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Bardians Craft Event to Support Kosovars

Group raises $1,000 for refugee center in Vienna

By Peter Naugle

Play for Relief, the sporting event held on May 2 organized to raise funds for Kosovar refugees, was poorly attended but successful nonetheless. All-in-all, the event raised approximately $1,000. The Play For Relief Committee will now use this money to help Kosovar ethnic-Albanian refugees in Vienna, Austria.

The event took place at the Stevenson Gym, where, for four hours, Bard and Red Hook High School students played softball and basketball, and then ate pizza donated by Broadway Pizza and Village Pizza. Participants were sponsored with a minimum of $15.

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Bacchanalian Menage is Back

With foam machine, volcano and virgin sacrifice, banned party returns

By Kenny Chance

IN THE DOCUMENTATION of the highly anticipated Menage, after the talk of legacy and the hype of return, the student body signed, and marveled at the more working than done. On May 1, an estimated 1,000 partypreneurs perched and grunted in an Old Gym flashing with laser lights, decorated with art installations, and pulsating with techno. Featuring two cages, a paper-mache volcano, a finish room, and a sex tent, the party attempted to re-knight the old Bard bacchante, embellishing, as primary organizer Mary Molina said, "sexual expression and loosening inhibitions." Mutually through, the party was interrupted for the ritualized "Virgin Sacrifice," that was advertised as a pyrotheatra show, but in actuality combined magic and erotic dance. And while there was no shortage of use condoms for organizers to clean up, even Molina agreed that the party did not live up to its high-end mainly due to inhibited attendees. "I wanted people to be less stand-offish, less judgemen- tal, and move participatory," she said.

For many, the mystery and hype that preceded the event dulled the effects of the actual party. From the start, when Molina secured $2,500 from Big Brother/Big Sister, rumors stirred about the money and the eventual culmination. With the organizers reminding students of the older, wilder Menage, with its Rolling Stone coverage and orgasmic tradition, Bard students waited in curiosity for the event's return. But as Kenneth MacLeish said, "Though it's cynical to say people wanted to be disappointed, that was my general feeling about it. It was just made out to be more than it was." And, as another partygoer, Brad Altman, said, "I would characterize it as anti-climactic." Despite defeatist expectations, as organizer and Virgin Sacrifice performer Devon White said, "There were a lot of different takes on the event." Some students had, as promised, intensely sexual experiences while others enjoyed the dancing and atmosphere. Molina described student's experiences by saying, "they ranged from having sex and having fun, to being laid back and having fun, and taking a drug and having fun." Even the organizers had different conceptions of what the Menage should be for students. White said, "Mary [said], 'I want them to fuck' and I said, 'I want it to be sexual.'" Despite these conflicting per- ceptions of the party, MacLeish echoed Molina's statement and simply said, "Regardless, people had fun." On a similar note, attendee Amy Cara Broneman said, "I had a good time. I'm glad someone decided to get it together and organize one this year... But more than anything else, it was just about the con- cept of having the Menage."

One experience shared by some young women at the party was unwanted groping. Although B.R.A.V.E. refused to give an official statement, citing internal conflict and victim vulnerability. Greg Johnson, who was on duty for B.R.A.V.E. during the event, said, "The Menage acted as a magnifying glass to that the
Alternative Spring Break: Building in Appalachia

This spring, nine Bard students went on an alternative spring break. Instead of painting a little house in a small town during the weeks between March 27 and April 4, these students offered their services to a struggling community in Appalachia.

Nancy Brous, Lena Brodersen, Seth Crepom, Rick Ehrler, Matthew Eltolt, Abraham Eshlev, Lyndie Furst, Christian Rubello, and myself spent spring break in(see text)

Verga, a small rural community in the Appalachian mountains. Fries is a former mill town that has lost its economic base and is struggling with high unemployment and a general sense of powerlessness. Community members were very interested in sharing their stories and teaching the group about the history of Fries and its surrounding area.

Most evenings were spent in the community center, making use of one of the bowling alleys (where nine new cars were won), duck pin bowling and set their pears, table pools, ping pong tables, basketball courts, piano, video games, library, TV, and VCR. Or, the group could be found mingling with the crowds at a local square dance. They even had a song dedicated to them at a big Maple Festival in a neighboring town.

The trip was part of a project by students in the Trustee Leader Scholar program. The goal was to provide Bard students with an alternative spring break where they could offer their services to those less fortunate while learning about a different community and culture. The nine students that attended the trip this year worked together in teams to raise funds and plan the trip.

The group wishes to return to Fries next year over their spring break. They also hope to get to Mississippi or Louisiana at the end of winter break next year to do similar work. If you have any questions or want information on how you can become future team members, you can contact Rick Ehrler (extension 4377, email rje88@bard.edu) or myself (extension 4663, email rz3@bard.edu).

Dr. Ansel Ross

Students spent their days painting porches, cleaning houses, raking yards, toppling trees, painting a caboose, clearing a bank along a main road, replacing lights, and more.

NEWSBRIEF NEWSBRIEF NEWSBRIEF NEWSBRIEF

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER AND PREPARATIONS

A Courtesy Gallup will be the Commencement speaker.

Saturday at the 115th Annual Commencement, March 26, in the contact between Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago. She has pub convinced several books, including works on classical music, philosophy, and moral education. In 1980, she was the president of the Philosophical Knowles, founder of the Jazz School, and lead pianist. She has also taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and is a professor of music at UC Berkeley. She has received several awards, including the Iowa Governor's Award, the MacArthur Foundation Award, and the Kavli Prize for Physics.

BARD NURSERY SCHOOL, ACHIEVEMENT

The B.A. Lόγια Kholamik, retired Baccalaureate School head, received the first annual award from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEC), an organization of child-care professionals dedicated to improving standards of early education. Only seven percent of child-care programs in the United States have been granted this prestigious award.

The nursery school program at Bard is unique in that it is a full-service nursery school, offering a range of educational activities for children from birth to age 5. The school features a wide variety of activities, including music, art, and outdoor play, as well as a strong focus on early childhood development.

PEOPLE MOVING AROUND IN LUDLOW

Changes in the administration are bound to affect local or at least 'lesser' students next year. Jonathan Goodwin, the new Dean of Students, will be the person to contact for information about the changes.

Dr. Ansel Ross

Students spent their days painting porches, cleaning houses, raking yards, toppling trees, painting a caboose, clearing a bank along a main road, replacing lights, and more.

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 1990

The Art Department, which is housed in the art building, will host a series of events this spring.

Tuesdays: A series of events will be held in the art building.

1. The Gallery will host a series of exhibitions and events.

2. The Gallery will host a series of lectures and discussions.

3. The Gallery will host a series of workshops and demonstrations.

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These events will be open to the public and are free of charge.

This is a call for interested students to volunteer to help.

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Event Raises Funds for Kosovars

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

but most raised more. Ian Schaff, a participant from Red Hook High, single-handedly raised $300.

Pay for Relief was the brainchild of Bard student Rachel Maloney. In addition to Maloney, the event, Chaplain Rev. Bruce Chilton, Kerry Chance, Peter Malcolm and Duffy Connolly organized the event. "I was watching '20/20' one night," said Maloney, "and it was really hard to watch all the images of war-torn Kosovo. I was really upset. I felt so helpless and I knew that I wanted to do something. I mean I had to do something."

Chilton, who facilitated the event, encourages Bard students to take political action on behalf of others. He said, "Bard College has a tradition of progressive rhetoric in which our own rights and privileges," said Chilton, "but our record of action on behalf of social justice has been spotty at best. The way that people have reacted to the crisis in Kosovo gives me hope."

If you were not able to support this event and are interested in donating, the Bard Chaplaincy is still collecting donations. Please write checks to the Bard Chaplaincy Fund, and send them through Campus Mail to Bruce Chilton. All the money will be sent to the Kosovos Refugee Center in Vienna, Austria.

The Vienna Kosovos Refugee Center shelters a small community of mostly children and teenagers, many of whom have been separated from their families. Beverly Davis, mother of Bard student Amit Copeland, works at the Center. Kerry Chance, a member of the Pay for Relief committee, contacted Davis two weeks ago regarding the relief project. Since then, Davis has sent emails detailing the shelter's needs. According to Davis, the Refugee Center now needs a low cost computer system. The refugees have sufficient food and necessities, but they have nothing to do with their time, and no way of keeping up with events at home. They speak only Albanian and English, and although they are learning German, they could certainly benefit from contact with the outside world on the Internet.

The Pay for Relief committee plans to buy a computer for the Center. It will combine funds with those donated by Lora Chance, a student at the Maryland Institute of Creative Arts, who raised $650 selling flowers. Once the Center has a computer, it will be possible to contact the refugees via the Internet. Davis plans to set up a penpal program for the refugees. Anyone interested in having a Kosovar penpal should email Kerry Chance at ke888@polmail.com. Chance can give you the mailing address for the Refugee Center, and Davis contact information.

Due to the recent developments in Kosovo, it appears that the refugees may be able to go back home within a year. The computer that Bard sends will still be put to great use. "When and if the refugees go home," wrote Davis in an email to Chance, "then we will donate the computers to the Vienna Orphanage Homes (there are several) who need this sort of thing."

Until then, the refugees can use as much as the Bard community can donate. The Refugee Center especially welcomes donations of American clothing. The Kosovar youths covet American gear, which, according to Davis, the Center "dotes out on special occasions." If you can make a donation of clothes to Kosovas, please contact Bruce Chilton.

There are now an estimated 750,000 ethnic-Albanian refugees in the border countries of Kosovo. Sheltersing these people is causing major problems for the border states. Macedonia, for example, faces a potential political or economic breakdown, due to the number of displaced Kosovars seeking refuge there. In short terms, these refugees need food and medical aid. In the long term, perhaps they will be able to return home, but returning and rebuilding will both take a considerable amount of money.

Chilton wants the Pay for Relief Committee to become the first phase of an ongoing project at Bard. With a long-term international aid program, he said, "we might take our place within a network of social justice, so that what we do might correspond better to the progressive ideologies that we tend to embrace." Next fall, the existing Pay for Relief committee will continue to organize fundraisers to respond to the emergency in Yugoslavia. After that, the committee will become a permanent organization at Bard that will respond to crises all over the world. Maloney said, "I'm really excited for next year when I hope we do a lot more."

Menage Returns to Bard

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

people causing problems at the party are also causing problems outside the party... The event set up problem situations for women."

The number of the partygoers and the amount of flagellation and sexual activity taking place presented a challenge for B.R.A.V.E. members, security, and even students whose friends were engaged in questionable behavior. "Nara's" Wanda Spodrutt said, "it was really hard to assess where the line [was] being drawn, and when [my friend] was in control or not... It was a dangerous situation." To this, organizers responded that the problems arose from non-Bard students attending the party. Several of the organizers developed ideas on how to prevent sexual harassment during the next Menage, possibly by limiting the party to Bard students. Because, as Modina emphasized, "Pretty much everyone at Bard knows that 'naked girls' does not mean touch." Conflicting definitions of sexuality and different expressions of that sexuality created a cultural clash between schools such as Sara Lawrence, Vassar, and Smith, who were officially invited to the Menage, and schools such as West Point and U Mass who were not invited. Johnson noted, however, that "It's a lie to think that there are not people at Bard sexually assaulting women. If it didn't happen here we wouldn't have B.R.A.V.E." For the future, Student Activities Director Allen Jones offered this advice: "if I'm going to a party with a provocative, sexual theme, what I need to do is keep alert. If not, it's what Security and B.R.A.V.E. are there for. People need to take responsibility for themselves.

Few other problems occurred at the event. Administrators and security agreed that even for a typical Bard weekend there were few injuries. Jones, who confirmed that one student was taken to the hospital, said, "People are taken to the hospital numerous times per week, so compared to any given weekend it was pretty good." The organizers stressed that many safety precautions were taken to prevent any drug or alcohol related injuries, such as distributing mimosas and providing a shuttle service. The Menage's abrupt suspension four years ago came when a drunk student totaled his car and suffered injuries resulting in a month long hospitalization.

In the end, $2,100 was raised, $1,500 of which organizers are donating to Beyond the Horizon, a summer program for underprivileged children that received no funding at the budget forum. The remaining profits will pay for unexpected expenses, and will be given to Big Brother/Big Sister. A representative of the national organization said of the Menage, "I'm sure that's nothing Big Brother's fault, they would have anything to do with that the national organization is certainly not going to comment on it." He did specify that, "there were really any restrictions placed on local fund raising as long as the events are to good taste." Dean of Students Jonathan Becker said of the organization sponsoring the Menage, "My personal feeling is that the purpose of the party is incommensurate with the goals of Big Brother/Big Sister..."

The original $2,500 Menage organizers received from the Bard emergency fund was mostly spent on the lighting system which cost over $1,000, the professionally made ads costing over $700, several hundred more for the installations, and likewise for weather balloons and food. Brooks-Spodrutt said, "I was outraged by how much money they got..."

Though the newly restored tradition of the Menage remains on shaky ground, organizers and students hope that it is one that will continue. Chelsea Goverde said, "It was good they had the Menage again. It was nice to see the sex-obsessed community come together like that."

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NYC Gardens Saved

Activists take charge as City encroaches on the green

By Amanda Davis

WHEN MAYOR GIULIANI announced he was planning to sell 112 of New York City’s community gardens, the response by the public was one of outcry and resistance. Ten years ago, the city allowed citizen groups to transform the vacant lots in an open-ended, temporary agreement. It appeared as if this would soon be up. The gardens that had mitigated crime and served as public gathering spaces in our privatized world were sitting on death row. Gardens that provided local food to the homeless and green space in a cement city were in jeopardy, so that Giuliani could increase his tax rolls and revenue.

Due to the massive outcry of public disapproval, it appears today as if the gardens have been saved. Thirty-three of the gardens will be sold to the Trust for Public Lands at the price of $3 million. The remaining 51 will be purchased by the New York Restoration Project, run by actress Bette Midler, for $1.2 million. Although these prices are below the market price for which Giuliani was determined to sell them, citizens and various coalitions have demanded that he compromise his original agenda. After numerous demonstrations, lawsuits, email tirades, letter-writing campaigns, and acts of civil disobedience, the issue has become such a hot topic and so well-covered in the mainstream press, that Giuliani and his supporters cannot rid the city of its gardens as easily as they had originally hoped. As the New York Times reported Wednesday, May 12, “One week brought a protest at City Hall that led to the arrest of 30 people, some bearing banners; another week found a man, dressed like a sunflower, screaming, ‘The gardens must be saved!’ from his perch in a hanging tree in City Hall Park.” On May 5, another 62 citizens were arrested, including five bird-related activists, in another act of civil disobedience, sitting in the street, as a swarm of garden supporters formed a “wall” between the police and the “Justice, Save the Gardens!” some bearing signs that threatened to use Giuliani as fertilizer if he did not spare the gardens. Three activists shackled themselves together inside a city office using Kryptonite bike locks Monday, May 10, demanding that the gardens be saved. Police had to use electric saws to cut the locks before they could be arrested (Berry 1999). These demonstrations, and many others, have been combined with lawsuits filed by the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, More Gardner, the Puerto Rico Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Trust for Public Land.

The success of these efforts teach three important lessons. The first is that urban gardens are pristine spaces, allowing city dwellers access to fresh nature, a place for feeding a spirit that is conducive to community organizing, beneficial to the environment, and a source of neighborhood health and pride. As the group More Gardner advocates, we indeed do need more gardens to make our cities greener and the lives of citizens more enriching. The second lesson is that if we remain silent, those seeking profits will auction off that which we love and need as a human community. If there had been no mass trespassing of citizen champagne, the gardens would be no more, plain and simple. This brings us to our third lesson, by far the most empowering.

Public demonstrations and lawsuits have given birth to the community gardens of New York City. These citizens have proven that activism is both a necessary and effective tool in the fight for social justice. Demonstration bore no arms, only their voices, their words, and a few lady bug costumes. Together, they saved the gardens. Their flowers have yet another season to bloom.

There may be a day when the profit-seekers return for the gardens. If that day comes, we will rise up again. Until then, we will be busy planting more gardens, sowing the strength of our communities and struggling for what is right.

Finding a President in El Salvador

Student travelled to Central America to oversee election process

By ROBERTA RODRIGUEZ-EIPSTEIN

I HAVE RECENTLY RETURNED from a 14-day trip to El Salvador, where I served as an official election observer for the National Democratic Institute (NDI). I was sent to El Salvador by the NDI in April 1999. El Salvador is the smallest of the group of countries that comprise Central America. Like Nicaragua and Guatemala, it has suffered a ferocious 12-year civil war. That war ended in stalemate, with a peace agreement negotiated by the United Nations. The ruling Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), is comprised of the large land-owning families and business groups who could not defeat the guerrillas forces of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). The FMLN was also unable to defeat the military forces of ARENA, which were strongly supported by U.S. government and transnational business interests. These opposing forces are now engaged in a delicately balanced combination of their struggle, but the process of demobilization, including elections, defines the terms of battle. Such transitions to democracy are often very fragile. Where they occur, human rights violations, and social and political divisions from Europe and the United States send observers to the elections in an effort to curb electoral violations and voter intimidation at the polls.

I went to El Salvador with the Committee for Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), a long-standing solidarity organization in the U.S. Other observe delegations included the Veterans for Peace, United Nations, and the SHARE Foundation. Prior to election day, the CISPES observers attended seminars on the electoral law, met with representatives of the political parties, labor unions, neighborhood and campesino groups, women’s groups and the U.S. Embassy; and talked to maquila workers (sweatshop workers).

I observed the election in a neighborhood in San Salvador, the capital city. The ruling ARENA party defeated the FMLN in this third-over national election, gaining roughly 50 percent of the votes cast. Fraud and widespread irregularities in procedures marred the election. Nearly two-thirds of the eligible voters were either unregistered or unable to vote. There are many reasons for this. First, the registration process was difficult for poor and illiterate voters. It requires three different forms of identification. The names of the candidates were not printed on the ballot, and ballots did not contain a code to match with the results. In addition, bus transportation on Election Day was slow and less frequent than usual. At the polls there was enormous confusion as crowds of voters struggled to find the proper table at which to cast their ballots. After hours of this turmoil, thousands of voters discovered their names had been mysteriously dropped from the registry. Thirdly, the ARENA party bought votes, offering people food and transportation in exchange for their support.

What I saw and learned in El Salvador has left me both anguished and hopeful. I was angered by the poverty endured by the people, and the corruption and the murder hanging in the air, the violence of the 12-year civil war. I saw the destruction and have left by Hurricane Mitch, and people struggling to rebuild their homes and communities. I heard of disaster aid which was diverted for political use by the wealthy ARENA politicians of San Salvador. I spoke with women who work in the maquiladoras 12 hours a day for a wage of 45,74, who told me of the subhuman working conditions they endure in these factories that produce the Liz Claiborn and Gap clothing.

I also witnessed much that makes me hopeful for the future of the people of El Salvador. Despite the great losses and the enormous obstacles they have yet to overcome, the people I met had hope for the future and willingness to struggle fiercely for a better life. Everyone, from the activists of the FMLN, to the people in their community groups, to the women in the maquiladoras, continued to fight. When they expressed gratitude for our support and presence as observers, I was deeply moved. These people had fought twelve long years against overwhelming odds for their land and freedom. They had lost family and friends who were murdered by death squads that the US armed and trained. Many had been tortured and imprisoned. Yet they spoke to me as to a comrade. I felt proud to be part of their struggle in this small way: to be part of the U.S. solidarity movement that continues to raise the awareness and consciousness of Americans, even against the aims of our own government.

Though there have been only small advancements in comparison to the 1993 Elections, El Salvador is still far from becoming a democracy. The FMLN has moved from a people’s front Guerilla army to a democratic political party in eight years. The women’s and workers movements are fighting with a power similar to their strength in the war. Though the FMLN lost the election they appear to be gaining strength. The women who were targeted by twelve long years of murder, death squads, poverty, Hurricane Mitch, and a corrupt government, are not giving up. They are fighting with a hope and power that I have never seen before.

If you would like to know more about the elections in El Salvador, you can e-mail me at nk9392@earthlink.net, or call CISPES at 212-229-1296. There is a women’s community in El Salvador that I am trying to raise funds for. If you are interested please contact me. Read and react, we have a responsibility for our governments actions. Silence is consent.
Delighting in the Refulgent Spring

Fifty West Point cadets traveled to Bard to gaze and hear battlefields' narratives and to conduct a debate with Bard students regarding public speaking. Graham Storl (above right) and Sherard Mortensen organized a hill party for seniors on reg- istration day, last Wednesday. Deer and snakes were plentiful as the seniors gloated in the fact that they were finally freed from Bard's punishing bureaucratic machine. On the left, Director of Admissions, Mary Baldwin, displayed before undergoing a gravity-defying leg stand. Bottom left, Senior Brian Durkin shows off a robot he built as part of his senior project.
A Rant on Opera and "the Magic Flute"

By Joan Carne

TRANSLATIONS are such impossible things. Human languages, being the fickle and illogical creatures they are, preclude any attempt to duplicate a text from one language completely and wholly into another. It's not that the act of translation is an imposs- ible thing, as anyone with a little knowledge of a foreign language and a dictionary can produce at least a reasonable approximation of most original texts. However, any hope of reversing any more than a shadow of the phrasing, rhythm and character of the original is an impossible thing; it must be understood by any aspiring translator. This is also not to say that there do not exist translations of exceptional quality that are faithful to the original text and yet work stunningly. Speaking as a reader of English, I would much rather read a well-written French novel than a badly written English one. The former is far more likely than the latter to happen to my French in order to read Madame Bovary in the original. Sure, it would be great to learn German to read Goethe, Italian for Calvino, or Czech for Kundera (although I'm pretty sure Kundera is better in English), but it would also be technically impracticable.

It can be said that what is most impossible about translations is our need for them. Realizing that many of the greatest works of literature would go unread without them, we have understood and come to terms with this demand for English language edi- tions in our literary world, and consequently there now exist a myriad of exceptional English translations of literature from just about every known human tongue.

But if we leave the literary world aside for the moment and examine the world of music, specifically that of opera, one finds a plethora of workable English transla- tions of even some of the best loved European operas. If we are to assume that the economics of opera function similarly to those of litera- ture, this lack begs the question "Where is the demand?"

I suppose that the first reaction to this question would be:

"Why should there be a demand?" After all, didn't the composer blend the words, creating and molding in such a way that, if he knew his craft well, all three of these qual- ities would support and complement one another to a unique and inexpressible way? Yes, this is true. Everyone who even attempts to write an opera must have as keen an -ear for the rhythm and five or six or seven of the languages that they are writing as they do for music. But since the com- poser sets not only the sound but also the meaning of each word, what good will we do in performing a work in the original language if nobody in the audience can even under- stand the words being sung? If anything, more of the opera will be lost in its audibility in this way than if it were given in translation. If the composer deemed the sound of the voice to be more important than the words being sung, why, then, should he limit himself to real words or real language? Composers like Philip Glass and Meredith Monk, deter- mining that words were secondary elements in their individual operatic visions, did not limit themselves to literal words, but used also phonetics and songlike syllables, as well as non-sense words as an element of their own creation. Only a literal word and phrase, if any, are used in these operas. When they are, their contextual significance in the opera is therefore magnified.

Since our world is so necessary a part of the opera as the music, the question of English-language versions of opera surfaces once again. The next objec- tion against such translations comes from purists who argue that the original lan- guage of a libretto, aside from determining the music to which it is set, actually determines and shapes the structure of the opera itself. Roger Sussman, American composer and essayist, accurately observed that some of the traditional operadist- izations that exist now developed in order to fit the language of the text with greater fidelity. As examples he mentions the recitative, which so comfortably fits the Italian language, or the German Stewplittel, which, with its spoken passages, better suits the capricious German tongue. It must be remembered, however, that these are stylistic developments, which only facilitate the way the music carries the words, and therefore the overall drama. Anyone who has seen operas in Germany, Italy, France or Russia may have noticed that almost all operas in these countries are given in the language of that country, regardless of the language in which the opera may have originally been written. It seems ironic to some that the very countries in which the greatest operas were composed have such different exigencies for the original language, it should be noted that opera goes in these countries consider not only the music and the plot of the opera, but the word-to-word action as well. Now, I am not saying that there is a "correct" and "incorrect" way to experience opera. It is perfectly rewarding and satisfying to experience it as merely vocal sound with instrumental music and some sort of plot (as a matter of fact, houses like the Metropolitan Opera and the Glyndebourne keep themselves in business by delivering this type of experience to a crowd of English-speaking auditors). This is, however, only one part of the total operatic experience.

That said, I ask once again, Where is the demand for English translations of operas? Of course, there has been a small number of English-language versions in recent years, like the Met's production of "Così Fan Tutte" a while back. Instances like this, unfortunately, are few and fleeting in the professional opera scene in this country. Rather, the place where English translations of opera are needed and used most often in this country is in amateur, student and small-scale performances. These are situations in which it is difficult to either find singers skilled in foreign language singing, or where the prospective audience will be naive enough of "true" opera that they will naturally want to follow along with the word-/to-word- action section. As a consequence of this freedom from the kind of hardened puritanism which we like to think of as a "true" opera and try very attract, small-scale student or amateur productions manifest the true spirit of the piece more effectively than their more illustrious counterparts.

One such production was recently performed here at Bard. Having left new re-introduced opera to Bard with a performance of Die Fledermaus, the drama and music departments put together a long-anticipated staging of another Mozart opera, "the Magic Flute," in English. The translation was by Bard drama professor William Drner, done especially for this performance. It is a good feeling to know that there are people with enough awareness of the importance of English opera translations that they are compelled to produce their own, dissatisfied as they are with the few that already exist. As a consen- tation earlier, translations are truly difficult, especially with opera. Preserving the phrasing, accents and expression of a good vocal line in translation is no small task. If not an impossible one. Drner's transla- tion seemed pretty sound on a literary level, for the most part, even in spite of a somewhat anticipated vocabulary, which made use of words like "tripping," "even" and "blinding"—words that exist now for the most part only in dictionaries. This was not much of a problem though, as it was possible to understand most of the dialogue. In some cases it even created a few charming rhymes. However, as with all, it is hard to find a satisfactory English transla- tion in spite of a late-Victorian vocabulary. The most impossible thing about Drner's translation, however, was the difficulty of singability—this in some cases that just did not fit smoothly with the music.

One wonders whether Drner's quest for literary pol- ish in his translation made the musical considera- tions of the text little more than an afterthought. As a result, once the musical element was added, a great amount of reworking was lost when the singers were forced to drop some of the more awkward words and syllables from the text in order to maintain a coherent flow of melody.

Instead of focusing on the problems of the words, however, the performance of "The Magic Flute" itself was very satisfying, showcasing some of the more talented singing and acting I've seen at Bard. The character of Papagena, played by banquet chef, was a pleasure to watch; also, he did not fail to make the marry, marry bird catch. The number of talented voices in the cast, everywhere from Tamarro, the protagonist of the opera, to his love Papagena, to the three ladies, to the priests of Sarastro, to a stunning Papagena, played by Marta Vural, fit the spirit of the music; fit the words, beautifully. There were some aspects of the direction I didn't understand, like the portrayal of the three guising spirits who advise Tamino and Papagena on their journey. Just why these, angelic spirits, who in many productions are played by young boys, were portrayed as three fiendish, clumse, nymphomaniacal girls is beyond me. However, I have long since learned not to question the finer points of the Bard theater department.

It may be that one of the reasons why English-language opera seems so shocking to many audiences is the lack of a healthy, defini- tive repertory of operas in our own language. Even the operas of Benjamin Britton and Virgil Thomson, which have managed to enter the mainstream repertory, make up only a fraction of the whole output. Perhaps when more English operas, especially those written by Americans, are taken with greater seriousness by our professional opera companies, the English language opera may actually begin to sound like a natural operatic language. Until then, I think the only way to approach this problem is by giving English translations of already well-established European opera. And in spite of the obvious prob- lems with "The Magic Flute" heard here at Bard, it is nevertheless a step in the right direction. Who knows, perhaps one of these days the Dobbs department may actually have enough courage to perform an actual, honest-to-good American opera. One can only hope.
The Greatest Food Review, Without Question, of All Time

A comprehensive account of restaurants in the vicinity of Planet Bard

By Stephanie Sweeney

As the sun sets on my Bard career, my project having spun into non-viability, my dorm room comforted by order of Thea Linder and the heart this dank cloud of a whole new life hanging over my head, I reflect on all the great places, and not so great places, that I have reviewed or have been reviewed for the Bard Review.

Here you will find a sampling of my life's work:

MOST DEPRESSING RESTAURANT:

The Taco Maker. Formerly an Arby's, this fast-food venue represents the fastest reaches of the Puerto Rican-based, monolithic corporate juggernaut, PT Taco Maker. As it attempts to portray itself as an okay place to eat, it relies on faded paper party products, a dated-up salsa bar, and their overly masculine mascot, Taco the Cat. With this thick, crusty-like, limp, squashed unto these pita-sized Casual red joints, he smiles at you in the most sorrowful manner. As you sit in the solarium, waiting for your food to be brought to the table, you are slapped in the face by the next-door McDonald's, complete with Disneyland-sized playground, under oh-so-golden arches, boasting "Billions and billions served!" And not one of those billions has accidentally stepped into the Taco Maker from the looks on the faces of the Taco Technicians, who seemed overwhelmed by the influx of customers that totaled four in my party.

The menu seemed to be constructed from a generic kit mail ordered from Hardee's. It did prove itself to be somewhat mysterious by offering for dessert, "El crudo," which translates into English means "The Creto.

Runner-Up: The Islander a.k.a., the Super K Cafe, Staxler (Kingston location only), Texas Lunch (even though I've never been there), and Beto D'arc (because it represents the unattainable).

RESTAURANTS I HAVE REVIEWED THAT HAVE CLOSED DOWN:

Chez Philippé: I know this place was on its way down the moment I stepped into the dining area. Maybe it was the dusty furniture or the lonesome Philippé himself. I don't know. What I do know is that even though this place was filled with mystery and intrigue, it proved too much for its own good. I write with a hole in my heart when I write about Chez Philippé.

Schell's Kitchen: The reason why this establishment closed down remains unknown. The only thing I can think of is that perhaps the intimate ambience it evoked became too much of that "family feel" and forced the owners to give away free food. I miss the breakfast pizza as much as I miss those sparkling cans of condensed milk on the Kitchen's shelves.

Cafe 7 West: The reason for this closing are obvious. This short lived restaurant offered exploiting egg salad sandwiches and a 7-Eleven drive through. In a prime example of self-defeating propriety.

BEST INEXPICABLE MAKEOVER:

Michael's Diner: A collage of many themes, from cross stitch to neon lights to Rococo, Michael's Diner has reestablished itself as a place of great conflation. As I sit in the white pleather booth, my attention is taken away from my littlebag and focused on the generic Tiffany lamps and old deco woodwork. No restuarant offered here anymore.

Runner-Up: The Bard College Coffee Shop (now referred to as The Bard College Cafe) and Arby's (which turned into a Taco Maker).

BEST PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:

Foster's Coach House: Getting your picture taken while talking on the phone in a home drawn curtain is an experience too great and rare to pass up.

BEST BREAKFAST PLACE:

Another Nice Addition: Besides being the only place I know of to name a dish in honor of Bard, this restaurant serves a far-away feel by being far away. It also offers the Yarm-Tam special, which starts the Yarm-Tam cafe, a dense and inscrutable coffee cake topped with the sweetest sugary gloop around.

BEST APPETIZERS:

China Rose: I love salted pancakes.

BEST, WORST, STUDIEST, EXPENSIVE, FAR-WAY, CRAPIEST DINNER:

The Everready Diner: It may have that shiny chrome outside but that just marries the sad truth of the inside.

BEST OR POSSIBLY WORST PLACE I'VE NEVER BEEN:

Bledsoe's Cafe, Bear and Bob, and Crabby Dave's

ALL-AROUND GREATEST PLACE (AND BEST SERVICE):

Def's Daisy Creuse. Whether you sit outside and enjoy the elements or sit inside and get that birthday-party feel, this is a place where everybody knows your name (as it's shouted over the intercom when your order is ready)! Anonymity is not its strong point, but decorativeness from a deep fryer view. From fried mushrooms to the "Ooh La La," you just can't go wrong if you go to Def's.

FILM REVIEW:

FILM REVIEW: FILM

For review for the best film of 1999 is that its targets won't get the point.

Jugos will be out in October. You may not have heard of it before, but that's probably because director Kevin Smith is following a rather odd publicity policy: he was so upset when the script appeared online (by "Drew Ducky" and taken), and he regularly updates the Jugos website so as to how the search for a distributor is going. Smith, who has nothing of a cult film after another dud, his hard-pressed silence verifiable Maltzick, and his acclaimed Clerks does have made a film that is religious. So far as I can describe it, Jugos will be Clerks—except with a famous face, a different line, more action, and a whole bunch more money. The plot (yes its has one of those lines) one of the descendents of Joe's coffee shop is called up by Maltzick (Moe Richard), the voice of God, to stop two rogue angels (Matt Damon, Ben Affleck) who are trying to get into Heaven via the old police inglorious clams. If they succeed, they will have proven that God can be wrong, thereby incalculating all of being. ("Leave it to the Catholics to destroy existence.") Along the way he meets the merry Seraphic (Skye Bureau), the apocalypse Helen (Cinna Robb),chains Jay and Silent Bob, three evil white kids, a monster made up of seaweed, and a gangster who really, really, really wants Affleck.OH, and on the seventh day, the gods goes to the arcade.

If the film's messages actually reach their intended targets, people will queue in their real life lines, there's a great speech in which Helen, who gets regularly kicked out of Heaven gives his other occupants a break from his Black Nationalist rhetoric, says, "White folks only want to hear the great life: itself, a place to God's kingdom... Folks just can't accept a black Savior." And then there's the all "Catholic-West" campaign. I'm not so sure how people who consider Jesus that close prohibitive friend would be affected by him off the cross giving a big thumbs up, but they probably will be. But then, I still argue that it's mostly Protectors who do it that sort of thing anyway. And if you like the wailing Garvey—except the execrations for the clue Woody the Cow-burn ahead probably the best way.

The thing is, I fear that these messages may be lost in that campaign from Clerks, the feeling of everyday trifles which drops off suddenly into the absurd (and, you, the somber bottomline tendency to only excessively on pop culture references. When the two rogue angels go on a fast six-pan- kiah campaign, they use hangkoks instead of flouring sweets. If you see proteus, they might be against the anti-Charch degrees stuff (but if you're a priest and you blow something, it really is holy!), or the Nix-ness-blackness stuff (Nuds talks about jobs as though Jews were—gomo—human), or Jay's final mouth (so comment,). Dr it might be because they think religion is being dropped down and degraded (more so than when those ignore it completely!).

Also, if you are not willing to talk to the proteus outside, he sure to point out that Kevin Smith is a practicing Catholic and that his a big copy, Stephen Rob, gives his copy to Def's (Def's currently you're killed when you get kicked out of Heaven), thereby clothed the naked as Jesus taught. Turn them against reading Def's Inferno and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, and ask if they've ever seen the movie, but, although I'm also Catholic and delighted to see a Hollywood film that acknowledges that religion even exists, it probably be there too, I'll be the one holding that sign that reads, "Matis Merriettas is not God." —Anne Wiatrowski
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FILM REVIEW

In care of the excellent Pretty in Pink, the Golden Age of
Teenage Movies, Jonathan Bernstein notes that a repeated
versus in the triumph of the underdog. Molly Ringwald
gets her
crash in Sixteen Candles and shows us the obvious riches in
Pretty in Pink. Three popular satirists meet their maker in
No longer, my friend. The roots of this movement are
washed back to the Breakfast Club, but I believe it was because
which actually set the standard that popular kids in the late
ninnies would actually be... portrayed as people. At
the expense, of course, of the outcasts. Sure, this about always
preferable to be popular than to be unamed at and despised,
but by suggesting that the popular kids are to be sympathized
with, the last voice of the reject—the stubborn pride
and moral superiority—is washed away.
I was thinking about this in the light of the recent Columbia
High School massacre—or so much that, but in the way it
was handled by the media, that is, as much badly. The
Trendseed Mafia, I read in magazines, was reminiscent of the
popular kids, who in turn held such enmity in less regard than
they did for, say, diet. Cramming from a high school the size of a
small suburban state, and being completely unaware of what
happened within my little group of friends, let alone outside it,
I never really cared of the dynastic of popularity, or even who
the popular kids were, but I do know that I was never like them.
I never wanted to be like them in that. This, I felt, intrinsically
made me either... instead I wanted to continue it was it
their faces: "Hey, I am not like you! I think your ideals and every-
thing you do is so much shit! Aw! And Soulboy/himself!" When
the news media talks about outsiders and hopeless students, I
get the creeping feeling that they would include me.
And what is so-scare for such outsiders? Let's see. We
could have the class bitch all prettied up in Two Things I Hate
About You. We could go see the class freak all prettied up in
She's All That. We could watch Buffy (I do, last week) Kick
the crap out of a "kind of spirit", but never again who planned
unbelievable, brain-eating creatures (network TV executives)
at the plane, and see her announce that she's given up on any
chance of a regular high-school moment for herself. Very nice.
Take a little pride in that declaration, there are some of us who
never had that option in the first place. I'd also like to
address the idea that the prince always returns in time for that
one special dance, it really, there is no prince...
What is popuarity? In the older days (the 60s), Bernstein
wrote, "War movies had kids. Spy movies had Cossacks... .
Dirt been movies had friends. Hip, cool, powerful friends. Ic
perfectly accessorized odies of tools who decided with the
arch of an eyeshadow or the cast of a scarlet by who would be
allowed to continue breathing the precious air of the inner cir-
cle and who would be plunged into social oblivion." How the
meanies are, variously, grown-ups, jujitsu exes, and many an
aneptic substitutes that fails to be believable/Fdr a screen
for the simple reason that they are not the prime many. Films
changed. Times haven't. Here I still a high-school student, I would
be hexed. As it is, I don't watch teen movies anymore. It's
enlightening enough watching the people who try to make
them.—Ann Malinowski

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Avoid The Lines
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The Five Most
Common Sights On
Campus
1) Pathetic egocentric music ma-
jors playing guitar on the Kline
Wall (surrounded by even more
pathetic female groupies.)
2) Mark Lambert, training for the
1992 Olympic Wall-crawling.
3) Annoying Kline sleepwalkers
who are always standing wendy
where you would like to be
walking as they cluck from the
antees, to the soda bar, to the
soup trimers, until londly
coming to rest permanently on the
poste
4) Self-selected campus D.J.s
perched on their window sill as
they select their personal favorites
for the enjoyment of everyone.
5) Obscure vendors selling
products made by others that
worlders as politically correct/Bard
students.
An American Band: A Tribute to the Parachutes

The all-star group of legendary heroes who rocked like no other—they touched not only stardom, but also our hearts

By Scott "Put 'n' Flap" Shaw

Of all the countless college bands making music on campuses across the country, few are as audacious, so frequently stunning, as Bard's own Parachutes. So it was destined that these four fortunate souls would cross paths musically and spiritually in the Hudson Valley and make some of the most potent and pure rock of our day. Make no mistake, there is nothing innovative or groundbreaking about the Parachutes' music—but therein lies its brilliance. The Parachutes listen and make music with their guts, and it is with our own that we must listen in order to recognize the ingenuity and heart behind it. Their work is rock stripped to its essence, sheer simplistic melody and abandon with a healthy spoonful of silliness for good measure. It's meant to make your head bob, your feet shake, your fists rise and your bellies rumble.

I was one of the lucky ones who saw the live debut, singer/guitarist Shawn Vander and Ezra Feltenberg, assured and a jumble of nerves, respectively; bassist Gaddy Davis, all rock 'n' roll and stone-faced; andlovable skin-banger Matt Hayes about as drunk as the Mice in Minneapolis used to get. A Parachute show in all its bright, unmitigated glory is a celebration of rock's virtuoso run amok, the proverbial chickens running around with its feed cut-off. Em's vocal range stretching to strip itself of its owner and rocket into the stratosphere; Shawn's deep, knowing anti-common sensuality taint' it like it is from seven feet high and rising; Gaddy, the epitome of cool, the be-all and end-all of hard-core bassists who know when to play and when to strip; and the striking Matt, never quite following through on his Bonham-potential but making quite an impressive racket with what must be the most predictable rhythm since Harry & the Bears, almost infinitely more agreeable and engaging. Which brings me back to why they're so damn good: they stem from the gut and not the cerebrum. It's not that they couldn't sit down and try coming up with something a bit more clever, but they just couldn't care to. They don't bother taking themselves too seriously. It's not worth it to them or the legions of fans, friends and family that love what they do as it is. Perverted and pomp the Parachutes are not. The Parachutes are the idiot savants of modern rock, and their brilliance lies in their not knowing it.

And then there are the songs. In the tradition of the Beatles, not coincidentally the most clinical and influential rock act of all time, the Parachutes feature not one but two talented songwriters with a marked stylistic tension that fuels the tank of the vehicle that is the group. Punning this absurd car analogy (inspired no doubt by Em's naggingly driving and catchy "My Car"), a Parachute's experience can be likened to that of a pleasant car driver. Even in the propulsive pop tunefulness of the group, the figurative gas pedal, if you will, providing a strong impetus with tones such as the aforementioned gem and the transcendent "Artie Boyfriend," whose development from the excitement building stop-start verses to the cascading chorus is a rollercoaster ride in itself. Meanwhile, Shawn's own off-the-wall melodies shine through on his trademark, "Hey, Girl," and the manic-dreading, slide guitar frenzy of "Uncle Nadeem's Cabin," while elsewhere he realizes a priceless level of introspective rocking with the remarkable "Rarely Ever Do I Think I'm Wrong." If Em's songs add the occasional surge of fuel that urge things on down the road, Shawn's songs are all about allowing yourself to coast, look out the window and enjoy the trip.

I would be committing a grave injustice if I failed to recognize another fine craftsman of music in the group. Though he contributed only one composition to the Parachutes' catalog, Gaddy's "Bugged" had enough pent-up energy, spit, and visceral power to make it an instant favorite. It indicates so much potential for the smooth-looking bassist, letting people know he's not just the group's pretty face. Apparently that's enough for Gaddy, even though the song is rarely performed and spoken-of even less. What he's left behind is a myth of a song and a would-be songwriting legacy.

Once this semester comes to a close and brings the graduation of Shawn, Ezra, and Gaddy, (leaving Matt as something of a free agent) the future of the Parachutes may seem a bit questionable, and rightfully so. Live music on Bard may never be the same. But perhaps I'm being too short-sighted. Did we not just see this past weekend Boba Fett (or, rather, Challenge of the Future) return to Bard, twice in about a year and a half, to show they still got a little steam left inside to rock with the best of them? And with members of Variety City (or, rather, Daddy) no doubt rocking the night away in some night-time urban locale this summer, thoughts of the imminent decline in live Bard music are probably best put to rest. So let's look forward to what perhaps might be for the Parachutes. Their music is simultaneously primitive, brilliant, goofy, and potgrant. They have an open invitation to play Bard any time they like.

They don't bother taking themselves too seriously. The Parachutes are the idiot savants of modern rock, and their brilliance lies in their not knowing it.
Wham, Bam, Thank You Ma'am

Miss Lonelyhearts

Well, I guess this is it. I don't know what you will do without me all summer, though I have faith that possibly a few relationships develop without my assistance. I'm a little disappointed in this final piece, I mean, somehow it just doesn't seem to have that Lonelyhearts unpin the all we know and love. It seems to me that if in the wake of the summer there might have been more than a few confused and misunderstood people out there, but I guess I underestimated your ability to recover from a night of debauchery. I suppose you could use the impending dooms of finals as an excuse, but quite frankly I would be surprised if this is really impeding your ability to get laid. I mean, think about it, this is the primary, and most enjoyable form of procrastination (besides writing this column). I find that beginning new relationships just before the year ends is the perfect way to avoid doing your work and significantly healthier than sitting in your dorm room and snipping glue. If you think about it, any kind of sexual relationship can provide hours of not only sex, but fun filled discussions about the direction of your relationship, and whether you really feel ready for commitment. So give me a break, step away from your computer, go out and find someone as stressed as you are and relieve some of that tension, baby. Otherwise you might actually have to turn that paper in on time.

Dear Miss Lonelyhearts,

I just started seeing this girl & I don't know her very well yet. We've just started fooling around & I'm new to this sort of thing (I'm a virgin). How do I tell if she's ready to go all the way?

Sincerely,

Groping in the Dark

Dear Groping,

There comes a time in every boy's life when a little voice deep down inside begins to rear its ugly head and says: "It is time to become a man." Well, groping, now is your time. You heard it when you see your first gun, swung at your first fastball, now it is time to hit hit your first hometown. You see, this is a decision only you can make, and until you are ready, it doesn't matter if she is. You are about to embark on a decision that will change your life, you are opening yourself up to a plethora of new and exciting opportunities (i.e. "You can put your hands there!").

However, if you have reached down inside yourself and realized that "golly gee, you really are a great person," and "boy are you comfortable with yourself," you ,then go right ahead. In fact, if the only way you can feel you can improve your Robert Redford good looks or gruff smile is with a good lay then what the hell, go for it. If you really want to know if she is ready, why don't you try talking to her? Talking is a very underrated form of communication, and I should know, I spend all day at this damn computer. You can approach the subject delicately, or be blunt and get right to the point, the choice is yours. I personally do not believe in all the nonsense about the physical signs of readiness. I mean, just cause I had a mole on my right shoulder didn't seem to me a good enough reason to have sex, but somehow the time just seemed right. (Editor's Note: Huh?)

I would like to quickly dispel some of the common misconceptions that men have about when a woman is ready to have sex:
1. She comes over, lays down on your bed, condom clenched between her teeth and kitty.
2. She can breath through her eyelids.
3. No matter what you say to her, she just says: "please, please, please me!
4. She constantly mentions that de-bunking you and your roommate beds will "really open up the room."
5. She reminds you that getting a water bed will "really tie the room together."

While many of these situations seem to imply that this girl is ready to sleep with you, you will find that more often than not, she is merely interested in home decorating. This is not the girl you want to sleep with, or else you will find yourself owning lace window curtains to match your bed ruffles. This is very bad, mature have shown that living around too much lace causes cancer. Be wary of the obvious, because more often than not the knowledgeable one is much more subtle.

Dear Miss Lonelyhearts,

I am a freshman at Bard, and I must say when I came here I never expected to encounter such a blatant embracement of sex and promiscuity. The recent "mooove" party, during which I actually witnessed people promiscuously humping in the hall appalled me. I find all this talk of sex and promiscuity worrying, and I can't even escape it when I attempt to read a fine piece of literature such as the Bard Observer. Every time I open up contains your despicably lewd columns accompanied by a positively offensive picture. How can you write such filthy? I am disappointed by the community for actually supporting your columns by writing your letters. When I open up the school newspaper, I expect to find articles which pertain to the enhancement of our community and the achievement of its members. Instead I encounter debate about whether to spit or swallow, and instructions on how to locate your "spot." I expect you will make fun of my prudishness, but I thought it was time that some of us spoke out.

-Silent Majority

Dear Silent,

You have made a fatal mistake by addressing this letter to me instead of the editor. You see, now I get to respond and make fun of you. Ha, ha, ha, ha. Unfortunately, I am going to overlook all the ways in which I can belittle your letter and I think I might actually take it semi-seriously. I refuse to submit to your personal attack with one against you. You see, I am not telling everyone to go out and have tons of sex all over the place without protection against a wall on the second floor of Luciofere while being watched by Australian sheep herders who are trying to copy tricks of their transcriptions. No way. All I do is humbly answer people's questions and provide a little comic relief for those of you who are stuck in a fist until next meal exchange (or snipping glue). And I also see no reason for you to blame the community for writing me letters. These are your fellow students, and they are just asking me what they want to read about. I mean you don't actually have to read this, and if the picture offends you that much I'm surprised you read it at all. Although apparently you wouldn't turn the page fast enough and somehow know the topics of several letters I replied to. That picture is just a ploy to get you to read the dirty thing, and apparently it is pretty darn successful. I respect your values, whatever they may be, but see, you don't get to write this column and so I don't know what else to say to you except that maybe you should go out there and join the wild rumpus. Sometimes being positively offended can be fun.
Letters

To the Bard Observer,

I am writing in response to the previous Observer issue's hot-man, "On the Ground, Beneath her Feet," in which feminists were portrayed as "unwanted triple-chicks with hairy legs." In my opinion, as a male feminist, this was yet another misinformed attempt at humor on the part of the hot-man crew. It simply was not funny, particularly following the blatantly sexist offensive@bard.edu signs that mocked Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Those signs clearly demonstrated the lack of understanding of sexual violence that is prevalent in the Bard community and the need for events like Speak Out, Clothesline Project, and Take Back Bard to increase the awareness of such issues. Chris Pepin, who created the original Sexual Assault Awareness Month sign, wrote a letter to the author of the doppy pigerlegs sign, that the Observer also printed in the last issue, ironically on the flip side of "On the Ground, Beneath her Feet." Chris wrote to the mystery author(s), "Maybe you thought, 'Hey, nobody but feminists, man-hating lesbian chicks care about this stuff, and they take it so seriously,' so you felt you could take a few jobs at women's equality. Maybe you thought that no one is raped or is in an abusive relationship at Bard, and everyone could use a good laugh about it." Though obviously the flies and the comic took different forms, they occurred in a similar message: the women's movement and the anti-rape movement is a laughing matter. "On the Ground, Beneath her Feet" suggests that Bard students accept the notion that sexual violence and assault does not occur in the halls and hallways of Bard. Whether this is actually ignorance, or an image of Bard that the Observer perpetuates, students should read with discrimination and help make this illusion. Do students really need another Bard relationship to end in murder or another rape in Twelfth Night for this illusion and that humor of being destroyed? To moke the effort of people who work for equality and to falsely stereotype them, inevitably shifts the balance and insults every victim of inequality and sexual violence. Since so much more effort needs to be put into increasing the awareness of sexual abuse, it is distressing to see how much is put into mocking such efforts. Humor can be a powerful weapon. Those who wield it should consider at whose expense it comes and how it could be used to help instead of hurt. Those who are reading this may think, I am being overly sensitive, but we all do and say hundreds of things every day that support a sexually violent culture. Most of those things people do not even realize support such a culture. Every time someone refers to les things like this slide by unomega, we become one step closer to a world and community without sexual violence.

Sincerely,
Greg Johnson.

Taking a Stand On Sweatshops

Code passes, protecting the rights of workers making products for Bard

By Michael Charney

Does Bard College Support Sweatshop Labor? Your Bard t-shirt, like most apparel, is produced in a factory with abhorrent conditions, including exposing workers to toxic chemicals, forced labor, employment of young children, mandatory strenuous hours, and a less than livable wage.

For example, many companies lock women into factories forcing them to work over 14 hours a day. Factories with these conditions are commonly referred to as sweatshops, and the goods we find in the bookstore and Kiosk may be manufactured in such places.

This semester, Bard students joined a national student movement against sweatshops. Over the last year, thousands of students at schools ranging from Duke to the University of Wisconsin have banded together in attempts to stop sweatshop labor. The movement has focused on the fact that most clothing, such as T-shirts and sweatshirts that bear the names of colleges and universities, are made in sweatshops.

Barr and Noble is responsible for making the t-shirts sold at Bard. They contract the labor out to Champion and a number of other companies. It is difficult to know whether the t-shirts are made in sweatshops. Large corporations do not disclose where their factories are located, and in what labor conditions, unless there is a contractual agreement that forces them to do so. In line with other schools around the country, Bard's Student Labor Coalition took on the cause and sought to add a code of conduct, to labor standards into the contracts of Bardia's vendors. After meeting with the administration for months, a code has been finalized. In March, a group of students drew up a code and began meeting with Jim Bruehwyl, vice-president of finances. Bruehwyl stated a shorter and less dense version of the code along the lines of a one-page-value statement. But, students wanted to ensure that the code would have "teeth" and would be strong enough to force corporations to end the use of sweatshops. In the end, Jim Bruehwyl and Leon Botstein were supportive. Last week, both of them signed an effective code and agreed to enforce it. The code covers Barrs & Noble and Company, the parent company of Champion/ FIL and Service Master. The code draws out a set of clear labor standards including a living wage, health and safety standards, and anti-discrimination clauses. Bard will only enter into contract with companies that adhere to these standards. In order to ensure compliance with the code, Bard may request that contractors disclose certain information such as the location of the factories, where the subcontractors they employ, and specific labor conditions. Furthermore, Bard has the right to send independent monitors into factories. All the information collected will be considered public and be available to Bard students and the community. The passing of the code has been a major victory. With the code, students and the administration can monitor Bardia's major contractors and guarantee that Bard students support sweatshop labor. Next year, the Student Labor Coalition will put the code to use to investigate the clothing in the bookstore, the factory in kiosk, and Company's dealings with Napafood. In order to ensure that these products are sweatshop free.

The code is posted on the website, http://student.bard.edu/~sweat.html. Students who are interested in getting involved are encouraged to contact Shantaik Gopalakrishnan of the Student labor coalition at 55455 or by e-mail, sg5949@bard.edu.

Observer Editorial Policy

The Bard Observer is Bard's only student-run newspaper. It forums for the exchange of ideas and information, the paper is distributed free-of-charge on campus. Eight issues are planned for the academic year; distribution generally takes place Mondays on a monthly basis; everyone is welcome to submit.

The deadline for all submissions, for they stories, artwork, photography, editorials, are due by 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 artwork on a labeled disk with files named in a Macintosh-compatible format (as PC files), include a double-spaced.haridry (printed) labeled with author's name, suggested headline and subheading 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 his or her identity to the Editor.

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

Send submissions via Campus Mail to P.O. Box 68.

The Editors can be contacted at observer-editor@bard.edu, 724-7312, and P.O. Box 686, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12596.

The Bard Observer

Editorial Staff

1998-99

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