

# TUFTS OBSERVER

TUFTS' STUDENT MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 9, 2009

## The Home Front: War Veterans Confront College Life





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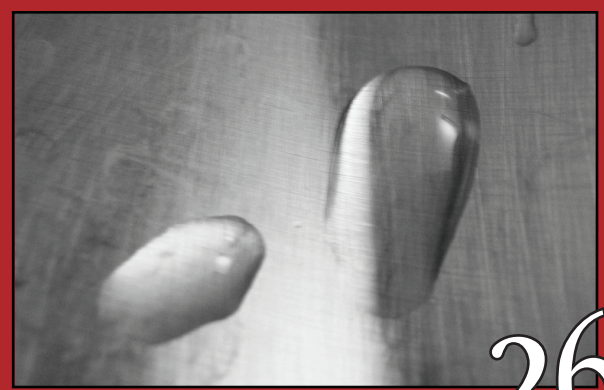
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The Observer has been Tufts' weekly publication of record since 1895. Our dedication to in-depth reporting, journalistic innovation, and honest dialogue has remained intact for over a century. Today, we offer insightful news analysis, cogent and diverse opinion pieces, and lively reviews of current arts, entertainment, and sports. Through poignant writing and artistic elegance, we aim to entertain, inform, and above all challenge the Tufts community to effect positive change.





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Since  
1895



# The Home-Away-From-Home

## Front

### Student War Veterans at Tufts University

BY PATRICK ROATH

Enrique Saenz arrived at Tufts for his first day of orientation in September 2006 with two duffel bags full of clothes and little else. He had never been to Tufts before and had trouble finding the campus on foot from Davis Square. For the past four years, Saenz had been traveling around the world, from Niger to Norway, and been paid for it every step of the way. Dream job? Extended gap year? Not quite. For those four years Saenz had served in the United States Marine Corps.

He remembers feeling confident upon his arrival to Tufts: “As far as I’m concerned this is going to be just another military exercise: people telling me what to do all the time.” That, he soon realized, was not the case. Saenz found it difficult to keep up with his peers, many of whom had just wrapped up four years of private education at top high schools. Suddenly bereft of the structured, regimented order that had governed his life for four years, he struggled to adapt to the freedom of student life. “If you want to skip a class, you skip a class,” said Saenz, remembering his utter bewilderment at that thought.

Tens of thousands of students across the country share Enrique Saenz’s story. The war in Iraq is ending and many of the “9/11 generation” of servicemen and women are returning home. To ease the transition into a successful civilian life, the federal government has resuscitated a GI Bill designed to help re-

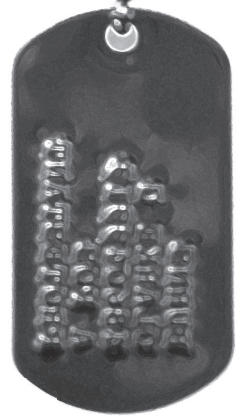
turning soldiers pursue higher education and reward them for their service to the country.

Though the GI Bill helps pay for college, it does little to ease the rocky transition between the battlefield and the classroom. I wanted to understand what it’s like to leave theaters of war for a private liberal arts college in suburban Boston — emphasis on the “liberal.” Since Tufts doesn’t recognize the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) program there are few outposts of military life at the university, and it’s easy to imagine that Tufts might not be the friendliest place for a returning veteran of America’s foreign wars.

“How many of us are there here?” was a question I was asked by each of the three student veterans I interviewed for this article. The answer is that no one really knows. Veterans of the armed service — some of whom are still active members of the military — are an extreme minority at Tufts. The univer-

sity does not track how many veterans are matriculated and there is no student veterans association on campus. Kim Thurler, a university spokesperson, estimated that there are six veterans in the School of Arts and Sciences and a handful more spread across Tufts’ graduate institutions.

The student veterans, or student soldiers (or “just students” as some prefer) are not drastically different from their peers. Their combat experience doesn’t define them but it has influenced the unique path they’ve charted to Tufts. It’s challenged their ability to adapt and reintegrate into the civilian world and they’ve quietly come to terms with a student body that has little idea what it’s like to fight in a war.





### Friendly Territory

Edgar Luna, a Sergeant in the Marine Corps who has been deployed to Iraq twice, walked into Dewick Dining Hall one day and was handed a brochure from a leftist student group. The handout called for, among other things, banning military recruiters on campus. Sergeant Luna remembers a tense moment as the student saw his crew cut and US Marines sweatshirt.

"I dropped it at his feet and walked inside, didn't say anything. Not a single word exchanged, he didn't give me a dirty look or anything," said Sgt. Luna. That was the closest he ever came to confronting a student on a campus where many have diametrically opposed ideas about the use of military force and the country's current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Sgt. Luna, a compact and fit sophomore, came to Tufts to become an officer. "Going to college is really incidental to that," he admits. A member of the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Educational Program (MECEP) program, Sgt. Luna is balancing his International Relations education with a disciplined curriculum in military training designed to maximize his leadership skills and combat

acumen.

Though also a veteran, Sgt. Luna's college experience has been, in many ways, defined by his participation in the MECEP program, which provides a strong vein of continuity between his military and college experiences. "Support group" isn't the right phrase, but the MECEP program is a kind of oasis of military life in the universe of Boston's academia.

Outside of his ROTC companions, Sgt. Luna expected the majority of Tufts' student body to view his military service with ambivalence, if not distaste. "I was ready for it, and I was expecting it. It didn't really happen. There's a perception that Tufts is hostile but it isn't at all. With regards to the students, they're overwhelmingly supportive," said Sgt. Luna.

Enrique Saenz recalls looking at Tufts as an option and thinking, "No ROTC program... that's got to be iffy. I better keep it down low." Now a junior, Saenz feels comfortable at Tufts and has received only accolades and praise from students and his professors. Though the "culture" here is vastly different than that of the military, the veterans have been pleasantly surprised by the respect for service that Tufts students have shown them throughout their college experience.

Still, the transition to a radically different social environment wasn't always easy. "It's like the guy who moves away and comes back four years later and all his friends are gone," Sgt. Luna puts it succinctly. Whereas each member of the United States military is bound by a common identity and sense of mission, the diversity of motivations and viewpoints at Tufts was a stumbling block for some of the returning Marines, but not an insurmountable one. "It was a big culture shock but it wasn't a painful one," Sgt. Luna said.

### Operation College

On one of Sergeant Matthew Tweedy's first trips to Tufts he was pulled aside by a university official. "We're really happy with your service," the un-named administrator told him with caution, "But I just wanted to warn you that this is the *most liberal* college campus." Implicit in her warning was a thinly-veiled concern for the hostility that Tufts students might direct toward returning soldiers, whom they might associate with two deeply-unpopular wars.

Sgt. Tweedy, a broad-shouldered and plainspoken 25 year old, brushed her dire warnings aside. After serving in reconnais-



SERGEANT MATTHEW TWEEDY, PATRICK ROATH. PHOTO BY CAMPBELL KLIEFOTH



sance units in Afghanistan and Iraq “at the tip of the spear,” he came to Tufts this past September with an open mind and a determination to succeed. Besides, he thought, after the Marines, college would be a breeze.

“I’ve slept less some nights,” Sgt. Tweedy confesses; Tufts isn’t exactly a breeze. The academic adjustment has been abrupt for the returning Marines but the discipline they learned in the military has come to their aid. “Going from the military to coming here, you gut-check yourself a lot more easily than a student from high school would,” said Sgt. Luna.

Coming from a situation that imperiled their survival, the daily pressures of exams and papers don’t seem to affect them much. “Pressure here to me, to other service members, doesn’t exist like it used to exist,” Enrique Saenz said. Yet grades and classes aren’t trivialized, even in light of the profound challenges each veteran has faced: they’ve worked too hard to get where they are to blow off assignments.

As the student veterans cope with their new setting, the university has had to learn to adjust in order to meet their unique needs. “There has been support but a lot of people don’t know how to handle veterans. The GI Bill thing was a bit of a shock to a lot of

people,” said Saenz. His first year at Tufts he was constantly badgered by the university for unpaid bills – the GI Bill pays at the end of each month so beneficiaries are often one month behind on payments. The Bursar’s Office eventually worked out a payment schedule that accounted for Enrique’s unique situation.

Though cumbersome at times, the university has mostly been able to adapt to the financial needs of each student. “I haven’t ever had a door close in my face,” said Sgt. Luna, who had to cut through a great deal of red tape to get his tuition invoice sent to him, rather than his parents.

The admissions office clearly accounted for each student’s military service before accepting them to Tufts, but exactly how is opaque. Tufts does not actively recruit members of the armed services. When asked whether students can defer their acceptance to Tufts if they choose to join the armed services, Dean of Admissions Lee Coffin admitted the situation had simply never arisen during his tenure.

Tufts seems eager to help the few veterans on campus, but it’s unclear how much they want or need it. “I can’t tell you how many cards I got when I first came here: counseling center this, counseling center

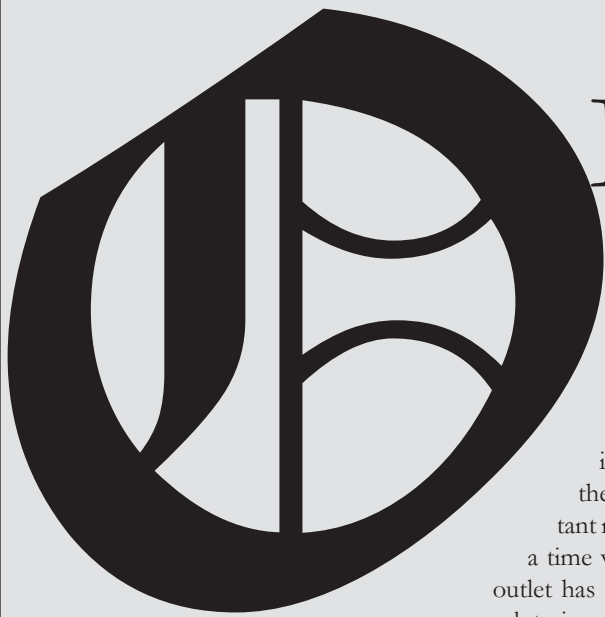
that,” recalled Sgt. Tweedy. On campus there is a tendency to conflate military service with the debilitating effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), an associated mental illness. Undoubtedly, combat experience leaves its mark on an individual, but the student veterans I spoke with at Tufts have adjusted to the aspects of their service that have lingering psychological effects for some veterans. “Those are things that I dealt with on an individual level,” Sgt. Tweedy said frankly.

The number of student veterans at Tufts is small enough – and will likely continue to be – that most of their interactions are on the individual level. Without a group identity or many members, there is no collective voice for Tufts’ student veterans. But do they really need one? The university has been slow, perhaps, in meeting their needs but it has figured out how to account for the few matriculated veterans.

The three student veterans I spoke with are, on the whole, happy to be at Tufts and well adjusted to college life. They’re proud of the service but don’t wear their military experience on their sleeve. They are neither celebrated by the university nor looked down upon by their peers.

In fact, they’re pretty normal. ☺





# EDITOR'S NOTE

BY MIKE SNYDER

The other day, a student interested in journalism came up to me and asked, "Why should I read the *Observer* when I can get the *New York Times* on my iPhone?" It's a valid point. In today's Google generation, news is readily accessible and almost impossible to avoid. It can be recorded on television, downloaded in a podcast, or digested on Facebook. It shows up in online publications like Slate but also gets dispersed throughout the blogosphere. The amount of information out there is, to say the least, daunting.

This isn't the first time that the *Observer* has had to adapt to changing circumstances. As Tufts' oldest and longest running student publication, it has outlived the dawn of the radio, the television, and the World Wide Web. It has seen two world wars, the Great Depression, and the election of the first African-American president.

Yet throughout the years, the *Observer* has offered a reliable and relevant student voice that informs, entertains, and challenges the Tufts community. It has served as the foundation for generations of student leaders, aspiring journalists, and sharp-witted provocateurs—combining to form an impressive (and well-connected) group of alumni. Most new student publications arrive on the scene only to vanish a few years later, but the *Observer* will continue to act as a stakeholder in the community for years to come. I'm privi-

leged to be a part of an organization with such rich history and a tradition of journalistic excellence.

Although we are incredibly proud of our history, I see the *Observer* playing a more important role at Tufts than ever before. At a time when it seems like every media outlet has an agenda, the *Observer* doesn't seek to impose a particular set of values on its readers. We don't aim to be left-wing or right-wing, mainstream or alternative, traditional or trailblazing. Our goal is to serve as a representative of the student body. That's why throughout our history, the publication has evolved along with the changing character of the Tufts undergraduate.

In 2001, we made the switch from a newspaper to a magazine in order to provide a superior medium for creative visuals and color photography. Two years ago, we added a Poetry and Prose section to diversify our content and expand our pool of contributors. This semester, we hope to be as inclusive as possible and form partnerships with a variety of student organizations, such as the TCU Senate and the Tufts Culinary Society. Expect student groups like these to contribute often to keep you both entertained and informed as to what's happening around campus.

These changes would not exist without a talented and hard working team of editors, reporters, photographers, and artists. This semester, we welcome several fresh faces to the staff to stir things up and add to the drive and enthusiasm that keeps us working late nights. By their side will be a team of veterans from the fall semester who have returned with their ingenuity and know-how. Altogether, the *Observer* staff is a smart, fun, and eclectic group of students, and putting together the magazine with them is the highlight of my

week.

While the *Observer* is a product of our staff, we also want the *Observer* to be a product of the Tufts community, to serve as a liaison through which Tufts students and faculty can express themselves, pitch their organizations, vent their frustrations, or report on something interesting happening on campus. Our agenda is to give you a voice, and that's something that the *New York Times* on your iPhone can never do in quite the same way.

Take advantage of this opportunity. If you did some creative writing as part of your English major, send it our way. Or if you took photos during your semester abroad, we can publish them in glossy, full color pages. Submit your work at [observer@tufts.edu](mailto:observer@tufts.edu)

As editor, I hope that you will find this semester's *Observer* compelling, informative, and provocative. Most of all, I hope that you find your experience with the *Observer*—whether you read us weekly or end up joining the staff—to be as rewarding as I have. Good luck with your spring semester. ☺

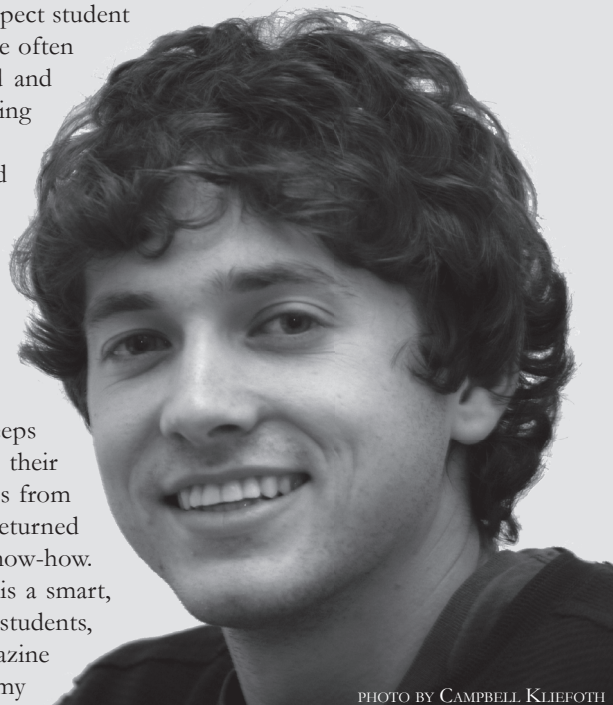


PHOTO BY CAMPBELL KLIEFOTH



# New Administration, Old Obstacle:

## Obama's Challenge in Gaza

BY JENNIFER DANN-FENWICK

As Barack Obama stood on the steps of the Capitol building and was sworn in as the United States' 44<sup>th</sup> President, the last of Israel's troops trickled out of the Gaza strip. 3 weeks of bombings left 1300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis dead with losses totaling around two billion dollars. Despite all the damage, Israel's original goal had still not been accomplished: Hamas, though crippled, was still in power. Obama has inspired many to hope for a better future; however, his optimistic mantra of change, "yes we can," did not resonate with Arabs and Israelis. Instead, as Obama spoke generally of improving the numerous conflicts in the Middle East, you could almost hear them muttering "no we can't."

On the surface, the pessimism emanating from the Arab-Israeli region may seem unfounded: Obama is sending clear messages that he is serious about instigating change in the Middle East. He quickly appointed George Mitchell as a special envoy for Arab-Israeli affairs, a choice that has been widely approved. Mitchell is considered a heavyweight "who frankly could have been the Secretary of State," says Aaron Miller, once a top US Middle East negotiator. Mitchell's success in implementing a peace process in Northern Ireland also leads many to hope that he could have a similar success in what is arguably the most intractable conflict of our time. Obama recently did his first formal interview as President on the Arab television station Al-Arabiya, signaling that he is serious about changing the mood in the

Middle East. There are also more individuals, states, and organizations working towards brokering a peace deal than ever before. In a recent article, the Economist suggests that perhaps now, after the war, is as good a time as any to work towards peace. "Gaza is only the latest bloody reminder that when this particular conflict is left to smolder, it tends to ignite with a bang... and nothing focuses the mind faster than a war."

However, a deeper look into the conflict and the impact of Israel's recent 3-week offensive explains why there is less hope in the region. Israel's attack may have worked

Mr. Erdogan told Mr. Peres, "When it comes to killing, you know well how to kill."

Israel's foremost aim during its 3-week invasion was to destroy Hamas and stop the rockets that keep their people in perpetual fear; Israel did not topple Hamas. Hamas is classified as a terrorist organization by many countries, including the US, and any diplomatic efforts regarding Hamas have generally been aimed at discrediting the group. In June 2007, Hamas was democratically elected to replace Fatah, (the more moderate Palestinian political group that still controls the West Bank), in the Gaza strip. Since then negotiations became

much more difficult because Hamas cannot be represented in diplomatic circles and because the Palestinians don't have one representative but two. Hamas is also much more extremist, and their strict demands make compromising particularly complex.



SHAHEEN LAVIE-ROUSE

in the short-term, but it seems to have made matters much worse in the long run. Arab leaders, reacting to inflamed public opinion, will not interact with Israel for a while, obviously making the peace process much more difficult as Arab countries will be an essential part of any successful peace deal. Even pro-American Arab regimes such as Egypt and Turkey, which often play the role of the mediator, have been shaken by the bloody images that have emanated out of Gaza via massive chain-emails and Facebook. The incident involving Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Israeli President Shimon Peres at the World Economic Forum last Thursday demonstrates the level of anger that is brimming in the Arab world. Before storming off stage after a heated debate,

Its charter still calls for the destruction of Israel, and although their party platform does accept Israel's right to exist, they are committed to violent resistance of any infraction of "sovereignty".

There are similarities between this recent offensive and Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 2006. The earlier war was also painted as one of deterrence, with Israelis aiming to punish the Lebanese for firing rockets into Israel. Drawing a parallel to this war, there was strong Israeli support for the initial invasion. However, support for the war faded as time went on, especially as Hezbollah's influence in the region seemed to strengthen significantly. Only time will tell whether Hamas' wartime popularity will transcend into sustained respect, but it is undeniable that Fatah,

and particularly its leader Mahmoud Abbas, has been weakened. Arabs will not easily forget when Mr. Abbas blamed Hamas for “stupidly provoking Israel’s attack.” “He is now a political corpse,” says one independent Palestinian analyst. It remains to be seen what effect recent events will have on attempts to make peace among the Palestinians.

With elections due in only two weeks on February 10, many of Israel’s main leaders, especially Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and defense minister Ehud Barak are reaping the benefits of the attack. Recent polls show that they are closing the gap with Likud party leader Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu, who was far ahead before the offensive. All the Israeli political infighting makes it very difficult to broker a peace deal, and the war’s effect on Israeli public opinion will also impede attempts for peace. Just as there is a lack of hope on the Palestinian side, many Israelis seem to have stopped hoping for lasting peace. After the war, Israelis have moved further right of the political spectrum, focusing more on short-term fixes rather than working toward a long-term peace agreement, and rewarding politicians that take forceful action quickly.

What attempts at peace might we see in the coming months? Both Hamas and Israel have signaled that they would accept an

18-month ceasefire; Hamas has also said it might accept international observers inside Gaza’s borders to maintain the ceasefire. Egyptian mediators also hope to start formal reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas on February 22. Egypt seems much more serious about stopping the arms that flow from Iran to Hamas through the tunnels that go beneath their border, many of which have temporarily been blocked by Israeli air strikes.

NATO countries have also offered support, including naval patrols, to keep arms out of Gaza. Stopping the weapons from getting into Gaza is one of Israel’s key demands, and if indeed Hamas is prevented from rearming, this may predispose Israel to offer Hamas something in return—perhaps a loosening of the borders?

Discussion on how to get sorely needed reconstruction aid into Gaza will begin as Israel and several other countries will not permit the aid to be distributed by Hamas. And despite Israel’s best attempts to squash the idea that it committed war crimes, we may well see an investigation. Chanting “Yes we can” will not help, as more than words will be necessary to carry on peace negotiations between these two communities: the new administration needs to work on making its words and promises into realistic actions. ☐

# Student Voices

“The Israeli’s have a right to security, and the Palestinians have a right to justice. When two rights clash, there’s a name for that, **it’s called a tragedy.**”

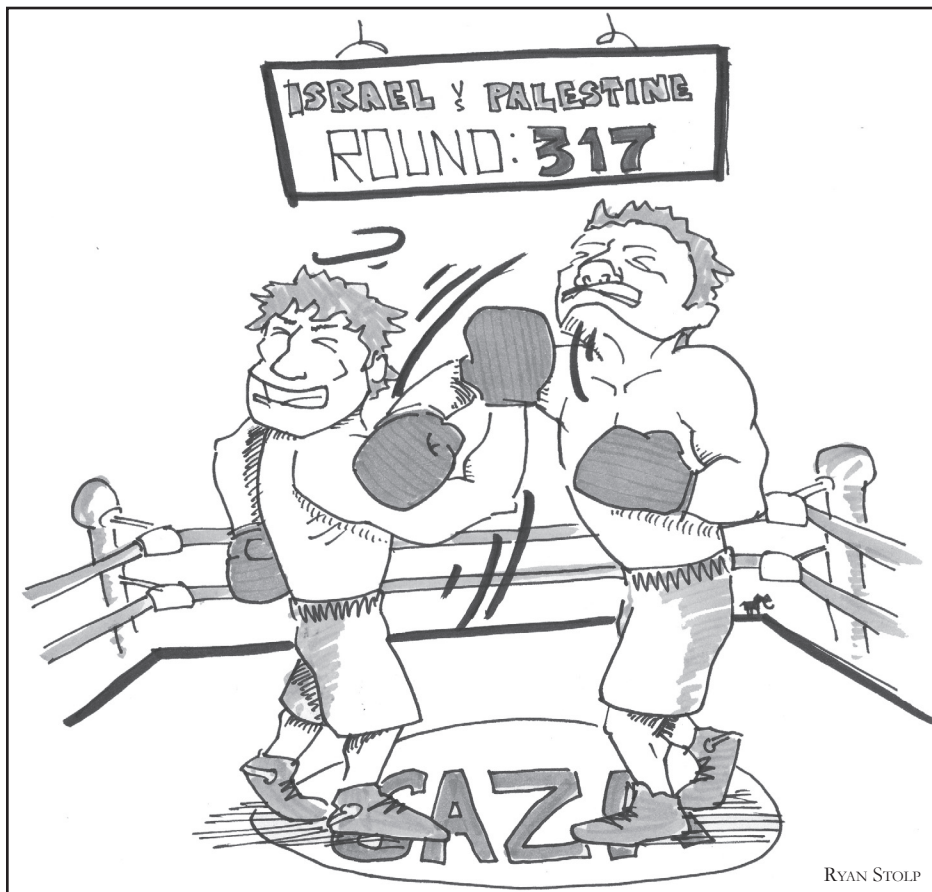
-Khaled Al-Sharikh

“Everyone is so full of **anger,**” she says, “nobody knows what to do or how to act.”

-Leila Al-Qattan

“Suddenly everyone wants to talk openly with Hamas. Tony Blair wants to talk with Hamas, [Hosni] Mubarak...talked with Hamas, Israel even negotiated with Hamas through Egyptian mediation.”

-Shaheen Lavie-Rouse





# BRIGHTEST OR BIASED?

## THE FEASIBILITY OF AN ELITE FOREIGN POLICY CLASS AT TUFTS

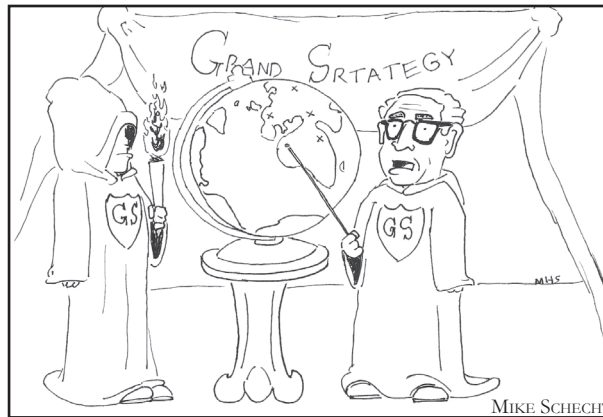
BY ZACH LAUB

A typical meeting of HIST 985 might consist of dinner with Thomas Friedman or former Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte (with helicopters flying overhead for security). Henry Kissinger is known to drop by, and in lieu of a final, students might have to simulate an economic crisis briefing critiqued by Nicholas Brady, Secretary of the Treasury to Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush, who gave a fifteen-year endowment of several million dollars to the program.

If being concerned with a future Cabinet appointment as an undergraduate seems ambitious, think again. Admission into Studies in Grand Strategy, a two-semester long course at Yale, is limited to the best and the brightest. There are only twenty-four spaces for more than a hundred undergraduate and graduate students who apply annually and undergo an extensive application and interview. The program's website says that it seeks "to educate students who, in the coming decades, are likely to assume positions of leadership in a variety of public and professional fields," and if the Cabinet potential of these students might be unclear prior to taking the course, they certainly complete it with all the networking opportunities they will ever need. Students have interned at the National Security Agency and the Institute for Security Studies at the European Union with the help these deep connections.

With proponents of the program looking to expand the course, could Grand Strategy find a home at Tufts? Much of the course is reminiscent of EPIIC, the Institute for Global Leadership's signature program, and Grand Strategy's stated emphasis on leadership, diplomacy and statecraft rings true at a school self-branded as "preparing students to be committed public citizens and future leaders." There is nothing grander than Grand Strategy, an all-encompassing perspective of the world that would complement Tufts' offerings, given that its Fletcher School is the oldest graduate school in the United States for the study of international relations and that its undergraduate IR program is among the nation's best.

Nadel believes a Grand Strategy course at Tufts could be beneficial, at least in principle,



saying, "It would help raise the profile of Tufts' Poli-Sci and IR. With greater exposure and this linkage to other first-tier programs in the country, I think Tufts would attract increasing attention and resources." He continues, "We could all use more networking opportunities, especially ones that have direct lines to internships and jobs."

Alex Roland, who adapted the program at Duke University, defines "grand strategy" as "how a state uses its total resources—which can be military, economic, political, diplomatic or social—to achieve its foreign policy objectives," as he told the Duke Chronicle. In a time when so many courses and majors are increasingly specialized, Studies in Grand Strategy is about seeing the big picture—at least, for those admitted.

Others are more skeptical. The Yale Alumni Magazine writes that some liberals on campus call the class "Grand Fascism," and one alumnus fears that it risks being equated to another exclusive Yale institution: Skull & Bones. The program reportedly attracts a high percentage of conservative students, perhaps because the neoconservative bias of the faculty is reflected in the application process, or maybe because the Bismarckian realpolitik view of the world—one in which power is the only meaningful currency—espoused by Grand Strategy is inherently conservative. Among its biggest proponents is the philanthropist Roger Hertog, a board member of the American Enterprise Institute, a think tank largely responsible for forming George W. Bush's neoconservative foreign policy. Zach Witlin, a member of the Director's Leadership Council (DLC), a student group at Tufts that advises the international relations program, finds fault with the charge that Grand Strat-

egy promotes American fascism. "If anything," he says, "Grand Strategy has the opposite program—too idealistic, too arrogant about the capabilities of American power." This is the neocon vision of making the world—or at least the Middle East—safe for democracy.

James Nadel, another member of the DLC commented that "what is not balanced is the political affiliations of both practitioners upon whose Washington connections the program is dependent. They are both staunch neo-conservatives." Likewise, conservative

philanthropists have been seeking to expand the program, taking proposals from academics across the country. Hertog rejects the notion that the course has a conservative bent, saying, "What appeals to me about Grand Strategy is that these programs build a certain intellectual discipline rather than an ideological partisanship," he said in the Wall Street Journal.

While duplicating such a program at Tufts may be theoretically attractive, there are many potential problems. Beyond the Yale program's bias, Nadel also takes issue with Grand Strategy as a "Direct to Washington" feeding pipeline Nadel says the lesson to be learned from the United States' current foreign policy debacles is that "the people who decide the great questions—of committing our military, of changing the way people in other countries live—must never be ignorant of military sacrifice or the dynamics of foreign cultures," continuing that it is necessary to "broaden [one's] perspective beyond Washington's own interests...something Tufts excels at."

According to Nadel and Witlin, The biggest obstacle to the adoption of a Grand Strategy course at Tufts is financial. Grand Strategy demands money and connections, including professors and practitioners who are willing to devote much of their time to a small number of students. With the Tufts endowment hurting in this economy, the only hope for instituting such a program would be philanthropy, and despite Hertog's professed non-partisanship, Nadel expressed doubts that either Tufts would accept money from someone so politically polarizing or that Hertog would offer it in the first place. For reasons both academic and economic, it seems that Grand Strategy's manifest destiny is to remain a bastion of Ivy League exceptionalism. ☉

# TONY BLAIR:

## *Maverick* of the Middle East?

BY MARYSA LIN, DANIEL ROSEN AND MIKE  
SNYDER



COURTESY OF TUFTS UNIVERSITY

The Right Honorable Tony Blair addressed thousands of guests at the Gantcher Center on Monday, February 2 for the 2009 Issam M. Fares Lecture. Former Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Blair now holds the post of Special Envoy to the Middle East on behalf of the “Quartet” (the European Union, United States, Russia, and UN). In discussing his vision of a peaceful Middle East, Blair appeared cautiously optimistic. Blair painted the instability of the Middle East as part of a larger conflict between Islam and the West. Like Samuel Huntington, who suggested that ethnic and religious divisions will be the sources of conflict in the 21st century, Blair acknowledged that there are major differences between the West and the Middle East, although he argued that the two groups can, and must, learn to live together in peace. “Both parties must learn to live in peace and coexist. It is our destiny to live or fail together,” Blair remarked. This peace must not come without mutual respect, however, meaning that the Western world cannot continue to force its policies on the rest of the world.

Though Blair authorized UK participation in the War in Iraq while Prime Minister, he argued that the divisions between Islam and the West cannot be bridged with only military might. “A pure military response will not never succeed,” Blair explained. In the face of unconventional political struggles, Blair believes that diplomacy is the key to solving the problem and that the West must immediately focus on solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a means toward improving relations with the Islamic world.

According to Blair, the creation of an independent Palestinian state, living peacefully side-by-side with Israel, is the “single most important thing we can do” for achieving peace in the overall region. “Nothing is more important or urgent,” Blair insisted, “and nothing should stand in the way of achieving it.” If Israel is able to make peace with Palestine, negotiations with Syria, Lebanon, and Iran will likely improve, leading to an Israel at peace with its neighbors.

Further down line, after stabilizing the Middle East, Blair believes the West should focus on rehabilitating Africa, where instability in countries like Somalia threatens to spread radical Islamic ideology throughout the Muslim world.

Despite Blair’s hopeful vision of a peaceful future, the language he used was at times problematic. For example, he seemed to point to an irreconcilable, ontological divide between the West and East. Although he argued for coexistence and cooperation, Blair repeatedly stated that the current struggle is one with two possible narratives for the Muslim world: one path of acceptance and “modernization” and another path of struggle against “joining the twenty-first century”. Such a statement seemed to imply that the Muslim world is backwards and must catch up the United States and Europe. Although Blair’s intentions are in the right place, such rhetoric may reveal his favoritism towards the Western way of life and serve to undermine the peace process.

“Islam is in transition,” Blair proclaimed, explaining that he sees a division between Muslims that want to join the twenty-first century and those who act in

reaction to the modern world. He generalizes the struggle between Israel and Palestine to one between modernizing and anti-modernizing forces around the world. He argues that “we can only make the twenty-first century work on the basis of partnership, equality, justice, a coming together of equals. Not a dictatorship of policy.”

However, a “coming together of equals” implies that worlds in conflict should meet in some sort of middle ground to settle disputes. This is in contradiction to stipulations put forth by Blair and other Western leaders, who demand that negotiations and settlements are impossible unless Hamas and other extremist elements agree to Western terms of peaceful negotiation.

Despite the sometimes contradictory nature of his speech, Blair’s gift for eloquence and humor sometimes helped to illustrate his more serious points perfectly. For example, while Blair spoke of the drastic effects globalization on foreign policy and world relations, he also joked about being technologically inept with his Blackberry. Always amusing, Blair’s lighthearted anecdotes were a breath of fresh air (including stories ranging from his harrowing yet successful experience in Ireland to jokes related to his more recent travels in the Middle East).

In the end, Blair’s serious and weighty speech was tempered by his wit and by making the audience laugh, sometimes even poking fun at himself. Having escaped the precarious high-pressure post of the British Prime Minister, which he did not step down from unscathed, Blair seemed to be back to his old, charming self. ☺



SOUND OFF:



# Amethyst Initiative:

WHAT SHOULD THE LEGAL DRINKING AGE BE?



**I**n July 2008, the Amethyst Initiative was launched by a group of university presidents and higher education leaders (including President Bacon) who signed a public statement that the minimum legal drinking age of 21 contributes to a culture of dangerous binge drinking on college campuses. The initiative calls on higher education leaders to encourage public officials to address these issues in part by changing the drinking age to 18.

*We ask you: What are your opinions on this? Should the drinking age be lowered? How should binge drinking be addressed on college campuses? These are the your Sound Off reactions:*

Teenage life is characterized by trying to break the rules. Whether it is through sex, drugs, or rock and roll, the years when an entire generation gets progressively too big for its britches are filled with rebellion. One of the most common forms of this rebellion is through alcohol. Popular culture has spoken to us and put forth the first commandment of college as, “Thou shall drink. A lot. Until you are TEMSed.” Is this a way to rebel against society? It may be. If it is, it would make sense to reduce the drinking age to 18, thereby taking away the outlaw aspect of underage drinking. However, will this measure reduce the ubiquity of underage drinking or will it legalize the poor decisions that many make while drinking? Can you trust an entire generation to change its mindset from binge drinking to social drinking just because of an alteration of a law? It’s hard to say. The only sensible way to go about this change is to gradually reduce the drinking age so that newfound freedom to drink is not abused by those who thought it was so far away.

-RACHAEL ALLDIAN

While recent arguments made in favor of lowering the drinking age may seem com-

elling, they are simply not strong enough to justify such a major change. I would love to have free reign over alcohol consumption as much as the next college student, but statistical evidence negates some of the claims being made. While supporters argue that the law will cut down on binge drinking, a University of Michigan study shows that since the drinking age was increased, binge drinking among college students has actually gone down several percentage points. Furthermore, while it may be true that the current law forces college students to participate in “underground” drinking, there really isn’t any distinct advantage to

drinking age will stop the cops from hating on the party, we need to seriously consider the potentially tragic consequences this scenario could create.

-ZACK FOULK

After a semester on campus, a certain amount of routine has built itself into weekend nights. Parties and events go hand-in-hand with rounds of shots and guzzled drinks. Students gulp cheap hard liquor and chase it with anything they can get their hands on. At parties, attendees drink beer after beer to keep their buzz. When underclassmen finally leave the frats and house



the alternative. Drinking out in the open doesn’t invite any sort of increased supervision or responsibility. In fact, the more likely scenario is that open drinking will allow students to take more risks such as over-consumption and driving while intoxicated. So while it seems like lowering the

parties, they leave carefully, struggling to keep their drunk energy under control as they walk past TUPD. While it’s undeniable that a lot of underage drinking happens on campus, it’s certainly debatable what the reasons behind it are. Do we drink so much because we’re not supposed to, or simply be-

cause we can? This new semester has shed a lot of light on underage drinking for some of us. Winter Bash is noticeably less ridiculous than Fall Ball. This semester it's much easier for us to say "I'm staying in" without feeling like we're completely abandoning our social lives. Freshmen meet people at parties, and it's easier to make conversation when you're less inhibited. Sober conversations during the day are made easier by the common knowledge of shared drunken adventures. Sure, campuses are crawling with legally drunk upperclassmen on a regular basis, but we can all agree that TEMS is called far more often to Houston than to Latin Way or Sophia Gordon. Maybe underage binge drinking has just as much to do with students immersing themselves in college culture (often a little too quickly and sloppily) as it does with legality. If the Amethyst Initiative were successful in lowering the drinking age, it could lessen the fascination with alcohol during the transition into college and create a class of social drinkers rather than one of binge drinkers.

-ELIZA MILLS

In principle, the Amethyst Initiative is necessary and good. It sparks a dialogue that needs to be had. However, it has several impracticalities. First, I believe we should lower the drinking age to 19, not 18. This keeps it out of high school, but allows it in college. There are plenty of 18 year olds still in high school who would end up buying alcohol for freshmen as young as 14. The second issue that I have with the Amethyst Initiative is a cultural one. In Europe, where the drinking age is around 18, there is much better public transportation. Drunk driving is punished by extremely harsh penalties and is consequently very rare. By contrast, the US may be unequipped to deal with a sudden lowering of the drinking age especially due to our inferior public transportation systems. I support lowering the drinking age to 19 but only with appropriate safeguards to deter drunk driving.

-ALEX FARMER

If the drinking age were lowered to 18, life for college students and university administrators would be safer and simpler. Colleges could focus on keeping students safe without having to police and punish underage drinking, and, likewise, students could seek help without fear of probation and other repercussions. School-sponsored events like Fall Ball could serve drinks

without having to administer wristbands and rope off VIP rooms. Underclassmen wouldn't have to conduct shady, illegal dealings to get fake IDs. The main argument against lowering the age is that increased access to alcohol would increase binge drinking on college campuses. However, I think binge drinking is more a result of personality type than the accessibility of alcohol, since the law currently does not stop those over 21 from binge drinking. If the age were lowered, would 18 year olds drink more often? Maybe. Would they binge drink more than they do now? I doubt it.

-MARIAN SWAIN

Here's a modest proposal: issue licenses for drinking. Upon your 18th birthday, you're eligible to apply for a drinker's license. You take a drinker's ed class which teaches the effects of alcohol on the body. There is no practical exam, though I'd like to see a supervised night of debauchery with points deducted for each party foul. Once certified, chug away. If you wait until

ever, the drinker's license would prevent cross-border alcohol tourism by restricting "underage" consumption to state residents only. The drinker's license is a public policy dream: it's sensible, it's possible, and it might just keep the bathrooms clean.

- TAYLOR BATES

It does not matter—least of all to me—whether the Amethyst Initiative succeeds, though I suspect it won't. It would not signal any marked change in the University's policy, and it absolutely would not change the fact that drinking, underage or otherwise, is simply part of the *donnée* at Tufts.

This situation is obviously not a secret. It is an open fact, universally acknowledged by this university's students, administration, and police department. Our common appetite for alcohol presents an unstoppable force. When, for example, TUPD entered a party at the Arts Haus this past weekend, they didn't begin to take down the names of revelers (to be honest, I'm not sure what

## “Those who favor the adoption of this initiative seem to possess some idyllic fantasy.”

you're 21, you can drink automatically.

Today, if you want to drive, you need to pass a test. If you want to join the military, you have to pass a lot of tests. If you want to sell liquor, practice a trade, or go to college, you need to demonstrate merit in some way to be accepted. We exempt drinking from this criterion because we think it has no externalities; the alcohol goes in and the drinker feels funny. There's no such thing as second hand drinking.

But drinking does leave its marks, from DUI deaths and broken families to stained rugs and nasty bathrooms. When we send 18 year olds to Iraq, we give them some basic training to safeguard them and the civilians they protect. If we take this as an argument for lowering the drinking age, let's extend the analogy completely: 18 year olds can take risks in return for good times but only with a little education.

The drinker's license isn't perfect, but it may be politically viable. In my native state of Vermont, the legislature has often seriously debated lowering the drinking age. A major concern has been teens from nearby states driving drunk on our roads; how-

exactly they did, if anything at all). Such an act, they surely know, would be misled, merely scratching the surface of a sea of saturnalia.

I, unlike those who advocate this initiative, don't think that its passage would have any bearing on "binge drinking"—a rather pejorative term, which is, it seems, used to encompass any sort of drinking which has even mild intoxication as its goal. Those who favor the adoption of this initiative seem to possess some idyllic fantasy, wherein now-enlightened Tufts students disavow their chancy, partying ways and instead choose to poshly sip gin and tonics in dorm common rooms. I have a lower estimation of my fellow students, who seem perfectly unwilling to separate drinking from its current gritty, louche, and ambiguous associations—that would, after all, take all of the fun away. ☹

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*Want to share your opinions in the next "Voice off" section? See page 12 for the next week's topic and e-mail Crystal.Bui@tufts.edu and Alexandra.Siegel@tufts.edu to be a part of our team.*



# FRATERNITIES: A Brother's Perspective

*A Response to the Nov. 24 Article "Frats: No Balls Allowed"*



BY BYRON CROWE II

Toward the end of last semester, I read an article in the Observer by Micah Hauser entitled "Frats: No Balls Allowed." In the article, Mr. Hauser narrated an experience he had while waiting in line outside of a party at Theta Delta Chi, informally known as "123," and gave his perspective on fraternities here at Tufts. I feel the way fraternities and their members were characterized in this article was unfair and completely unsubstantiated.

One of the first things that we're taught at Tufts as a part of our liberal arts education is to be wary of making generalizations about a large group of diverse people based on a small sample of experiences with its members. In his article published on November 24, Mr. Hauser took one statement from one brother from one fraternity on campus and used it to characterize the entire population of fraternity members here at Tufts as "drunken chauvinist[s]." I'm shocked by the intellectual laziness exhibited by Mr. Hauser in the writing of this article and offended by the contents of it.

Greek brothers and sisters here on the Tufts campus and across the country are victims of stigmatization and stereotyping. I feel this is because people outside of our organizations don't understand our goals and how we seek to achieve them. While I can't speak for every chapter on campus—lest I commit the fallacy of Mr. Hauser—I can speak on behalf of my fraternity, Zeta Psi. One of the main purposes of our brotherhood, besides character-building and philanthropy, is to contribute to the lively social atmosphere here at Tufts. Contrary to what was written in Mr. Hauser's piece, we are not in any way trying to facilitate the objectification of women. Rather, our brothers spend a large part of their time and money to ensure that our house is a welcoming, friendly and, most importantly, safe atmosphere for all Tufts students. It is for this reason that I was frustrated when I read Mr. Hauser's characterization of our brothers as a group who "values breast size and skirt length . . .

above all else."

Also, I'd like to clarify something for Mr. Hauser and for anyone else with a misconception about how brothers feel about running the door at parties. In his article, he wrote: "Like the high school football star who lives and breathes for those four quarters of glory every Friday night, so too the frat brother relishes the weekend hours of 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. For those precious ticks of the clock he is the gatekeeper, the ruler of our collective nightly destiny."

This analogy is a gross misrepresentation of how we feel. We do not take any pleasure in standing outside in the rain and cold, surrounded by people who are upset with us because we can't—in accordance with fire codes—admit any more people. Door duty is hands down the most miserable position to be held during a party. This is thanks largely to people like Mr. Hauser who pass judgment on brothers for simply doing their job and keeping the party going.

I hope that in writing this, I've cleared up any misconceptions about the purpose and methodology of frat parties at Tufts. At the end of the day, we really do just want everyone to have a good time.

P.S.: I do agree with Mr. Hauser on this point: I would also like to see more theme-house parties. Crafts House is wicked. ☺



OPINIONS WANTS YOU TO WRITE.

Recently photos emerged of Olympic Gold Medalist Michael Phelps smoking pot at a party. Phelps has repeatedly apologized to fans and stated: "I engaged in behavior which was regrettable and demonstrated bad judgment. . . For this, I am sorry. I promise my fans and the public it will not happen again."

What standards should athletes be held to as role models? Do public figures have a greater obligation to behave legally, or should they be able to use their positions of power to make changes in public policy?

If you have an opinion, please write a 100-300 word blurb and send it to either [Alexandra.Siegel@tufts.edu](mailto:Alexandra.Siegel@tufts.edu) or [Crystal.Bui@tufts.edu](mailto:Crystal.Bui@tufts.edu)





*Photos by Brittany Sloan*





*Photos by Brittany Sloan*













# Inauguration:

## *From the Watchful Eyes of an Observant Jumbo*

BY TAYLOR BATES

**I**t looked like Armageddon. At 3 a.m. in the nation's capital, more than a million slow-moving people choked every highway and tunnel under the steady watch of sharpshooters and helicopters. Like human glaciers, the crowd moved along the path of least resistance until they were stopped by barricades and restricted bridges. Amazingly, a thin thread of civility kept me from rolling over the police as I treaded toward my goal: the inauguration of President Obama.

I had come to the inauguration of Barack Obama after a long journey. I interned for Obama's campaign in New Hampshire, propping up yard signs like toy soldiers in the cold winter snow. It was then, during primary season, that Obama's team had become my team. When we lost the second primary, I was there for the concession speech, the first ever use of "Yes We Can" as a campaign slogan. After many handshakes and a 30-second speech, the Vermont Democratic Party elected me as a delegate to the 2008 Democratic National Convention. About four months later, I received an unexpected ticket in the mail and decided to witness the last milestone of Obama's campaign and the first step in his presidency.

I almost didn't make the pilgrimage to Washington D.C. Despite my long work for the campaign, I never became a fanatic. My only problem was that federal law prevented me from selling my ticket on eBay. I am not a sentimentalist; I would have watched CNN's broadcast of the same speech I heard on Inauguration Day. I would have welcomed CNN's additional commentary and my own personal option of changing channels for Rick Warren's opening prayer. I could have watched the event on a comfy couch, in a warm room, with hot food on my lap and a cold drink in my hand. My friends in the city would have gladly taken my ticket, or I could have scalped it, knowing law enforcement didn't really care. But I didn't do any of those things.

Instead, I woke up too early, came insufficiently dressed for the cold, and definitely didn't eat enough breakfast. Although the journey was brutal, my consolation was witnessing history.

Some men go to war because they can-



not face posterity and answer for their inaction when the world changed. All too often, they end up repeating stories endlessly even though their grandchildren are too indifferent to ask. I came to D.C. knowing I owed it to my grandchildren, and after the hard slog, I've now resolved to sit the little bastards on my knee someday and tell them everything about this day, whether they like it or not.

I joined the human glaciers at 3 a.m. We flooded onto the National Mall at 8 a.m. Dawn had turned the Washington Monument into an enormous sundial, and I waited, shivering, for the shadow to shorten and for the noon ceremony to begin.

Even with my ticket, I couldn't get close enough to see the oath in person. I eventually found a choice position to watch: in front of a JumboTron where I managed to get between two little old black ladies with Sunday hats and enormous fur coats. Huddling between them was like being hugged by a giant chinchilla, and that alone kept me alive in the freezing cold.

I still remember those two ladies crying after the speech. One of them had stood facing the other direction four decades ago, watching the Lincoln Memorial during the March in Washington D.C. For these reasons, I still wonder if I should have given up my ticket. Some Obamaphiles are just

overenthusiastic, but some deserved to hear that speech far more than I ever could.

I have heard many speeches by Barack Obama. Most were better than the one he gave at his inauguration. But for the first time, his speech brought me back to reality. While every other address I'd heard from him gave me visions of a resurgent America, the one on January 20 sobered the crowd. People had come to love his campaign speeches because he talked about the future. This time, people came because of history. No one had time to read the morning paper. Few were thinking of the stock, labor, or housing markets. We left our daily routines to watch history, secluding ourselves from the present. The speech was my first reminder that we are facing a recession and fighting two wars. The poetry of the campaign had ended, replaced by governing prose.

After the speech came to a close, I wandered the crowded streets looking for food and a way home. I had slept three hours and been awake for 17, running on only cereal for breakfast and a hotdog for dinner. When I got back to my friend's dorm, I had no further desire to celebrate. Hope and inspiration had done their work. Now I just needed to recover. ☺



# BOSTONIAN BEASTS OF FABLE

BY ARIANA SIEGEL



Far, far away in a mystical land called Boston lies a treasure trove full of creatures both awesome and terrible. Only the brave of heart dare breach the tangle of the T and the throngs of scientifically-minded masses to reach the Museum of Science's famed *Mythic Creatures* exhibit. If you deem yourself brazen enough, prepare for a trip under the ocean, across the continents, through the air, and into the imagination of ancient man.

Upon entering the first section visitors are hurled into the mythical depths of the ocean. They find



themselves face-to-face with frightening creatures such as the Kraken, a giant red-eyed beast whose tentacles were thought to drag ships below sea level, and other more familiar creatures such as mermaids, whose story traveled all over the world on the backs of slaves and sailors. Born of the desire to understand and to navigate the vast, terrifying unknown that is the ocean, stories were passed through generations of explorers and fisherman. Some myths warn coastal dwellers of the ocean's danger. A tale imported from the ancient Aztec tells of the Ahuizotl, a ferocious, fanged water creature that cried like a baby to lure people to their deaths. But balk not, for beneath the waves lie mythic creatures even more mysterious and deadly; one must only seek them out.

On firmer ground, fantastic unicorns, centaurs, and Cyclops tower over their human guests. These fantastic horned horses, chimaeric hybrids, and one-eyed men have wandered through human imagination since the time of the ancient Greeks. The exhibit reveals that these mythical creatures arose from the bones of real, extinct predecessors. The inspiration for several fantastic creatures may have been derived from skeletons of prehistoric mammals; mammoth bones may have been mistaken for the former limbs of a giant, the hole in elephant skulls thought to be the one-eyed Cyclops' head. Long before the invention of DNA sequencing, archaeology, or even taxidermy, people invented myths to explain mysterious animal remains.

As the intrepid transition into the air exhibit, they discover that, while some mythical birds like phoenixes are the product of folklore and ancient symbolism, others truly existed. The Haast eagle of New Zealand that boasted a wingspan of 10 feet and talons the size of human fingers truly did cast shadows upon a time. Both mice and men must beware of

this great bird's fantastically large appetite.

Finally, the bravest souls venture into the Dragon room, where the history of the most popular and powerful mythical creature is on display. The dragon is a transcontinental phenomenon, inspiring fear and respect amongst eastern and western cultures alike. Dragon tales from Asia and Europe can be found in the ancient pottery, armor, and clothing available for the eyes of the fearless.

Though the question of whether this exhibit explored "actual science" worthy of



a place in the Science Museum was oft heard amongst

voices of visitors, the exhibit has definite merit. These creatures may not have roamed the earth, but they did roam the minds of men and woman through the ages. This alone deems the beasts as important as the tools later invented to discredit them.

Mythical beings, as popular as the mermaid or obscure as the Ahuizotl, are gathered in the Museum of Science for the Bostonian to examine. The exhibit affords the discerning eye an opportunity to peak into the ancient and eternal musings of human consciousness and explore the patterns of logic in the face of the extraordinary. So venture forth and make the journey for yourself... if you dare. ☞

*Ariana Siegel is a freshman who has not yet declared a major.*



Dear President Obama,

I know you probably get tons of letters from journalists and bloggers offering advice on what to do now that you're the President of the United States (or POTUS). But may I suggest you listen, if only for a second, to the suggestion of a cannabis columnist from the heart of American Academia.

As I'm sure you recall, the first time your transition website (Change.gov) asked your constituents for the questions that matters to them, the most voted for question was: "Will you consider legalizing marijuana so that the government can regulate it, tax it, put age limits on it, and create millions of new jobs and create a billion dollar industry right here in the U.S.?"

And your aides responded: "President-elect Obama is not in favor of the legalization of marijuana."

With the mounting economic, medical and legal burden of reason on our side, cannabis users were left aghast. The brevity of that response, 85% shorter than your average, was a slap in the face and a dismissal of the important dialogue now decades overdue. As NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) deputy director, Paul Armentano, recently wrote, "Marijuana law reform should no longer be viewed by legislators a political liability. For the incoming administration and for Congress, it is a political opportunity." And might I also remind you that, in every state in which propositions to loosen cannabis laws were on the ballot this year, every one of those propositions received a higher voter percentage than you did in the presidential election.

Minutes after taking the oath for the presidency, you said, "The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works... Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account."

I struggle to find a collection of government programs that work less and waste more money than the War on Drugs. Still, I'm not going to ask you, the president, to begin campaigning for changes in marijuana laws. That would be ridiculous; you have

tear here — send to POTUS



more than enough issues to contend with. I'm asking you to re-open discussion of drug laws, especially those concerning cannabis. After all, there was enough time and money to investigate steroid use in Major League baseball. If we have the resources to snoop pastimes and games, surely there is enough to give a thorough investigation of what, for many people, is their medicine.

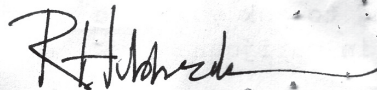
Recall that a conservative estimate for the annual budget of the War on Drugs is \$50 billion. That's a Bernie Madoff size loss every year; wasted on a never-ending war with ill-defined metrics for success, empty-worded goals, and no end in sight. And just as the invasion of Iraq helped Americas enemies in Iran and Venezuela, so too has the American Drug war provided increased profits and subterranean power for organizations whose interests are inherently opposed to American interests like the Taliban, Mexican drug cartels, and the sinister Canadian pot growers. Surely this topic deserves a little congressional investigation. You may find, not an outcry of horror, but rather a sigh of relief, a flood of recovered funds when we need them most, and an end to hypocrisy.

You've made no secret of the fact that you inhaled (and snorted). It wasn't even a major election issue that you took part in an activity that, if caught (especially as a black man), almost certainly would have gotten you arrested and prevented you from even beginning your tremendous rise to be our 44<sup>th</sup> president. With that as your reference, consider the harm inflicted by the government you now lead upon hundreds of thousands of people every year who weren't lucky, like you, to not get caught.

I hope you get to read this Mr. President. I hope you get to take a moment to look at the facts instead of the propaganda manufactured by the DEA, FDA, and other government agencies that profit off of the ongoing drug war. I hope you can see past the politics and the antiquated prejudices and see to it that this issue gets a fair look.

Best of luck running the country, you'll need it.

Peace, Love, and Bowls,  
Lonny Reginald "Reggie" Hubbard.  
<http://ReggieHubbard.blogspot.com>



tear here — send to POTUS



# CULTURE SHOCK!

## How to Use a Japanese-Style Toilet

BY CATHERINE NAKAJIMA

There are many things we take for granted, especially when it comes to items that we see, use, and need everyday. For example, toilets.

In America, toilets are reasonably predictable and reliable—always near, with a bowl, a lid, a cover (except in public establishments), maybe a graffiti'd "I love you" or "Fuck Bush" on a stall wall, and a flusher. Across the world, however, toilets may not always be shaped to imply an invitation to sit down.

Let us consider Japan. In the Land of the Rising Sun, many public and privately-owned bathrooms continue to utilize toilets of outdated design; more specifically, they are toilets embedded into the ground as mere flushable holes, similar to European and Turkish models. Such toilets require fairly strong leg and buttocks muscles. Made of porcelain, these toilet bowls are ovular in shape, and the user is supposed to squat with feet positioned on either side. The goal is to squat low enough to prevent any splashing but high enough not to fall in.

It may seem as though this buttocks-hovering would be difficult for some people, particularly the elderly. On the contrary—the majority of people I've met who swear by these "squatty-potties" and who refuse to use anything else are elderly Japanese ladies. In Japanese, these old-style toilets are called *washiki*, a word that means "Japanese-style." The reason that older generations still use the *washiki*-style toilets, despite the extra effort that they necessitate, is because these traditional toilets satisfy their staunch cultural loyalty. Such loyalty to culture and tradition is especially incredible in a time faced with such quickly advancing technology and in a nation with such great affinity for the technological savvy and new. Doubtless, the Japanese are apt to make and use clothes-dryers, yet the majority of Japan remains dedicated to hang drying. They do have dish-dryers, but dish-washers are considered unsanitary.

There is a washroom duality, however. If you're not confronted with the antiquated squatty-potty, you will find a super-robotic toilet, known as a *Washlet*. These may come equipped with sensor-activated lids, automatic flushes, and remote-controlled bidets, bottom-rinsers, dryers, or seat warmers. These ultra-advanced toilets were introduced in Japan during the 1970s and currently represent 60 percent of households, a sharp climb from about 23 percent in 1995.

An important cultural value, cherished by the Japanese, is cleanliness—*keirei*. This word is synonymous with "beautiful."

But which toilet exemplifies *keirei*? Many traditional Japanese consider squatty-potties cleaner because they do not involve skin-to-toilet contact (think: a bowing vs. embracing culture, SARS masks). Most Americans, on the other hand, would argue that sit-down toilets are cleaner when considering the accumulation of misdirected waste that gathers around the *washiki* bowl. The Japanese recognize the western point of view and thus both *washiki*s and techno-toilets can be said to appease *keirei*. The *washiki*/techno-toilet duality demonstrates not only the differences in toilet usage overseas but also the various ways in which cultures measure cleanliness and even beauty. ☪

PHOTO BY JOSH ASCHHEIM

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*Catherine Nakajima is a freshman who has not yet declared a major-*





The Observer

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*observer@tufts.edu*



# Montréal: C'est Bon Marché

HOW TO AVOID SPENDING YOUR LIFE SAVINGS IN MONTRÉAL

BY KATIE CHRISTIANSEN

In a magical land not too far away, across the borders of our fair country lies a magical white kingdom full of snow, fair exchange rates, beer, and poutine. It's not Narnia, it's not The Shire, and it's definitely not Hogwarts in winter (but wouldn't that be awesome?). No, my friends, it is Montréal, a city easily accessible for those of us with cabin fever and a thirst and deep hunger for beer and poutine.

Montréal (I'm not being pretentious; that's the way it's really spelled) is a relatively large city of about 1.6 million people that is a dream for a college student looking for a weekend adventure away from campus with some friends. I'll start with the bad news first: despite a currently decent exchange rate (1 US dollar to about 1.25 Canadian dollars), the activities college students like to partake in, such as shopping, clubbing, and eating out can rack up the bills pretty quickly.

But never fear! There are more than enough ways to save some loonies (Canadian dollars to the layperson) and get the most bang for your buck while still enjoying Montréal the way it's meant to be enjoyed.

First things first: getting there. While I absolutely bathe in the glory of no longer being a freshman and thus having access to an on-campus car, there is, in fact, an alternative. Perhaps the most cost-effective mode of transport is the ever-popular bus. Greyhound buses run well under \$100, depending on what time of day you leave and for how long you plan to stay. That being said, the cheapest (and most enjoyable) way to head north is to scrounge up a car and take a little adventure.

One of the most important things about this trip for me was finding a good breakfast place. Not some IHOP, but a real

pancakes, eggs, fruit, bacon type of place. When we headed to Eggspectations (great name, right?) on the first day, I knew I was at home as soon as I laid eyes on the Construction pancake special. I was graced with three buttermilk pancakes, bacon, lots of fresh fruit, and hot chocolate, all for about \$8 US. The following morning, I was pleasantly surprised to find that Chez Cora's generous portions and interesting options, including omelet crêpes and cinnamon roll French toast, were fairly priced as well. With a cheery interior, it was definitely the kind of



place you would want to start your day. As an aside: it's the only place I will concede to eat at that has pictures of the food on the menu.

Being the active college students we are, breakfast tends to serve as a sort of late lunch. After we had filled our bellies with some of Montréal's best pancakes, we decided to roam what is perhaps one of the city's greatest assets: its vast expanse of interconnecting underground malls. A shopper's paradise in wintertime, the malls offer a vast variety of stores, ranging from high-end boutiques to American Apparel. Many offered good prices or advertised New Year's sales. For those who cannot find what they need in any of the six underground malls, an H & M is located directly across the street from the Peel Street/ Rue Ste-Catherine entrance. If large international super-chains aren't quite

your game either, there are numerous boutiques scattered around the Peel Street area as well as around McGill University, many of which offer fancy dresses and trendy casual clothes. Who knows—you might even find the perfect Winter Bash dress that nobody else had (I did)!

After all the strenuous shopping and breakfast-digesting that we endured, we decided a late-afternoon snack was in order. Our poison of choice? Poutine and two jumbo pitchers of beer. For those of you not in the know about Montréal's most famous dish, poutine is a sort of late-night binge eater's dream: French fries topped with gravy and cheese curds. Although it sounds less than appealing, it is actually extremely delicious especially when paired with some ketchup or a nice cup of hot chocolate. We, however, decided to take advantage of Peel Pub's afternoon beer specials: two jumbo pitchers (each of which contain about ten beers) for about \$40 US. Not a bad deal. Being the true purveyors of pride that

we are, we ordered Labatt Blue and Rickard's Honey Brown, which gave us Jumbo pitchers of brown and blue. Although it seemed a bit odd to be enjoying some brews in the afternoon, the relaxed atmosphere of the bar gave us a nice opportunity to chat and enjoy ourselves.

I'm not going to pretend that escaping to Montréal is like going to a tropical island for a weekend. Nobody's going to serve you a Corona while you sit on the beach, and there won't be any birds of paradise flying through the cloudless sky. However, there are more than enough ways to make a few days up north a weekend to remember... and one that's not too hard on your wallet.☺

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*This is the first of a two-part installment about how to conquer Montréal on a budget. Next issue: night life.*



BITE-SIZED  
REVIEWS*First Stop:*  
DAVIS SQAURE

*Every week, Excursions will bring you tasty nuggets about Boston's best dining, shopping, and exploration hotspots.*

COMPILED BY: CHELSEA BROWN, CRYSTAL BUI, KATIE CHRISTIANSEN

## JULIE'S NAILS

I must admit, I was rather skeptical when I was dispatched to a nail salon that lies directly adjacent to the McDonald's on Elm Street. Alas, Julie's Nails is your typical outdated cosmetological establishment, complete with fake wood paneling and muted fluorescent lighting. But just as one does not venture into a McDonald's for the decor, one would not go to Julie's Nails to absorb the atmosphere. Pinched for time and/or money, Julie's is a satisfactory option for college students in need of a little grooming. I was extremely pleased with the manicure and pedicure I received. The water in the footbath was Goldilocks perfect. The

service was friendly and professional, and there was a plethora of *People* magazines to induce some much-needed mind-numbing escape away from academia. Julie's Nails features a full selection of OPI polishes to choose from. My life has definitely been improved considerably now that I know my feet are clean, massaged, and adorned with sparkly gold polish... even if they're still confined to the fluffy shackles of my winter boots.

## MAGPIE BOUTIQUE

As the Urban Outfitters generation, when looking for cheeky gifts and spunky clothing, we often turn to this mega-chain for purchases that look indie enough to excuse their mass-production. Yet, a stone's throw from our very own Davis

Square, at Magpie Boutique, one can find entertaining tchotchkes, jewelry, stationary, and clothing made by local artists. Magpie is my new go-to place to buy presents for friends, as nearly everything is reasonably priced and utterly charming. I encountered gold beetle earrings, fun magnets made from bottle caps, a moose figurine made from a bicycle chain, and many other diverting tidbits. Their wide array of colored t-shirts sport funky designs and clever political statements (one that caught my eye was an unassuming olive green shirt that read "Guantanamo Bay: come for the beaches, stay for the waterboarding?"). Currently, Magpie has a Valentine's Day section with cards and chocolates that won't make you gag; instead, they have an endearing, organic appeal. Boys, I would check here if February 13 rolls around and you know your girlfriend can smell a CVS-bought card from a mile away. Magpie Boutique is a wonderful little establishment, and I am very surprised that I haven't been directed here before when in need of a necklace with a painted porcelain medallion or an old record melted into the shape of a bowl. Okay, so they're not dire necessities but pleasant possessions nonetheless.

## ROSEBUD FOOD &amp; SPIRITS

Don't get me wrong, I am a true lover of the groggy 1:30 brunch at Dewick. Yet on certain Sundays, fluffy stacks of pancakes and hot, cheesy omelets sing their siren



KATIE CHRISTIANSEN



song loud enough to lure me away from the Tufts campus. In this case, Rosebud Diner certainly does the trick and then some. Voted “Best Diner” by the *Boston Review*, this enchanting little restaurant is located inside a dining car, which could be considered a tad cramped if not for the convivial atmosphere. Whether at the counter or in a booth, one gets the feeling of quite literally being in the cheery confines of a 1950s time capsule. Rosebud serves delicious diner fare; everything from the milkshakes to the hamburgers are reputed to be delicious. Their breakfast menu is simple and mouthwatering, with a wide selection of egg dishes to choose from. I had the Portuguese omelet (with chorizo, onions, peppers, and salsa) which was a thoroughly awesome taste experience. Their ingredients are fresh, their coffee is bottomless, and their service is the epitome of fun-loving Bostonian hospitality. I would definitely recommend this place as a good first date spot; the lively atmosphere easily absorbs any awkward silences, and the cozy interior encourages “accidental” proximity. After my meal, full of buttered toast and tasty eggs, I stepped outside feeling much more refreshed and satisfied than Dewick would have left me.

## POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL

I don’t think I have ever stepped inside Poor Little Rich Girl and not been entertained by the wacky things I have found there. Blue fur coats, crocheted pants, neon velvet gowns, and heinous metallic skirts seem to be standard at this funky, quasi-secondhand



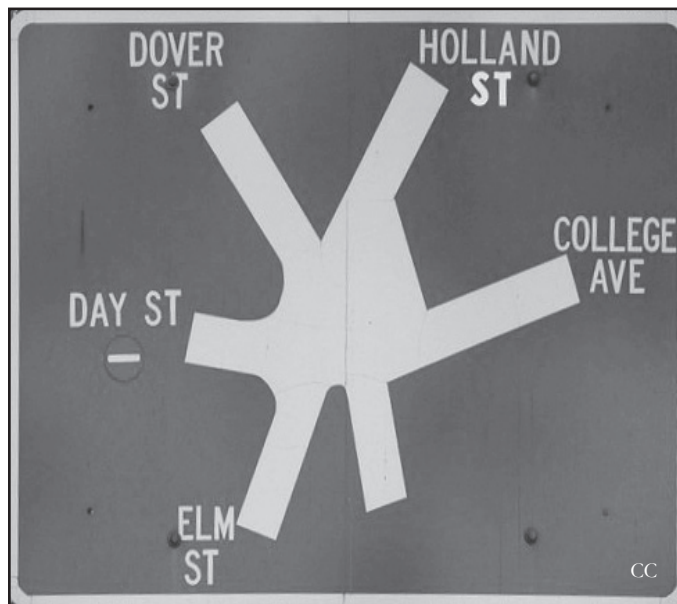
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boutique. One sees the contradictions of this store’s contents immediately upon entering. To your left, vintage wedding dresses that are comical in their ugliness. To your right, selected pieces from Forever 21. It gets better as you move towards the back where the clothing racks are divided by decade from the 40s to the 80s. Granted, the 50s section is more bird lady than Jackie-O, and the 70s is too ridiculous for words (think lime green pantsuits). During your tour through the last century in fashion, you might just find something that could work for you. If you are not up for an arduous excursion to the Garment District and want to avoid the crowds and high prices, Poor Little Rich Girl is the perfect place to whip up a funky costume. You may, however, wind up frustrated and sifting through their big selection of secondhand pants, tops, and dresses. I know I usually give up and start trying on goofy hats and costume jewelry. Beware of the super flattering mirrors and lighting in the dressing room, as it takes a size off and makes whatever you are wearing look completely fabulous (I think this is how I ended up with a poly-blend mini-dress). All in all, Poor Little Rich Girl is like your crazy aunt’s closet on steroids, and, even if you don’t prance away with anything new, it is certainly a fun place to browse.

## ORLEANS RESTAURANT

Located steps away from Leonard and Wallace Streets, Orleans Restaurant is a recognizable restaurant with a red “O” that’s a great spot for both fun and food. The restaurant includes two types of menus—both delicious enough to suit any person’s picky appetite. The bar menu at Orleans serves tasty appetizers for those underage until 10 p.m. The choices are so exquisitely diverse that they satisfy any craving; menu items include (but are not limited to) teriyaki chicken dumplings, marinated steak tips, and Orleans’ signature burgers, pizzas, and nachos. Each entrée is satisfying to the taste buds, stomach, and, most importantly, the wallet. The bar menu is a great way to

grab a quick bite with friends while enjoying the luxury of flat screens playing the latest sport game. However, for those looking for fancier food and a more formal dinner (think romantic dates, girls’/guys’ nights out, etc.),



the regular menu offers entrées such as pan-seared salmon fillet, braised short rib, and sirloin steak. For those over 21, Orleans has a bar with a DJ every Saturday night with no cover charge. For those underage, there is live acoustic music every Thursday and Friday nights at 8 p.m., and RockBand every other Sunday. In addition to these theme nights, if you know the answer to, “What was former Vice President Dick Cheney hunting when he shot Harry Whittington?” you might have a chance at Orleans popular Trivia Night every Wednesday, where teams of up to 5 people can join in and compete for gift certificates to the restaurant and go after the weekly jackpot prize. Trivia Night is an activity that abolishes uneventful and boring dinners. The restaurant’s overall ambiance is friendly and upbeat; if it’s not Orleans’ innovative theme nights, the smell wafting from the kitchen is enough to have everyone return for more. For the record, Cheney was hunting quail. ☺

*Want to contribute to the Observer Excursions’ bite-size reviews? E-mail Crystal.Bui@tufts.edu or Kathryn.Christiansen@tufts.edu to be a part of our team.*

*Next week’s location is Porter Square – we’re accepting submissions from your favorite spots now!*



# Chrysanthemum



well, hello backbone  
 scrubbed and gory ivory,  
 frayed with yellow stains  
 and sideways blood.  
 hello growth.

oh the big ridges:  
 meet of ball-and-socket  
 the slim and crisp taste  
 of water  
 of tongue  
 of slick cadaverous lies.

the spaces, the dirt, the  
 brown between your teeth—  
 a nervous collapse  
 of arrogance.

in your own way you  
 never meant any harm.  
 but, cry and fever  
 hurt and touch  
 (-- switch—reverse.)  
 :

you seep through my skin all the same.

—KRISTEN SURYA





I

Incinerating, we're just burning brightly into the dawn, darling.  
As the moon throws its last laugh over the world  
we'll paint the heavens with our glittering adieu –  
soaring past the emerging beams, we'll circumnavigate the gods,  
burst from between those rosy fingers.

Riding the wind on the wings of some shimmering bliss,  
we'll be ravenous for that last blessed sip of shade,  
we'll devour every waking moment until we explode  
into that first song of life, that blissful, tumbling rampage of sun...  
and this our fate, this tearing through the morning's slow fire,  
a love of the careening, wheeling sunrises, the quickening pulse –  
nothing more than some fools dancing in the dew,  
nothing more than coming back to fantasy, honey.

—KATHLEEN BOLAND



CC



# POLICE BLOTTER



## Tuesday, December 9

The morning after the festive Nighttime Quad Reception a student in search of his missing backpack called Tufts Police to see if they had apprehended the bag. They did have the backpack, and invited the student to come down and retrieve it from the police station. Shortly thereafter the student confidently strolled into the station to retrieve his bag, wearing nothing more than a tiny mens' speedo and body paint. Once reunited with his bag the student was rushed to the Dean's office.



*I'm telling you, he should probably have hit the gym first because he would definitely not be on the cover of GQ.*  
 —Sergeant McCarthy

## Sunday, January 25

At the post-party time of 3:50 a.m. a call was made to police regarding a Breaking and Entering (B & E as we say here at the Police Blotter) in progress at a residence on Chetwynd Rd. A rapid response by the Tufts Police made detaining the suspect easy. That, and the fact that the suspect was intoxicated to the point that he was under the impression that it was his house in which he was attempting to gain entry. It was later explained to the suspect that he lived two doors down.

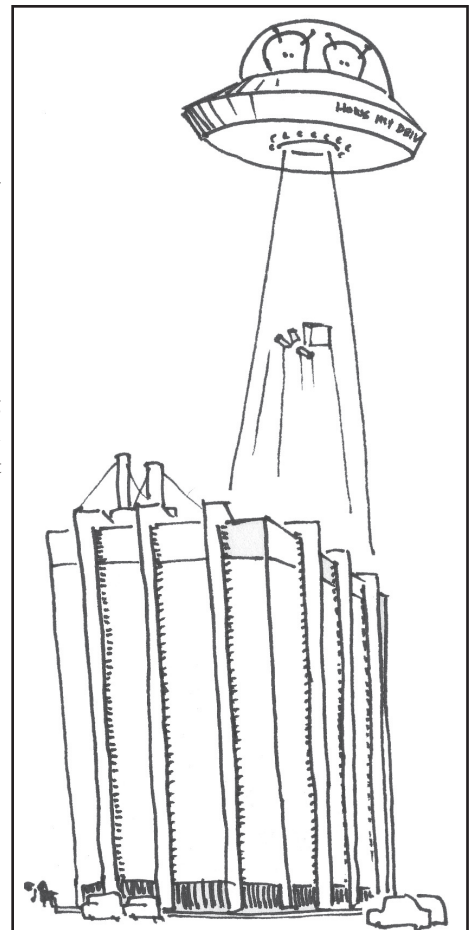
## Friday, January 23

On Friday, January 23, a philanthropic student reported an interesting story of compassion, deceit, and watches. On January 16, the student was approached by a person saying he was from New Hampshire and was in need of \$200 in order to get back. The generous student actually acquiesced and wrote a check for \$200 after the New Hampshireite gave his watch as collateral. Several days later the man from New Hampshire organized a meeting in which his watch would be returned to him and he would reimburse the student \$220. The exchange was soured by the fact that the new check of \$220 bounced. A thorough description made it easy for police to catch the fraud and organize a more reliable form of repayment.

Why no Winter Bash dirt?

*There's only so much you can say about it.*  
 —Sergeant McCarthy

—Illustrated and Compiled by Ryan Stolp



## Monday, February 2

On February 2 at 1:30 p.m., police received a report that a science experiment, on loan from NASA, was missing and believed stolen.



PARTING SHOT

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*Brittany Sloan*



# Tufts Observer

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