

# TUFTS OBSERVER

TUFTS' STUDENT MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2, 2007



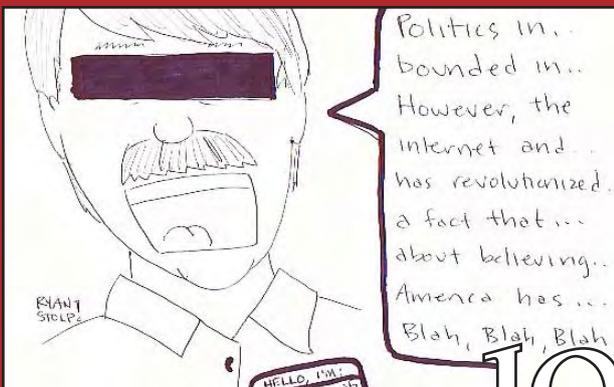
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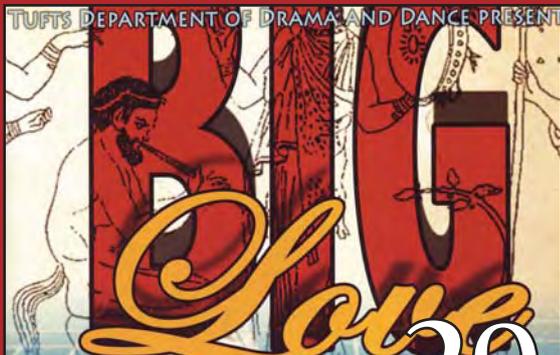
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NEWS  
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OPINION  
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ARTS  
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EXCURSIONS  
A unique guide to the North End

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



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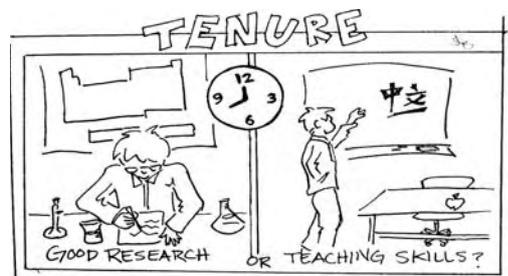
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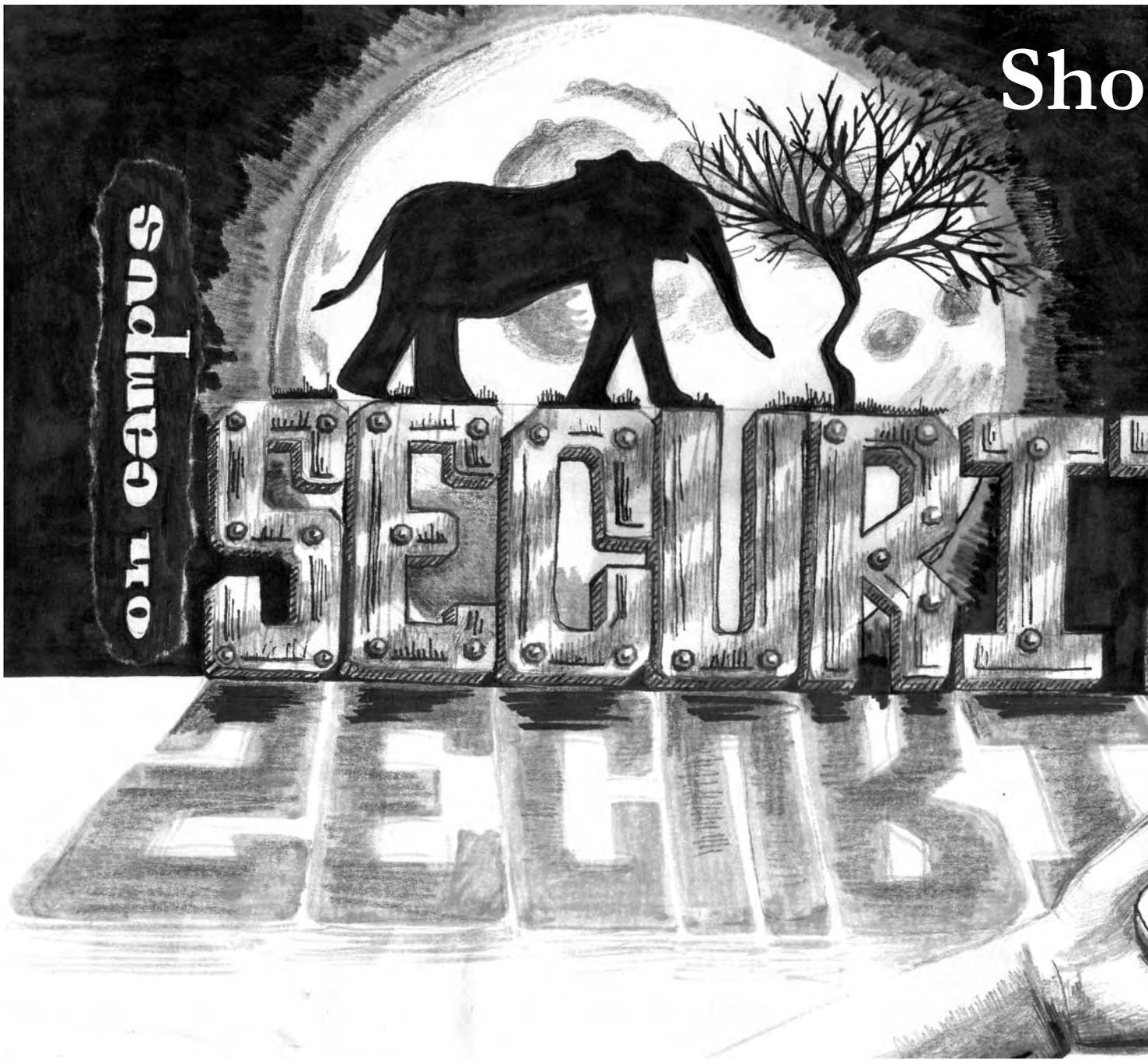
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By SARAH TAUB

**A**s righteous and noble as the idea of trusting your neighbor may be it, is an unpractical moral value. As healthy, successful youths living in a rather enclosed bubble, many of us feel especially impervious to danger and assault. But as the events of this volatile world — and the ever-increasing number of attacks on school grounds prove — we have little control over the crises that dominate headlines. So how much of a real threat to safety is there on college campuses? Where does the danger begin and how can we insure ourselves against it? >>

# ould We be Scared?



CYNTHIA McMURRY

As righteous and noble as the idea of trusting your neighbor may be it, is an unpractical moral value. As healthy, successful youths living in a rather enclosed bubble, many of us feel especially impervious to danger and assault. But as the events of this volatile world — and the ever-increasing number of attacks on school grounds prove — we have little control over the crises that dominate headlines. So how much of a real threat to safety is there on college campuses? Where does the danger begin and how can we ensure ourselves against it?

This impossibility to trust or even know the environment around us has rung especially

true in the past few years, during which once-sacrosanct school grounds have been brutally attacked dozens of times. Indeed, there have already been several assaults on school campuses in the United States this year, including a recent shooting on October 10 at a high school in Cleveland, Ohio. Last year, Virginia Tech experienced the deadliest school shooting in American history, when an armed student shot and killed 32 people and wounded many more. There were also three other shootings on school campuses in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Colorado during the months of September and October in 2006.

There is no doubt that these events have changed and affected the lives and beliefs of people all over the world. But how has our daily life been affected? And how has the implementation of security shifted to better protect schools and campuses?

## An Increase in Crime

On the Medford campus last year, there was a 333 percent jump in violent crimes. What appears to be an intense rise in physical assaults, however, is actually not what it seems — thirteen crimes were reported in 2006 as compared to three in 2005. For this reason, when dealing with such small numbers of misdemeanors, rates of comparison between school years are not always an accurate way of analyzing campus crimes.

There have been two assaults and one robbery on campus so far this year, which, while considered by TUPD to be similar in nature, were probably not associated with one another. TUPD officers regarded the first incident, from September 28, unusual because it was an armed robbery where a gun was shown. According to TUPD Captain Mark Keith, a robbery with a gun is an anomaly both on-campus and in the immediate area, as usually only a threat is made with the demand for property.

The second incident was a failed attempt to steal a laptop and PlayStation from South Hall later that day. The second assault occurred on October 3 and is also considered rare as two students were assaulted. Mr. Keith says that students are usually not attacked when they are in groups of more than one. The attack began as a strong-armed robbery, which means that a demand was made for property, in this case money. When the student refused, the muggers

committed assault and battery.

## National Threats to School Safety

So how real is this threat to safety?

According to Glenn Muschert, who published “Research in School Shootings” in the online journal *Sociology Compass* in early 2007, schools are one of the safest places for young people. He does make a point, however, that victimization of students resulting from non-fatal assaults is quite high, with “rates of 33 thefts and 22 violent crimes, including four serious violent crimes, per 1000 students.” In comparison to non-fatal attacks, fatalities in schools are extremely rare: only about one in two million school-age youth die as a result of a homicide or suicide at school each year, which means that less than two percent of homicides of school-age youth occur at school.

Mr. Muschert also reports that “social scientists have been at work trying to tease out the varying dimensions of this phenomenon.” The researchers have grouped the attacks that have occurred at schools within the past forty years into five categories. They accompanied their work with a fascinating list of the possible causes that fuelled them.

The first category suggested by social science studies is a “rampage shooting,” in which a “member or former member, such as a student, former student, employee, or former employee, formed an attack on a school or group of students selected for symbolic significance, often to exact revenge on a community or to gain power.” The Virginia Tech and Columbine High shootings are examples of rampage shootings. Researchers suggest that the reasons for them include mental illness, access to guns, peer relationships, and familial neglect or abuse.

The second category of school attacks is mass murders, “which are carried out by a non-member of the school community, typically an adult who is not a former student or employee.” The perpetrator “attacks a school institution or group of students for symbolic significance, often to gain power.” Examples of these include the 1927 Bath School Disaster in Bath, Michigan, and the 1996 Dunblane school killings in Scotland.

The third category is a targeted shooting, “which is perpetrated by a member or former member of the institution and is an attack of revenge targeted at individuals for some real or perceived maltreatment.” Targeted shootings occurred in 1992 at Tilden High in Chicago, and in 2003 at the Red Lion school in Red

Lion, Pennsylvania.

The other two categories of school shootings include government shootings, The Kent State shooting in 1970, and terrorist attacks.

### National Reaction to Attacks

So far, the United States has not been faced with a terrorist attack on an academic institution. But, on the whole, attacks at schools seem to be a largely American phenomenon. There has been only one internationally reported rampage shooting in the past ten years.

While access to weapons is less regulated in the United States than in Europe, school shootings seem to be more of a problem of mental and community health. In almost all of the cases involving mass killings, the perpetrators had exhibited mental illness in the form of depression or uncontrollable rage. Professional medical help had even been offered to some of the shooters, such as Seung-Hui Cho, the gunman at Virginia Tech, and Charles Whitman who killed 31 people at the University of Texas in Austin.

What is perhaps more disturbing, though, is what social scientists call the “culture of silence” that seems to afflict many education communities. For example, before the high school shooting in Cleveland at SuccessTech Academy on October 10, the shooter, Asa Coon, told a few of his friends not to attend school that day because he was going to come armed with weapons. Not one of the students reported anything to their teachers or parents to warn of the shooter’s intentions.

### Who Protects Us?

The Tufts University Police Department (TUPD) is a 58-member team with about 40 sworn officers. The TUPD safeguards the school’s three campuses in Boston, Grafton, and Medford, but the different departments consider themselves one entity and officers from each school cover shifts on all three campuses. Each department also works closely with their surrounding local police forces.

Officers assigned to the Medford and

Boston campuses are sworn deputy sheriffs in Middlesex and Suffolk Counties, and officers assigned to the Grafton campus are also designated as special police officers in the towns of Westborough and Grafton. According to Mr. Keith, who has been on the force for 19 years, Tufts police has had a good relationship with their counterparts in Medford and Somerville. He says that his department meets regularly “throughout the year to discuss issues involving crime and security, and we usually meet prior to the beginning of an academic year... to see how things went, and discuss issues that we might be facing in the spring semester.” The departments also collaborate on officer training throughout the year.

use of the escort service has greatly increased, and he further encourages it.

On a grander scale, the University’s department of public safety, the umbrella organization overseeing TUPD, has prepared itself for a multi-person attack by organizing Crisis Management Teams for all Tufts University campuses. According to the public safety department’s website, “in the event of a weather emergency, significant utility disruption, domestic attack or other crisis situation, the appropriate Crisis Management Team will assemble to mitigate consequence [and] promote the safety of the community.”

Mr. Keith says that in response to incidents like those at Virginia Tech, all officers

are required to undergo an Active Shooter Training Program, and that specialized units from surrounding municipalities would be involved in such a situation as well.

Another response to the Virginia Tech

shootings has been the implementation of the Send Word Now program, which is meant to prevent the “communication crisis” that so severely affected the sprawling campus in Blacksburg. Indeed, because college campuses tend to be so spread out, it is difficult to communicate with all students instantaneously.

This is why the Send Word Now program, which allows the University to send messages to students, faculty, and staff, is so essential in time-sensitive emergency situations. Send Word Now works by simultaneously distributing messages to cell phones, email systems, text messaging, landlines, and pagers, and can disseminate critical information to the campus community.

But even in the aftermath of the horrific Virginia Tech shootings and the incidents that have already occurred this year, only about half of Tufts students and faculty gave their email and cell phone information to the University for this program after the administration sent an email on September 19. Because it is so critical in an emergency, TUPD is considering creating another mass sign-up day. ☉

## What is perhaps most disturbing is what social scientists call the “culture of silence” that seems to afflict much of the modern world.

The Medford campus uses four marked patrol vehicles, one unmarked car, a couple of administrative vehicles, and two motorcycles. In terms of standard staffing, Mr. Keith says that at least two patrolmen and one sergeant are usually on duty from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM throughout the week. During hours of higher activity — Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights between 10:00 PM and 2:00 AM — staffing is at its greatest and overlapping shifts are often implemented. There are normally three 11:00–7:00 officers and one sergeant, as well as officers working the 7:00 PM–3:00 AM shift. In response to robberies and assaults on campus, TUPD increased its presence, meaning officers worked later than their assigned shifts.

### Prevention

What else can students do to keep themselves protected in everyday life?

Mr. Keith urges students to always be aware of our surroundings and to not provide opportunities for crime: lock doors and windows, keep private property secured, and use the escort service provided by TUPD (available at x73030). Mr. Keith notes that student

# Tenure at Tufts — Academic mystique unveiled

BY LYDIA HALL AND MARA SACKS

If you think it's hard to get into college, you should try staying there. Despite its career-defining implications for faculty, most students fail to fully grasp the notion of tenure. Occasionally, a professor will announce he or she will be leaving the Tufts community, piquing momentary outrage. But without a complete understanding of the process, students cannot effectively influence the outcome of such decisions.

"In the case that students are upset about a tenure decision, it usually only comes into play after the decision has been made," says Amanda Richardson, chair of the TCU Senate Education Committee. "It's kept so quiet; generally students don't know who is up for tenure, or who they can advocate for." In addition to confidentiality regulations, the closed-door treatment of the subject reflects the vulnerability candidates face throughout the process. The recent denial of tenure to several popular teachers, however, has garnered heightened curiosity about the process throughout the Tufts community.

Departments confer tenure appointments when professors successfully demonstrate superior teaching, research, and service. With the increasing emphasis on research and publishing at Tufts, many have questioned how such priorities abase other expectations of tenure candidates. In addition, increased opportunities for sabbaticals, which are integral to research, have prompted concerns of a "brain drain" at Tufts, in which full-time faculty without tenure teach more courses.

## Publish or Perish

One of Tufts' foremost points of pride in recent years has been its commitment to research. The University spends \$160 million every year on a diverse range of projects, and continually extols the ability of its faculty to balance scholarly pursuits with quality time spent in the classroom. Tufts provost Jamshed Bharucha believes research enhances the teaching experience. "I think

that it's important for faculty members to have time to do their scholarly work and to reenergize themselves intellectually for several reasons," he explains. "One, it's important for faculty to remain current in their fields so they can bring current material into the classroom and challenge students with the most current material. They also need time for professional development. It's important that they be able to excel in their scholarly work, which is also something that manifests itself in the classroom."



*Prof. Charles Inoye shows files relating to a single tenure case.*

But there are some in the community who feel that, when it comes to the tenure process, the emphasis on research has gone too far. Speaking at last month's memorial service for late Prof. Gerald Gill, Howard Malchow, chair of the history department, questioned the increasing importance attached to attracting faculty members with the most prestigious research records.

Praising Prof. Gill, as did many, for his unflinching devotion to his students, he recalled that Prof. Gill had a difficult

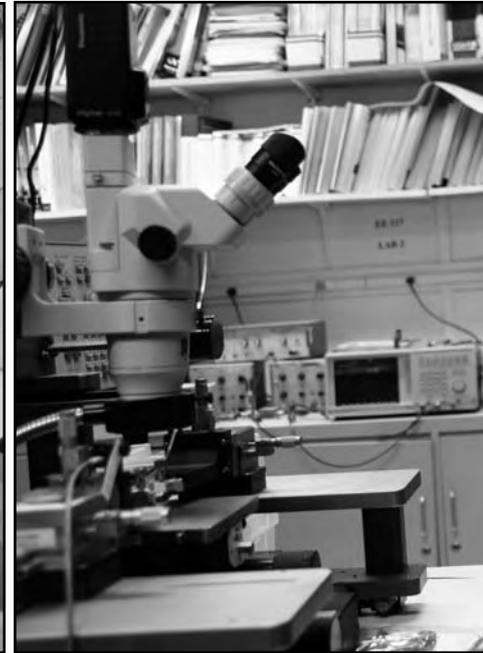
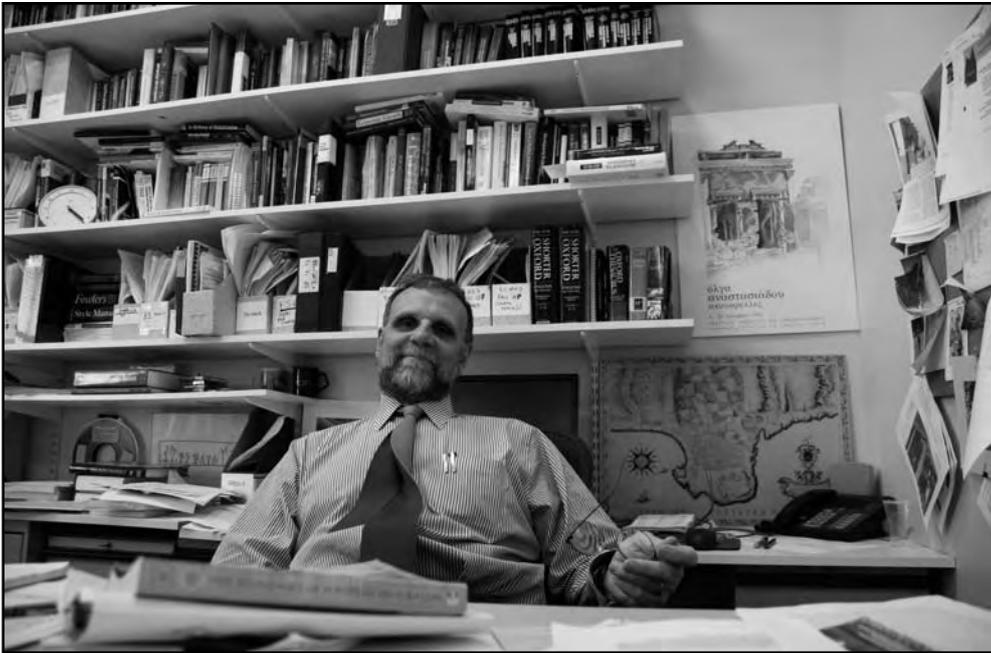
time attaining tenure at Tufts due to his unfinished dissertation. "I wonder if there is not a cautionary note for us today," Prof. Malchow said. "As the University reclaims its determination to ratchet up scholarly criteria, we are told that service is its own reward. Would Gerry get tenure at Tufts today? We need to think hard about the expressed goals of the new Tufts, and how the kind of teaching, service, and engaged scholarship Gerry represented might properly be encouraged and rewarded." He continued: "It is not enough simply to hope that excellence in these areas will flourish anyhow outside a system that privileges the hiring and retention of the most visible, the most prolifically publishing scholars, however flattering that might be to the University's status."

Nevertheless, Tufts continually asserts that research should never come before teaching. "We value research and scholarly activities independently from their contribution to teaching, but they will never become so important that we forget our commitment to educating our students," reads the school's mission statement.

But Gary McKissick, a community health professor, believes it to be difficult to reconcile these two very different missions. "There's a clear sense here that research — and raising money to do that research — is now to be the main enterprise of faculty," he says. "At the same time, the message seems to be that Tufts remains committed to undergraduate education. That's a commitment that is very hard to meet when the message to faculty is 'Spend more time on research.'"

"It appears though that in Tufts' effort to become a Research One Institution, research productivity has priority and teaching and service are not considered equally," says Ms. Richardson. "I am not sure that I am in agreement with this new goal."

While students can be put at a distinct disadvantage in this way, it puts pressure on faculty members that some see as



Meet the team (from left to right): Profs. Yannis Ioannides in economics, Mohammed Afsar from engineering, and Jeffrey Berry from political science are

undue. “At Tufts, it’s clear that you have to have a strong research record, and the expectations on that front have been ratcheted up quite a bit in the past couple of years,” says Prof. McKissick. “But what counts as ‘strong’ is never quite clear — administrators and department chairs are generally loath to quantify it a priori. So, there’s generally a lot of anxiety among junior faculty, and that stress and strain is probably inefficient in important ways.” Even Prof. Berry acknowledges the pressures that exist when it comes to a candidate’s research record. “I think professors are under an enormous amount of stress to produce scholarly work of excellence,” he says. “I think they also work very, very hard at their teaching. We don’t want to promote people who aren’t good teachers.”

“There are times at some institutions in which teaching and research are characterized as in tension,” wrote University president Larry Bacow in the spring 2004 issue of *Tufts Magazine*. “I do not think they are, if we do it right. Great teaching should reinforce great research, and great research should reinforce great teaching.” But when it comes to the University’s tenure process, do the two truly share an equal weight?

### A Negative Verdict

With so many levels of scrutiny it is hard to imagine a tenure case that does not end soundly. In the past few years, however,

several professors recognized for their superior teaching abilities were denied the permanent status.

Many cases of negative tenure decisions were met with surprise and indignation from candidates. Without breaching confidentiality regulations by discussing specific candidates, Jeffrey Berry, chair of the faculty’s Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC), acknowledges that there have been some cases that are divisive throughout the process, producing unpredictable outcomes.

Kerry Chase, formerly a professor of political science at Tufts, was denied tenure at Tufts for reasons unclear to most students. This ambiguity came from the inconsistency between his promising fourth year review and the ultimate denial of tenure.

“My department’s fourth-year review letter flatly stated that if I published my book, I would have a strong case for tenure. After that review, I published my book as well as two more articles, I won the UNITE award for excellence in teaching, and my very high teaching evaluations got even better,” says Prof. Chase. “But my tenure case was divided, whereas my fourth-year reappointment had been unanimous.”

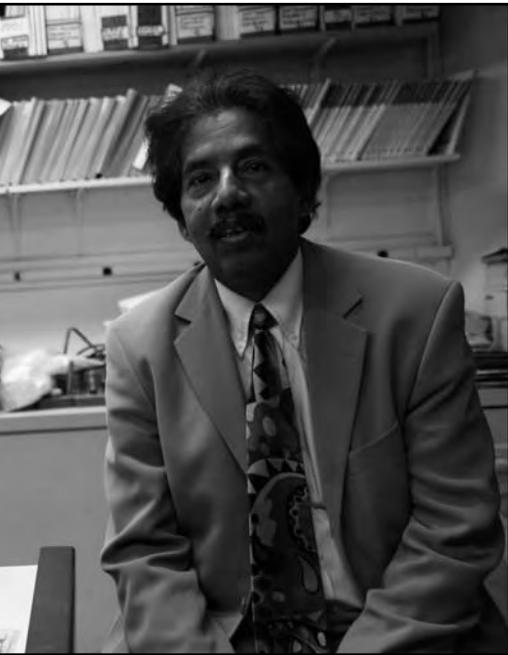
Prof. Chase points to interdepartmental tension as partially responsible for the unforeseen outcome. “Late in my pre-tenure period, the department chair who I relied on and trusted left the department to become a dean,” he says. “There was more conflict among the tenured faculty over the depart-

ment’s direction and priorities. Department meetings became uncomfortable. I tried to keep a low profile, but faculty divisions are difficult to navigate when you are coming up for tenure.”

Another strange case involves Prof. McKissick. Unlike Prof. Chase, Prof. McKissick never submitted his candidacy for tenure. As Prof. Berry noted, most professors who will be denied tenure are typically cautioned out of the process. Despite the fact that he received such counseling, Prof. McKissick was not spared embarrassment.

“My situation was both simple and complicated,” he says. “I had a tenure-track appointment in political science, and it was obvious that I wasn’t going to get a favorable pre-tenure review from the department. The reasons for that were clear — my research record was deficient — and so my fate was quite easy to predict. My case was complicated, though, by the fact that I had a joint appointment in Community Health, and Community Health was happy to keep me employed.”

Rather than a seamless transition from tenure-track to non-tenure-track, however, Prof. McKissick faced a difficult predicament. “To stay employed as a faculty member at Tufts, I couldn’t get a ‘no’ vote on my pre-tenure review, and so I had to withdraw from the whole process. Of course, withdrawing from the tenure process can make a person look especially unworthy, at least in the eyes of some people at Tufts. In effect,



are all members of the Tenure and Promotions Committee. They are responsible for approving long-term employment for tenure-track professors.

then, I had to declare myself a total loser in order to keep some semblance of my job,” says Prof. McKissick. Although the treatment of the case was clearly unfavorable, Prof. McKissick adds, “The best part about this, though, was that it all happened in the same academic year that the TCU Senate named me ‘Professor of the Year.’ I’m a big fan of irony, and that one will stay with me a long time.”

### The Tenure Process

The tenure process is extensive. It takes approximately one year from the time a professor submits his candidacy, to the time the Board of Trustees reaches an official decision. Throughout this year, four different committees evaluate the candidate.

First, the tenure candidate submits his case to his department. This typically occurs after the professor has been on tenure-track at Tufts for five years. In some cases, a professor will submit his or her candidacy earlier — this typically only occurs when he or she has taught at another institution for a period of time, and has had an opportunity to research and publish.

For the most part, candidates only subject themselves to the tenure process when they are confident that they will be successful. Although candidates are wise to abstain from entering the process for long enough to amass teaching and research experience, Prof. Berry explains that tenure-track professors cannot avoid it for too long.

“You can’t be here for more than five years without having a tenure decision made. In that position, it’s either up or out — you’re either given tenure, or you’re given an additional one-year contract, terminate,” says Prof. Berry.

In the first level of evaluation, tenured members of the department meet approximately three or four times to discuss the professor’s candidacy. They assess scholarship, teaching, and service, by gathering relevant material from internal and external sources. Internal sources include the professor’s curriculum vitae, student evaluations, the TCU Senate recommendation, and input from fellow faculty members. The department also solicits letters of recommendation from professors from prestigious universities who specialize in the candidate’s area of expertise. The department votes on whether or not the professor should receive or be denied tenure, and the department chair writes a letter discussing why they recommend or do not recommend the candidate.

Discussing the rationale department members apply to tenure cases, José-Antonio Mazzotti, chair of the romance language department, says “priority is given to research, then their teaching, and then their service. Wonderful teachers might not get tenure for many reasons — for example, lack of service — so they must be treated on a case-by-case basis. [Tufts] is more and more of a research university, so top priority goes to research and publishing, but

still professors are supposed to be complete educators.”

The recommendation and all of the corresponding material are then sent to the TPC, comprised of six elected professors who evaluate each professor applying for tenure. In addition to the information provided by the department chair, the TPC receives sealed letters of recommendation from students, faculty, and other members of the community. The candidate is also able to submit additional information to the committee based on the recommendation letter from his or her department. “At Tufts, the process is much more transparent than at other schools — in many places, the candidate is just told the department voted, but is not told what the decision was,” says Prof. Mazzotti. “At Tufts, the candidate reads the letter by the department on the recommendation they made, [so he or she] has an opportunity to address those issues with the TPC.”

The TPC does not officially grant tenure, but rather formulates a recommendation for the dean of the school. After the dean has had an opportunity to review the case, he or she makes a recommendation to uphold or reverse the earlier decision, which he or she then sends to the provost. The provost takes the case to the president, and then to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. Although the TPC recommendation is probably the most influential evaluation, and it is extremely unlikely for a candidate to receive tenure if the Committee votes against

## The Brain Drain

The sabbatical has long been a valued part of a professor's experience. Offering a chance, after six or seven years of teaching, to get out of the classroom for a semester or longer, sabbaticals are seen as an important opportunity to pursue research and for professors to rejuvenate themselves intellectually. They travel and pursue various projects, even, at times, soliciting outside grants.

Over the years, Tufts has attached growing importance to these leaves of absence, even increasing the number of sabbaticals for junior faculty members.

Provost Bharucha sees them as an opportunity to enhance teaching skills. "I can't emphasize enough that sabbaticals and leaves for faculty are extremely important if we want to maintain high standards of teaching," he says. "We pride ourselves on being a very special institution that places a very high value on quality of teaching and on scholarly work, and I strongly believe that's the winning combination for the future."

This is, he believes, to the best advantage of students. "Students can use Google to find out if their professors are pushing the boundaries at a national level," says Provost Bharucha, "And I think students want that, they want to know that they have a world leader teaching them."

President Bacow acknowledges the importance of sabbaticals when it comes to hiring top faculty. "It's a very, very competitive market," he explains. "To get the best faculty to empower students, we have to offer them a competitive hiring package. That means competitive salary, competitive facilities, attractive classrooms, modern technology — and part of that package is support for their scholarship. That means that one of the things we have to do is offer them sabbatical opportunities periodically."

This is, however, not without its difficulties. "It comes with a cost because it means that some people will be on leave," President Bacow explains. Ultimately, though, he believes that it is beneficial, as "what they bring back to the classroom is the experience they had while they were on leave."

But Prof. McKissick is unsure about the increasing importance of the sabbatical. "More time on research almost certainly means more professors taking leaves or 'buying out' their teaching obligations with grant money," he says.

But this raises questions: "Who is going to teach the classes? Who is going to spend time with students?" asks Prof. McKissick.

"On the one hand, the administration sees classes taught by non-tenure track faculty as an embarrassment. But on the other hand, the signals from and actions taken by the administration tell faculty to get out of the classroom and into their research — leaving who to teach? How do you reconcile those mixed messages?"

it, the Trustees render the final decision.

The process is undeniably lengthy and invasive, but Prof. Berry explains, "[There aren't] many professors that come up that don't get tenured. You wouldn't go for tenure unless you had a good shot at it. It's too humiliating otherwise, to be rejected. You have your dossier sent out to ten of the leading experts in your specific area; you wouldn't want letters that said, 'This person's mediocre.' So the people who aren't going to get tenure, by and large, fall by the wayside."

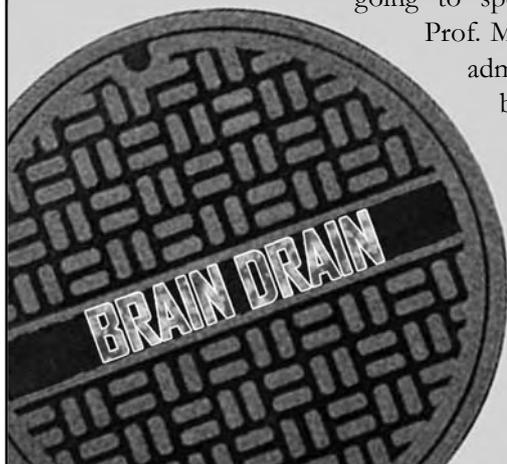
The second and fourth year reviews are constructive opportunities for tenure-track faculty to gauge their progress and chances at attaining tenure. These reviews are formal meetings in which department members communicate their expectations to the tenure-track professor.

On some occasions however, reviews do not accurately anticipate later tenure decisions. Prof. Chase explains, "If this process is consistent, junior faculty make adjustments or move someplace where their talents are more appreciated. If it is not consistent, then unexpected tenure denials occur — an event that demoralizes the scholar who must try to salvage the career he or she has laboriously built and devastates the family that must face an unforeseen job loss."

### The Fine Print

According to Ms. Richardson, as many as 20 or 30 professors can come up for tenure on any given year. It is important to recognize the subtext of the tenure process: only *tenure-track* professors are eligible for tenure. Within the School of Arts and Sciences, there are currently 48 professors in line for review. The vast majority of the faculty is at a different career point — 213 professors are tenured, and 341 are non-tenure-track members. For the School of Engineering, there are 17 tenure-track professors, 44 tenured professors, and 55 non-tenure-track faculty members.

The contract a professor receives upon beginning employment with the University specifies the terms of his or her position. Professors are often brought in on a part-time or visiting basis in order to fill voids left by professors on leave or sabbatical. Last spring, Karyn Esielonis, a visiting lecturer of art history filling in for a tenured faculty member, announced she was leaving Tufts. Students were furious and filed a petition



to appeal her departure. “I was simply a visiting lecturer hired on an as-need basis to replace faculty members who were on sabbatical,” she explains. “The students very kindly submitted a petition to keep me. I was really touched by their gesture, but I fully understood (and understand) the limitations of my position.”

The terms of such non-tenure track

Ms. Richardson points to the importance of this responsibility, “We really value this experience — it wasn’t until a few years ago that the Senate was even given an opportunity to write on behalf of students.”

Provost Bharucha explains that the administration has reached out to the student body to improve the tenure process in recent years. “I’ve had some very productive

process, is good at selecting a certain kind of person,” he says. “Whether that kind of person is the only kind of person who can add value to Tufts and, especially, to Tufts undergraduates’ experiences, is not obvious to me.”

Prof. McKissick wonders if a better system couldn’t be implemented. “Perhaps there’s a way to imagine a system of higher

## “Great teaching should reinforce great research, and great research should reinforce great teaching.”

appointments are often unclear to students, yet Provost Bharucha cautions them from disregarding the contribution these appointees offer.

“The person who is hired on a temporary basis brings in new blood and new ideas into the departments,” says Provost Bharucha. “I think that we shouldn’t underestimate our non-tenured and non-tenure track faculty who can contribute a lot.”

It is also important to note that the ratio between tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty varies based on the needs and requests of each department. “For example, departments in the performing arts often recruit practicing performers from the community to provide instruction on musical instruments or to direct performance ensembles,” says Suzanne Miller, assistant director of public relations for the University. In addition to variations across departments, the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine and the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy have historically not had a tenure system.

### Do Students Have a Say?

Although students are often spared direct participation in the tenure process, their opinions are not forgotten. Students weigh in on candidates in two predominant ways: through course evaluations, and the TCU Senate Report. Each year, TCU Senators meet with Catherine Doheney, Secretary of the Faculty, to learn about the tenure process and their role in it. When a professor submits his candidacy for tenure, senators go to the department to review the stack of student evaluations that have accumulated over the years. Although departments record statistics and composites of teaching evaluations each semester, senators review the gamut of comments and student remarks.

conversations with the Senate about how we can improve the assessment process because some work is needed on it,” says Provost Bharucha.

Prof. Berry emphasizes the credence the TPC pays to student evaluations and the TCU Senate Report. “We look at the student evaluations, we actually read them, we don’t look just at the summaries, we read the individual comments,” he says. “There are also some times when individual letters come from students who are mentored by the candidate, and we look at those very carefully.”

Without public disclosure that a professor is up for tenure, however, it is unlikely that students will have much notice to voice their opinions. Ms. Richardson acknowledges the Senate and Provost’s office have struggled to find ways for students to have a more direct impact on the process. Petitions seem to fall on deaf ears given the fact that they are often signed after the decision is final. “I think that if there was an effort to make the process out in the open, students would have a chance to send letters on the professor’s behalf,” says Ms. Richardson.

### Is It Effective?

Ultimately, there seems to be no easy consensus about the effectiveness of the tenure track system at Tufts. There are those who question the process for its promise of a permanent, guaranteed job, arguing that it leads to a sense of complacency in professors. “Infinite job security leads to lack of desire to improve,” opines one recent Tufts alumnus, adding, “Tenure should not be as important, or as hard to lose.”

Prof. McKissick believes that the system has both its advantages and its flaws. “The tenure system, like any decision

education that finds room for different skill sets without sacrificing the institution’s overall commitment to research,” he speculates. “A school like Tufts, after all, is trying to serve multiple audiences. Maybe that could best be done by creating an environment that didn’t depend on the fiction that research and teaching are complementary, if not functionally equivalent, skills.”

It is also interesting to examine the tenure track systems employed by other colleges and universities around the country. Some schools, for example, guarantee tenure in some of their departments immediately upon the hiring of a new faculty member — St. Olaf College in Minnesota is one of them. Others, like the University of California schools, offer greater transparency throughout the process, allowing the candidate to read all non-confidential documents and redacted versions of documents deemed confidential at any time. Still others have foregone the tenure process altogether.

Although many argue that the process is in need of revision and greater flexibility, President Bacow maintains that the administration is comfortable with the current tenure requirements. “In the same way that it has gotten more competitive to get into college,” he says, “the tenure process has become more competitive.”

Prof. Berry believes that whatever flaws the Tufts tenure process may have, those involved in it do the very best that they can. “Do we give tenure to the right people?” he asks. “I think we’re usually on target. There’ll be the occasional case where people divide, but we do the best we can. We’re human,” he adds. “And our judgment is not perfect, but we try very hard to make the decision that is as objective as we can with our judgment.” ☉

# BEYOND BLACKBOARD

*Professors and students find a voice in cyberspace*

BY ALEXANDER DIETZ

In the past six years, the advent of blogging has changed the face of the news, the Web, and by extension, the world. In 2006, *The Economist* likened it to the invention of the movable-type printing press, which took Europe into a new age. Several months later, *Time* magazine chose “You” as its Person of the Year, not (entirely) in an attempt to pander more transparently than John Edwards at a socialist convention, but to recognize the profound influence of personal and participatory media.

Has blogging impacted Tufts like it has everything else? It is difficult to judge offhand how many students and faculty members have blogs, much less how many read them. Still, the format has manifested itself in visible and provocative ways. From a Fletcher professor who writes one of the foremost blogs on international relations, to startup sites hoping to seize on a new niche in campus media, to the more ordinary postings of undergraduates, the format is making its mark on campus.

## The Professor

Daniel Drezner seems modest enough for a man whose personal website is viewed about 3,500 times a day. “I’m not sure I’m all that popular,” says the associate professor of international politics at the Fletcher School. “I mean, I’m popular by the standards of most bloggers, but compared to someone like

Andrew Sullivan or Atrios, I’m just an insignificant gnat at this point.” But the Truth Laid Bear, a ranking of blog popularity, calls him a “large mammal,” the fourth-highest category in its “blogosphere ecosystem.”

Prof. Drezner decided to get into the then-nascent fray of online opinion in late 2002. He had read blogs before, and found them interesting, but says that “following the 9/11 attacks, there was a lot of blogging about international relations and not a lot of people who were blogging had any training in international relations, or any sort of education. So I thought there was a niche I could fill.”

After he was offered a monthly column on *The New Republic’s* website, his blog ([danieldrezner.com/blog](http://danieldrezner.com/blog)) took off. Nevertheless, he claims to have “no idea” what explains his popularity. “I think it was a combination of luck and being an early entrant,” he says.

Why does Prof. Drezner blog? “Because I don’t have a direct pipeline to the New York Times op-ed page,” he quips. He finds inspiration from surfing the Web, and his site provides a way in which he can comment on material he finds relevant. “You know, I blog because I think I occasionally have something interesting to say,” he says.

Prof. Drezner says that blogging has added significantly to his scholarship. For academics, he says, blogging “functions as a sketchpad of embryonic ideas that you can potentially convert into longer thought pieces, either in the form of a scholarly article, or as an op-ed or a policy-related article.” In fact, several of his published papers in such publications as *Foreign Affairs* and *The Journal of Perspective on Politics* began as blog posts.

Similarly, Prof. Drezner says blogging has been an asset to his work in the classroom. “For me, it’s been useful,” he says, “because it’s sort of a way of coming up with the right anecdote to connect an abstract idea that I’m trying to get, and concretize it to students.”

However, he says the honesty and informality of the for-

mat is not necessarily always a good thing for professors. “By its very nature, being a professor needs some degree of formality. And so I think sometimes students feel they might have an over-degree of familiarity based on what you blog about, or based on the fact that you have a blog.”

At the beginning of each course, therefore, Prof. Drezner has to explain to his new students that his blog will not be a part of the curriculum. “I always make it very clear from day one. I say: ‘Look, I have a blog, you certainly don’t need to read it to do well in this course, and God knows you don’t need to read it back to me to do well in this course,’” he says. “I think some of them do read it, some of them don’t. And the less I know about their reading habits, the better.”

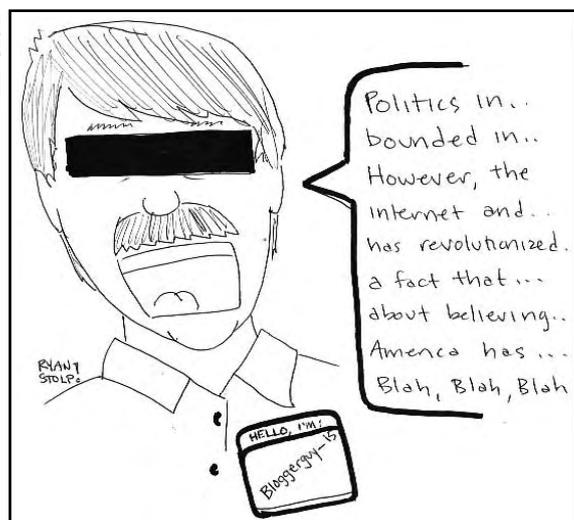
In addition to posting written items, he also appears regularly on [bloggingheads.tv](http://bloggingheads.tv), a site that features video conversations, or “diavlogs,” between prominent bloggers and journalists. It has hosted some of the biggest names in the business, from Glenn Reynolds of “Instapundit” ([instapundit.com](http://instapundit.com)) to Andrew Sullivan of “The Daily Dish” ([andrewsullivan.com](http://andrewsullivan.com)), but Prof. Drezner doubts that diavlogging is the next big thing. “Let me put it this way,” he says, “The day you see E! having a diavlog on Britney Spears, then I’ll know the format’s hit the big time, but I don’t really see that happening.”

How does Prof. Drezner find time to post on his blog regularly in addition to teaching classes, writing books (he has four, so far), appearing on [bloggingheads.tv](http://bloggingheads.tv), and writing articles in general-interest and scholarly publications? “I clone myself,” he explains. But in all seriousness, “No, I think the answer is that it depends. You know, actually, there are days that I don’t blog, and the length of time it takes for me to write a post can run anywhere from ten minutes to a few hours. Probably you as the outsider don’t know necessarily which is which.” Also, he adds, “I watch much less television than I used to.”

## The Photographer

Undergraduates have also tried their hand at the format, in various ways and with varying results. Some have had experience with

RYAN STOLP



blogging through internships. Daniel Halper (A'09), for instance, contributed to *Commentary* magazine's blog "Contentions" ([commentary-magazine.com/contentions](http://commentary-magazine.com/contentions)) during his work at the publication this past summer. Similarly, Samuel DuPont (A'08) has written for *Foreign Policy's* "Passport" blog ([blog.foreignpolicy.com](http://blog.foreignpolicy.com)). That young people could be exposed to such tools through more established sources is a testament to the maturity and pervasiveness of the new media.

Shane Lavalette (A'09), who studies at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts as well as at Tufts, has achieved minor success with his

been hopelessly overhyped, Mr. Lavalette exemplifies some of the best that the new media revolution has to offer. "For myself, I see blogging as a learning experience," he says. "My hope is that it feels that way for my readers as well."

### The Amateur

Others have taken the more traditional route, and set up blogs that have had less influence, though they are not necessarily without merit. A senior majoring in political science and communications, who requested to remain anonymous, is one of them. He writes "Yoda

basically, you know, we have two years, and then we have another election. We can't feel defeated, we need to work back up." He was surprised to see the post draw fifteen comments, since he could usually expect one or two at the most, and realized that his writing could have a real effect on people.

The student sees the format as the antidote to the one-way nature of the mass media. "I really hope to see the trend continue, where we're not just receiving information, we're also putting our thoughts out there," he says. "And even though sometimes it can be hateful, and sometimes it can be just noise, overall it's good

**"I mean, I'm popular by the standards of most bloggers,  
but compared to someone like Andrew Sullivan or Atrios,  
I'm just an insignificant gnat at this point."**

blog covering fine art photography ([shanelavalette.com/journal](http://shanelavalette.com/journal)). On October 8, he was selected as one of 20 finalists for a \$10,000 scholarship through the site [CollegeScholarships.com](http://CollegeScholarships.com), to be awarded to a college student with an exceptional blog. At this article's deadline, he did not look likely to win, but says he "was very happy to be selected."

Like many his age, Mr. Lavalette started blogging in high school. "My blog began as a way for me to archive my own artistic endeavors," he says. "When I came to college, however, my motivations changed and I decided the venue would be much better used as a way for me to learn about and investigate what other artists were doing"

Mr. Lavalette does not share the view of those who say that blogs have merely added to a cacophony of facts and opinions, such as writer Alan Jacobs, who last year called the medium "the friend of information but the enemy of thought." "I always tell people that I think one of the most special parts about blogging is that it allows for intelligent discussion in a form that's accessible," Mr. Lavalette says. "It's very easy for readers to write a comment about a post and often times these comments will spark useful and interesting dialogue."

He describes a series of interviews with contemporary artists that he has featured on his site as "one of the most rewarding parts of the blog yet, as it allows for me to speak directly to artists that I'm inspired by and ask them questions that I'm dying to hear answers to." While the term "citizen journalist" has

2.0" ([yodatwopointoh.blogspot.com](http://yodatwopointoh.blogspot.com)). He is as humble as Prof. Drezner about his traffic, but perhaps has more reason to be. "Maybe ten people are aware of it," he says. "The readers who I know about are people who I immediately live with or have lived with this summer, and I'll say 'Oh, I updated my blog,' 'Oh, I'll look at it.' I don't know who else is reading it"

In this respect, the student is typical of most bloggers. The average number of readers for blogs at LiveJournal, a popular and enduring blogging service, is seven. Even so, while he admits he is no Walter Cronkite, he does not see the practice as an exercise in narcissism. "I like to inform, if there's information out there I want to spread, I like to disseminate it as much as I can," he says. "I guess it's for my own benefit, if you want to put it that way. But I do like to share the information. I don't just write about my day, I write about issues, and I write about public officials. It's not just for me."

The student began blogging in high school, writing mainly with a personal focus. He also wrote in some detail about his experiences abroad at *Blague06* ([blague06.livejournal.com](http://blague06.livejournal.com)), a so-called "travelog." But he began to concentrate more on politics after President Bush won reelection in 2004.

"I remember a little after, maybe within days of the '04 election, a lot of people were really upset and really disillusioned and just ready to give up, that was the feeling in the air at the time," he says. "And I wrote a post on what was still my LiveJournal, and I said

because people are having a voice." He admits his own voice is relatively small, but he's glad to have it just the same.

### The Renegade

Since the early 1980s, campus media at Tufts has been dominated by three publications: the *Tufts Daily*, *The Observer*, and *The Primary Source*. Occasionally, other players have emerged on the scene. While it is all but forgotten now, Brian Finkelstein (A'01)'s now-defunct "Brian's Rumors Daily" site once exercised enormous influence on campus. Six years ago, one observer said, "you have to be asleep around here not to know that 'Brian's Rumors Daily' page existed"

At its height, the site attracted an average of 4,461 unique visitors a month, comprising 16 percent of respondents to a *Daily* poll. Unfortunately, its open character also drew comments described as personal and racist attacks, which contributed to Mr. Finkelstein's decision to abruptly shut it down in April 2001.

Can the success of "Brian's Rumors Daily" be repeated while avoiding a similar demise? The people behind the new blog *Tufts OTR* (short for "On The Record," accessible at [tuftsotr.com](http://tuftsotr.com)) think so. One of its writers, who goes by the pen name "the Philosopher," says that time, along with other factors, has made the ground more fertile for a new source of campus news. "The fact that it's 2007, not 2001 as in that piece, means people are more geared towards blogging and absorbing news

*Continued on page 13*

# Study Abroad Scams: Is Tufts Immune?

BY PATRICK ROATH

There's no such thing as a free lunch. And now, for officials in Tufts' Office of Programs Abroad and Study Abroad, there's no such thing as a free trip — if it's being paid for by an external study abroad provider. This policy is new for Tufts and is a reaction to recent national developments. In the wake of allegations of misconduct, kickbacks, and unsettlingly close relationships between university study abroad officers and external vendors, New York State Attorney General Andrew M. Cuomo has expanded an investigation into the student loan industry to include study abroad providers.

Mr. Cuomo has not charged Tufts with any wrongdoing. The study abroad office did, however, confirm in an article in the *Tufts Daily* that in the past, officials had accepted trips subsidized by third-party providers. Notably, some of the providers under investigation, such as the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), are popular choices for Tufts students and offer several programs endorsed by the university. These revelations were enough to cause some students to grow concerned that the office did not have their best interests at heart. In response, the administration has decided to think twice so students don't have to, and has taken steps to end the practice of accepting subsidized trips.

"Obviously, we haven't been influenced by these trips," Sheila Bayne, associate dean for programs abroad, told the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in September, repeating the University's assertion of innocence. Sally O'Leary, the foreign study advisor at Tufts' Office of Programs Abroad who has become the center of scrutiny at Tufts, also insisted that the sponsored trips in no way affected decisions made in the office. Ms. O'Leary says that the only factors the of-

fice takes into account are program quality, academic rigor, relevance, and administrative oversight.

## Abroad Strokes

The actions of the Office of Programs Abroad affect a significant number of undergraduates: About 45 percent of Tufts students study outside of the country for at least part of their college career. At Tufts, spending four years on campus without traveling overseas is now often the exception rather than the norm.

The growth in popularity of such programs (which often charge upwards of \$20,000 per semester) has been a boon to universities and has given rise to a growing industry of non-profit study abroad providers. Many providers now lack affiliations with established institutions of higher education, like IES, or are loosely affiliated with one, like the Center for Education Abroad at Arcadia University. There is no central index that registers such providers, so it is difficult to gauge how much the study abroad market has grown. One indication suggests that

the increase has been substantial: NAFSA Association of International Educators, the industry's professional organization, has seen its membership rise from about 6,000 officials in 1990 to more than 10,000 today.

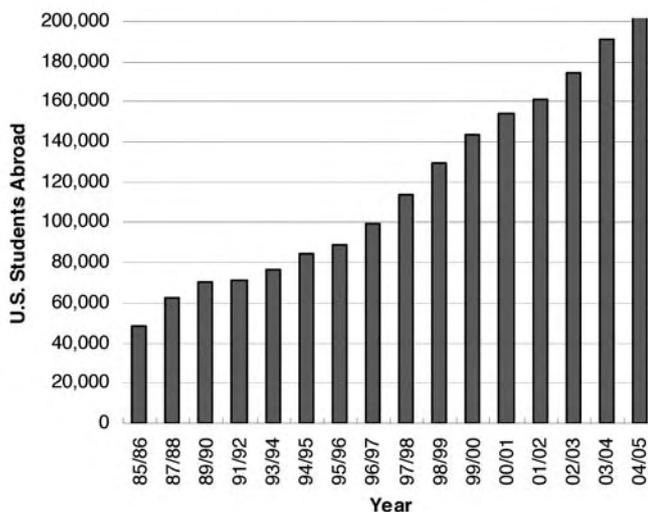
The burgeoning study abroad industry, like many fast-growing, profitable sectors, has yet to be subjected to substantial regulatory standards like those that govern conduct in many spheres of the American economy. Some colleges now find themselves playing catch-up, correcting

arrangements that arose out of convenience but have since been criticized as being too heavily influenced by interests outside their respective schools.

Potentially in a similar situation, Tufts has decided to take action and head off the threat posed by its relationships with certain vendors. In fact, according to the administration, changes to Tufts' policies have been in the works for at least several months. "Following the New York Attorney General's investigation this past spring into relationships between the higher education community and the student loan industry, Tufts undertook a review of our own

## U.S. STUDY ABROAD TRENDS

205,983 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit in 2004/05. U.S. student participation in study abroad doubled over the past eight years.



INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The increasing popularity of study abroad at Tufts reflects a national trend. Over the last decade, the number of undergraduate American students who have chosen to study abroad has increased dramatically — by about 150 percent. For students, this has created a plethora of options for studying, living, volunteering, and working in foreign countries. While much of the boom is simply due to the larger amount of undergraduates at American colleges, overseas education is now seen by students and potential employers as a proverbial "gold star" on a resume, in addition to being a valuable personal experience.

practices and decided to formalize our expectations into a formal policy statement,” says Tom McGurty, Tufts’ vice president for finance.

Mr. McGurty is leading efforts in the finance office to revise the University’s business-conduct policy, the document that specifies which practices university officials are allowed to engage in with private organizations. “It is the University’s objective to award business on the basis of considerations such as quality, service, competitive pricing, and technical abilities,” says an online statement from the financial office. “Acceptance of personal gifts or gratuities of any kind from suppliers, that could be construed as a means of inducing business with the University, is inconsistent with this objective.”

### Cleaning Up

But what exactly is a personal gift? And what constitutes “inducing business with the University”? The new business-conduct document will undoubtedly state in more explicit terms what types of interactions officials are allowed to have with businesses. Without calling them gifts, Mr. McGurty referred to the trips as a kind of support that could create an appearance of a conflict of interest that Tufts wants to avoid.

Officials in the study abroad office are also compelled to follow the ethical standards laid out by the NAFSA Association of International Educators, of which all of the professional staff in the office are members. That policy asks members to “exercise caution in accepting gifts that might be intended to influence them.”

Although accepting subsidized trips to providers’ foreign locations is a fairly widespread and unremarkable practice at many universities, the negative attention they’ve recently attracted has convinced the Tufts administration to completely disallow them. “We decided that it was simply cleaner to prohibit this activity all together,” says Mr. McGurty.

Nationwide, study abroad has grown but some say it hasn’t matured. As a whole,



the industry has been criticized for the high prices and limited opportunities for financial aid that effectively bar racial minorities and the economically disenfranchised from sharing in the valuable abroad experience others enjoy. Data compiled by Institute of International Education suggests that the vast majority of students going abroad are Caucasian and female (almost twice as many women as men choose to study abroad). In 2005 only 3.5 percent of students going abroad considered themselves African-American. At Tufts, students who require aid for foreign study are limited to Tufts’ programs if they want their institutional aid to transfer. For students traveling outside of Tufts’ programs, alternative sources of funding exist but are scarce.

With the imposition of the revised policy, the administration hopes to send a clear signal and minimize the risk that students will feel disenchanted with Tufts’ study abroad organization. “It’s to avoid the appearance of impropriety,” Dean Bayne told the *Higher Education Chronicle* about the ongoing process. As more and more aspects of the undergraduate experience are opened to profiteering (even Facebook makes money now!) the decision to revise the business conduct policy is timely, but it is unlikely that this is the last time the document is revisited. Tufts may not be immune to the controversial arrangements that have plagued other colleges but has proved that it is resistant. ☪

*Patrick Roath is a junior majoring in international relations. He is currently studying in Padua, Italy, through a Boston University program. He is a former news editor at The Observer.*

## Campus Blogs

*Continued from page 11*

from the Internet.”

Bloggers like the Philosopher are paid. Tufts OTR is a branch of a company called OTR (collegeotr.com), a startup founded by Columbia alumnus Doug Imbruce, which also operates sites at 30 other colleges and universities, with plans to expand to over 200 campuses by June.

Tufts OTR takes a provocative look at campus events, and delivers content much faster than the official student publications. “We just love the idea of providing an uncensored outlet to talk about campus news and other happenings that might get glazed over,” says the Philosopher. “We’re not here to ruin anyone’s life. We’re here to lighten the mood. And we hope that people are feeling a real connection to the blog, because we certainly are.”

The Philosopher characterizes Tufts OTR as a “satire blog,” but it also gets a wealth of firsthand information rivaling that of the established press. Bloggers are on constant alert for potential scoops, carry cameras, and receive tips that students would never send to the *Daily*. “At a campus like this that’s so engaged,” the blogger says, material “literally falls into your lap.”

The bloggers have been criticized for their decision to remain anonymous. But according to the Philosopher, anonymity gives the writers more license to express themselves. “We don’t feel like we have to censor or limit content because it gets traced back to an individual, and that’s more within the goal of OTR: to create the most honest atmosphere from our student perspective as possible.”

So far, the OTR experiment seems to be working. Tufts OTR receives around 500 unique visitors a day, making it the company’s most visited blog.

Despite the constraints imposed by anonymity, it has seen steady growth thanks to word-of-mouth publicity. Although the Philosopher doesn’t see it as a threat to traditional campus media, it certainly looks to be establishing itself as a legitimate alternative.

OTR is an example of how blogging at Tufts has been largely positive. Whether in the classroom or in the dorm room, broadcasting news and analysis to several thousand or half a dozen, the format has demolished old barriers to information and conversation. ☪

# Political Artists Talk Shop

*Student initiatives, campus activism,  
and Governor Deval Patrick's drapes*

BY DUNCAN PICKARD

*The Institute of Political Citizenship (IOPC) is Tufts' student-run initiative to bring local and state policy to active citizenship on campus. The IOPC is run by five student chairs through the Tisch College: Jarrod Niebloom, Matt Shapanka, Brandon Rattiner, Sarah Ullman, and Dean Ladin. We sat with Mr. Shapanka and Mr. Niebloom.*

*The Observer:* How is the IOPC going?

Jarrold Niebloom: It's going well. We are founded by students, led by students. The goal is to engage students in state and local government. We are aiming to not only engage students involved in politics and policy work on campus, but all sorts of students. We're trying to reach students across the University through the importance of active citizenship.

Matt Shapanka: One of the things we want to stress is that just that it's student-led and that it's not an extracurricular activity. It's an academic institution that's part of the Tisch College. The cornerstone of a Tufts education is global, active citizenship. What we are trying to do is prepare students for that in state and local government because knowing where you came from and where you started is essential to being an active global citizen. This is an academic and political project. This is not an extracurricular activity.

*The Observer:* You say state and local, but do you see the IOPC getting involved in national or international politics?

JN: It's at least not on the radar right now. We believe students need to know what surrounds them at home. We want to get people to realize that they should be concentrating on local issues before going off to deal with issues around the world, which is also very important. That's a void that we can very well fill. Meanwhile there are other initiatives on campus that deal with this active citizenship role on a more global scale.

*The Observer:* What are some programs the IOPC has initiated at the local and state level?

JN: We'll start with the internships. All too often, political internships revolve around office work and data entry that fail to tap

employers reap the benefits of the college student's unique perspective. The idea is that we want to focus on national issues in the state landscape.

MS: The bulk of that is that in the first semester we have paired seven students with elected officials and nonprofit organizations. Instead of going in the office and making phone calls and doing data entry, they are assigned a topic or issue that the group is interested in —

JN: It's also of interest to the student —

MS: Yeah, we match students up with internships based on the interests that they expressed to us. They now go to the office four hours a week and are engaged with actual research on these policies. They are interacting with the officials and working in the State House to provide a body of research that they will present to the politician or organization. That's unique. Most students at Tufts who are involved in politics don't get to do that.

JN: We are also anticipating using those policy reports in a journal of public policy, a journal written by students on issues that are of interest to people in the state of Massachusetts right now.

*The Observer:* Massachusetts state politics is known for being provincial. It is often difficult for people not from Massachusetts to break into politics.

MS: Yes, definitely.



*Tufts political wizards Matt Shapanka (left) and Jarrod Niebloom.*

into the wealth of resources intelligent students at a leading research institution have to offer. By pairing students across the extracurricular spectrum with elected officials, nonprofits, and community service organizations, the IOPC aims to create a dually beneficial program, where students take an active role in policymaking, and



*The Observer:* So, what is the reaction from people in government and nonprofits towards these students, most of whom are not from the state?

JN: What we are trying to do is pair students with legislators who are more interested in policy than they are in politics. There are legislators out there who care only about how so and so is voting. That's not what we're trying to do at all. We're trying to let students conduct academic research. I think if you're researching transportation finance, you're not only looking at the Massachusetts model, you're looking at the model in California, New York — you're going to look at how other states do it. I don't think it's a problem that students are not from Massachusetts. They don't have to know how politics works in Massachusetts; they have to know policy.

MS: That's not to say there is no politics whatsoever. Either the research will help support a bill or the bill will die. But students who work with politicians get a sense of what politics is like.

*The Observer:* How does the IOPC try to engage students beyond the seven who have internships?

MS: We are now forging a partnership with Tufts Votes, which is a student org that works to register and encourage people to vote. We are working with them and the office of community relations on these.

*The Observer:* Who are some of the officials you have relationships with currently?

JN: We have students paired with both Democrats and Republicans. We have students working with Sen. Steve Tolman and Sen. Patricia Jehlen from right around here. Also Rep. George Peterson who is a Republican, and Rep. Carl Sciortino.

MS: This is a nonpartisan or multi-partisan organization. We are not working directly with the Democrats or the Republicans, and we do work to make sure we have internships with both parties so it's not a bastion of Democratic politics. We are in the planning stages of forging a relationship with the governor's office. The goal of that partnership will be to reinstitute civic edu-

cation in Massachusetts, working with high school students around politics, trying to make that a statewide policy again to education in civics and civic engagement.

*The Observer:* [Laughs.] When you say "the governor's office," I always think of the drapes.

MS: As long as you get the story right, you can tell it.

*The Observer:* Why don't you tell it?

MS: Well, I interned with the governor last spring and summer. We had intern appreciation day and I was in the governor's office. All we students were introducing ourselves to Gov. Patrick. You know, "Thank you, Gov. Patrick, pleasure to work here." I walked up and said, "Hi Gov. Patrick, I'm Matt Shapanka, and I like the drapes." This was about three weeks after he sparked statewide controversy by spending an exorbitant amount of money on his office drapes, so it was a sensitive issue. But on the bright side, he remembers who I am.

JN: And the IOPC has benefited from that. We are working on creating this initiative with the governor's office using Matt's connections.

*The Observer:* So no negative consequences?

MS: Sometimes the governor and I have some cold interactions, but ultimately I am still close to him and people in his office.

*The Observer:* What is the state of political activism among Tufts students?

MS: I think political activism among Tufts

students is relatively strong. The students who are engaged are very engaged whether it's through ECO, the Tufts Democrats, the Energy Security Initiative — there are outlets here, and students do take advantage of them. But our initiative is to reach out to those students who aren't engaged, mostly through issue advocacy.

*The Observer:* If activism is relatively high, then what was the impetus for starting the IOPC?

JN: There are many people who are very engaged, and the IOPC works to be an entry point for those people into the Tisch College. We also find smaller programs. We bring in speakers, establish symposia, and so forth. That can reach out to students who aren't as engaged in politics. People can use policy research and create the difference they are hoping to create at the legislative level, affecting a whole community as opposed to one individual if they were to work at a local level with community members. We want to make that interaction more acceptable to students and alleviate that common view that policy is bad. ☺

# TICKER TAPE

## Bite-size news you might have missed since our last issue.

### Taking a Gamble

Tufts will be looking for a royal flush as the University partners with the Global Poker Strategic Thinking Society to establish a team for the 2008 National Collegiate Team Poker Tournament and Conference.

The latest issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education reports that Charles R. Nesson, a Harvard law professor and founder of the society, insists that poker can capture — and improve — the minds of young Americans. “Win in poker and win in all things, including life,” says

Prof. Nesson about the game.

### Tufts Top for Fulbrights

The Institute of International Education named Tufts one of the top producers of Fulbright scholars. Out of 38 applicants from the University, 13 students were selected for the prestigious award and will be spending the 2007–2008 year in towns and cities around the world. Tufts ties with Columbia and Princeton in this regard.

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the US Department of State. According to its website, it is the largest U.S. international exchange program offering opportunities for students, scholars, and professionals to undertake opportunities in international study, advanced research, or teaching.

### Rave for Refugees

At the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, there are over 70,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia. These refugees have been severely affected by war, and lack many everyday, essential items.

On October 25, Pangea’s IDP/Refugee Committee hosted a Rave for Refugees fundraising dance party at Oxfam Cafe to benefit Mapendo International, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and IDPs.

### This is the Place to be Stressed

Midterms are highly stressful weeks with little soothing remedy. In an effort to assuage and help students through their concerns and worries, BostonNOW, a free daily newspaper and website, cites Tufts as most helpful when it comes to



study advice. The online edition reports that through its website, the University offers a plethora of helpful study tips for students stuck in a last-minute study binge.

### Top Jewish School

In its second edition of *RJ Insider’s Guide to College*, *Reform Judaism Magazine* names Tufts one of the Top Jewish Schools due to its high (31.5 percent) Jewish demographic.

In a press release, Lisa David, director of the Union’s KESHER College Department, says, “This is a valuable resource for student and parents. While there are countless magazines and guides on the perfect college experience, there was no time-sensitive annual magazine or guide for Jewish students interested in a Jewish college experience.”

### Professor to be Knighted

On November 19, Tufts National Endowment for the Humanities Professor Judith Wechsler will become a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, or Knight of Arts and Letters. The title is an Order of France and will be bestowed on Prof. Wechsler for her extensive work and research for books and films on French art. The award was established to honor those who have significantly contributed to French art and literature. Previous winners include writer Salman Rushdie and actresses Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman.

— Compiled by Mary Jo A. Pham

## TCU Watch

The next Senate meeting will be held on November 4 in the Large Conference Room in the campus center. Jim Glaser, the dean of undergraduate education, will join the Senate and answer questions.

### From the October 21 meeting:

Provost Jamshed Bharucha spoke to the Senate body regarding academic life in general, including his reflections on the need for balance between pure academics and hands-on experience through civic engagement.

The Senate fundraiser at Chipotle last week raised \$2,455 for the TCU. The Senate will use the money to reach out to students.

On November 15, senators will be conducting the annual Safety Walk with school administrators and TUPD in order to point out potential safety hazards across campus such as poorly lit areas or steps that traditionally stay iced over during the winter.

# A Night Out With TUPD

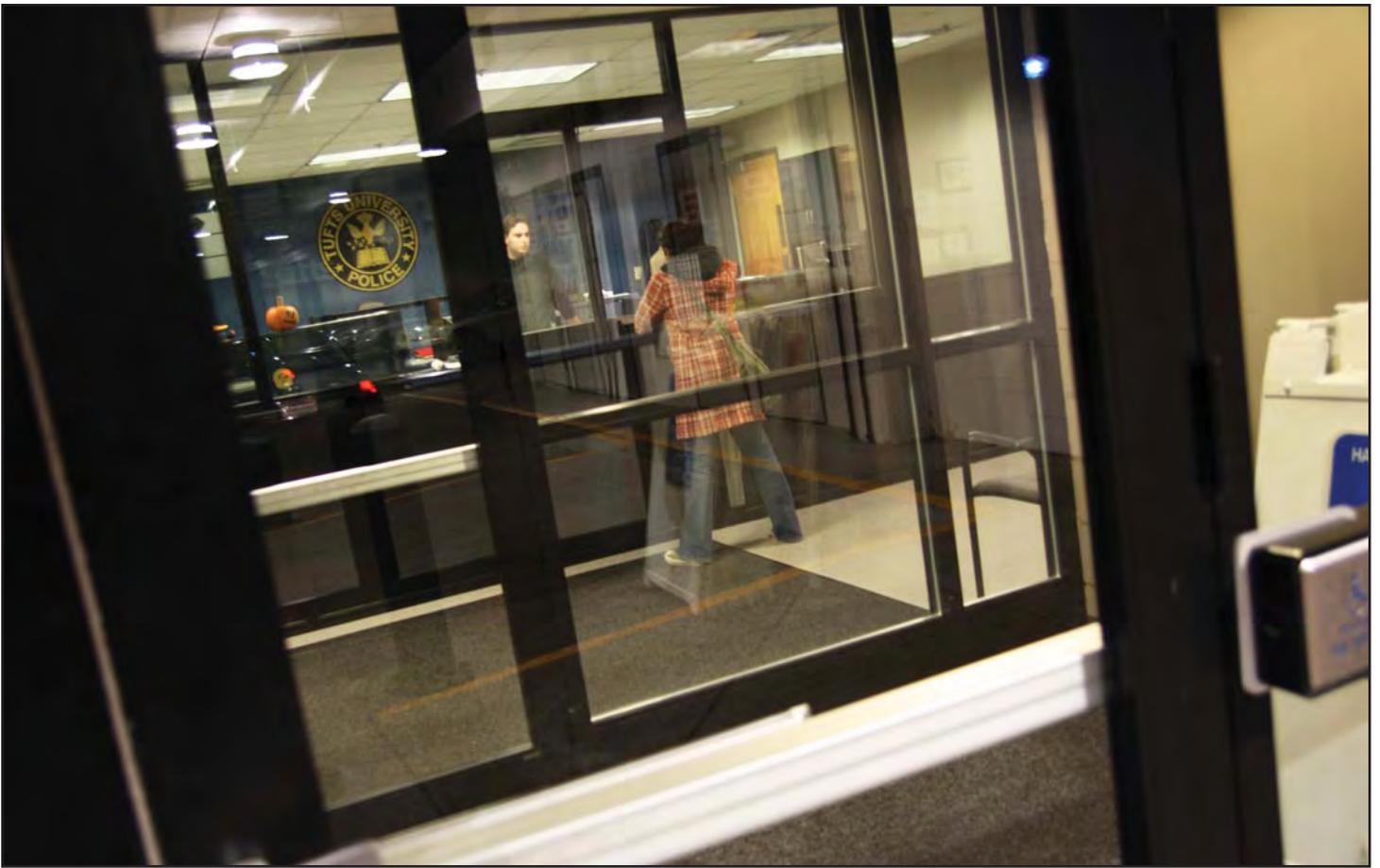
Photos by Sam James



*Sergeant McGee, Patrol Supervisor of the Tufts University Police, gears up for Saturday night patrol.*



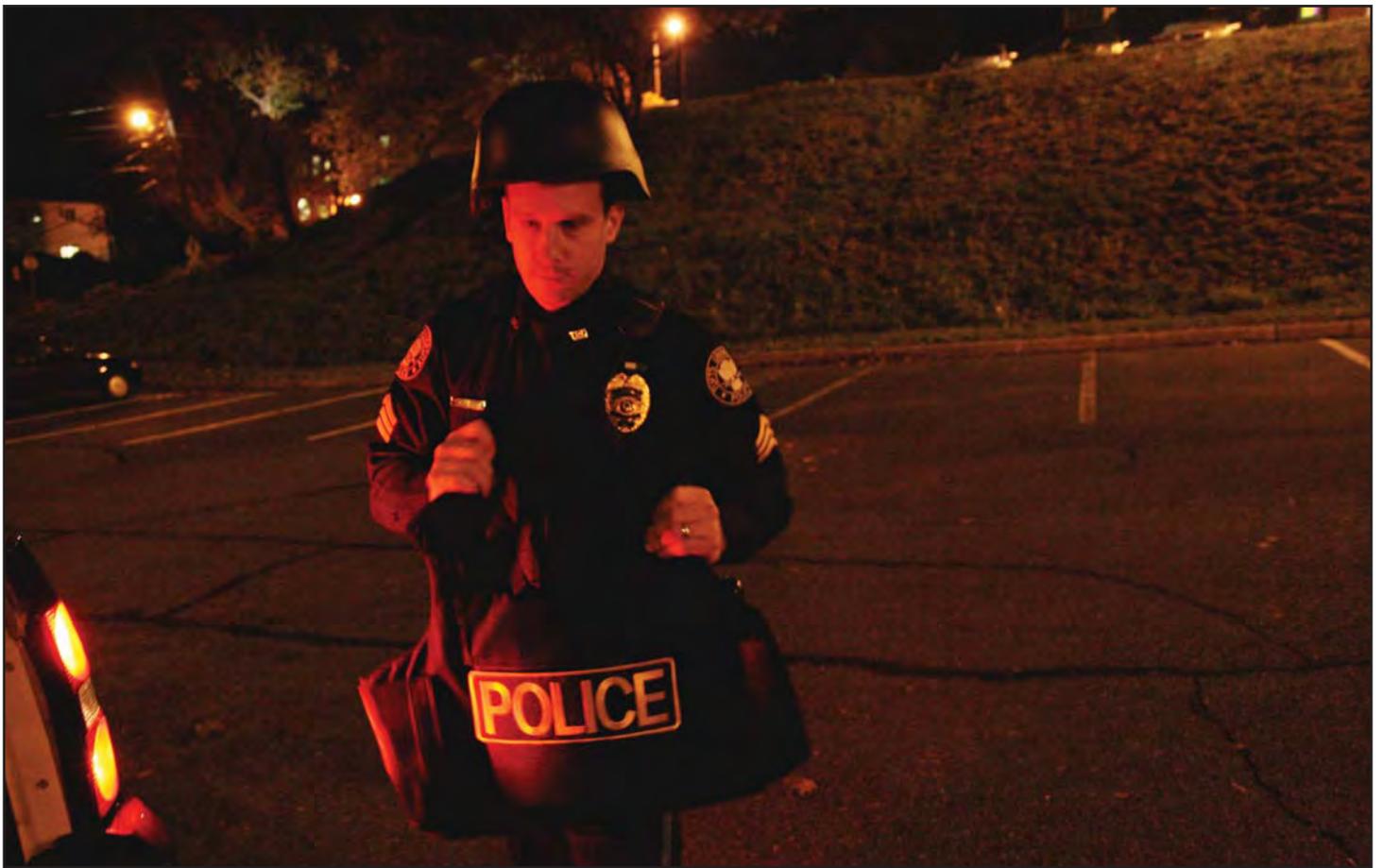
*Tufts Police Officers confer on Professors Row.*



*A student at the TUPD headquarters.*



*Tufts Police Officers survey a fraternity party on Professor's Row.*



*Standard issue TUPD protection equipment.*



*An emergency blue light phone outside Bush Hall.*



*Police Officers field calls at the TUPD headquarters.*



*Sergeant McGee on Saturday night patrol.*

# The Truth about Tenure

Although vitally important to students, few at Tufts clearly understand the process professors undertake in order to obtain tenure. As the University continues to place more emphasis on the research accomplishments of its professors, receiving tenures will become more important for prospective scholars wishing to teach at Tufts. As this week's feature news article illustrates, the tenure process is not only complicated, but also problematic for both professors and students. The educational life at Tufts will continue to suffer unless these deficiencies are rectified.

The growth of Tufts' national reputation has given the University incentive to promote its commitment to research. As a Research One Institution, professors at Tufts are not only required to teach courses, but also to conduct rigorous scholarship on campus. Much publicity centers on the school's commitment of over \$160 million to the research endeavors of its professors and scholars. The dual commitments of professors and the increased emphasis university officials have placed on research accomplishments are causes for concern. While attracting big names in academia to campus raises the prestige of the University, it may not be overly beneficial to students. With the extensive time commitments required by both good scholarship and teaching, it is hard to imagine more devotion to research not detracting from the classroom. More disconcerting is the possibility that gifted teachers will find difficulty holding long-term positions at Tufts because of this increased focus on publishing. A professor like the late Gerald Gill, known for his commitment to teaching, service, and inspiring young scholars,

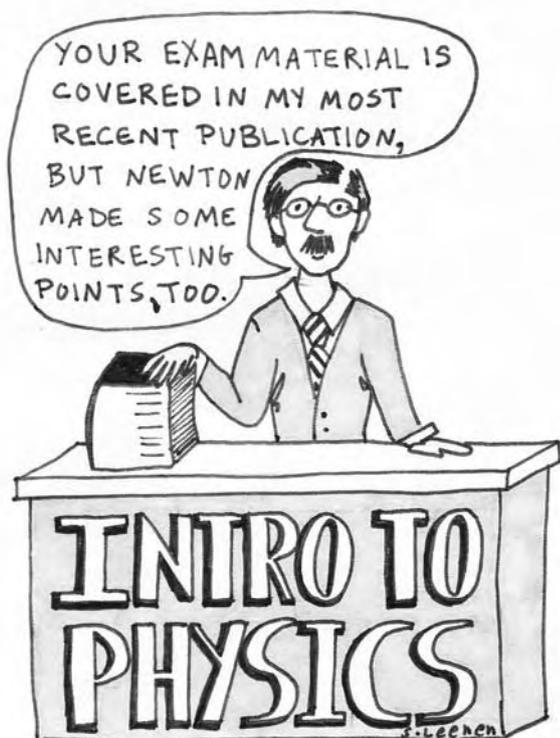
would possibly not receive tenure because he did not finish his dissertation.

The fact that the late Professor Gill, one of the most beloved professors in recent memory, would have trouble gaining tenure today highlights the tenure process's extensive failures. The University should place its obligations to the students first; it should not deny tenure to stellar teachers due to a lack of books written, articles published, or awards won. Furthermore, the tenure process itself is in need of modifications. More emphasis should be weighted towards student opinions, particularly those found in the course review forms filled out at the end of each semester. Undergraduates ought to take a direct role in the final decision-making process, and tenure proceedings should become more accessible and transparent. The fact remains that most students are unaware of which professors are up for tenure. While respecting the privacy of the process, support from students for a particular professor could, and should, sway tenured faculty and the board of trustees.

An increased focus on student participation would also reduce the influence tenured faculty have when recommending a professor for tenure. Having other professors deciding the fate of their colleagues opens the door for personal interests to play a role. Perhaps a non-tenured professor took on controversial research that went against the conventional wisdom of the established faculty. Maybe an applicant directly challenged the scholarly work of another colleague on the review board. While these situations may be somewhat exaggerated, they illustrate the point that established professors may have interests to recommend professors for tenure who share similar views, thus limiting the diversity of thought that emerges from the academic departments on campus.

Despite the deficiencies in the current tenure process, one must acknowledge that attempts to attract top scholars not only add reputation to the University, but also provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to learn from the top minds in the field. That said, if Tufts wishes to promote both research and teaching, it must provide insight and programs into how to combine the two effectively. Every college student tells the story of the professor who is brilliant in a particular academic field but fails to relay his knowledge to the class. Until the administration takes positive steps to train professors to teach effectively, claims of the complimentary nature of research and teaching will remain nothing but sweet-sounding propaganda. Employing famous scholars who are unable to teach is both counterproductive towards the goals of the University in developing young minds and detrimental to the students enrolled. Minimizing such cases should be a top priority of the administration.

There are no easy answers for fixing the problems of the tenure process. Like any other work-related field, many qualified professionals apply for very few spots. Nevertheless, in an academic environment, where students have the most to gain from which professors the school hires and fires, their collective voice should be louder. It is a failure to let great teachers go, but this failure compounds if done without the input from the most affected members of the academic community. ©



# Political Citizenship: What Is It and Why Does Tufts Need It?

BY JARROD NIEBLOOM  
MATTHEW SHAPANKA  
BRANDON RATTNER

In 1852, Tufts President Hosea Ballou II argued that Tufts should work “out abroad from itself, beyond the circle of its graduates, sending its energies forth.” To be sure, this perspective is still embodied by the Tufts University mission. As we are all aware, on November 3, 2006, President Lawrence S. Bacow unveiled the University’s capital campaign, “Beyond Boundaries: The

of implementing policy, seems to be dwindling. Indeed, many young adults (on campus and beyond) do not see politics as a vehicle to address and solve societal problems. Bitter divisiveness and harsh rhetoric have taken the place of informed discourse and meaningful policy research, replacing the powerful political vehicle with a new face of partisanship and ineffectiveness. Students would rather rally and organize communities than research and promote legislation that arguably could achieve the same end goal.

In Tufts’ mission to educate, motivate

himself he does not know”), there is great value in understanding the issues and politics facing local communities, the building blocks of the national and international systems. Without understanding individual communities’ demands, it is impossible to understand the divergent interests of communities worldwide and how best to reconcile them. The second piece is related and is an issue of practicality: interests and problems change from community to community, state to state. A focus limited to individual states and municipalities allows for students to

“Citizens must understand the tenets of political citizenship”

Campaign for Tufts.” A cornerstone of the campaign, the president promulgated, was to be Tufts’ “dedication to preparing students for lives of active citizenship.” The establishment, endowment and current undertakings of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service are one of many ways Tufts attempts to inspire students across the University to engage as active citizens in order to help build a more equitable world.

Since its inception in 2000, the Tisch College has grown from a small group of dedicated individuals working to promote one of Tufts’ core missions, into a large college with programs that reach across the gamut of disciplines throughout the larger University. With the leadership of the Tisch College, Tufts has become a pioneer in publicizing and teaching active citizenship and public service in institutions of higher education. As a result, Tufts boasts a student body whose level of community involvement, public service and activism is truly unparalleled.

What remains confounding is that while record numbers of students currently participate in community service programs, the same increase in political involvement has not been seen over the past few years. While applications for the Tisch College Scholar’s Program reach all-time highs each successive year, and the Leonard Carmichael Society and issue-advocacy groups reap the benefits of greater student interest, student attention to politics, as an institutional means

and mobilize active citizens, those citizens must understand the tenets of political citizenship. To best illustrate, imagine an individual who wishes to address the issue of hunger throughout Massachusetts. On the one hand, that individual could work with communities, mobilize citizens and, one community at a time, fight the problem of poverty-induced hunger. This is the model currently preferred by students, and its power cannot be underestimated. Yet, that same individual, who understands the vast and profound powers of the political system, could also lobby for policies and/or legislation that would combat the same problem. With policy research and political coalition building, a single endeavor could theoretically solve the hunger epidemic once and for all.

The latter model is what the new Institute of Political Citizenship (IOPC) at the Tisch College aims to achieve. The IOPC aspires to teach students the great powers inherent in our state and local governments; that political activism should be used in conjunction with community and grassroots organizing, to implement policies that address the needs of local communities.

One could extend the criticism, “If we are striving to become ‘global citizens,’ why then the state and local focus?” The answer is twofold: first, one has to understand one’s surrounding communities before one branches out. In other words, in accordance with the commonly used banality, “you cannot know where you are going until you know where you have been” (or, consider La Fontaine’s quote, “he knows the universe, and

conduct comprehensive reviews of how best to implement policies, given the particular structure of a political unit.

The IOPC has already made great strides toward these ends. Less than one semester into its existence, the IOPC has placed students in policy research internships with state legislators and public interest research groups (with the plan to offer placements with non-profit organizations, primarily for environmental and educational research, in the spring semester). Additionally, the IOPC has forged a bond with the non-partisan Tufts Votes student group, and is currently working on an extensive Medford/Somerville voter registration initiative. The IOPC is also planning to kick off a dual initiative with the Civic Engagement division of the Governor’s Office to promote middle school and high school civic education throughout the state come the spring semester.

To be sure, the newly minted Institute of Political Citizenship (IOPC) will provide students with the tools to develop innovative answers to the diversity of challenges that confront local communities throughout our country and beyond its borders. Utilizing a combination of grassroots organizing and advocacy methods, coupled with conventional academic research, we have the ability to train and even further engage students, offering insight and sensitivity to the various methods by which they can change the world. ☉

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*Sarah Ullman, Dean Ladin, and Adam Welldai also contributed to writing this article.*

# Islamofascism: The Latest Neoconservative Catchphrase

ALEXANDRA SIEGEL

Drumming up support against an enemy usually requires a bit of slander. Adversaries become a lot bigger and scarier once they're endowed with ominous names. Calling the "Wicked Witch of the West" by her given name just wouldn't have had the same effect. Recognizing this power of words, the Bush Administration has produced no shortage of slogans over the past six years. Unfortunately, phrases like "War on Terror" and "Axis of Evil" seem to be losing their spark. Lest we become too calm, our enemies have been newly rechristened "Islamofascists." There may not be any allusions to green skin or flying monkeys, but it sure gets the adrenaline pumping.

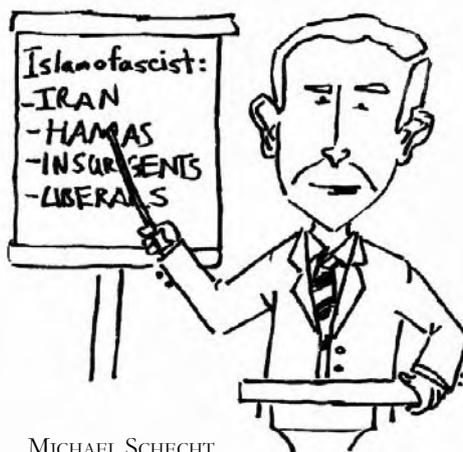
One important motivation for this change in rhetoric is to accurately define the "enemy." According to neoconservative historian Bernard Lewis, it is impossible to have a war on "terror." He explains "Terrorism is a tactic, it is not the enemy...If Churchill had told us that we were engaged in a war against submarines and war craft, we'd be in a different world today." While there may be a logical justification for employing the term "Islamofascism," Lewis and other proponents are well aware of its propaganda value.

Ironically, the term Islamofascism was coined by the leftist French writer Maxine Rodinson during the Iranian Revolution. Rodinson was a Marxist, who described essentially any movement of which he disapproved as "fascist." Recently however, the word has begun to creep into the neoconservative vocabulary. President Bush first used the term following the 2006 thwarted bomb plot in the UK when he asserted, "The recent arrests...are a stark reminder that this nation is at war with Islamic fascists who will use any means to destroy those of us who love freedom."

One problem with the word Islamofascism is its slippery definition. Many people who use the term "fascism" in this context argue that radical Islamists wish to impose their beliefs on other people in a totalitarian manner. However, over the past year "Islamofascism" has been used to describe everything from Sunni Al-Qaeda to secular

Syria to Shiite Hezbollah. Other groups that fall under this umbrella include Iraqi insurgents, supporters of the current Iranian regime, Saudi-financed Wahhabis, and the Muslim Brotherhood. This might prompt one to ask which of these groups, with their widely varied ideologies and goals, is the true "Islamofascist" enemy.

This "buzz word," as the Washington Post calls Islamofascism, also has dangerous psychological implications. Historian Michael Burleigh recently explained on National Public Radio, "Islamofascism suggests to many people that Islam itself is fascist." Since World War II, the word "fascism" has conjured images of Holocaust victims and legions of ruthless uniformed soldiers. Etymologically speaking, the term Islamofascism simply combines the word "Islam," the name of a religion practiced by about 25% of people on Earth, with the profoundly negative term "fascism." Although according to the BBC, the Bush Administration has made some conscious efforts to distinguish between Islam and radical Islamists, their new rhetoric dangerously blurs the line.



MICHAEL SCHECHT

The most recent manifestation of this new catchphrase was the creation of "Islamofascism Awareness Week," a national campaign which brought neoconservative ideology to over 200 college campuses between October 22 and 26. According to its creator David Horowitz, the purpose of this campaign was to "Confront the two big lies of the political left" which he asserts are that "George Bush created the war on terror," and that "Global warming

is a greater danger to Americans than the terrorist threat?"

This campaign has generated a great deal of media attention, most notably at George Washington University in Washington D.C. where protesting students posted signs around the school that proclaimed mockingly, "Hate Muslims? So Do We!" The signs also included a byline indicating that they were "Brought to you by the Students for Conservativio-Fascism Awareness." These students were reprimanded as the signs contained anti-Muslim rhetoric despite their satirical intent.

Islamofascism Awareness Week made its debut at Tufts University on October 24, 2007. It arrived in the form of a lecture by neoconservative historian Daniel Pipes brought to us by the *Primary Source*. Interestingly, Pipes began his presentation by explaining that he personally is not a strong advocate of the term "Islamofascist." He went on to say that he prefers terms like "radical Islamist." Although Pipes made an effort to appease the members of the audience who came armed with signs proclaiming, among other things, that Tufts is a "Hate free campus," he failed to recognize the fundamental problem with defining an enemy in such black and white terms.

While Islamofascism has quite a fear-provoking ring to it, the word itself is only the surface of the problem. The greater issue is the propensity of neoconservatives to label large and diverse groups of people as good or evil: with us or against us. Sunni insurgents in Iraq, for example, may have little in common with Ahmadinijad, but evidently they both can be classified as Islamofascist adversaries. This kind of emotionally charged labeling of a loosely defined enemy makes diplomacy very difficult. Tensions intensify even further when large groups of people are offensively branded as "fascists" — an accusation that has not gone unnoticed by the Arab media. A broad formidable enemy may be a powerful political asset, but it is an international relations nightmare. ☹

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*Alexandra Siegel is a freshman and has not yet declared a major.*

# Saving the World Requires More than a Flick of a Switch

BY SETH STEIN

One of the most enriching things about attending a university like Tufts is the array of student groups. For what seems like every issue, we have a group. These groups undertake all sorts of campaigns, initiatives and events to promote their causes. I can sympathize — I personally co-chair Students for Barack Obama. But not all of these campaigns are created equally — and one of the initiatives that has bothered me since freshman year

nity. The loudest and most comprehensive voice in this particular debate within the scientific community is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — the IPCC. The IPCC was founded by the United Nations with very specific aims. “The role of the IPCC is to assess on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis the scientific, technical, and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of risk of human-induced climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation.” The

rors that of cigarettes and their link to lung cancer in the 1970’s. Most organizations and scientists who deny global warming seem to be funded and supported by entities that have a vested interest in keeping the debate unclear, like ExxonMobil and other energy companies. In the United States the debate also gains a partisan twist. Republicans, backed by important energy lobbies, make every effort to paint the debate as inconclusive. The Bush administration has pursued even more unethical and dangerous tactics, purposely coercing government scientists to point to inconclusive evidence on global warming, or pushing them to avoid the subject altogether.

But the other side is not guilt-free either. Because of the push towards consensus in the scientific community due to the perceived immediacy of the crisis, dissenting opinions are not well received. Granted, most of those opinions are ill-founded and have shaky propositions, but there are important counter points. Some scientists believe that climate change may be minor enough not to be dangerous. Others point to the actuality of global warming and how it deviates from the models predicted; for example,

models of the change in temperature deviate from observed temperature change in many instances. This trend towards conformity is troubling. True scientific work requires alternate, competing theories in



is ECO’s ‘Do It In The Dark.’ Not that I disagree with the sentiment, but I fell up and down the stairs of Tilton a little too much during that campaign, though the glow-in-the-dark condoms amused me quite a bit. This year, however, it got me thinking: what’s the big environmental deal? What is the global warming debate? Most importantly, how effective is ‘Do it in the Dark?’

The first step in understanding ECO’s campaign is to briefly explain the global warming debate. If you have ever tried to research the subject, then you can understand my pain — it is a subject surrounded by smoke and mirrors, special interests and partisan debates. The most important place to start in understanding this debate is the source of our data—the scientific commu-

nicity. The loudest and most comprehensive voice in this particular debate within the scientific community is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — the IPCC. The IPCC was founded by the United Nations with very specific aims. “The role of the IPCC is to assess on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis the scientific, technical, and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of risk of human-induced climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation.” The

“The first step is to de-politicize the debate on global warming”

real, and we are causing it.

How, then, is there a debate with dissenting opinions? Seeing as the basis of any firm opinion comes from understanding its weaknesses and criticisms, I ventured into the world of global warming skepticism and denial. Unfortunately, the debate mir-

order to distill the most truthful. If the scientific community is sure about the fact of global warming, there should be no danger from competing and dissenting opinions — through the peer-reviewed community, they should all be debunked or co-opted into the accepted theory.

Even with this criticism, it does seem that the scientific community is right and that global warming caused by man is fact. But the politicization of this issue has produced conflicting policies that

and it appeases their constituencies. In short, the politics of global warming have produced partisan debate, with those on the right ignoring the facts entirely and those on the left doing little but blowing

CO<sub>2</sub> in their shipping and production than saving the energy and burning some gasoline. The next solution is to get your hands on a Prius, to reduce your emissions even more. What Toyota won't tell you though is

“The UN has determined... ‘that raising animals for food generates more **greenhouse gases** than all the cars, trucks, SUVs, planes, and ships in the world combined.’”

do little to actually solve the problem and only satisfy special interest groups. Ethanol, the emissions exchange and the ‘hydrogen economy’ are perfect examples of this. Ethanol was supposed to be the environmentally acceptable alternative to oil. No one took the time to research the proposition and see its shortcomings. Ethanol from corn in the United States requires significantly more energy to create than it provides; we do not have the farm capacity to produce enough ethanol to run our cars while still feeding our populace. Worst of all, ethanol fuels have not been shown to be any better for the environment than old-fashioned gasoline. All ethanol does is satisfy farm states.

The emissions exchange is minimally better. The idea is to exchange emissions in a market, where those who produce less emissions sell credits to those that go over the quota, ostensibly to reduce pollution overall. However, this has achieved very little in the way of actually reducing emissions, as those who produce lots of emissions continue to do so, but now have a green-washed way to look good in the public. All the while, this market just provides another way for certain people to accumulate more wealth at the expense of the public.

The hydrogen economy is the most promising of these politically charged answers to global warming. If it were practical, the hydrogen economy could solve a variety of our emissions related woes. But it is so incredibly expensive, requiring a total overhaul of our infrastructure. The chances of it succeeding therefore seem remote. The inadequacy of these solutions has done nothing to deter politicians who espouse these policies, simply because it makes them look like environmentalists

hot air.

So then, where can we find a solution to this dilemma? There does seem to be one powerful tool, especially in a capitalist society — the actions of the public. This is where ECO and Do it in the Dark come in. Turn off your lights when you leave the room, turn off the faucet when you are brushing your teeth, and try to walk instead of driving. And if you do drive, make sure it's a Prius. This all sounds good—we can save the environment by being more responsible ourselves! The reality, however, is that these little lifestyle changes won't make a difference. Great transformations are needed, but are unlikely to happen.

What if everyone in the United States ‘did it in the dark’? Would we reduce our emissions by easing the stress on our coal and oil based power plants? Not by a noticeable or important amount. The simple fact is that most of our emissions come from — and this is straight from PETA's mouth — cows. The UN has determined, and I quote, “that raising animals for food generates more greenhouse gases than all the cars, trucks, SUVs, planes, and ships in the world combined.” Wow. It gets even better—even if we stop eating meat, most of our food is shipped in from all parts of the country and the world, releasing incredible amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>. The actual ‘little’ thing you can do to stop global warming is to only eat locally produced organic vegetables. Doesn't sound so good anymore does it?

What about all the other little inconveniences people undertake to ‘do their part’ like walking instead of driving? I recently read an interesting report that broke down the calories we burn by walking instead of driving. In order to eat enough food to replace those calories, we release far more

that so much CO<sub>2</sub> is expended producing a Prius that you would need to own the car for ten years in order to finally make back those emissions with the gas you saved!

If the little things won't save us, what about the big things, like better fuel consumption standards and the Kyoto Protocol? If we actually attempted to follow these measures, we would make a much bigger impact on our emissions. However, the politicization of global warming and the stance of the Bush administration have halted such actions. The irony is that even if we follow these measures we may still achieve little overall — the growing consumption in China and India will negate our modest gains. In this scenario, we are left with few options.

What can we really do then? The first step is to de-politicize the debate on global warming. Global warming is real, and we need to do something about it that ignores special interests. We have to sponsor huge projects to change our infrastructure and consumption. We have to push what would be labeled as ‘imperialist’ policies to keep China and India in line. We need an aggressive government that earnestly seeks to reduce the damage from global warming — all the while learning to live alongside what may be inevitable.

So you can keep the lights on when you go up the stairs tonight with little fear. Try to eat more locally grown food, but don't break yourself over it. Instead, make sure you cast the right votes and get involved in the political process. This problem may be intractable, but with the right leadership we at least have a chance. ☺

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*Seth Stein is a sophomore and has not yet declared a major.*

# Why it's Time for Atheists to Come Out of the Closet

BY PATRICK ANDRIOLA

Led by authors Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Tufts' own Dan Dennett, the secular movement in America is growing stronger by the minute. Americans are increasingly opening their minds to the reality that there is no evidence for God. There is an openly atheist member of Congress (Pete Stark, California-D) and numerous other freethinkers in the scientific field. In terms of Hollywood names, the list of non-believers ranges from Woody Allen to Howard Stern. Yet still, in the 21st century and in a nation that has always prided

itself on openness to people of all beliefs, being an atheist carries around a stigma that thwarts most non-theists from coming out of the proverbial closet.

But now is the time to change all that. We are living in the age of secularism and have seen the harms of religion from all sides. Whether it is the Twin Towers falling in the name of Allah or the retardation of stem cell research on behalf of angry Christians, religion has more than outstayed its welcome. While it may have served purposeful in early civilizations as a tool for bonding and inquiry, we have evolved (yes, evolved) far enough that it is no longer useful. In fact, it is an increasingly harmful danger that only thwarts intelligence, scientific advancement, and peace.

Some may argue that religion has done good for the world, and I agree that it has. However, the harms far outweigh the benefits. Would we need Christian missionaries healing the sick in Africa if their own dogma didn't dictate that it is better to die of AIDS with God than to live using contraception and suffer eternal damnation? Christian

abolitionists were combated by southern slaveholders of the same faith who used the Bible (specifically Ephesians 6: 5-6) as a means of justification for slavery. Even today, human rights are being denied to homosexuals because of the Judeo-Christian view on what constitutes a "traditional" marriage. School children in all parts of the world are being taught the fraud that is Intelligent Design while Charles Darwin is constantly

in something when all the evidence points against it. Why, in an age of technology and reason, do we consider that to be a good thing? Anyone with a basic understanding of science can tell you that virgin births, partings of the sea, and raising others from the dead are just impossible feats. And yet, when a Christian or Muslim tells you they believe because they have faith, they are praised for their unabashed ignorance. What horror!



If you feel I am being too harsh about religion, then you have not seen the free ride it has gotten over the past two millennia. We are told since childhood to respect the religious beliefs of others and that questioning them would be disrespectful. Why? Just because. As the

opiate of the people, religion has become a subject you cannot criticize publicly without scorn and backlash. However, it is just impossible to deny the fact that the Bible is a work of complete fiction written by some old men. The Judeo-Christian God of the book is a racist, sexist, and homophobic megalomaniac who destroys civilizations and smites non-believers. The Koran is also filled with just as much hate and as little peace. This is not an attack on the believers of a group, but rather the belief. As president of the Freethought Society at Tufts, I hope to spread the word of atheism and secularism around campus. I will not hand you a holy book. I will not attack your beliefs with the threat of hell. I will not tell you that your life can only be complete if you follow my lead. All I ask is that you listen, and ask yourself the most important of life's questions. If you do, no one except your own reason and intellect will convince you of the obvious truth: that there is no evidence of God. ☉

As you watch the Presidential debate heat up, take a good look at how each candidate uses their ifaithi as a tool. But faith is not a virtue. It is a disease. Faith is believing

in something when all the evidence points against it. Why, in an age of technology and reason, do we consider that to be a good thing? Anyone with a basic understanding of science can tell you that virgin births, partings of the sea, and raising others from the dead are just impossible feats. And yet, when a Christian or Muslim tells you they believe because they have faith, they are praised for their unabashed ignorance. What horror!

*Patrick Andriola is a freshman and has not yet declared a major*

# INTERRUPTIONS

BY OLIVIA TEYTELBAUM

## BITCHIN': *What pisses you off?*

*There should be an opportunity for a campus-wide beer pong tournament. Why can't Tufts be known for its drinking culture, too?*

– Laddie McLiquor

Sadly, “National Beer Pong Champions” wouldn’t be a particularly surprising or unique addendum to any school’s repertoire of bragging rights. At Tufts, we can claim a lot of things: least aerodynamic mascot, shortest men, hilliest hills, tastiest stir-fry... would beer pong really enrich us as an institution? I’m not so sure.

*All my classes should be taught in a foreign language if I choose.*

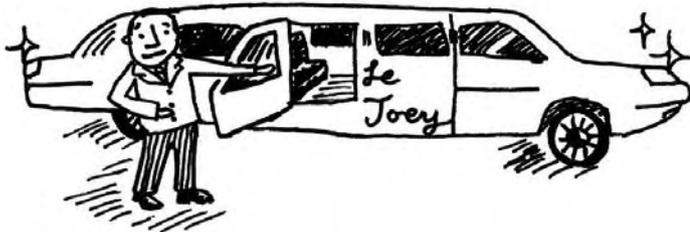
– Prissy Polyglot

There comes a time when we need to ask ourselves: Are we in America? If the answer is “yes,” then you need to stop complaining about our community not being “international” enough for you in some way. If you want to speak another language, go abroad. Or better yet, get Rosetta Stone. I hear they’ve got some great programs. Plus, I think you fail to realize that most of the classes at our school are taught in what could be considered a foreign language. All you have to do to hear them is audit an engineering, math, or peace and justice studies class.

*We need a direct Boston Joey so that I don't have to take the T and it should run all the time and even late at night so I can visit my friends at BU until 2 AM and then call and have it pick me up and yeah wouldn't that be great?!*

– Sojourning Strumpet

ANGELA ROBINS



Again we’re back to square one with Joey complaints. Have you ever tried driving to Boston? Good luck not running over someone, especially that homeless guy on the bicycle that rides around making the siren noise. What, is the T not fast enough for you? It’s not cheap enough for you? It’s not clean enough for you? It’s only one of the nicest public transit systems in the Northeast! We should be thankful the Joey acquiesces to tote us back and forth to Davis...and bless its poor little heart if it comes on time.

## CAMPUS POLL:

*Which professor would you most like to be stranded with on an island?*

- Prof. Muños...because I want to have his babies! :)
- Kenneth Lang. He could use the stars to navigate us a way off the damn island. And at least if I’m having insomnia on the island, his lecture voice will lull me to sleep.
- Blood Bath McGrath. I mean come on.
- Prof. Eslelonis. Minus: Crazy woman. Pluses: We could talk about lots of art; France.
- Alessandra Campana. She’s a hottie.



## JP LICKS FLAVOR OF THE WEEK: CARMEL APPLE

If you didn’t get a chance to go pumpkin picking this fall, you should go apple picking. If you don’t think you’ll get a chance to do that either, you should go to JP Licks and try the caramel apple ice cream. It tastes like creamy apple pie. Honorable mention this week goes to the chocolate sorbet, which seemed more like a hit or miss, but ended up being a big hit. The flavor is a lot like that of a Fudgesicle, only better. And the fro-yo machine is working again! Try the pumpkin. Hurry, though — who knows how long it’ll be working.

# SOUNDS AND TASTES: Canada, O Canada



ROXANE SPERBER

BY JONAH GOLD

*"Sounds and Tastes" is a bi-weekly column that examines the relationship between popularity and quality in contemporary music, and its cultural implications.*

It is unfair to broadly say that American rock n' roll has stalled, but in recent years it has become increasingly clear that Canada has usurped America's role as the spawning place for rock's most progressive elements. Eastern Canadian groups such as The Arcade Fire, Feist, and Broken Social Scene have helped to reinvigorate independent rock. Broken Social Scene has helped to propel the concept of the jam band into the 21st century with their expansive "baroque-pop" sound. The Arcade Fire has similarly expanded on the sounds of earlier artists, most notably Bruce Springsteen, while also espousing a sharp political commentary on the world in which we live. Feist has placed herself as the latest in a line of smart, independent Canadian female performers going back to Canadian singer Alanis Morissette. In addition, bands like Godspeed You! Black Emperor, Set Fire To Flames, Sam Shalabi, and A Silver Mt. Zion have redefined the concept of instrumental rock, showing more influences from classical composers than anything else. These bands have worked to completely redraw the boundaries of rock n' roll. The genre of post-rock was almost entirely created

and defined in Canada. Utilizing field recordings and multiple interviews, such bands have been able to create music that also serves as an extremely critical cultural commentary of both America and its imperialist tendencies.

The foundation for the progressive nature of contemporary Canadian music lies in the conflict created between the variety of cultures and political views currently being expressed in the country. In Eastern Canada, three distinct cultures emerge; one is French, one British, and one Canadian, the last of which has drifted closer and closer towards conservative American culture. Multiple Quebec separatist movements also attest to the fact that Canada is simply not the "mixing pot" that America turned out to be. The liberal ideologies espoused by the French and British contingents come into direct conflict, now more than ever, with

the conservative movement growing in Canada. It is my belief that the conflicts between these different political cultures represent the main catalysts for the recent rise in musically progressive Canadian groups.

Canada, to Americans, is little more than a land of maple syrup, funny-looking policemen, and infinite snow. Canada has also been known for its nationalized health care, and traditionally more liberal politics. However, just last year, Stephen Harper was elected as prime minister, representing the Conservative Party of Canada that had been founded only three years previously. Harper supports lower taxes, free trade, and hopes to create a stronger joint North American military as an extension of the NORAD air defense system. It seems that this conservative movement has disturbed some portions of the Canadian population. Many Canadians have criticized the "Tories" for their pro-American policies, but nowhere has the protest been louder than in Canada's musical community. Yet much of this musical criticism has been focused not at Canada, but against the United States and general conservatism.

In this year's *Neon Bible*, The Arcade Fire makes several clear comparisons between Canada and America in songs such as "Windowsill," in which he states, "I don't want to fight in a holy war... I don't want to live in America no more." Lead singer Win Butler is actually a native of Texas who moved to Montreal for college before begin-

ning The Arcade Fire. Songs such as "Antichrist Television Blues" and "Black Mirror" represent direct attacks on two increasingly important facets of conservative culture. Butler in "Antichrist Television" adopts a Nietzsche-esque attitude, criticizing overzealous religious believers and eventually proclaiming God to be silent and dead. "Black Mirror" discusses the emptiness of today's North American culture as well as the increase in video surveillance in this country. Towards the end of the song he begins a military criticism, asking "Mirror, mirror on the wall, show me where the bombs will fall."

Post-rock bands such as Sam Shalabi, Set Fire To Flames, and A Silver Mt. Zion are almost beyond comparison with The Arcade Fire. The bands' lack of standard song structure or proper lyrics dramatically changes how the music is presented and understood. Massive arrangements rise and fall, as their lyrics and recordings shine during the sonic lulls. In these musical lapses, the bands espouse views that are rabidly anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist. Many make specific protests against American and Israeli international aggression, often taking a pro-Arab stance in Middle East relations. Such post-rock bands often spend a large amount of time integrating art and short stories within the CD jacket with the field recordings to create a more complete musical experience. But even so, their songs themselves independently provide many examples of progressive politics.

On Set Fire To Flames' second LP, there is a track named "Tehran In Seizure" whose pulsating clicking eventually climaxes, representing the buildup of anti-Shah sentiment leading up to the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Sam Shalabi describes his latest release, *Oxama*, as "protest music about Arabophobia in a post 9-11 world," utilizing Middle East recordings along with electronic mixing to create an incredibly distinct sound. Shalabi does not specifically criticize American sentiments, instead focusing on Arabophobia as a worldwide trend. A Silver Mt. Zion makes more poignant attacks on American imperialism and capitalism on their tracks titled "God Bless Our Dead Marines" and "American Motor Over Smoldered Field." Over the clashing sound of strings comes a voice proclaiming, "Our vulgar princes sleep, dead kids don't get photographed, God bless our dead Marines." It seems that Canada has much more than we thought they had to say... eh? ☪

*Jonah Gold is a sophomore majoring in International Relations and Middle Eastern studies.*

# All You Need Is...

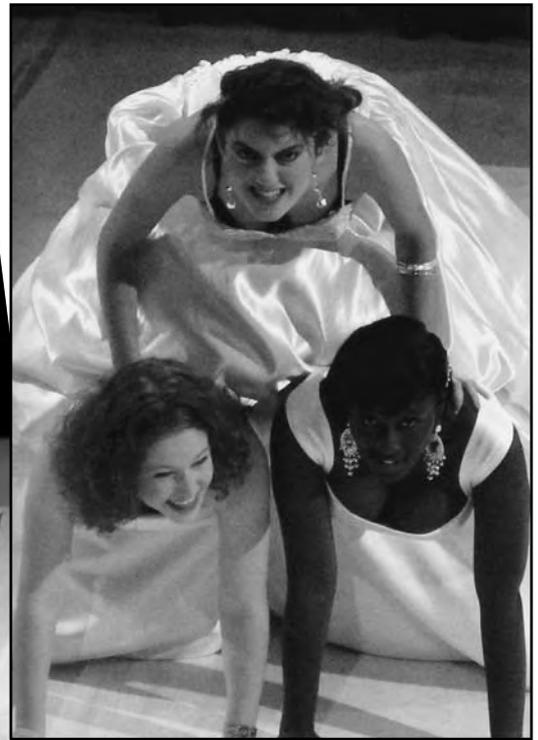
## Big Love

BY BRIAN McLOONE

Charles L. Mee's *Big Love* (2003) is a redux of Aeschylus's less fun (although more famous) play, *The Suppliant Maidens* (470 BCE). As usual, when I see a play based on an Ancient Greek original, I'm immediately disappointed when we don't sacrifice a goat beforehand. When did this practice stop, and why? I guess, in our P.C.-induced world, a production crew can't get away with "animal cruelty" or some other such war crime — a point which seems coincidentally relevant here, since the thrust of Mee's play is to showcase the banality of orthodoxy.

Mee is a former historian, so naturally he's going to return to the golden age of theater, as he has done many times in the past, with his plays *Orestes*, *Agamemnon*, and *Trojan Women*, to name just a few. With *Big Love*, Mee is, once again, drawing upon one of the oldest plays known to woman. Set at an Italian villa in the Mediterranean, the play weaves the story of three women fleeing the all-powerful grip of matrimony. But the ladies-in-waiting are certainly approaching their dread of tying the knot from different angles. Lydia is a romantic, searching for some type of overwhelming feeling of passion in her love affair; Thyona is what a feminist looks like — man-hating and matrophobic; and Olympia, in principle, wants to submit to a man, but just not to the groom in question. The problem is that they're all being *forced* into marriage with their cousins; an unfortunate state of affairs for both parties, one would hope. When the would-be grooms discover where their would-be wives are hiding, the women have to answer what Sartre called "the only truly philosophical question" ever asked (And I'll give you a hint: it's not whether to get married or not).

The play is written as a comedy, but the "hypothetical" situation of forced marriage



Photos Courtesy of SUSANNA BROWN

seems a bit tasteless at times. Maybe this is just me caving in to the aforementioned Land of the Politically Correct, where fun goes to die, but the whole premise of the production really does put things into an uncomfortable perspective. The plot serves as a hyperbolic example of marital expectations in modern America, and that is not an accurate representation of what women in many cultures actually have to deal with — sometimes more than once. So at base level, that's a singular, fundamental complaint. But besides that, the play provides an incredibly necessary and clever look at some very challenging issues. During the 1960s and '70s, women were really questioning whether the construction of marriage was reconcilable with their desire for independence and self-sufficiency. And before that, with less success, many leftists questioned marriage on the grounds that it was simply a construct of capitalism.

Both the cast and the crew did a terrific job capturing the fun and seriousness of this very nuanced issue. I don't want to give away too much of the play's setting in this review, but the stage is arranged

in a very captivating manner with loads of interesting scenery, and the music is both relevant and exciting throughout the course of the story. One of the most interesting elements of the production is Mee's use of chaos. This style of theater is Mee's specialty. As he has described his work, "I like plays that are not too neat, too finished, too presentable;" and, "My plays ... are filled with things that take sudden turns, careen into each other, smash up, veer off in snickering turns. That feels good to me. It feels like my life. It feels like the world." So it makes sense that this is the way he structures *Big Love*. There are episodes during the play where things seem very unstructured, a clever directive strategy that fits with the message of the story.

In this spirit, *Big Love* is an engrossing performance with many interesting and unpredictable turns. Feminism, homosexuality, sex, violence, death, marriage, love, hate, anger, frustration — all interesting topics in their own rights, and all the singular topics of countless plays. *Big Love* meshes all of these together into a unifying and didactic framework. ☺

Catch the next performance of *Big Love* in Tufts' Balch Arena Theater from Thursday, November 1 through Sunday, November 3 at 8:00 p.m. For the show on November 1, tickets will be sold for \$1 at the Coben box office. For all other nights, the price of admission is \$7.

# Donnie Darko:

## a Sci-Fi Adventure on Stage

BY MICHAEL TUCKER

Adapting a film into a play is a tall order for a playwright — especially when the film is as cinematically nuanced as Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko* (2001). The American Repertory Theater attempted to capture the surrealism of the psychedelic science fiction cult-classic on Saturday, October 27, when *Donnie Darko* debuted at the Zero Arrow Theater in Cambridge.

The adaptation was a success. The play is an exploration into the mind of mild-mannered but somewhat rebellious Donnie Darko, a troubled teen who begins seeing an imaginary friend in a bunny suit. Donnie first encounters the bunny, Frank, in a dream. Frank advises Donnie to leave his bedroom because of an unmentionable imminent danger. Frank then tells Donnie the world is going to end. The play thus functions as a study of Donnie's reaction to his perceived immanent doom, and is rooted in the mental turmoil and delusions that ensue.

The film *Donnie Darko*, which was described by A.R.T.'s Acting Artistic Director Gideon Lester as "self-consciously cinematic," presented many obstacles for a theatrical conversion. The play's adaptor, Marcus Stern, created a play that mirrored its film original closely, but avoided the awkwardness of transferring the suspense of the film onto the stage. Stern, who also directed *Donnie Darko*, ultimately penned a play that tactfully bends the limitations of conventional stage theatre.

Not being able to use the close-cropped shots and quick angle changes that the film employed, Stern used minimal lighting to forge an intimacy between the actors and the audience. The play was scored with the film's soundtrack — a mix of oddly placating 1980's pop-rock and stereotypical but effectively suspenseful tracks common in many sci-fi thriller movies.

The play unfolds with an aura of post-modernism, which allows the adaptation to truly flourish. Such a style informed the



Photo Courtesy of A.R.T.

audience early on, as if to say, "Yes. This was a movie. Yes. We are using a lot of the cinematic elements of the movie in our play."

The most suspenseful scenes are achieved through this post-modern fusion of film and theatre. When both Donnie and the audience are first introduced to Frank, he appears as a crude and imposing silhouette against a misty red haze. Once Frank was illuminated, the bunny suit and its sinisterly emotionless face looked like perfect replicas.

The audience was immersed in the surreal atmosphere created by the menacing soundtrack and hovering red mist behind Frank. The bunny suit blankly stared forward as Frank's deep, ominously monotone voice was broadcast over the speakers. During this scene, the play rose above the film. The physical proximity between the audience and Frank created a connection — I, like Donnie, could see that Frank was physically there, that he was real. His voice was broadcast loudly, blanketing the audience with the same authoritative presence felt by Donnie.

Dan McCabe's performance as Don-

nie Darko was insightful and engaging, highlighting the fear and confusion of his character's addled teenage mind. He delivered his lines fluxing between the authoritative tone of a self-assured man and the solicitous but fearful timbre of a teen. In doing so, he captured the essence of *Donnie Darko*: a physical manifestation of the conflict between our innate uncertainty and immanent doom.

If acted out poorly, *Darko*'s character could be perceived as a disengaged youth full of hubris and rebellion. McCabe's *Darko* is purposefully weighted with a sense of introverted awareness. It appeared throughout the play as if the *Darko* that McCabe constructed was painfully aware of the absurdity of his situation, making the internal struggle all the more unbearable.

Gretchen Ross, *Donnie*'s developing love interest, is depicted quite differently by actress Flora Diaz. Much like McCabe, Diaz brings forth the fear and confusion of Gretchen's mind. She does it, however, in a way that makes Gretchen seem like a normal teenage girl. She delivered her lines with startling realism, as though she was truly feeling the underlying awkwardness and uncertainty of a teenage girl going through such a transitional phase of life.

The entire company performed well, fluidly exchanging lines and delivering a professional performance. The technical aspects went unnoticed, as they should have. The minimalist approach to set design and lighting allowed the acting and atmospheric immersion to bring the audience inside the warped mind of *Donnie Darko*.

A helpful bit of advice: *Donnie Darko* runs for an hour and a half without an intermission, so go before and take it easy on the bottled water during the performance. ☺

*Donnie Darko* runs from Saturday, October 27 through Sunday, November 18 at the Zero Arrow Theater. Individual ticket prices range from \$39 to \$52, and student prices are \$25 advance purchase; \$15 student rush on the day of the performance. See [amrep.org/darko](http://amrep.org/darko) for more information.

# Live at Oxfam



SARAH LEENEN

BY JOHN KIRKUP

After witnessing one of the weekly concerts at Tufts' Oxfam Café last month, the words that come to mind are those of *Blade Runner's* Roy Batty — "I've seen things you people wouldn't believe." While every band that played had a somewhat other-wordly quality, it would be misleading if I didn't remember the fact that not all aliens bring peace and love — some come to destroy, harnessing the power of synthesizers and way too much reverb.

8:47 P.M. A few minutes later than the intended 8:30 start time, my accomplice and I are relieved to see that the show hasn't yet begun. Oxfam Café is the essence of informality. Painted lights and pillars give the impression that the people here have truly created a place of their own, and made something out of nothing. The small crowd — about 25 people — seems smaller when a quick show of hands indicates that about five of us are from Tufts. Jumbo would be ashamed. The size of the crowd seems irrelevant, however, as every man, woman, and androgynous hipster wants and needs to be there, driven by the fact that Tuesday nights are for anything but studying.

8:53 P.M. The ukulele people are the first band. They are called Prince Rahm of Iodia. Sitting on a couch 10 feet away from me, they are indistinguishable from those around them. Intimacy is never a bad thing, right? Not so right. The music is a combination of repetitive, dissonant, and atmospheric guitar chords set to random synthesizer solos that make use not of actual melodies, but of sounds thought lost in only the worst '80s sci-fi flick. Prince Rahm is a harsh master. Is this what they play at Guantánamo Bay?

9:27 P.M. Prince Rahm's reign has come to an end. The duo still inspire affection among the audience, but the affection is tempered by a desire for musical integrity. The next act is folksy Sandra O'Perry, who hails from Toronto. The music begins with a slow bass line of sorts emanating from a box he's placed in front of him — the beat is almost without rhythm until he starts playing. His voice is sonically healing, soothing my bleeding ears. He seems like he hasn't spoken to humans in some time, and his voice goes in and out of coherency — but being understood lyrically is irrelevant, as his powerful melodies and addictive, subtle rhythm leave little else for the mind to focus on. Rainy days suit this music perfectly. Sandra saps my will to leave, and the shortness of his set saddens all.

9:55 P.M. Next up is Orion Rigel Dommissé, who looks the definition of the "indie chick," but doesn't seem to have thought much about what to do once she's on stage. Imagine Regina Spektor with bronchitis and you'll have summed up in 15 seconds what Orion stretched across the bitter space of half an hour.

10:40 P.M. Just as my hand was beginning to persuade me to pull the fire alarm, Orion vanished from the stage. Nat Baldwin's band takes to the stage, and has the most interesting composition of the evening: bass, violin, cello, and drums. This is the most soulful music of the night — Baldwin's voice is just another instrument, fading in and out over powerful bass lines and intense violin solos. They are true musicians, watching each other's eyes and understanding just what needs to be done to heal the spirits of the venue. For the first time, the band is participating more than the audience. And it feels good.

10:50 P.M. Some light banter and some heavy music reminds me why I'm there. Concerts really are amazing. They give you an experience that somehow, and only once, gets through to the most private recesses of the self, while simultaneously relating you to everyone around you. We are not alone.

11:30 P.M. The end. Wandering out of the Oxfam Café, I feel as if I've woken from a dream. A dream of dinosaurs, evil princes, and soulful peasants — a strange dream at times, but always brightened by the fact that in spite of all the sonic abuse, a night at the Oxfam Café still beats the hell out of your average weekday night. ☺

The next concert at Oxfam is Saturday, November 3, 7:00 p.m. For more information on upcoming events at the café, see [myspace.com/oxfamcafe/music](http://myspace.com/oxfamcafe/music).

## ARTS THIS WEEK

### TUFTS:

Fri., Nov. 2 through Sunday, Nov. 4, *Big Love*, Balch Arena Theater, 8:00 p.m. A comedy of three sisters who take matters into their own satin-gloved hands to avoid their marriages. Tickets \$7 at the Cohen Box Office.

Sat., Nov. 3, *Break the Stage*, Cohen Auditorium, 8:00 p.m. The hottest Intercollegiate Step Competition in the New England area comes to Tufts. Tickets \$10 at the Cohen Box Office.

Sat., Nov. 3, *Mt. Eerie, Privacy, and Jason Anderson at Oxfam Café*, 10:00 p.m. A unique show sponsored by Bodies of Water Arts and Crafts and Oxfam's Midnight Café. \$7 at the door.

Thurs., Nov. 8, *Comic Potential*, Balch Arena Theater, 8:00 p.m. Hilarity and mayhem ensue when a group of soap opera actors is replaced with robots, one of whom develops human romantic emotions. Free.

### BOSTON:

Fri., Nov. 2, *David Sedaris*, Boston Symphony Hall, 8:00 p.m. Brilliant and brutally honest, Sedaris punctures political correctness and skewers cultural euphemisms. Tickets \$30 to \$48; call (617) 482-6661 for more information.

Sat., Oct. 27 through Nov. 18, *Donnie Darko*, Zero Arrow Theatre, 8:00 p.m. A new adaptation of the 2001 cult film, a sci-fi play about time travel. See [amrep.org/darko](http://amrep.org/darko) for more information.

Sat., Nov. 3, *The Mobfather at the Mystery Café*. Ricardo's, Boston, 7:30 p.m. An interactive comedy-murder mystery that can be solved while enjoying an Italian dinner. Tickets \$48; call 781-784-7469.

Sun., Nov. 4, *Live Flamenco Performance*, Bar Lola, 8:00 p.m. Noted flamenco artists perform live music and dance. See [flamencoboston.com/barlola](http://flamencoboston.com/barlola).

# Everything But Dinner In The North End

BY JULIA FELTUS

Who doesn't love a fabulous, authentic Italian meal? Shrimp Giuseppe with sun — dried tomato and prosciutto, savory Arancino that melts in your mouth, and spaghetti and meatballs like Mamma used to make... These are just a few of the specialties that can be found on the lively streets of Boston's historic North End, accessible by the Haymarket T stop. But, there is more to this cultural oasis than its pricey, although delicious, restaurant cuisine.

Because a large percentage of late-night spots in the Boston area are 21+, younger students may not choose to venture into the city. However, the North End's Improv Asylum Theater is a great destination for college students of all ages. This improv sketch comedy club is open to those over age 17. Similar to Saturday Night Live skits, the Improv Asylum's Main Stage shows and specialty events are created on the spot. With the help of its audience, the cast produces an entirely original and innovative show each night. Visit the Asylum on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights to see the 8 or 10 p.m. showing of its Main Stage Show. Tickets are moderately priced at \$20. On Wednesdays at 8 p.m., the Asylum features its show, "Lost in Boston, or How I Learned to Love that Dirty Water," an improv show that any Bostonian or neo-Bostonian will enjoy. Tickets are a mere \$15.

Fancy something sweet after laughing until it hurts? The North End's Hanover Street offers many options. Walk to 272 Hanover Street, also known as Gigi Gelateria, which boasts some of the sweetest, most authentic gelato in the North End. At Gigi Gelateria, not only do they serve gelato in a cup, but staffers can also scoop the frozen indulgence inside chocolate covered or plain cannoli shells. Flavors range from crowd favorites Tiramisu, amaretto, and stracciatella (vanilla with chocolate shavings) to more unique flavors such as passion fruit, grapefruit, and pear. Gigi Gelateria is open daily from 10 a.m. to midnight.

Caffe Vittoria, located at 294 Hanover Street, is the perfect place to catch up with friends over a mocha latte or cappuccino. Sip your steamy beverage outside and watch the pedestrian traffic, or slip inside and be transported to old world Italia.

However, if you want to get away from the congestion that can build up around this area, walk further up Hanover Street to Lulu's Bake Shoppe, at 227 Hanover Street. This retro-style shop is straight out of the 40s-50s soda fountain era, with a black and white checkered tile floor and mint green leather upholstery. Its signature dessert is the official Lulu cupcake, a dark chocolate cupcake with slick chocolate frosting and "Lulu" spelled out in white cursive letters. The S'mores cupcake is made to perfection, with a rich, moist chocolate base, marshmallow, and sprinkle of crumbled graham cracker on top to finish. Other popular varieties include Oreo, dulce de leche cheesecake, red velvet, and mocha-raspberry-coconut. Depending on the variety, these sweet treats range from \$1.75 to \$2.75 each. Buy one, two, or five if you fancy. Though they are known for their cupcakes, Lulu's Bake Shoppe also serves coffee, biscotti, individualized cakes, and tarts, as well as made-to-order cakes.

The North End isn't just for those who love to eat; great shopping can be found here as well. Custom-made graphic tees, crafty picture frames, you name it — Shake the Tree has it all. Located at 95 Salem Street, this quaint and artsy boutique is full of scarves, hats, dresses, jewelry and giftware. Though the clothing is somewhat expensive (some dresses carry price tags of nearly \$200), smaller gifts such as picture frames, candle votive holders, and jewelry are more moderately priced. Among the trendy dresses and large leather bags, a batch of vintage-style clutches particularly caught my eye. They were just the right size, came in several patterns, and were under \$30.

If you are shopping for that special someone, your canine pal, head over to Pri-



PHOTO BY JULIA FELTUS

ma Donna on 30 Prince Street. A relatively new addition to the North End, Prima Donna has clothing for dogs, including Burberry-inspired vests and spooky Halloween costumes. The charming boutique even has a display case of doggie pastries. Only in the North End can you find canine friendly cannolis. But don't get discouraged, you non-pet lovers; there are dresses, sweaters, and spa products for you too, and jewelry starting at \$12.

For those who are of legal age, the well-established wine shop The Wine Bottega is a great place to browse or buy gifts. The shop is reminiscent of a treasure-filled, been-in-the-family-for-ages wine cellar, with thick wooden beams and brick walls. The Wine Bottega offers a wide selection of wines, but specializes in Sicilian varieties. It even has weekly wine tastings on Fridays from 5 to 8 p.m. Take those hands out of your wallets and let your taste buds run wild — wine tastings are completely complimentary!

Calling all history buffs: if tiramisu and wine just don't strike your fancy, the Paul Revere House is right around the corner, located on at 19 North Square. For \$2.50, college students can visit one of the oldest buildings in Boston. Typically, touring the house and courtyard takes approximately 30 to 40 minutes. But all tours are self-guided, so feel free to stay and browse. Starting November 1, the Paul Revere House will be open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

The Historic North End is only a hop, skip, and jump away. Catch the T in Davis Square, switch to the Orange Line at Downtown Crossing, and ride until you reach Haymarket. The North End is the perfect escape from exams and papers: explore, laugh, eat well, and learn some Italian while you are at it. ☺

# Washington Street

*This is the second and final installment in a two-part short story. The first serialized part was featured in last week's issue of the Observer. Jahn Sood ('08) is majoring in International Relations.*

BY JAHN SOOD

At two-seventeen Eric zoomed across the Longfellow Bridge. His face was hard and his chest was cold, but he was sweating under the edge of his black knit hat and he pedaled harder and harder. In the wire basket that flew forward in front of him, there was a package. It was square and thin, wrapped carefully into a red and white plastic shopping bag and it peeked over the edge of the basket since it was too tall to fit comfortably. Inside were pictures, pictures of China, the only way that he could show his daughter where her grandmother lived. Twelve pictures over twelve months that would all be like

this. He would hang them on the wall like the picture of the ocean floor behind the fish tank.

Ashamed, he pedaled harder and harder, his bike weaving in and out of luxury cars and moving trucks, minivans and taxi cabs. He raced them all, every last one, shooting forward on his rusty insignificant torpedo bike, and most of all he raced the wind. It chased him back over the river from the towering university steps where he had delivered a bag of hot grease that didn't remind him of home and it chased him in and out of the bookstore where he had paid seven dollars and eighty-four cents for a glossy fish-tank calendar. The wind came from either side across the

water and hardest in front. He pedaled to push through it. He knew that if he slowed down it would wrap around him and he couldn't stop it. It stung through the leather of his cheeks. A Red-line subway train exploded from underground and screeched still between the pouring rows of traffic. Eric held out his arms in full wingspan and looked up tempting the train and the traffic to run him down. He pedaled and pedaled.

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"I think that we really made a breakthrough with Robbie Vasquez today," the gym teacher said enthusiastically behind the closed doors of the principal's office.

"Do you think so?" The principal pushed.

"Well, yes. Today in my class, we finally got him into the pool. He has been in my swimming class for the entire semester and he has always refused to get in the water; he throws tantrums and hides in the locker room. Well, you know all this; we spoke about the problem before. Today he finally jumped in, and I think he liked it."

"Well, that's fantastic, Ms Jacobs," the principal said, "swimming class is supposed to be fun for the students."

\*\*\*\*\*

When Eric pushed through the heavy glass doors of the Lower School at two-thirty-six, his cheeks burned, but he could not help smiling. Julie was there, sitting on the bench in the front office with J.J. from Mrs. Sue's class.

"He's here," Julie announced and gestured to Principal Ng that Eric was by the door. Then she stood up, waved goodbye to J.J. and bounced over to where he was standing. She waited until they turned around the block, and when she was extra sure that J.J. couldn't see anymore and she



took his hand.

He decided to wait until tomorrow to show her where grandmother lived.

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At home, in the red-brick, fifth floor apartment, Robbie, took out his notebook and drew pictures of Chinese letters on the first page while his brothers Carlos and Alan, chased their baby sister Maria in circles around the table with a basketball and a couch cushion. He rubbed his finger down the notebook's inseam, pushing the saw tooth edge of the page he had ripped out this morning into the binding. He tried to remember which one of the funny drawings meant "to play."

"Help me, Robbie!" Maria squealed,

back by dinner time. Robbie is in charge, and there will be no bothering your sister, comprende?"

"I want to go to Papi's house," Robbie protested. "I like it better at Papi's house."

"Then who is going to look after Maria?" Robbie's mother put her free hand on Robbie's face, but not long enough to console him.

"We need to work together here, Robbie"

"Yeah, don't go! Look after Maria!" Maria echoed

"Baby!" Carlos and Alan chanted in unison!

"Hey! I'm not a baby," Maria made a huge playful frown, and looked at Robbie

now since he left the town where he was born and came here. No hand had touched his face like this for a long time, and he couldn't even remember what it was like to be on the other side. That is why he sat here every night, in this exact spot, so that she wouldn't forget like he had.

"Ba ba, tell me a story about when you were little," Julie said.

"It was a long time ago xiao hai-zi," he told her gently. More than anything else, Eric feared that Julie would find out where he came from and ask to go there and he would have to explain to her that she never could and that it was all because of him, because he had thought that if he walked up lonely piers and hid in ship bot-

"No hand had touched his face like this for a long time, and he couldn't even remember what it was like to be on the other side. That is why he sat here every night, in this exact spot, so that she wouldn't forget like he had."

and Alan tripped and tumbled over the cushion that he had hoped to use as a battering ram, but Carlos kept after her. Just as Robbie looked up from the mostly blank notebook, the whole chaotic scene froze in still frame and he saw Carlos with basketball over head aiming to let it fly and Maria crouched on his side of the table looking excitedly through the back of the chair at her brothers. Then, the freeze broke and everything snapped into action. Maria reached out and grabbed onto Robbie's hand and Carlos hurled the ball across the table where it knocked down a cup full of water and rolled over the edge towards Robbie and Maria. Robbie sat up and swatted the ball away so that Maria wouldn't be hit, and the water from the cup swooshed across the table and under Robbie's notebook.

"¡Roberto Vásquez! ¡Basta ya, chicos!" His mother hollered as she ran into the room, unbuttoning the second button from the top on her white collared shirt and scooping Maria up from her hiding place at Robbie's side.

"Robbie, I need you to look after your brothers, not to start trouble. You are the man in this house and you need to start acting like it. ¡Boys, escuchame! I have to go to work right now, but I will be

for support. They all knew that she liked being the baby. Her mother set her gently down on the ground and she got down on her hands and knees and crawled back under the table to safety.

"Okay, I'm going. Be good, hijos. Robbie, don't forget what we talked about."

Then, she went back into the bedroom, put on a blue blazer with a gold name tag pinned over the left breast pocket, and walked across the living room to the door. She waved bye-bye to Maria, opened the door and left, locking it behind her. When she was gone, Robbie looked down at his notebook again. The water had soaked up into its pages and they were soft and wavy. He closed the notebook and pushed it across the table so hard it went off the other side.

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At eight-thirty four Julie lay in bed with one bedside lamp lit and she watched the little bumps at the end of her blanket move around as she wiggled her toes. When Eric sat down on the chair next to the bed and pushed the hair across her forehead with his fingertips, she looked up. He looked back at her and wondered if this was how he had looked when he was young and his mother used to sit by his bed before he went to sleep. It had been almost thirteen years

toms all the way across the ocean that he would find everything that he didn't have at home, but now he was here and home was gone and there was nothing he could do to get it back.

Julie held her breath until her cheeks got red and flushed and wiggled her toes a little more, not enough that Eric could notice, but enough that the air in the room shifted just a little bit. Then she thought of Grandma again and it welled up in her and she wanted to let it out, but for some reason that she didn't understand, she thought that she should stay quiet. It squeezed her stomach and tapped at the inside of her teeth nervously. Then, she blurted it out.

"Dad, if you don't know where grown ups go, does that mean they're dead?"

Eric looked down and let the words turn over in his head.

"Julie, my child, why would you think something like that?" He said.

"J.J. said so."

"Julie, sometimes people say that they know a lot of things even if they don't know very much at all. You shouldn't worry too much about everything that J.J. says."

"Then how come you didn't tell me where Grandmother lives?"

He froze.

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Robbie rolled over in his bed and pushed his face into the pillow. He could hear Carlos and Alan fighting through the wall. He had told them to go to sleep, but they never listened to him since he was their brother. He didn't want to be a grown-up anyway. He was sweating and his head hurt, and he wished that his mother would come home. He squinted hard and thought that if he went to sleep, that it would all go away. Then he opened his eyes again and held them open with his fingers since he knew that if he fell asleep, he would have to go back to school and stay there all day alone.

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Eric sat quietly looking at his daughter and holding his hand on her cheek until she fell asleep. He couldn't think of anything else to do and there was nothing that he could have said. When she rolled over her back started to rise and fall, he knew that it was safe to go. He stood up and walked back into the kitchen where he found his hat and coat and put them on. At ten fourteen, Eric locked the door of his apartment and slipped quietly down the winding stairwells of the building, around and around until he hit the floor.

When he reached the bottom of the stairs, he pushed through the thick glass door to the world and stumbled out into the cold. Washington Street was lonely now and most of the stores had gone to bed. The sky was dark and hollow, and he couldn't see the stars past the city glow. He turned the dial to unlock his bike and pulled it away from the rack. His skin stung when he pressed his fingers around the steel crossbar, but he couldn't let go. When he had turned the bike

in the right direction, he climbed on and rode down the empty street under blinking red traffic lights and looming towers while the wind shook its head.

Eric got to the restaurant early this time. Three minutes before his ten thirty night shift began. When he opened the door, the neon light from inside burst around his body leaving him in silhouette

tank. He looked over a realized that some thing was alive here. There was one young woman with dark skin and darker eyes sitting in the dining area at the table by the fish. She was hunched over a carton of rice, sifting through with a plastic fork, her straight brown hair unfold over shoulders like it was meant to hide her from something. Eric wished that she didn't need to

hide, but she was a beautiful woman, he knew that everything beautiful had to hide in a place as lonely as this. Then, she forked some of the brown, fried rice into her mouth, straightened her back and for just a minute let her shoulders rest

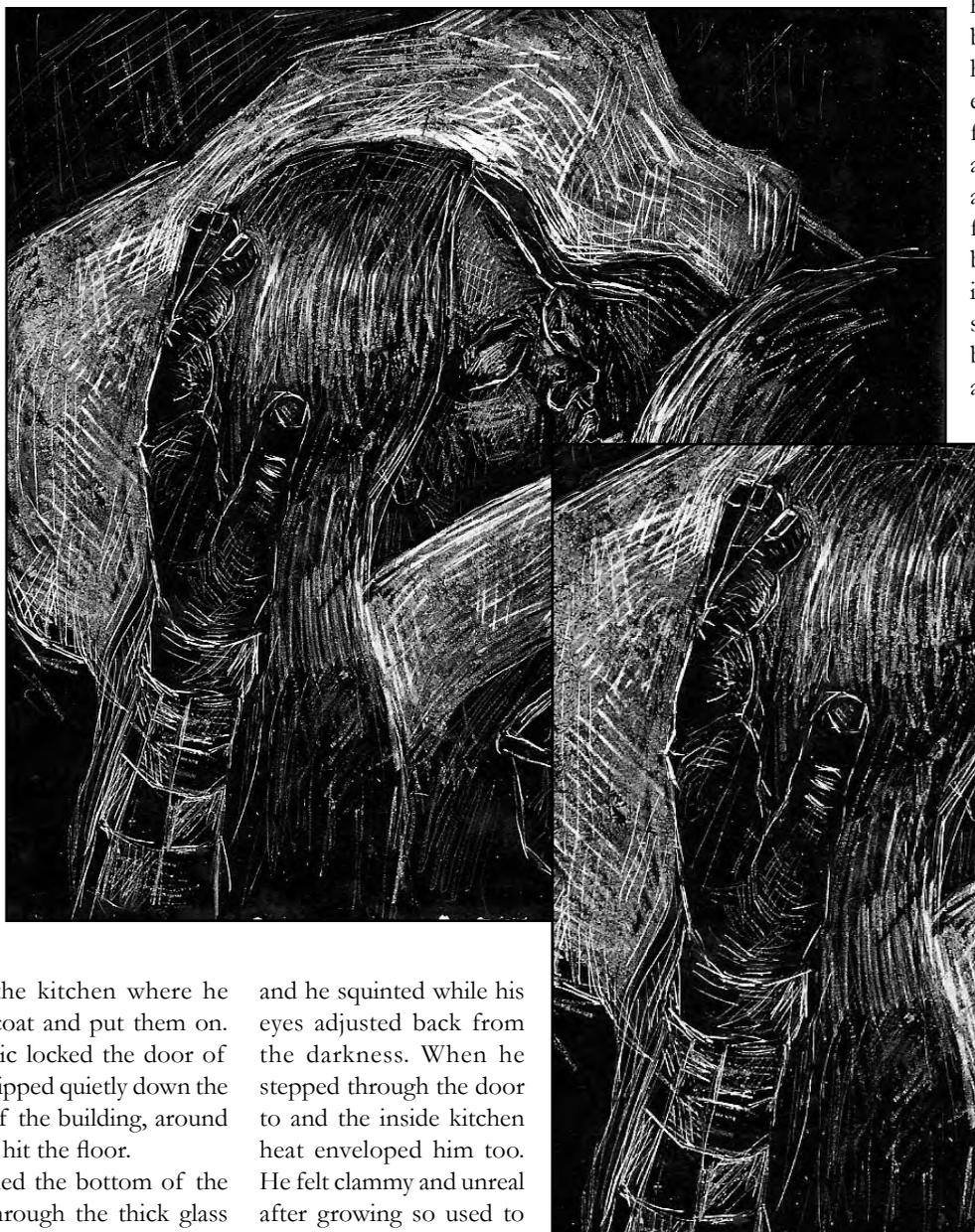
against the back of the chair. She looked up into the fish tank letting it stare back at and it draped an iridescent halo of light across the chest of her blue blazer. In that moment, Eric knew that at least one person understood what he was feeling. He stepped slowly into the room and pulled off his hat and unzipped his coat, then walked past the counter and into the kitchen where

and he squinted while his eyes adjusted back from the darkness. When he stepped through the door to and the inside kitchen heat enveloped him too. He felt clammy and unreal after growing so used to the winter air.

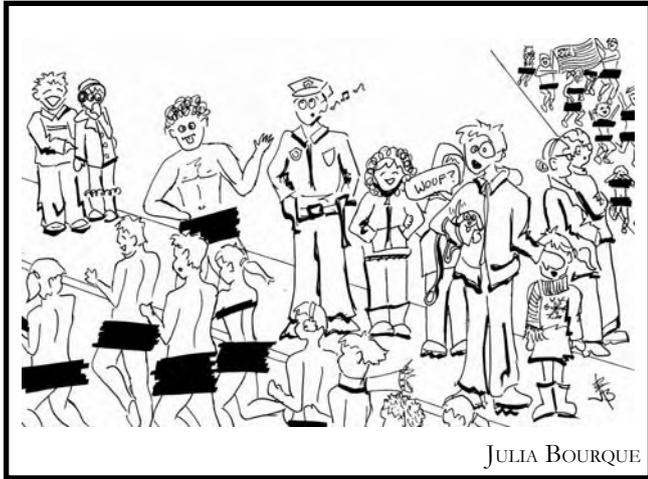
The small restaurant was different now, than in the morning. The teenage cashier was home in bed and the kitchen staff was reduced to one older man who filled all of the late night delivery orders. The whole place was singed with an eerie silence. The only sound he could hear was the steady bubbling of the fish

he found his first delivery orders for the night. ☺

*Roxane Sperber is this week's featured artist. Roxane ('09) is a joint-degree student with the Museum School of Fine Arts majoring in Art History.*



# On the Scene



Every year, Tufts students have one night to cut loose in the midst of academic intensity and blistering winter weather.

This year, the date of Tufts' annual Nighttime Quad Reception is Monday, December 10.

## Puddle Plodders

BY DUNCAN PICKARD

Students were trucking across the Quad, trying to avoid the globs of water exploding on their book bags and the soggy spots in the grass. A stream of water ran by the sidewalk in front of Olin; the students who flocked out of afternoon classes had to hop over the small creek. The hop didn't require much effort or skill, but many students confronted the stream as the greatest challenge of their day, considering the hop from different angles during their approach, mustering their athleticism from yards away.

Some of the girls were disappointed by this new obstacle. One, wearing a sorority sweatshirt and gabbing on a pink Razr, slouched her shoulders and glared uphill as if to say, "Who put *this* here? This is unacceptable. You'd think that \$45,000 would at least buy me a bridge." But she unscrewed her face and hopped impressively, being sure to raise her high heels enough to avoid submersion while maintaining a hand up to shield her Louis Vitton bag from the rain. Indeed, her jump carried her several feet past the edge of the stream.

The seniors (identified by '08 shirts) don't hop, as a rule. They encounter the stream as if it has been there since freshman year, gliding across Packard Brook while gazing at Barnum like they don't even notice the water. The tall ones barely break stride, just pausing at curbside to adjust their hips. They barely get off the ground, glide across the water, and step to the other side.

# POLICE BROTHER

Compiled by Molly Posner, with the cooperation of the Tufts Police Dept.

## Thursday, October 25

TUPD received a call at 7:39 a.m. that a computer had been stolen from Jackson Gym sometime between 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 24 and that morning. The computer belonged to the dance department.

## Friday, October 26

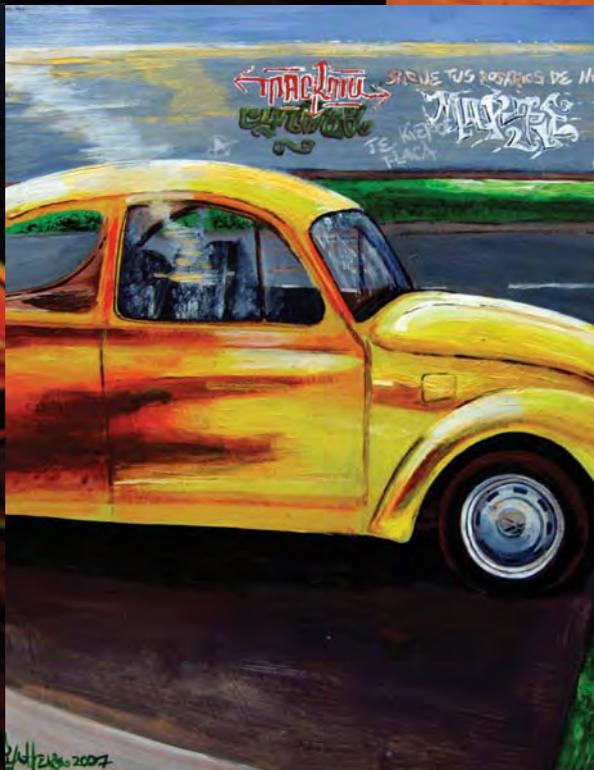
At 1:14 a.m. TUPD officers were called to Hill Hall where an intoxicated student was making a scene. The student's friends had called for medical help; however Armstrong Ambulance requested that the student be put under protective custody due to his violent behavior. The student was then taken to Lawrence Memorial Hospital, where an officer had to stay with him for the duration of his visit.



RYAN STOLP

The most amusing hopper was a portly professor who approached the jump without grace or style, but had fantastic enthusiasm. He shuffled alongside the curb, surveyed the distance, and stuck out his arms in preparation. He quivered and took off like a wounded bird, floating lopsided over the stream, just barely achieving the required distance. He jiggled when he landed.

One student — distinctly freshman — was engaged in a deep conversation with two friends as he left Olin. He crunched his forehead, no doubt explaining the answer to a deep philosophical question he had been contemplating all week. His friends hopped modestly across, but he was so engrossed in thought that he was unaware of the flowing water in front of him. He stepped in the torrent, and water whirled around his foot. He made a painful hop to escape, and his friends threw their heads back in laughter while he sloshed his way downhill.



The featured artist on this week's Parting Shot is senior Cynthia McMurry. While studying abroad in Santiago, Chile, last year, Cynthia photographed a series of Volkswagen beetles. She later painted reproductions of the antique autos on canvas board.

# Tufts Observer

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