uphold and preserve the law, then he is incapable of performing those duties as a peace officer and therefore should be removed from service. While I respect the police's difficult task to serve and protect, there is no justification for the misuse of official powers. The abuse of powers creates tension between the police and the community and depletes trust between citizens and officers. The law is not a shield behind which the police could justify their personal prejudice and racial bias.

The deputy in question should be suspended immediately. The suspension should last at least six months, during which time he should make a public apology on Bard campus and inform the Poughkeepsie and Red Hook newspapers of the facts of the situation. Although his words and actions were bigoted and wrong, it would be an

extreme action to force his resignation and his loss of career over a single incident. However, further inconsiderate action of this type is definitely grounds for his permanent removal.

While the Resident Director and security officers did not interfere with the assault, the students present also did not stop the police officer. The Resident Director, security officers and students alike were shocked by the deputy's drastic actions. Any further interaction with the deputy would have complicated

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the situation. The lack of interference on the student and staffs' parts further distinguishes the police officer's actions as racially oriented and unnecessary force. While it is easy for individuals to say: "If I were there I would have..." it is unlikely that anyone could have acted in the height of confusion. For these reasons, the Resident Director and security officers should not be held responsible, and should not be forced to resign.

—Ling Chen Kelly

Dear Bard Community,

I would like to extend many thanks to all of you for being there for me during my recent bereavement.

My brother was a gentle, quiet man who never had a bad word to say about anybody or anything and his death is a great loss to his family and friends.

I will always remember your kindness and thoughtfulness during this time of sorrow. Your prayers, kind words, love and donations are greatly appreciated.

—Shirley Day

Scrutinizing Candidate Kovel's Senate Defeat

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

ing demonstrations and protests, and putting on his "Schumato" puppet show that dramatizes the lack of democratic process within the media and the extent to which it is controlled by corporate interests. However, there was an almost complete media blackout regarding Kovel's run for office, as there is of many left wing actions, events, and issues.

Kovel received approximately 15,000 votes, far short of the 50,000 he needed in order to put the Green Party permanently on the ballot in New York state. There are four million registered voters in New York, and ten million residents who are eligible to vote. Kovel discussed the fact that those folks who probably would have benefited most from his election probably are those that don't vote. Most of the poor, after all, know full well that their "representatives" do not serve them, but cater to corporate interests. In addition to these eligible voters who have lost faith in the current political system, there are also people who, if allowed the voting privilege, represent a great danger to the status quo, because their interests differ so drastically from the interests of those currently in power. Fully 14 percent of black males in the U.S. are barred from voting for life because they are convicted felons. (Seventy-five percent of the national prison population is black, 80 percent are imprisoned for nonviolent drug convictions.) I was barred (illegally) from registering to vote in Dutchess County, although federal laws state that college students may register to vote in the county and state in which their college is located. This casts doubt on the potential of electoral politics in the United States as a source of hope for real change in a positive direction.

We must keep some hope alive, however. Although corporate interests have a similarly strong presence in the parliaments of Europe, Green Parties on the other side of the Atlantic are enjoying especially strong support right now, particularly in Germany. As the November/December issue of the *Earth First!* reported, the European Green Party recently proposed that we should name natural disasters caused by pollution and global warming after major corporations, (à la "Exxon kills 6,000 in South America").

It was voted down.

Observer Editorial Policy

The Bard Observer is Bard's only student-run newspaper. A forum for the exchange of ideas and information, the paper is distributed free-of-charge on campus. Twelve issues are planned for the academic year; distribution generally takes place Mondays. Everyone is welcome to submit.

The deadline for all submissions, be

they stories, cartoons, photographs, statistics, or advertising, is 5 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to publication. Late submissions (with the exception of late breaking news and sports articles) will not be accepted.

Submit all writings on a labeled disk with files saved in a Macintosh-compatible format (no PC files). Include a dou-

ble-spaced hardcopy (printout) labeled with author's name, suggested headline and subheadline when relevant, and a short description of the work.

Letters to the Editor are welcome. We strongly discourage anonymous submissions. If anonymity is absolutely necessary, the writer must reveal her or his identity to the Editor.

The Bard Observer reserves the right to edit letters for spelling, grammar, length, and coherence.

Send submissions via Campus Mail to P.O. Box 850.

The Editors can be contacted at observer@bard.edu; 758-7131; and P.O. Box 850, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504.

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four stars-Poughkeepsie Journal

BOT-MAN: WETWORKS

Bot-mari, Volume 3, Issue 3, 1998



Written & created by: Chris Van Dyke, John Holowach; Copyright 1998 Holowach/Van Dyke; Drawn by: Chris Van Dyke
Special thanks to: Allen Josey, for being forced to appear in this obligatory sequel; Morgan and Mulzer, for helping with last minute brainstorming for extra wacky dialogue to pack each panel; all the insanely paranoid individuals who insured that my life as a hit man would be short and sweet (my homework thanks you); and as always, Mumia Abu-Jamal, for being someone who leads to college student protests, and thus an endless source of entertainment.