

TUFTS OBSERVER

TUFTS' STUDENT MAGAZINE

MARCH 2, 2009



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The Story and Science of Sexual Preference

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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 affect positive change.



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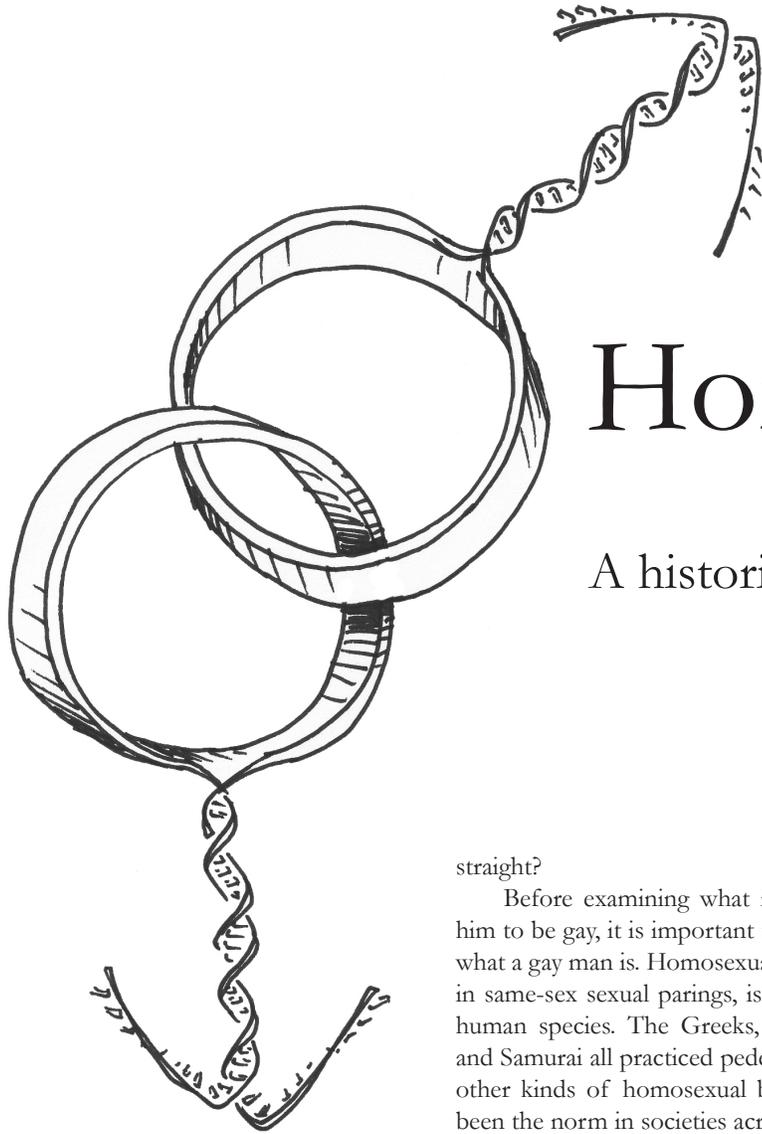
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Since
1895



The Question of Homosexuality

A historical, social, and scientific look
at sexual preference

BY SETH STEIN

When does a man become straight or gay? Is it a choice or is it predetermined? If it is a choice, as certain groups claim, then the issue is further complicated: why would a person willingly join an oppressed minority? Perhaps the discussion should start on a more personal, albeit admittedly non-scientific, note.

I grew up in downtown Chicago. One of my best friends grew up about four blocks away from me. We come from similar socioeconomic strata; both of our parents are professionals. He has an older sister; I have an older half-brother and half-sister. We attended the same day camp as children and the same high school as adolescents. We both attend prestigious top-tier universities now. Yet he recently came out as a gay man and is very active in the LGBT community at his school, while I'm a heterosexual with a girlfriend. What "makes" him gay and me

straight?

Before examining what in his life led him to be gay, it is important to understand what a gay man is. Homosexual behavior, as in same-sex sexual pairings, is as old as the human species. The Greeks, the Romans, and Samurai all practiced pederasty; various other kinds of homosexual behavior have been the norm in societies across the globe. But a gay man—a man who has exclusively same-sex relations with romantic attachments—is a modern phenomenon. The Greek who has a boy lover that he trains to be a warrior, but also has his wife to maintain the home, is not a homosexual. A man who self-identifies as gay, has strong attraction for same-sex relations, and chooses not to adhere to the norms of straight society, certainly is a homosexual.

THE GAY COMMUNITY

To understand homosexual *behavior*, not *identity*, we can use the animal world as a guide. Homosexual behavior is commonplace among other primates. The most popular theory used to describe this behavior is called the "alliance formation hypothesis." Simply put, homosexual behavior allows lower-ranking males to cement alliances with higher-ranked males or other lower-ranked males; this allows them access to resources they either would not have had

before or would have had limited access too. The main resource, ironically enough, is access to females. Homosexual behavior, just like heterosexual behavior, is used to cement social bonds. In this light, the ancient Greeks and Romans aren't outliers—they are the norm.

But where did the modern gay community come from? Around the 19th century there were fundamental changes taking place in Western Europe that would transform the face of the world—industrialization, nationalism, and the modern nation-state. It should not be surprising that the first homosexual community—who looked to men exclusively for romantic and sexual relations—emerged in the most advanced state of the time, Great Britain. Freed from traditional family arrangements and social constraints, as well as the ability to lead independent lives with relative autonomy and anonymity, they embraced their sexual desires towards members of the same sex.

The division of the world into gay and straight quickly followed the creation of the first gay communities. Up until the early 18th century, it was not uncommon for married Englishmen to engage in homosexual intercourse on occasion. However, the burgeoning field of biological science quickly ended the fluid sexuality that had been the norm in Western civilization from

ancient times. Rapid advances in medicine spurred doctors to classify homosexuality as a deviant behavior and therefore an illness or defect. This was instrumental in further separating those who chose to engage in homosexual behavior and those who did not. People now began to self-identify as *either* gay or straight.

The tendency for both the homosexual and the heterosexual worlds to practice exclusively same-or opposite-sex relations caused gay men to develop an alternative community to the predominantly heterosexual world. Before the community came out of the closet in the 1960s, it was maintained by secretive bars and meeting places. There were clearly established ways of suggesting to possible partners that a man was gay. This is where the stereotype of the effeminate gay man originates; gay men would commonly act more effeminate to signal to other men that they were gay.

As studies of human sexuality in the United States were almost nonexistent before the 1960's, little was known about this underground community. Alfred Kinsey, in his famous report on human sexuality, opened the doors to this world and may have laid the basis for the gay civil rights movement. He challenged the common misconception that one is either gay or straight, positing that human sexuality exists on a continuum, and, throughout their lives, people can and will engage in both homosexual and heterosexual behavior. That being said, Kinsey did allow that *most* men engaged in predominantly opposite-or same-sex relations, not a combination of the two.

This caused a sea of changes in the homosexual world. Kinsey allowed that homosexual behavior was *not* deviant but in fact perfectly normal. As the community came out of the closet in the 1960's, fundamental cultural changes took place that allowed gay men to express themselves in new ways. Being gay changed from being a dark secret to being alternative; gay scientists and activists sought to end the discrimination they experi-

enced from mainstream society.

At this point the gay community shifted from an underground, largely self-contained community into a political unit. As black Americans demanded that they not be discriminated against on the basis of their genetic skin color, so gay men demanded that they not be discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation. Scientists sought to find the "cause" for homosexuality—if orientation was indeed genetic or biological, then it was senseless to discriminate on that basis. However, more conservative scientists and religious groups sought to prove that homosexuality was a choice and therefore not protected by civil rights legislation. And thus inquiry into the biological basis of homosexuality took on politically charged tones that skewed our understanding of homosexuality for decades.

NATURE VS. NURTURE

Fortunately, our understanding of homosexuality and human sexuality in general has advanced by leaps and bounds; homosexuality is no longer listed in the DSM-IV as a mental illness. The most extensive twin study on sexual orientation ever undertaken was recently published in Sweden. Comparing twins, the study demonstrated that human homosexuality has a genetic factor, an environmental factor, and a social factor. All of these factors play together to increase or decrease the probability that an individual will be a homosexual. The results of the study suggest that environmental factors account for about 60% of sexual orientation, while genes account for another 40% (refer to the sidebar for an analysis of this study).

The genetic basis of homosexuality is a puzzle to biologists—why would a trait that causes a person not to have offspring be preserved in the human species? This puzzle, however, is misleading; although homosexuals currently leave around 1/5th the offspring of their heterosexual counterparts, historically we have no evidence of how many offspring homosexuals could have

produced as they were most likely *not* exclusively homosexual. The genes that contribute to male homosexuality have been postulated to be located on X chromosome and therefore passed down the mother's line. In a tip of the hat to the elegance of evolution, one theory suggests these genes seem to make women more fertile while also contributing to male homosexuality. As such, the dearth of offspring produced by gay males is offset by greater numbers of offspring produced by women carrying the gene.

As previously stated, genetic factors are not the only determinant of homosexuality, and modern science shows they may have an even smaller effect than we think. Current theory is exploring unique environmental factors, i.e. the state of the fetus in the mother's womb. The biggest determinant for homosexuality seems to be birth order; the successive sons after the first of a woman are the most likely to be gay. Why this is the case is still not clear, but it may have something to do with hormone levels in the womb. Testosterone plays a major role in sexual development in fetuses, and it is theorized that the first son, who produces testosterone in the mother's womb, causes the mother's body to become sensitized to the molecule. The mother will start producing testosterone antibodies that could change the hormone balance of her successive sons, which may increase the likelihood that he is a homosexual.

Regardless of the cause of homosexuality, there are some biological differences between a gay and straight person's brain. Recent studies, which are considered controversial by some, show that gay men's brains more closely resemble the brains of straight women. In other words, gay men have stronger vocalization skills and lower visuospatial intelligence than straight men. These differences are not drastic or universal, but they do shed light on a biological component of male homosexuality.

It is apparent that homosexuality has a biological basis, but few of the factors

“Kinsey allowed that homosexual behavior was not deviant but in fact perfectly normal.”

that contribute to homosexuality seem to predetermine it; in other words many different factors work together to make homosexuality more likely. Social factors are important as well. The process of “coming out” is actually a very ordered and regular socialization process, in which an individual chooses to self-identify as a gay man and pursue their sexual desires toward the same sex. This is part of the polarization of male sexuality—men who come out to be gay identify as strongly with exclusive homosexuality as your average straight man identifies with exclusive heterosexuality.

What is clear is that homosexuality certainly has its biological, social, and cultural elements. A fascinating confluence of these factors is the “gay ghetto.” Being a Chicagoan, this concept is hardly foreign to me. Northalsted, commonly known as “Boy’s Town” is an accepted part of the Chicago landscape, geographically positioned near other primarily young and progressive neighborhoods. In Boy’s Town shops fly the rainbow flag, men at bars expect other men to be gay and gay political organizations are organized from the community. Because of its tight-knit community spirit, Boy’s Town was one of the few urban neighborhoods to

grow and gentrify throughout the entirety of the last four decades, even during the height of urban decline and white flight. As urban renewal became the order of the day in the last decade or so, Boy’s Town has been an essential mover in revitalizing Chicago’s north side.

CONCLUSION

What do all these facts mean when we look at them together? Gay men are actually different from straight men, both biologically and socially. So is that what makes my friend different from me?

The short answer is no. My friend and I are actually the same in every way that matters. He wants to find someone who he can love and who can love him back. He wants to be with someone he is attracted to who can offer new things in his life. He wants to be happy and satisfied. At the same time, his sexual orientation is not important at all in other large areas of his life—what he studies, what he likes to do, and who he chooses as his friends. I do not consider it too high a compliment to describe him as one of my most cherished friends—a role he filled even before he came out of the closet.

But why then is this the kind of person

we are allowed to demonize in such horrible ways? Our cultural bias against homosexuals is so strong that the groups opposed to marriage in California didn’t even try to cover their motives. Instead they explicitly said they were *anti-gay rights*.

Fortunately times are changing much faster than the conservative forces in society can contain them. Americans our age are much more likely than even our parents, who were hippies, to be accepting of gay and lesbian individuals. Even young evangelicals are sick of beating the sodomy drum and would much rather focus on traditional progressive causes like poverty alleviation. I honestly believe that by the time I am my parents’ age my friend will be able to get married legally.

Even though things are changing quickly, that is not a license for inaction. While I enjoy the full range of rights and opportunities any society can provide, my friend does not. He is a second-class citizen. Gay rights is the civil rights issue of our generation. Liberty by gradations is not liberty, it is hierarchy. True liberty is all or nothing, and, until all people in the United States enjoy and practice their full rights, we will not be a free people—just *mostly* free. ☺

A Closer Look: The Dangers of Simple Science

BY DANA PIOMBINO

The prudent individual should be ever wary of the presentation of science in popular publications. Without a firm grasp of the underlying science or access to the original study being cited, many readers just accept an author’s interpretation of the scientific work to which he or she is referring. Aiming to write an article that appeals to a wide range of individuals, authors will often take great liberties with the research. Drastic oversimplifications, incomplete presentations and sometimes entirely incorrect representations of the conclusions are not uncommon in some popular publications.

This article briefly discusses a study using Swedish twins to determine potential genetic causes of homosexuality. This was done by statically analyzing the patterns of differences in sexual preferences between genetically identical twins and non-identical twins. The study’s authors also attempted to ascertain the influence of environmental factors. Yet the conclusions that can be

drawn from this study are tentative and ambiguous at best, as admitted by its authors.

Teasing apart all the individual elements that contribute to human homosexuality has never been a straightforward task. This can be attributed to a variable plethora of factors. Primary among such elements is how poorly humans fit into most scientific studies. Second only to Martians, *Homo sapiens* are among the most difficult species to study within a scientific framework. An empirical study usually seeks to determine how it is that one or many variables in a system (the independent variables) influence one other variable (the dependent variable). In the case of the Swedish twins, the independent variables were the similarities and differences in sexual orientations between pairs of both monozygotic and dizygotic twins. The dependent variable was a set of statically produced predictions about the roles played by the external environment and a person’s genes in the genesis of a homosexual individual.

But humans lead exceptionally complicated lives, filled with countless vari-

ables and dynamics that dance together to shape who we are. For scientists, studying systems that consist of even a few extra, unknown variables is a nightmare. Studying situations that are composed of almost nothing but unknown variables — as is the case with humans — is akin to the seventh circle of hell. The results of the study were made even less conclusive by the fact that the population pool studied was very small. Statistical models derived from small sets of data always results in fairly high uncertainties being attached to the final numbers, as in the case of the Swedish study.

Upon a careful reading of the original journal article one can conclude only that both genetics and environmental factors do play rolls in a human’s sexual orientation. The human sexuality, much like almost everything in nature, is far too complex to be defined by a few concrete numbers, and is subject to much interpretation. The main moral to take away from all this is: always be skeptical of pop-science. ☺

SLAVERY IN 2009?

CONFRONTING A CONCEALED CRISIS

BY LISNERVA NUEZ AND ALINE GUE

Have you checked your clothing label? Chances are that slavery has contributed to the production of many of the things you use and wear every day. Slavery still exists and flourishes today, even though many of us are not aware of its presence. Now, slavery persists behind closed doors. No longer are there slave owners or plantations; today, slavery is encased in divisions such as the sex industry, domestic services, factory work, agriculture, and the hotel business. The US Department of State's "Trafficking Persons Report" in June 2004 stated that slavery is evident in these five sectors with 46% of all counted slaves in sex and prostitution, 27% in domestic service, 10% in agriculture, 5% in factory work, and 4% in hotel work. Slavery is perpetuated to feed the hunger for cheaper goods. How can we stop modern-day slavery? One way is to raise awareness.

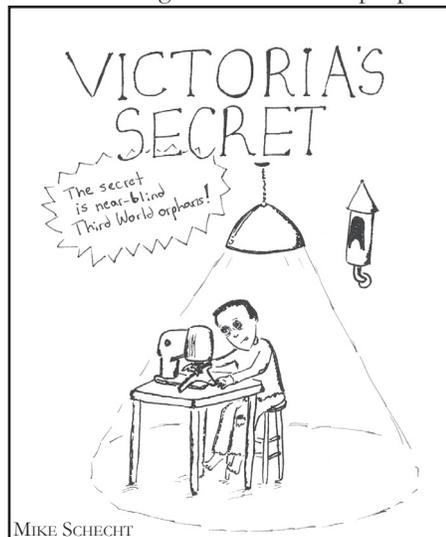
The first challenge in the destruction of modern-day slavery is that some people simply do not know it exists. Pangea's Modern Day Slavery committee's main objective is to raise awareness on the Tufts campus. Elizabeth Gardner, a Policy Associate for Free the Slaves, commented in an interview that awareness is imperative "when it comes to the issue of modern-day slavery, because many people consign this problem to the past and to some place far away. As we work to mobilize support to abolish slavery, we must continue to spread the word that this problem still exists. Many modern-day slaves live in South Asia, but the truth is that at times they can be found in our own backyard." During the group's tabling efforts in the dining halls, many people were surprised to learn that slavery is ongoing today. The committee is also working in conjunction with Human Trafficking Students (HTS). HTS is a cross-campus group that is comprised of college students from the Boston area who are interested in the devastating topic of modern slavery and its abolition. Their mission is to spark academic conversation in support of the abolitionist movement as a means for gradual change.



COURTESY OF HDTP

Eric Goodwin, a Harvard graduate student, Danielle Townsend, a Tufts freshman, and Michael Rubine, a Northeastern University student, are the central team leaders for this initiative.

There is a market for slavery that encourages its continuation. The demand for cheap clothing has been met with a supply made by slaves. If people did not want to buy cheap products, then the practice of slavery would finally die away. The anti-slavery initiative emphasizes the need for action to change the mindset of people in



charge of corporations that participate (directly and indirectly) in the use of slave labor. To accomplish this large task, Free the Slaves is using world-class research and compelling stories from the frontlines of slavery to convince the powerful and the powerless that slavery can be eradicated. The mentality of prioritizing profit over ethics and morals needs to be eliminated in the consumer market in order for the abolition of slavery to be possible.

A third challenge to the modern slavery problem is getting people to care. The global market has rapidly evolved into a world of cheap, name-brand products. Consumers indirectly perpetuate slavery by purchasing products that are manufactured by slave labor. On behindthelabor.org, the profiles of several well-known brands, such as those of Gap, Old Navy and Victoria's Secret, describe their use of slave labor. If there were no demand for such products then there would not be any advantage for companies that use slave labor. The goal for organizations like Pangea is to get people not only interested but also to hold their attention and commit them to ongoing support of the cause. If students stay involved, perhaps they may begin to see the results of their efforts. "There are a number of opportunities for students to get involved," Gardner says, "College students are in a great place to learn and act. One of the most important actions that a college student could take would be first to get educated about the issue. Once you learn about what is happening, share this knowledge."

The creation of a world where slave labor is never necessary and no longer acceptable is needed to achieve Free the Slaves and other groups' goals. Other markets that establish revenues without human exploitation must be launched in order to accomplish this task. A solution: fair trade. By helping slave labor-free products succeed in the market, fair trade would provide a chance for conscious consumerism to drive producers that use slaves out of the market. There are solutions out there to which we could all contribute without drastically altering our lifestyles. It all starts with raising awareness and bringing the issue out into the open. ☺

URBAN OUTLOOK

EPIIC SYMPOSIUM 2009

BY JULIANA SLOCUM

Convincing any Tufts student to devote well over 20 hours on a Saturday and Sunday to a single activity may seem like an impossible task. After all, students' schedules are packed with clubs, community service and sports, not to mention nagging homework assignments. Yet the 40 students in the EPIIC colloquium demonstrated true dedication when they committed nearly their entire weekend to the EPIIC symposium. The 24th Annual Norris and Margery Bendetson EPIIC International Symposium was held February 18th to 22th at Cabot Auditorium. The event marked the culmination of months of intense study and research, as colloquium members sought to share what they had learned with the larger community.

The Education for Public Inquiry and International Citizenship (EPIIC) is a program of the Institute for Global Leadership. Directed by Sherman Teichman, the initiative seeks to actively involve young people in national and global issues. One of the main components of the program is an intensive, year-long colloquium. Each year, roughly 40 students are selected for the class, and they explore a complex, global theme from a variety of perspectives. In the past, classes have focused on such relevant topics as Transformations in the Global Economy (1993), Exodus and Exile: Refugees, Migration and Global Security (1998), and Global Poverty and Inequality (2008).

This year, the theme for the colloquium was "Cities: Forging an Urban Future." Essentially, participants attempted to understand the complex issues surrounding urbanization. As the world shifts toward urbanization, there is much uncertainty about how so many different people can live together in a single space. Questions surrounding safety, transportation, inequality, housing, pollution and government were only some of the issues that students have examined in the course.



COURTESY OF EPIIC

Colloquium participant Lumay Wang ('11) explains that "We spent each class examining a different [urban] issue. For example, we spent a class talking about public health and cities. Another day, we talked about urban warfare." Students also had some control over the curriculum and could suggest and investigate their own topics of interest.

Students learned about the broad trend of urbanization by reading, listening to guest speakers, and engaging in class discussions. Wang explains that "our workload consisted of heavy amounts of reading—some weeks up to 1,000 pages. Our classes consisted of professors and visiting speakers [who] first gave us a lecture and then gave us the chance to ask them questions." The colloquium stresses active participation; students are encouraged to consider how to apply what they have learned to the real world, and to engage others in discussion about these issues.

The EPIIC symposium fulfills this goal of active engagement. This year's event aimed to foster discourse around the issue of urbanization. Participants were encouraged not only to consider the problems of foreign urban centers but also to examine their own cities and to formulate and discuss potential solutions. Wang notes that "our main goals of the symposium were to promote an intellectual discourse between faculty, students, and distinguished panelists, educate our peers about any emerging issue, and spur people into action. In order to tackle any problem, you have to understand it."

In order to ensure that participants gained an understanding of the complex nature of urbanization, the symposium consist-

ed of a series of panel discussions addressing a variety of urban issues. The event began on Wednesday, February 18th with a discussion led by Saskia Sassen, Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, about the increasing globalization and inequality that exist within modern cities. The symposium continued for the rest of the weekend, with a series of panel discussions on issues such as economic leadership within cities, urban terrorism, the effect of climate change on coastal cities, and urban democracy.

There were many illustrious presenters, including Bernard Amadei, founder of Engineers Without Borders—USA, Sergio Fajardo, former mayor of Medellin, Colombia, and Janice Perlman, founder and president of The Mega-Cities Project. On Saturday afternoon, various panelists held small-group discussion sessions on their respective topics of expertise, allowing attendees to converse directly with these experts. Many members of the Tufts community attended the event, including undergraduates, graduate students, alumni and staff. Also in attendance were delegations from foreign universities, including Seoul National University in South Korea, Hebrew University in Israel and University of Cape Town in South Africa, as well as a number of students from the United States Air Force, Naval and Military Academies.

Wang believes that the symposium was a major success. She was pleased not only with the quality of the discussion and the knowledge of panelists, but also with the audience's participation: "the question sessions were great—the depth and breadth of questions asked by our student body as well as the international students really prodded these experts and practitioners." After putting in countless hours in preparation for the event, the symposium was truly an accomplishment for EPIIC's members and an impressive display of Tufts' commitment to active civic engagement. 



COURTESY OF EPIIC

CUTTING AND SPENDING: REPRESENTATIVE CARL SCIORTINO TALKS LOCAL ECONOMY

BY JOHN PETER KAYTROSH

While Massachusetts has weathered the storm better than most, the recent economic downturn has certainly had its effects on the Bay State, and, in particular, on its most populous region: metropolitan Boston. At a time when aid is needed most, the fiscal responsibility of providing such aid may be questioned. Locals are faced with questions of how the Boston's biggest industry, education, will fare in this economic climate. Questions and concerns about how these changes will affect local areas and prospects for recovery are rightly illuminated in these times.

After years of spectacular financial prosperity and security, even our most august universities have been hard-hit by a nationwide recession and financial scandals; universities are facing an extraordinary decline in endowments and expected income. Tufts foresaw a 25% drop in its endowment even before news of Madoff's Ponzi scheme, in which the university lost \$20 million.

Recent drastic reversals of fortune, however, have caused local universities to engage in more cautious planning as they move forward. According to the *Tufts Daily*, Tufts plans to spend \$36 million less next year. Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the school's largest academic unit, plans to cut \$225 million from its budget. MIT looks to cut spending by \$50 million as it plans for 2010. Tufts, Harvard, Dartmouth, and Boston University have instituted full or partial hiring freezes, affecting would-be recruited professors nationwide as well as locals. In an interview, Tufts alumnus Carl Sciortino, Representative of the 34th Middlesex district, (Medford and Somerville), notes, "I know of people that are in the community who are unemployed who have sought jobs at universities, and they're not there. This is obviously a strong segment of the community?"

These facts and figures become more real when the effect of spending cuts can be understood on a local level. Since most of a university's operating budget is spent locally, local businesses will be particularly hard hit. For example, building projects will likely

lapse at the universities that have been constantly under construction for several years now. Sciortino observes, "Obviously, the financial sector has been the most publicly in shambles, and I have constituents from that sector that have been laid off, but that spills out to all levels of the economy, for example, the construction sector. These people only have work if the state and private industry are spending money on construction." Outside spending for services, ranging from printing and publishing to consulting services, will also be hit by these recent developments.

Even food service will likely be cut; high-priced items will be replaced with less expensive choices, and events that once



and maintenance essentials being axed, it is easy to envision institutional and individual cuts on things such as food, field trips, and transportation. Sciortino said, "As the university itself and as the individual students and faculty are forced to pull back on their spending, that has an impact on the small businesses... [Some] wouldn't survive without the students."

Sciortino also notes that students are not alone: "[This crisis] isn't unique to higher ed. Clearly, endowments and pensions, both public and private, have collapsed around the world. I don't see anyone's investments being spared." Universities are only one part of this Commonwealth and the ripple effect that the cuts are having is creating concern among politicians and has residents looking for a solution.

Trying to turn the situation around, the

state is seeking to bridge its current funding gap with a combination of tax hikes and spending cuts. Perhaps the most egregious is a \$128 million cut of town and city budgets for this year and a \$350 million cut in the same aid for the next fiscal year. These cuts to funds are making life difficult for many municipalities. Mayor Joe Curatone of Somerville has appointed a special advisory board for the sole purpose of figuring out how to absorb the nearly ten percent cut in local aid. On Beacon Hill, the priorities are clear, at least to Sciortino, who believes that "at a very basic level... most people are looking for support, for a place to call home, a job, and a way to get between the two."

Local prospects may appear brighter to some due to the passage of a recent economic stimulus package recently. While Governor Patrick warned citizens that "this stimulus package will not be a panacea," it is hard for Bay Staters to remain indifferent. This package includes anywhere from \$6 to 9 billion for the Commonwealth over the next two years and will help close budget gaps and fund essential services. However,



ever, the funds might not have an immediate impact. Sciortino differentiates from the long and short plans: "Some of the money is targeted towards specific programs that are state/federal joint programs, like Medicaid. Obviously, that's money we're going to be able to put into the economy very quickly, since those programs already exist. The ones that are going to be more challenging are around infrastructure and around new programs altogether."

However, the question remains: will the aid sent to states, cities, and towns across the 50 states in 2009 seem worth the trouble when people pay the debt of the stimulus in the future? Indeed, all of the measures are little more than stop-gaps. Sciortino cautions, "[The stimulus] money is short term, and you cannot build a stable, long-term budget on short-term revenues. My primary concern is...how to address that structural deficit that is going to exist for years to come." Legislators are now faced with an unenviable task in which all must participate: should the money be spent now at the future's expenses, or should services be allowed to be unstimulated in order to see if the economy can fix itself? ☐

HISTORY RESURFACES IN PIRATES! SOMALIA

BY ADRIAN WILLIAMSON

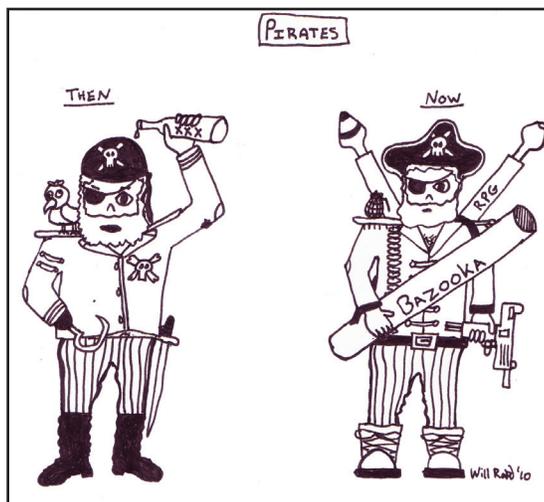
Most Americans' perception of pirates has been tainted by Disney's productions; its pirates are usually eccentric, rugged, and dirty individualists. In *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the protagonist Captain Jack Sparrow is presented as loveable, laughable, and loony. However, the pirates of the Indian Ocean are not what Disney has taught us to expect. Pirating has become Somalia's most lucrative industry, and, it's causing international turmoil.

Historically, the closest parallel to today's Somali pirates are the pirates of the Barbary Coast. These predominantly Muslim pirates operated around Algiers were successful, organized, and socially accepted—some traveled as far as Iceland. They were so powerful that most European powers paid duties to prevent attacks on their merchant ships. After American independence from Britain was attained, the United States was also forced to invest in the safety of its merchant ships. After refusing to pay tribute to North African pirates so that they would not attack American ships, America engaged in the First Barbary War in 1801 and the Second Barbary War in 1815. Even after the relative success of the Second Barbary War, piracy was still a problem for Europe, and Britain bombarded Algiers in 1816 and again in 1824, which stifled piracy in the region. This age of piracy only officially ended when the French took Algiers in 1830.

Although it has been almost two hundred years, the piracy problem persists, and history's answer of coastal bombardment and colonization is no longer viable. The similarities are striking; in Somalia, pirates are socially accepted, wealthy, (believed to be) discretely financed by Dubai businessmen, and tacitly allowed to exist by their ineffective government because of the wealth they bring to Somalia. A United Nations report suggested that pirate gangs had compromised the government of Puntland, a semi-autonomous region home to a third of the Somali population. A lively port city, Puntland is the new Algiers. According to Mary Harper of the BBC, Puntland caters

to its pirate population, even opening restaurants to feed the pirates' hostages and crews. The pirates are thought to bring in close to 30 million dollars a year, and they often devote it to lavish lifestyles. Recreational drug use among the pirates is common, and, as Abdi Farah Juha, who lives in the regional capital Garowe, said in an interview with the BBC, "They wed the most beautiful girls, they are building big houses, they have new cars [and] new guns."

Initially the pirates perceived themselves as a coast-guard-like entity, defending Somalia's fishing waters from illegal trawlers ruining the industry. Now, the pirates' influence has extended far beyond this capacity.



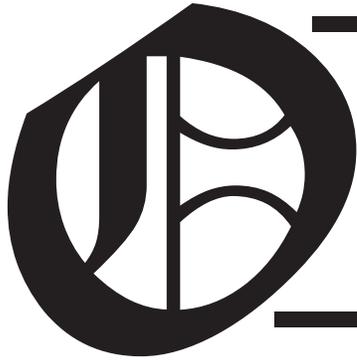
WILL RODD

Gus Constantine of the *Washington Times* deemed Somalia a failed state because it lacks a cohesive, sovereign, central government that is capable of negotiations. Due to the constant civil war, there was a stable supply of arms and people willing and able to use them. About one half of Somalis live on less than one dollar a day, and about one third of the population survives on food aid. Somalia is also laden with the medical and military burdens that many African nations face. To many Somalis, piracy seems to be a rare option that improves their quality of life. Maybe after being plundered by colonial powers for hundreds of years, some Somalis are eager to have success and live comfortably. These pirates are not woefully irrational; piracy is a lucrative career choice.

Recently the international community has once again taken action against piracy. As a result of the capturing and ransoming of many ships, including the *Sirius Star*, an oil tanker carrying a 100 million dollar cargo, and a Ukrainian ship carrying 33 military tanks, warships are increasingly moving into the area for protection. 30 percent of the world's oil, as well as most of the shipping from Asia to Europe, passes through the Suez Canal many countries have a vested interest in keeping this route safe. The European Union recently launched Task Force Atlanta, which essentially consists of six warships to patrol the area. China, Russia, Malaysia, and India also have warships on similar missions. However, since more than a million square miles need to be patrolled, monitoring the area is a daunting if not impossible task, according to Jonah Fisher of the BBC. Some within the United Nations have questioned this tactic, pointing out that without meaningful changes on dry land, piracy will most likely continue.

In addition, the *American Free Press* expects the cost of the EU's naval force to be 320 million dollars, which exceeds four times the EU's annual aid budget for all of Somalia. The jury is still out on whether the influx of more warships will help. The BBC has embedded Jonah Fisher on the British Royal Navy frigate HMS Northumberland, which is part of the Atlanta Task Force. According to Fisher's sources on board, although there has been a lull in piracy as of late, this fluctuation may be attributed to the seasonal weather conditions that compromise the pirates' small-boat operations, and piracy could likely resume as the weather improves.

In this globalized world, failed states are becoming a more critical international problem. In addition to providing a breeding ground for terrorism and extremism, they hurt international trade. The consequences of failed domestic situations can spread to affect other places and people not directly involved. Barbary Coast piracy ended when the French colonized Algiers in 1830 and provided a stable government on land. For the modern piracy problem to be solved, a stable government on land is a crucial part of the solution. However, given the more immediate problems in Afghanistan, Israel, Iraq, and Iran, Somalia's problems will most likely go unnoticed until another high-profile ransoming takes place. ☉



Overheard at the Observer

Katie's retinas are burning from watching the fat guy with the sock in his crotch do the Single Ladies dance... in a leotard. Great.

Mike wants to know why all the publications can't just get along.

Karen almost got hit by the Joey.

Samantha can't wait for spring break to arrive.

Mike's facebook username:
michael.goetzman@tufts.edu
password: cowabunga.

Ryan wonders: Why so much disrespect during the classical guitar performance at Tufts Best Dance Crew? Wtf?

Caitlin likes pie.

Will is exploding the souls of the unjust with dynamite arrows.
pew pew.

Josh is wondering when the library roof is going to be done.

Gertrude is waiting for the wintry mix to end



CORRECTIONS:

In the February 16 issue, Marwan Al Ju'beh and Danny Newhide were misrepresented in the article entitled "Many Goals, One Aspiration: Peace in the Middle East." Marwan Al Ju'beh is a Palestinian Jordanian, who is originally from Hebron in the West Bank. Danny Newhide, a California native, lived in Lebanon for three years during high school and has spent nearly every vacation there.

Capping Executive Pay:

A Response to Obama's \$500,000 Imposed Limit

BY ZACHARY FOULK

A few years ago, the average American probably wouldn't have been able to name upper management personnel at any of the major Wall Street banks. While this may still be true for some, the relationship between everyday citizens and Wall Street has changed dramatically.

For months, as Americans threw blame upon Wall Street, executives continued to take their money courtesy of the Trouble Assets Relieve Program (TARP). This exchange continued until President Obama placed a cap on executive salary compensation for firms receiving bailout money. The new law capped executive pay at \$500,000, a daring move of market intervention that I hope will never again be necessary.

It goes without question that this decision is riding upon a wave of popular opinion. The American public has not only developed a mistrust of the financial system but also an outright disdain. At the top of the list are the Wall Street executives. Whereas the rest of America struggles to hold on to jobs and homes, CEOs on Wall Street need only lament the loss of a zero on their paychecks. Considering that Americans blame these leaders' poor judgment and excessive risk taking for most of the financial woes of the credit crisis, outrage is an appropriate response.

America doesn't mind that these executives have been making absurd amounts of money in the past. The concern is that they should no longer be earning the lion's share, especially when part of that share comes right out of the bailout money and ultimately out of taxpayers' wallets.

Proponents of the salary cap measure argue that \$500,000 a year certainly isn't going to send these high-powered executives straight to the poorhouse. \$500,000 a year is still a hundred thousand more than Obama will make as president. There are, however, critics who claim that the restrictions will cripple companies looking



to build solid managerial leadership.

However, if a firm wants to replace its CEO, it should be looking internally. As for those firms concerned with keeping management, if these Wall Street executives think they can find a better paying job at another firm in this economy, then good luck. I can't even find a summer internship.

In my opinion, the crux of the controversy isn't in the ethics. Most of the opposition to the bill lies in the supposed movement away from capitalism to socialism. A shortsighted, cursory glance at the situation might yield someone with little investing experience to this rather alarming conclusion.

Despite this, if the complainers would do their homework, they would understand that with emergency money going into buying large portions of Wall Street banks, the government has a large stake in these firms. It is the same with shareholders who directly purchase common stock. Therefore, like shareholders, we the taxpayers should indirectly be able to make decisions on how the companies are run for as long as we have this stake.

Since we have such a large portion of these companies in our hands, we should be able to make equally large demands of the management performance of these companies in the future. With such an overwhelming argument in favor of this

measure, even senior members of the GOP have conceded their usual opposition in support of the salary cap.

After all the frustration that Wall Street has caused over the past year, I'm glad to see that the government and the common man were able to land a solid right hook with the executive pay limitation. Rewarding the CEOs of Wall Street with government bailout money while Main Street residents suffered was an unacceptable policy.

These CEOs should have seen their banks fail miserably as the U.S. government refused to bail any of them out. That's how the system normally works. If your company cannot operate under current economic situations, then survival of the fittest should weed your unfit firm out.

While I agree that the government did not have this option of just standing by, I couldn't stand to see them do the opposite and simply hand bailout money over to CEOs who should have lost their jobs. To all the TARP company CEOs, Sean Hannity, and any other conservatives out there who think this measure was too harsh—it could have, and technically should have, been much worse. ☺

Zachary Foulk is a freshman and has not yet declared a major.

All Bottled Up

BY EMILY BOEKE



CAMPBELL KILFOTH

About 9.5 billion gallons. That was the amount of bottled water Americans consumed just in the last year. Bottled water is an expensive commodity—and not just in terms of money. Our extravagant compulsion to buy bottled water pollutes our land and costs us space—an estimated 80% of water bottles end up decaying in landfills. Yet despite the environmental hazards of our unnecessary obsession with bottled water, we continue to be ruled by our pricey penchant for this product. We spend over \$15 billion annually on something that is relatively costless—if only we had enough energy to turn on the tap. In addition to the direct money spent, we waste 17 million barrels of oil each year just to package the water not to mention the cost of transportation. Unfortunately, this expensive endeavor has no clear benefits.

The idea of packaging and selling water makes little sense except in its contribution to our capitalistic and consumerist society. To take water from its local watershed, thereby depriving that area of an adequate supply and then ship it for miles and miles, sometimes across national borders, is ecologically illogical. There is little reasoning behind buying bottled water, especially given that 40% of it comes from public wa-

ter sources. Bottled water may even be less safe than its humble cousin from the tap. In fact, the US regulations of the quality of bottled water are slightly more lax than those of public sources, and the bottling process can lead to an increase in bacteria. Although people defend bottled water by arguing that the containers can be recycled, it appears that we don't walk the talk. In practice, 9 out of 10 bottles end up in the trash or as litter. But don't worry, plastic bottles only take about a millennium to biodegrade.

It's embarrassing that Tufts contributes to this growing problem. Hodgdon is always fully stocked with Poland Spring. I recall the irony of attending a Tufts sponsored fall presentation on "eating green" in which each panelist was supplied with his or her own ice cold, neatly packaged container of H₂O. Luckily, there are alternatives to our current oil-guzzling method of hydration. Tufts could follow in the footsteps of schools such as Washington University in St. Louis, Brandeis, and Leeds which have banned or are in the process of banning the sale of bottled water on campus. By promoting the sale of reusable, BPA free bottles and bringing the archaic water fountain back into the limelight, Tufts could cut back on carbon emissions and contribute to a more sustainable and natu-

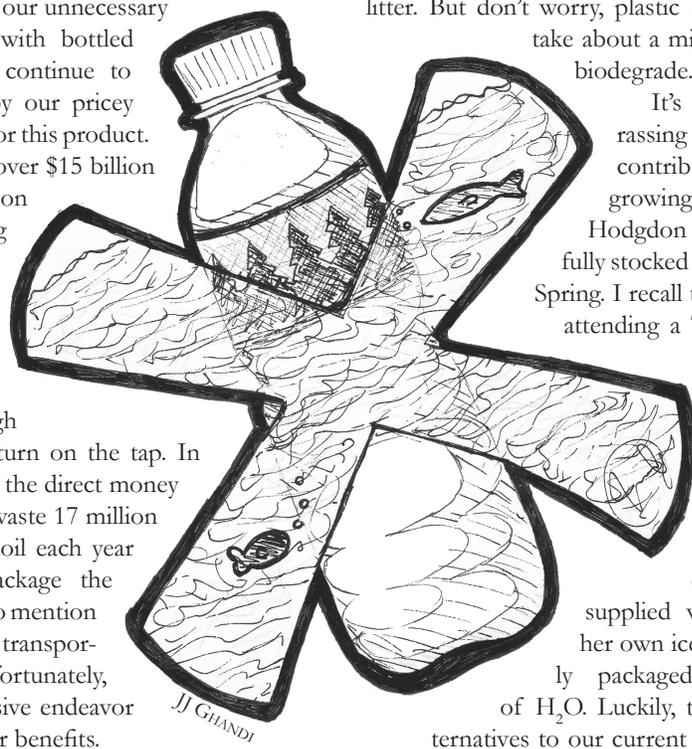
ral method of water consumption.

On a hot day, the crystalline, glacier-cold liquid sitting placidly in those sleek, clear bottles can be quite tempting. I admit to succumbing once or twice in the past semester. However, if bottled water was harder to come by and we took advantage of the easily accessible alternatives, we could consume much less of this product and provide a positive example for other institutions.

Any freshman who slaved away his or her summer reading Robert Morris' *The Blue Death* may know that our water supply systems are in dire need of reform. Boston, for example, has no filtration system (other than the general pre-screening to get rid of large objects). Chemical treatment and watershed protection are the main methods of purification which means that the risk for water containing organic matter such as bird feces is higher. According to Morris, taxpayers would have to spend about ten cents per day in order to have filtered water. This is not an outrageous cost when compared to that of bottled water. As a country, we should try to decrease bottled water production and create more jobs to protect and build up our water infrastructure.

The flashy promises of water companies such as Poland Spring's laughable "eco-shape bottle" and Fiji's claim to be "a fine artesian water that is good for people and good for the environment" tempt us to feel less guilty about our purchase of their products. But we should not be so easily deceived. We should keep in mind that the most eco-friendly thirst quencher, though it may be less glamorous, can be found in our faucets. ☐

Emily Boeke is a freshman who has not yet declared a major.



Falling for Young Adult Fiction

BY KRISTEN SURYA

I have something to confess: I am a young adult junkie. Yes, that's right, a junkie. At the bookstore I can spend hours browsing the "Fiction/Literature" section: I drool over the beautiful new Penguin packaging on classics like *The Three Musketeers* and groan loudly when I see that Jonathan Safran Foer (still!) hasn't published another novel. I pick a stack of books that I'm never going to finish, open the one that looks the most interesting, and read for about an hour before I quit fooling myself and decide to find exactly what has been missing on this trip.

And that's when I do it.

I close my book, leave my beautiful stack of literature, and creep quietly—so that no one can see me—to the young adult section.

That's where I can finally indulge myself.

It's nothing against the classy stuff, but there's just something fulfilling about reading about characters that are just like me. Age differences and minute details aside, it's much easier to relate to the day-to-day lives of teenagers than it is to put myself in the shoes of someone like Ma Joad. Their wishes, hopes, dreams, anxieties, and insecurities—their bare emotions—often mirror mine so closely that it's hard to believe that these books weren't written just for me. When something extraordinary, tragic, or just plain weird happens to these characters, I believe it could happen to me too. That's the real charm of young adult fiction (YA).

Lately, however, the genre has become really hard to defend. There was a time when it was still relatively unexplored, when the YA section in Barnes and Noble was limited to some Sweet Valley Twins books and a few amazing creations like *The Giver* or *Sloppy Firsts*.

Despite this, YA has recently soared as a market. Stephenie Meyer, the best selling YA author of the past three years, has said that the teen girl fan base is the most loyal, devoted, and fanatical of any other group of readers. First we go for boy bands and then we go for boy vampires. The pattern is obvious but chilling.

As a response to this recent sales explo-

sion, publishers have started churning out YA books faster than Stephen King novels. A large chunk of the YA genre shows a trend toward developing books with poor writing, repetitive or clichéd plots, and an unnatural, unhealthy focus on romance. However, it's not as if all teen girls care about is becoming princesses or finding the right guys. Books like *Gossip Girl* are sad and inaccurate portrayals of teenagers today. Their characters



MATTHEW CARLSON

are engulfed in worlds of beauty, fashion, and premature sex—two-dimensional universes that unfairly stereotype teenagers. These authors fail to provide us with any kind of critical lens for our lives, reducing us to mere piles of Gucci and fluff.

The worst part is that we buy into this stuff. Feminists keep talking about how sex-

ist the *Twilight* series is. While I agree wholeheartedly, I can't help but point out that this isn't a failure of Meyer alone. This is a failure of the genre and a failure on the part of teenage girls to speak out for more quality fictional representation. Every time I pick up the newest *A-List*, I can't help but ask: is this how the world sees me? Is this how I see myself? Maybe if authors and readers answered these questions, there would be less of a discrepancy between the quality of books demanded and quality supplied.

Though this small, subpar selection of YA has dominated bookstores for the past few years, there is good YA out there. Most of the really good books are relatively unnoticed by the press. These are the novels that win awards instead of hosting midnight parties. Libba Bray's *The Sweet Far Thing* for instance, is nothing short of amazing. It's got mystery, the romance of Victorian England, and yes, there's a guy. More importantly however, it's about young women who find themselves at an impossible age and free themselves in an impossible time.

I don't just want to hear about the girl that I am—I want to know about the woman I will become or, more importantly, the woman I want to become. Books are meant to do more than indulge our fantasies. They are meant to bond with us, to share in that inexplicable part of ourselves where we can be our most contrary: happy while sad, content yet unfulfilled, mature but young at heart. In short, books are meant to reflect our humanity so that we may look upon it and learn. ☺

Kristen Surya is a sophomore majoring in Economics.



OPINIONATED?

SO ARE WE.

Email Observer@tufts.edu to submit responses, opinion pieces, and join our "Sound Off" team.



All photos by Josh Beers

Josh Beers



Nicholas Dynan



*The 2009 Norris and Margery Bendetson 24th Annual EPIC
CITIES: Forging an Urban Future*





*Anderson 24th Annual EPIIC International Symposium
Forging An Urban Future*



Nicholas Dynan



Dancing with Dictators: Obama's New Diplomatic Opportunities

BY ALEXANDRA SIEGEL

When Barack Obama looks across the geopolitical table at his fellow world leaders, a number of notoriously unfriendly faces stare back. From Ahmadinejad to Putin, Castro to Kim Jong Il, the list of potentially hostile dictators is daunting. On the campaign trail, Obama often spoke out in favor of reviving diplomatic relations with such “enemies,” asserting “strong countries and strong presidents meet and talk with our adversaries. We shouldn’t be afraid to do so. We’ve tried the other way. It didn’t work.” While it remains to be seen how effective Obama’s diplomatic endeavors will be, it appears that the demeanors of many of his adversaries may be shifting in his favor.

As Obama rose in the polls, gained the Democratic nomination, and defeated John McCain, he began to attract international support—some of which came from unlikely places. In June 2008, the *World Tribune* published an article entitled “Obama offers change Kim Jong-Il can believe in.” It seems that the North Korean dictator vastly preferred Obama to John McCain, who he described as, “nothing better than a scarecrow of neoconservatives.” Numerous analysts say that the aging dictator views Obama’s presidency as his last chance to better his legacy before his health further declines. Kim Jong-Il is 67 years old and, after suffering a stroke last summer, has become increasingly preoccupied with improving the state of his country before leaving it to one of his three sons. That being said, North Korea will likely continue to pose problems for the Obama Administration as it works to acquire the nuclear capabilities to “defend itself against American and Japanese imperialists.” Despite this, Kim Jong-Il’s receptiveness to Obama indicates that there may be greater hope for diplomacy—at least more than there was under the Bush Administration which tarnished relations by, among

other things, naming North Korea a member of the “Axis of Evil.”

The Castro brothers have also responded remarkably well to Barack Obama. Fidel Castro described Obama’s inaugural speech as “impressive” and lauded his “noble intentions” and the “honesty with which he expressed his ideas.” This praise comes in sharp contrast to Castro’s anti-Bush rhetoric which included the assertion that “Bush couldn’t debate a Cuban ninth-grader.” Throughout

program. While Obama and Ahmedinijad are likely to have a rocky relationship down the road, there may be some new opportunities for more successful diplomacy.

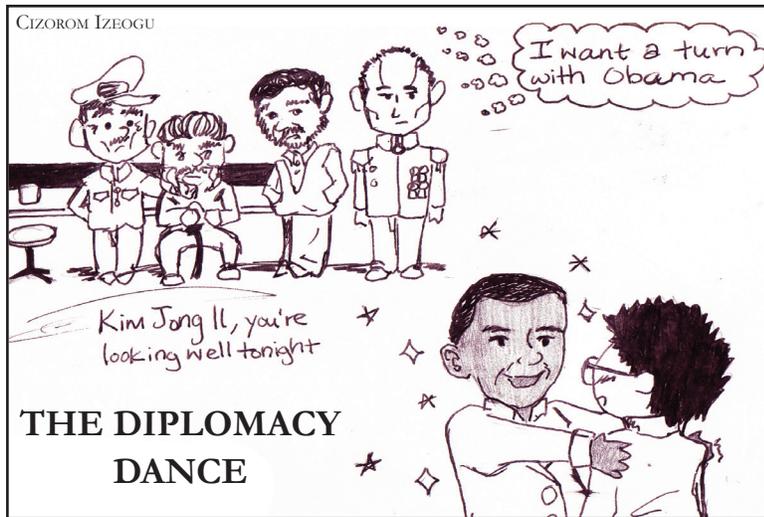
Although Obama may not be able to see Russia from his backyard, it seems that his relationship with Putin and his protégé Medvedev may be improving as well. According to the *Huffington Post*, Putin asserted that if Obama’s campaign platforms are “not just words, if they are transformed into practical policy, we will respond accordingly, and our American partners will immediately feel that.” Recently, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told representatives that “the world is ready for change, and President Barack Obama came to power on a slogan of change.” While US-Russian relations are far from smooth, perhaps these seemingly positive feelings for Obama will allow for beneficial changes.

Barack Obama inherited a nation fraught with challenges both domestically and abroad. During his first term in office,

his campaign Obama promised to meet with Cuban President Raul Castro. He also mentioned the possibility of easing travel and currency restrictions to Cuba. Despite this, Obama clearly stated that the US embargo against Cuba would stay in place until Cuba enacts democratic reforms. Raul Castro has responded positively to Obama and expressed willingness to meet with him at a neutral location such as Guantanamo Bay.

Even Mahmoud Ahmedinijad seems to have warmed to Barack Obama. The Iranian president congratulated Obama on his victory and said that Obama’s election showed the American people’s desire for change from the policies of George Bush. According to Al-Jazeera, “The move was the first time an Iranian leader has offered such good wishes to a US president-elect since the 1979 revolution.” On the campaign trail, Obama asserted that he would consider holding direct talks with Iranian leaders over the country’s nuclear

he will need to confront numerous foreign policy predicaments from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the global financial crisis and the nuclear proliferation. Obama has pledged a commitment to diplomacy and is starting to move American foreign policy in a new direction. However, such diplomacy can only be effective if US adversaries are also willing to engage. Lucky for Obama, it seems that many formerly unfriendly world leaders such as Kim Jong Il, Fidel and Raul Castro, Mahmoud Ahmedinijad, and Vladimir Putin may also be looking for change. Whether these improved relationships are more than just rhetoric remains to be seen, but they are definitely a step in the right direction. It takes two to tango, and it appears that certain dictators are ready to begin the diplomatic dance with Barack Obama. ☉



Alexandra Siegel is a sophomore majoring in International Relations.

[CARPE DEBRIS]

At some point approximately 2 weeks hence, 14 Professor's Row, aka Anthony House, aka Crafts House, for reasons bearing in no way upon the current economic "wtf?" adopted the time-tested practice of "litter liberation," known in some circles as dumpster diving. Here's a list of the liberated articles:

- 50 apples
- 15 onions
- 30 peaches
- 15 loaves of bread
- 1 heads of lettuce
- 3 cantaloupes
- 30 bananas
- 2 cucumbers
- 20 lemons/limes
- 3 roots (?) ambiguous fennel thing
- 2 tubs plain humus (bad call)
- 6 tubs jalapeno hummus (good call)
- 1 tub garlic hummus (eh...)
- 6 pkgs. mescaline lettuce (organic)
- 3 pkgs. baby spinach (organic)
- 15 grapefruits
- 2 artichokes
- 8 tomatoes
- 4 jars dank-ass pickles
- 2 boxes cereal
- 20 Odwalla bars
- 2 lg. boxes maple brown oatmeal
- 2 bags wild rice
- 1 bag basmati rice
- 1 peacock lamp
- 1 sonic stud finder
- 1 300 pc. Art set (2 pc. missing)
- 1 225 pc. art set (5 pc. missing)
- 5 souls-of-our-enemies
- 1 tube artistic cake icing
- 2 pkg. air-dry clay
- 1 4ft-tall windmill erector set
- 2 tubes sparkle glue
- 5 tube acrylic paint
- 1 hair curler
- 1 box fancy paper
- 1 set doll house furniture (Victorian)
- 1 picture frame
- 15 bouquets assorted flowers
- 4 bouquets roses (assorted pink, red)

Crafts House is a vegetarian/vegan co-op that serves free, open-invite, homemade meals Sunday to Thursday at 6p.m. in addition to operating the Crafts Center in the basement of Lewis Hall. ☺

For today's article, I'm going to talk about marijuana. I know you're thinking: Reggie, you always talk about marijuana! While mostly true, I normally obscure this most delightful subject with ugly things like legalization or the militarization of police. Today I just want to talk about marijuana—that beautiful, herbal mistress.

Marijuana is a plant that has, over the millennia, evolved incredible resiliency and breadth of habitat. It's been employed by humans for oil, fiber, and food, but you know what I use it for. Marijuana's active ingredients evolved as natural defense mechanisms against bugs and other pests.

The two main strains of marijuana are Cannabis Sativa and Cannabis Indica. Sativas are native to equatorial regions and grow very tall (+6 foot) with long, thin leaves. Indicas are native to India, the Middle East, and South Asia. They are shorter with thick, bushy leaves and usually boast a higher crop yield than sativas. The difference we care about though, unless you are evaluating the logistics of fitting a lanky sativa in your dorm room closet, is the chemical properties of two strains. Sativas have higher levels of THC, while Indicas have more CBD. I'll explain.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. It is imperative to make you aware that Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is only one part of the abundant collection of active compounds that creates a marijuana high. THC is, of course, the most well known of all the cannabinoids (the family of chemicals that bond to the cannabinoid receptors in the brain). THC produces the "up" part of a marijuana high; the feelings of euphoria and minor hallucinations. It is trippy and hyper, possibly paranoia-inducing and the genesis of the munchies.

Canabidinol (CBD) is the other abun-

GOING GREEN

An Alternative Culture Column
by Reggie Hubbard



dant (about 40% of active compounds) cannabinoid in cannabis. CBD is responsible for the "down" feeling of a reefer high; the relaxation and the almighty itis. CBD is thought to produce many effects that soften the psychoactive properties of the THC. Its most important role, however, is its medicinal use. Rick Sampson, who prescribes hemp oil as a treatment for cancer (with remarkable results, see his website: www.phoenix-tears.ca), uses Indica cannabis hemp oil for its high CBD content and the calming effect. CBD's also help induce sleep, act as anti-inflammatories, and remedies nausea, which is the reason it is often used by cancer patients afflicted with post-chemo nausea and inability to eat and sleep.

However, there are up to sixty other active ingredients in marijuana. The varying ratio of THC to CBD in addition to these other substances gives each marijuana strain its unique properties. It's this variability, from hyperactive hallucination to sedative pain reliever, that makes cannabis so multifaceted. Manipulation of this variability is especially important for medicinal use. Consistency and accuracy are necessities for any medication, so scientific knowledge and consistent access to the right strain are essential for any serious medicinal practitioner.

Most marijuana sold on the untaxed, unregulated market today isn't exclusively indica or sativa. Millennia of human influence have lost the pure, genetic progenitors to cross breeding. But while top weed scientists (obviously wearing white lab coats) have "back-bred" strains to the point of near racial purity such that dispensaries can



WHITE RHINO

A 10/90 sativa/indica with family ties to our old friend, White Widow. Like the Widow, she is hearty, hefty, sweet, and covered in white crystals. A good medical weed.



TRAIN WRECK

90/10 sativa/indica getting a lot of hype lately. Though a sativa, Train Wreck's sticky, popcorn nugs bear the name for a reason. Your face doesn't stand a chance.

honestly label strains as “100% sativa,” the true ancestors are lost forever.

Be consoled yet, friendly smoker. Genetic manipulation has produced hybrids wherein wonderful, unique features of one plant can be mixed with those of another, and another, and another.

There is, however, also a third “family:” Cannabis Ruderalis. This plant has been nearly forgotten about due to its low potency. A sativa gone wild, Ruderalis was naturally-selected for survivability in the harsh Russia climate, so what it lacks in potency it makes up for in ruggedness. Ruderalis is able to flower and produce untended in the wild—a trait even the best outdoor indicas and sativas cannot match. The return of Ruderalis traits to the gene pool may, one day, harbinger in an era of unprecedented ease of outdoor growth. Here comes Johnny Weedseed.

For you, the pot smoker, take this information with you to your reefer jockey next time you’re going for a pickup. If you’re planning on smoking before your Art History class’s fourteenth trip to the MFA, ask for “a sativa” (sativa dominant, but if it’s pure, get me a bag and I’ll hit you back). Try and snag some indica (which shouldn’t be hard) if you’re about to chill and watch Conan.

For me, I love a nice 80/20 sativa/indica for my normal smoke that keeps me happy and doesn’t leave me tired and sleepy. If you smoke more than once a week, it’s nice to pick up two or three different strains at once (weed doesn’t get old! It is, however, very photosensitive). I always try to keep a gram of Sour Diesel or Strawberry Cough around for when I just want to get ripshit stoned.

Which I am now.

Hope you can get here too. ☺
—Reggie



CINDERELLA 99

A personal Moby Dick of mine and close relative of Northern Lights. As a dangerously mindblowing, near-pure sativa, many marijuana resources warn “newbs beware.” I feel compelled, however, to urge anyone who comes across this rare and wonderful bud not to let her go. Easy to grow, enormous yield and “dangerously” potent; why isn’t this princess around more?



SWEET TOOTH

Another fruit of the earth that has treated me right time and again, the Tooth is, hands down, the most sugary-delicious weed I’ve ever tasted. This Cannabis Cup winner is an even sativa/indica hybrid that truly boasts the “best of both worlds.”



SUPER SILVER HAZE

This old-school Cannabis Cup winner has had its high compared to an energy drink and its surface to glue. Enough said.



STRAWBERRY COUGH

80/20 sativa/indica used medicinally for anxiety and depression. The conic buds hint of kiwi as well as creamy strawberry.

THE DISAPPEARING MAN



&

OTHER SAD SONGS

So this fellow (pictured) came down out of the mountains the other day. Jahn Sood is his name. You might know him as the mysteriously disappeared guitarist for our home-town homies, Ezra Furman and the Harpoons. Well, we know where he disappeared to now—the goddamn mountains. Well, I bumped into him the other day at the circus; his [tragic, melodic, theatrical] circus. There were suspended American boys, conniving ring-leaders, and a female acrobat that I suspect of being a polymath due to her double degree in philosophy and religious studies from Stanford, three time U.S. gymnastic team membership, stunning voice and apparently bass guitar skills too. Now, search me for the reason why Sood wanted to make tracks back here so fast, but I’m not complaining. Reason being, with my ass, and the asses of my fellows, glued to our respective seats, Mr. Sood and his merry band gave me a sepia colored guitar and vocal whip’n I forgot existed. His is a lyric tale of melodramatic, post-Depression circus life. Don’t expect any fancy, Hollywood Freudian frills or flashbacks—just the meat and potatoes: love, lust, death and music. Meanwhile, Jahn Sood is the Disappearing Man part of his show and album, “The Disappearing Man, and Other Sad Songs.” ☺

—WILL RAMSDELL

You Can check Jahn Sood out on the web at www.myspace.com/jahnsood

FLAVOR TRIPPIN' WITH MIRACLE BERRIES

BY RYAN CLAPP

Willy Wonka would have loved this berry. It's not hard to imagine a swarm of Oompa-Loompas singing its praises in their velvety baritones, the miracle fruit that turns sour and bitter flavors into the sweetest of tastes. Yes indeed, there does exist a berry that will have you gulping down lemons as lemonade, at least for an hour. It was recently tested right here at Tufts, but, before I preach about my miracle berry experience, let's ladle up some context to whet the appetite.

The berries come from the *Richadella dulcifica* plant native to West Africa and were "discovered" in 1725 by a French explorer who noticed that local tribes chewed them before meals. However, they did not become widely known in the United States until the 1970s, and, more recently, "flavor-tripping" parties offer a sour smorgasbord for those able to lay their hands on some precious berries. Miracle berries are so named because they contain a glyco-protein called *miraculin*, which affects taste receptor cells on the tongue to induce the sweet sensation from sour stimuli like acids.

My mood was also fairly sour when I looked to buy a dose of Miracle Fruit and found that they are not FDA approved and so would be tough to get in the States. Why ban these delectable berries? The titillating story goes that Robert Harvey re-discovered the miracle fruit as a biomedical post-grad student in the 1960s and immediately recognized

the potential for commercial use as a sugar substitute. After promising trials, powerful backers quickly invested in Harvey's company, Miralin, and the FDA seemed close to approving miraculin in early 1974. Several events then occurred.

Miralin's offices were expertly burglarized in the fall, and the FDA file was left lying open on the floor. A car was seen driving back and forth past the offices, slowing down each time, and Harvey said he was followed by another car on his way home. Then came the coup de grâce; on the eve of the product's launch, the FDA abruptly reversed their friendly stance and ordered Miracle Berry products pulled from drug stores across the country. No explanation from the FDA was ever provided, and the Sugar Association has flatly denied any involvement, but Harvey's business partner told BBC that, "I honestly believe that we were done in by some industrial interest that did not want to see us survive because we were a threat."

All the intrigue had me craving miraculin something awful, and since the berries in dried tablet form are perfectly legal in Japan, I snuck past Uncle Sam with a Paypal account hidden under my blouse. Nine days later I had a packet of ten tablets. Globalization can

be neat. A few adventurous friends trooped with me to Dewick for a test, undeterred by the disclaimer waiving responsibility for our possible loss of life. When the FDA doesn't approve a product, there are some pretty funny loopholes Mr. John Q. Questionably Legal Export Company has to close.

We filled our plates with citrus fruits, cheese, and a few veggies, all of which are supposedly affected by miraculin. I would also be remiss not to mention that miraculin allegedly counteracts the bitter and sour flavors in beer and wine (my underage self cannot confirm). A request for multiple lemons went unchallenged by the incredibly obliging Dewick staff, and so the game was afoot. Seats taken, tablets popped, tongues coated. The tablets were distinctly unpleasant, chalky with a bizarre tang. That didn't matter though, because for the next ten minutes we ate lemons and grapefruit like Goldfish. Slap me thrice and sell me to my mama if those lemons didn't taste *exactly* like lemonade!

Folksy expressions are the only way I can think of to convey the unbelievable sensation of expecting sour and getting sweet. Imagine inverting your sense of touch, to expect the smooth surface of a keyboard and then feeling steel wool. It was a thoroughly original experience, and we just couldn't get enough. The citrus was finished in minutes and so experimentation on the rest of our stock began, with varying results. Sour pickles tasted like, well, sweet pickles, which are already around, but the grapefruit was ambrosia. Veggies were largely a disappointment, but cheese was the creamiest!

Modifying the sense of taste is quite a novelty, and if you can spare \$15 there are plenty of sites online willing to ship to the US. Go wild in your quest for the most transmutable foodstuff, but unless you are a tummy-ache masochist learn from this flavor-tripper and be sparing with the lemons. ☺

Ryan Clapp is a freshman who has not yet declared a major.



Google:

[sleeptracker]

[argot.com]

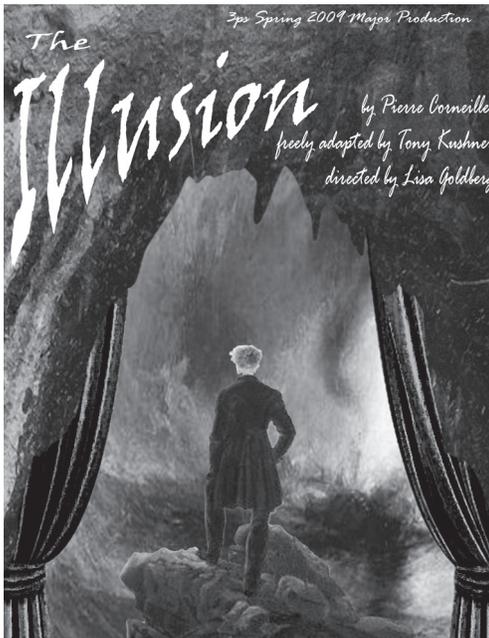
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The Illusion

BY LINA STOLYAR

This semester, Tufts University's student theater group, Pen, Paint, & Pretzels, presents its Spring Major, "The Illusion" by Pierre Corneille, freely adapted by Tony Kushner (*Angels in America*), and directed by Lisa Goldberg, '09. The play follows a man who goes to the cave of the magician, Alcandre, to find out the fate of his son, who ran away from home as a child. The magician, along with his manservant, shows the lawyer three different illusions of various pieces from his son's life. During each of these illusions, the son's name changes along with the names of the people around him, but the people remain the same. The father, simultaneously with the audience, witnesses all the occurrences in his son's life and at the end, everyone finds out the real truth about his son. This play is full of romance, love triangles, sword fights, magical caves, humor, drama, and even stage magic.

"The Illusion" is playing:

Thursday, March 5th at 8PM

Friday, March 6th at 8PM

Saturday, March 7th at 8PM.

Tickets are \$7 and can be purchased at the Balch Arena Box Office or by calling 617-627-3493.

The 20th century dramatist Samuel Beckett is doubtlessly best known for his existential tragicomedy *Waiting for Godot*. The play, which debuted in 1953, focuses on two characters, both of whom are waiting for a mysterious man named Godot, who, like the character upon which the name is derived—*god*—never arrives, and never will. But while the intellectual heft of *Waiting for Godot* is conspicuous and heavy, the dialogue simply sparkles, such that it's more fun than depressing, more amusing than philosophically unsettling.

Endgame, alternatively, is far more sober, bare, and haunting. The play itself is set in a single room in a post-apocalyptic era—*ad ultimum res*, we might say—and involves only four characters, a mother, father, their son, and a butler, who we're led to believe comprise the last four members of our species. We're not told what has led to the end of our world,

just that it has been led to an end. Many pieces set in such a post-apocalyptic nightmare involve characters who are struggling for existence. Against all odds, they seek to survive against the elements — viruses, zombies, robots, and so on. The point is that if you continue to live, there's a chance that dear civilization might again pop up its head and establish control.

In *Endgame*, Beckett's central character pursues a quite different strategy. The son, Hamm (Will LeBow), has chained up his parents far enough apart so that they won't be able to breed, for he thinks it's about time our species makes a final exit from the planet. Whatever humanity did to get itself close to extinction is good enough proof for Hamm that we're not particularly worthy of existence anyway. At times, he'll allow the butler, Clov (Thomas Derrah), to throw a biscuit down

After the Apocalypse

Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*

BY BRIAN MCLOONE

the make-shift cellars in which he imprisons his parents. But for the most part, Hamm's interactions with his parents are brief and impolite. At one point not far into the play, Hamm's mother fails to respond



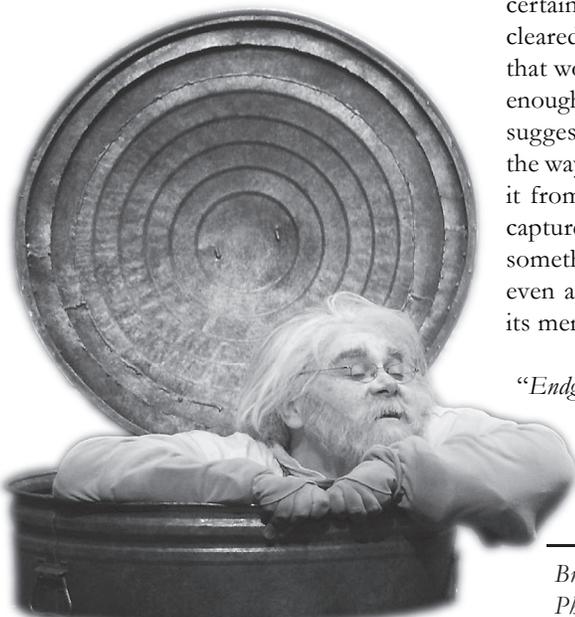
when her husband calls on her. It becomes obvious to all – Hamm, Clov, the father, the audience – that she has just died. But Hamm barely musters a response, let alone a sign of loss.

Clov is an interesting, somewhat necessary foil to Hamm. While Hamm can't stand up because of his illness, Clov can't sit down. And while Hamm is smart and sinister, Clov is stupid and kind-hearted. We're meant to believe that he remains the butler to this deranged sadist because he's simply too dumb to realize that he might be able to make it on his own. One of the overriding tensions in the play is whether or not Clov will muster the courage to bid Hamm adieu, in some effort – however much in vain – to propagate our species just a bit further. Overall, then, the play is rather muted and anticipatory. There are no big crashes or glowing fire, for those have already come and past. The turmoil manifests itself in the macabre, sickly psychology of Hamm, and how the rest of the characters come to grips with their fates.

I don't know why the American Rep-

ertory Theatre has chosen to produce *Endgame*, but it's difficult to overlook the obvious relevance that any post-apocalyptic piece bears to the general tenor of our time. Does every generation feel as though it might be the last, or is this something

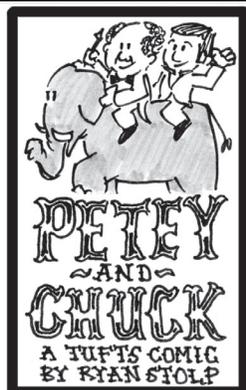
new to this century and the last one? *Endgame* was written during the Cold War, when imminent annihilation was not a theatrical device, but a very real – perhaps likely – possibility. Somehow, our species managed to get past that stand-off, but it certainly would be naïve to suppose we've cleared any worthwhile hurdles. My fear is that work like *Endgame* goes far but not far enough. It might be about time that we stop suggesting that humanity might be headed the way of the dinosaurs and start chanting it from the rooftops. What *Endgame* does capture, nevertheless, is that there is indeed something worth preserving in our species, even as twisted and depraved as some of its members might be. ☺



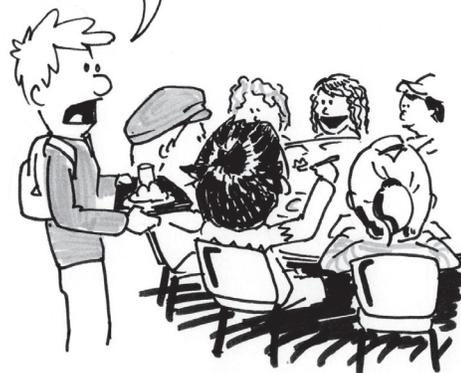
"Endgame" is playing at the American Repertory Theatre at 64 Brattle Street in Harvard Square until March 15th. Tickets can be purchased online at www.amrep.org or by calling 617.547.8300.

Brian McLoone is a senior majoring in Philosophy.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATRE



Hey man, I was just sitting there...



Any questions? ... No? ... Then I guess I'll go ahead and hand out the exam.



HELLO??



Man, Chuck, Ever since I deleted my facebook, it's been like I don't exist!



IT'S WORKING! I think Pete is trying to contact us!



??



SKATING in BOSTON

MAKE THE MOST OF THE REST OF YOUR WINTER

BY SUZANNE SCHLOSSBERG

Landing at Logan Airport after winter break, all I could think about was ice-skating. The snow covering the ground should have brought about thoughts of lunch-tray sledding and frozen snowball fights, but instead I found myself longing for the ice. I had wanted to go skating since the beginning of last semester but, failing to do so, I was determined to convince my friends that a night of skating was the perfect way to start our second semester. So, through pleading and the promise of great food afterward, I convinced a group of friends to set out for the Frog Pond the following Friday night. The Frog Pond is a small ice rink created annually in the Boston Common, which attracts both lifelong skaters and those who

have never been on ice before.

We all bundled up (Hat? Check. Gloves? Check. Scarf? Check. Thick woolen socks that my mother insisted I buy? Check.) and headed out to Davis Square to catch the T. Getting to the Frog Pond could not have been easier. The Common is right off of the Park Street stop on the Red Line, and the skating rink is less than a two-block walk in. Being on a college budget, my friends were concerned about how expensive our night in the Common would be. Going skating, however, ended up costing about the same as a weekend movie and popcorn at the Somerville Theater: \$4 for admission, \$8 for skates, and \$1 for a locker rental.

The Frog Pond proved to be a great activity for a large group of friends (ten of us total), all of whom had varying levels of ice-skating experience. Some of my friends were on the ice and skating circles around me before I'd even had a chance to tie my laces. Others cautiously spent the first few minutes slowly working their way around the rink while staying close to the banister and a skating buddy. Ultimately, when my friends and I ended up sitting on the ice instead of skating on it, a helpful arm or extended hand was always at the ready to help us up again. After about an hour and a half of laughing, falling, and, of-course skating to old pop-rock songs blasted from the Pond's speakers, my friends and I decided that warm food and beverages were in order.

The Boston Common is surrounded by good and easy places to eat, but since I had promised my friends great food, I lead them to the Black Seed Café and Grill. The Black Seed is conve-

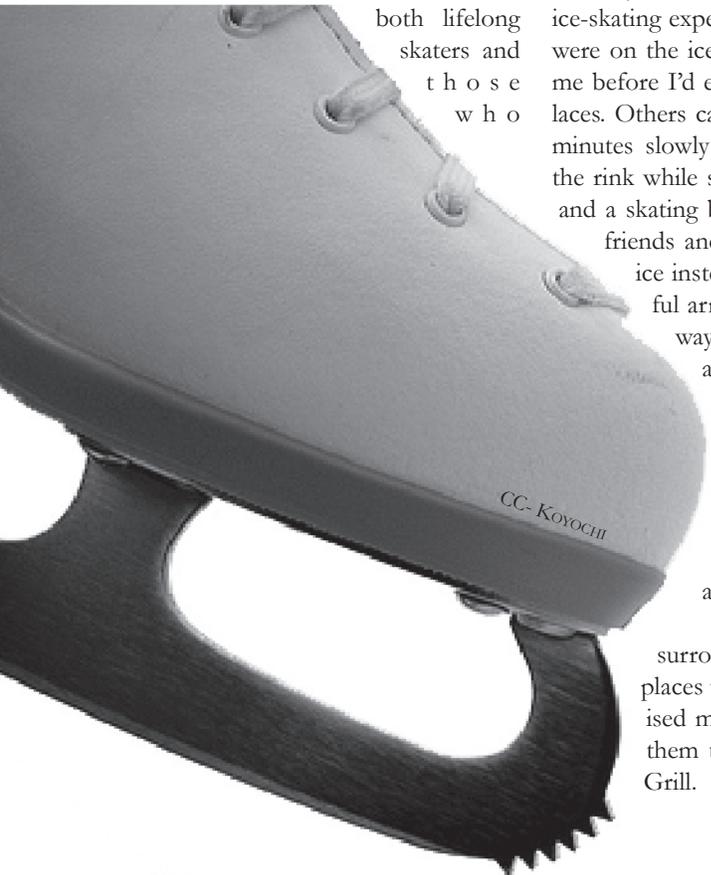
niently located across Tremont Street from the Park Street T stop. So, two blocks later, my friends and I were defrosting in a warm, causal café that offered both quick and non-greasy food with a Mediterranean theme. I had originally found the Black Seed in my quest for a satisfying falafel wrap, and I have since made it a staple of my trips into central Boston.

After placing our orders at the counter, we found that the tables were easily moved to accommodate our large group. As it was a weekend night, this turned out to be a fast and easy way for a large group of people to be able to order and eat without having to deal with a sit-down restaurant or the need for a reservation.

The food is relatively inexpensive (ranging from \$5-\$9 for a dinner-size wrap) and is served in hearty portions. Beside my favorite and highly-recommended falafel wrap, there are a variety of other hot wraps offered, including chicken and lamb, steaming hot vegetarian soups, and classic cold sandwiches. The Black Seed also has a full menu of coffee and hot drinks. After freezing on the Frog Pond, my friends decided that the true crowd-pleaser of the night was the hot apple cider. Generally speaking, big cups of hot beverages for less than half of the Starbucks equivalent are always going to be popular.

When we had all finished warming up and satiating our appetites, we only had a few short steps to the Park Street stop in order to take the T back to Davis. Overall, the night may have been chilly, but the amusement, satisfaction and, convenience of the skating and café proved a great way to reconnect with my friends and take advantage of the city after a restful break. ☺

Want to write for Excursions? E-mail Kathryn.Christiansen@tufts.edu





BITE-SIZED REVIEWS

NEXT STOP Harvard Square

BY JAN MCCREARY AND CHELSEA BROWN

CREMA CAFE
27 Brattle Street

Filled with an array of eclectic cafés, Harvard Square can offer a less conventional escape than that which most Tufts visitors expect. Located on Brattle Street and a three minute walk from the T, Crema Café is the perfect place to relax on a Sunday afternoon among the mix of grad students, Ph.D candidates, and young professionals that crowd the long wooden tables on the first floor of this intimate space. A second floor balcony provides customers with an equally communal atmosphere of tables for two to four people spaced only inches apart.

Although a little pricey for a turkey sandwich (\$7.50) or tuna melt (\$7.25), gourmet-type samplings like Crema's Sweet Potato Sandwich with green apple and avocado (\$6.25) and classics such as Nutella and banana on wheat (\$4.25) make the trip worth it. All sandwiches are served in wooden baskets lined with wax paper, giving the experience at Crema a simplistic feel that complements the acoustic guitar tunes piped through the two-story space.

Salads are reasonably priced variations on classics such as Caesar (\$5.50) and Greek (\$4.75). Crema's main counter also features a full variety of breakfast munchies including yogurt parfaits, muffins, bagels, and pastries (all \$2 to \$3) as well as a variety of cookies(\$2).

Although Crema's narrow dimensions provide the perfect level of coziness for the winter months, visitors should be forewarned that during meal times Crema can become quite mobbed and difficult to navigate.

LA BURDICK CHOCOLATE CAFE
52D Brattle Street

Although Crema Café also offers a fair sampling of sweets, serious chocolate lovers should take the extra five-minute walk down Brattle to L.A. Burdick's Chocolate. On the weekends especially, Burdick's mahogany floors are lined with strollers, parents, and grandparents of young children. For the few undergrads willing to brave the sea of preschoolers, Burdick's hot chocolate (small: \$3) will not disappoint. As thick and creamy as truffle filling and available in dark, milk, or white chocolate, a few sips are usually enough to satisfy a week's worth

of chocolate cravings.

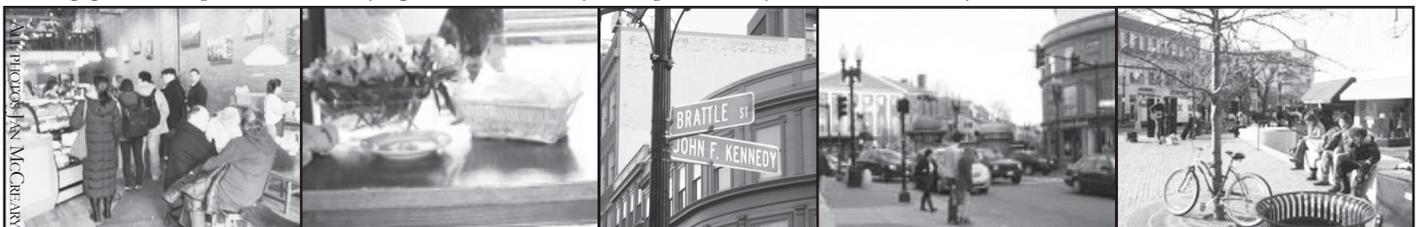
Burdick's also features a counter of homemade chocolates and gift boxes as well as an extensive selection of cakes. Slices (\$4-\$4.50) are fairly small, but their rich flavor makes up for the moderate portions. One of the most popular selections, Burdick's Birthday Cake features layers of chocolate cake and raspberry ganache. For the non-chocolate lovers dragged to Burdick's by their friends, the Linzer Torte, flavored with hazelnut and almonds offers a refreshing alternative.

It's best to visit this gourmet house of chocolate on the weekend before 5 pm. By the early evening, L.A. Burdick's can become quite congested and seating is scarce.

THE TANNERY
39 BRATTLE STREET

In these trying times of economic downturn, everyone is cutting back on superfluous expenses. Strutting down Newbury Street with arms full of shopping bags now makes one look a little more Marie Antoinette than Julia Roberts à la *Pretty Woman*. In this spirit of financial modesty, I nipped down to Harvard Square to find some reasonably priced dress pants to wear to the EPIIC Symposium. Yet after trying on my fourteenth pair at the GAP, I looked down at the starched pants awkwardly flaring around my ankles and decided I just couldn't. I knew what lay around the corner: The Tannery.

This clothing and shoe store is a luxurious designer retail venue, full of smart attire for men and women. Quality fabrics, designer cuts, fabulous shoes... it couldn't be better. And, if the shopping gods are with you, you might just walk in on a day when their sale section is well stocked with great things. It is also one of the best spots for jean-enthusiasts featuring a Baskin Robins-esque selection of True Religion, Blue Cult, Rich 'n Skinny-you name it. The salespeople at the Tannery can be a little pushy, but they are mostly just happy to help and have a knack for finding things you didn't see the first time around. ☺



Tufts Culinary Society Presents...



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Aphrodisiac...

...or Not?

BY LAUREN LEE

If your recipe for an evening of romance begins with a meal consisting of overflowing glasses of wine, a hunk of steak, and potatoes swimming in cheese and cream, your night is bound to end in a food coma instead of your hoped-for steamy session in the sack.

Contrary to popular belief and innumerable old wives' tales, ingesting certain food items will unfortunately do nothing to increase your libido or that of your desired lover. A few of the more common "aphrodisiacs" such as chocolate, oysters, and alcohol have all been scientifically unseated from their former roles as libido-enhancers. Of course, none of this is to say that you shouldn't imbibe or indulge in such foods when feeling extra frisky.

So if you want to prepare a 'meal of love' to knock the socks off your person of interest, your best bet would be to substitute a heavy meal of red meat and dairy products with lighter fare. Heavy meals require more

of your body to digest and thus blood is redirected towards the digestive organs instead of other *ahem* areas necessary for lovin'. However, there is absolutely no reason you should stick to cold rabbit food and go to bed hungry, as there are plenty of lighter but no less delicious options available.

Oysters, known for their aphrodisiac qualities because of their resemblance to a woman's lady bits, still make every ounce the tasty appetizer and rarely require extensive preparation. The key is to find the very freshest oysters possible and make sure that they are all tightly closed upon purchase. An easy method of preparation is to shuck (pry open) them and top them with a few simple seasonings (salt, any herbs you like, a little cheese) and bread crumbs before tossing them into the oven at 425 degrees until the cheese is bubbly and the oysters are sizzling. Be sure you remember to always protect yourself while shucking (ha!) as a slip of the hand can land you in the ER instead of the dinner table. For the oyster-averse, a simple

BUYER BEWARE!

False aphrodisiacs that might stick a fork in your romp in the sack

- Ⓢ ALCOHOL: It only lowers your inhibitions and some, uh, other things...but you already knew that.
- Ⓢ RHINOCEROS HORN: Long believed to be a libido-booster, it really just makes Rhinos look fierce.
- Ⓢ RED MEAT: Just because you eat it, doesn't mean you have it.
- Ⓢ VIAGRA: While it meets the clinical definition of a sexual stimulant, it's not exactly sexy to feed to your partner.
- Ⓢ SPANISH FLY: Actually dried beetle parts; scientifically proven to stimulate your gag reflex. And nothing else.

cheese plate with preserves and grapes makes an even simpler appetizer.

Seared scallops are an easy option for an entrée. Simply heat your (not non-stick) pan and a few tablespoons of butter before plopping your scallops in for approximately one minute per side (more if you have gigantic scallops). As for accompaniments, steer clear of too much white (pasta, potatoes, rice, cream, cheese) in favor of more flavorful sides such as prosciutto or bacon-wrapped asparagus.

And for dessert, there's nothing that gets the serotonin (the same neurotransmitter released during sex) flowing like chocolate. So finish with mini flourless or molten chocolate cakes topped with fruit. If you're lacking in the pastry skills department, finish your meal with some pretty chocolate dipped strawberries. Ⓢ

This is the first installment in a mini-series from the Tufts Culinary Society, "Food for Thought" which will explore the bonds between food and culture.

If they corner you in a parking lot
on a late night, a dark night,
kick dirt in your eyes,
and press your face to the pavement,
I'll sit by the bloodstain that remains.

If a black jeep swerves, hits and runs,
and leaves you in the median, I'll stop
roadside, place a flower and a card,
graffiti your name along the granite.

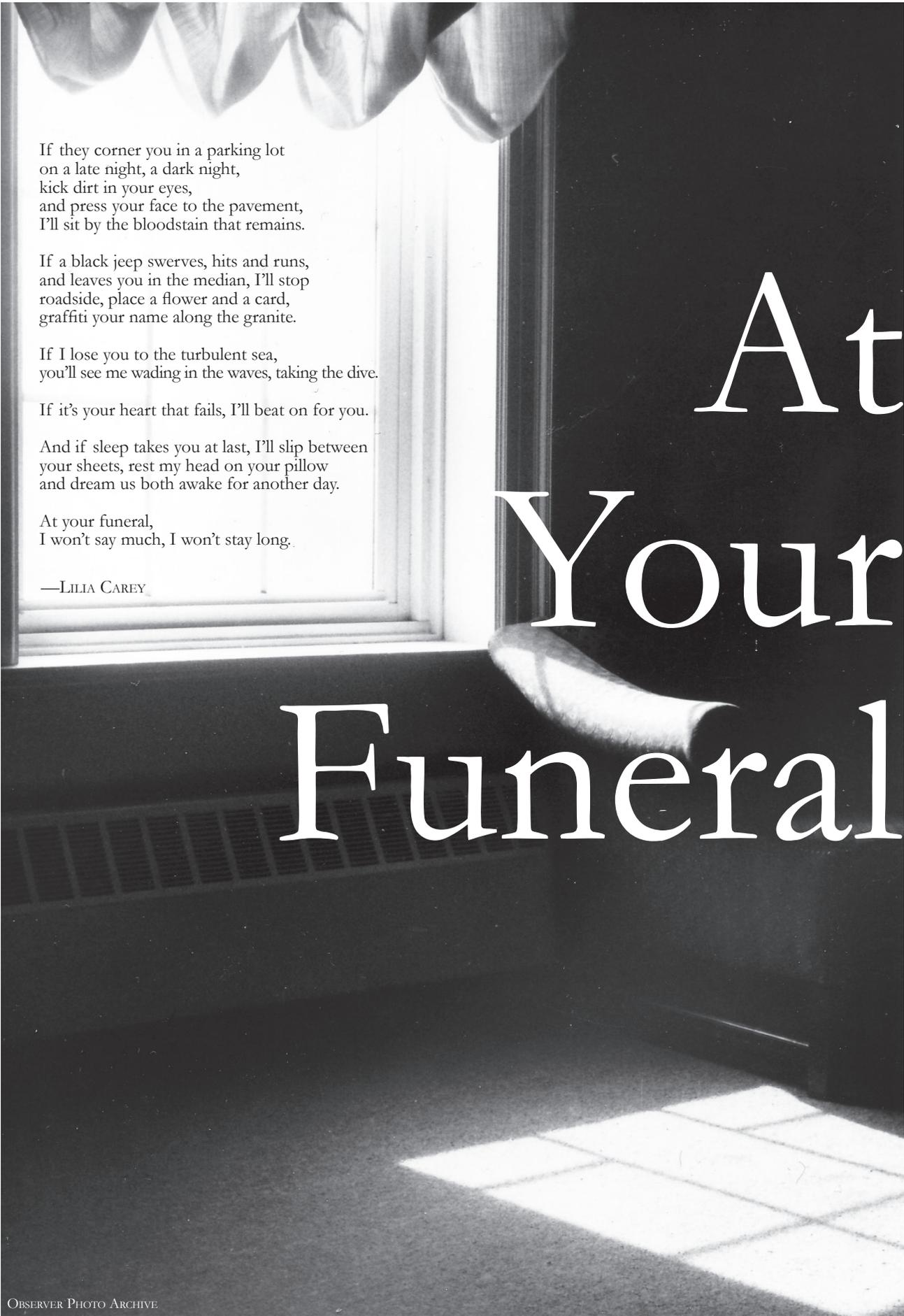
If I lose you to the turbulent sea,
you'll see me wading in the waves, taking the dive.

If it's your heart that fails, I'll beat on for you.

And if sleep takes you at last, I'll slip between
your sheets, rest my head on your pillow
and dream us both awake for another day.

At your funeral,
I won't say much, I won't stay long.

—LILIA CAREY



At Your Funeral

OBSERVER PHOTO ARCHIVE

The Secret of the Cosmos



My root may be irrational
but you can
solve me.

Follow the vein that runs blue from my left palm
to the smooth spot on the belly of my right arm.

Derive me implicitly.

I invite you
to divide my burnt lips
by your silk fingertips.

Approximate my volume
as I rotate around the axis of your desire.

Evaluate the sum of my parts.

I want you
to connect my freckles into constellations and
extract a cosmos from my-pale-skin.

When you reach my extrema
do not abandon me.

Find the limit of my curves.

I need you
to leave me with more –
than just a tooth mark and knotty hair

Stay here with me.

Have a peach or a plum from my fruit bowl of hypotheses
and maybe

I will speak the akousma softly in your ear.

—ROXIE SALAMON-ABRAMS

POLICE BLOTTER



Thursday, February 19

Around 1:16 in the morning, the pungent perfume of pot permeated the premises of Metcalf. The mystery practically unraveled itself (without those darn meddling kids and that big dog) when a student opened a door and the smell grew in intensity. It was also observed that there was a rolled up towel at the foot of the door and a plastic bag over the smoke detector. One occupant first denied and then later admitted to smoking marijuana and eventually relinquished two glass pipes and a grinder.



Friday, February 13

At 2:13 a.m., Tufts police stumbled upon a student who was lying in the sidewalk outside the campus center. While the student was conscious and alert, police along with the Somerville fire department decided that her evening would be better spent lying on something more comfortable, such as a bed, at Somerville Hospital.

“Let’s see if there’s enough happening in Jumbo Land to write something up here...”
-Sergeant McCarthy

“Anytime you see ‘alcohol’ in the heading you always check...”
-Sergeant McCarthy

Saturday, February 21

At roughly 8 p.m., the Tufts fuzz received a tip that a delivery of six 30 packs of beer would be delivered to South Hall. Two officers observed a white bootlegging van stop on Packard Avenue outside Lewis Hall and two white males approach the back of the van. Though the driver asked for ID, the two bulls determined that the two males were underage. The driver left with the hooch and no clams.

Tuesday, February 17

At 7:45 p.m., TUPD followed their noses not to the aromatic scents of a lovely Dewick dinner, but rather to the more unique funk of marijuana wafting from a bathroom on the second floor of Bush Hall. Police made an inquiry to the student in the room across the hall, who admitted to smoking. However, feeling justified in his actions, he explained that it helped him focus on his studying, though he had recently finished all the marijuana in his possession.



“I just hope he finished studying. All of a sudden you have no more [pot], and you have a couple more chapters to finish studying.”
-Sergeant McCarthy

—Illustrated and Compiled by Ryan Stolp



Ryan Orendorff

Tufts Observer

Since 1895

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