

TUFTS OBSERVER

VOLUME CXXV, ISSUE 4

OCTOBER 29, 2012



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The *Observer* has been Tufts' student 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, creative writing, and lively reviews of current arts, entertainment, and culture. 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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We're the Losers

By Kumar Ramanathan

THE PROBLEMATIC POLITICS
OUR GENERATION IS
INHERITING

November 6 will mark the first time that most current college students have the opportunity to vote in a presidential election. This is our political coming-of-age, our entry into the world of enfranchisement and of endless pandering based on our demographic and geographical position within society. The impact we face from the outcome of elections is becoming less abstract as we enter the job market and the purview of the IRS. The policies and platforms of the two major parties are undoubtedly important, as the outcome of this election will determine aspects of our life for years to come—the state of our healthcare, financial regulation, Pell Grants, and tax policy, just to name a few. However, the 2012 election has a parallel importance for our generation. The contours and characteristics of this election cycle reflect the state of our democracy; they act as a bellwether for the politics that we will inherit.

Forty years ago, George McGovern became the first presidential nominee to emerge from the same primary process that he himself had redefined years earlier. For the first

time, the electorate was radically empowered in primary elections, making McGovern the first “grassroots candidate.” The campaign was also the first to feature the ramifications of the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act, which required campaigns to disclose financial contributions. Richard Nixon’s crushing defeat of McGovern in November heralded a significant realignment of both parties’ bases. The tactics used by Nixon during the campaign were also notably new, and in the ensuing months they would turn into the Watergate scandal that destroyed his presidency and sent the institution into an unprecedented crisis.

Much like the 1972 election, the 2012 election reveals underlying changes in the way our democratic process works. Over the past few years, we have seen a growing influence of money in politics, modern tactics of voter suppression, and intensifying institutional failures in Washington. These shifts are combining in a broad theme of disenfranchisement and plutocratic tendencies that is solidifying in this year’s campaign, acutely affecting the politics we will face for decades to come.

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

It is an oft-repeated phrase that there’s too much money in American politics, but it has never been true to the extent that it is today. The cost of the 2012 election has increased from the 2008 record of \$5.3 billion to a projected \$6 billion. More telling even than the net increase in campaign spending is the change in the composition of where all this money comes from: in the landmark 2010 Supreme Court case *Citizens United v. FEC*, a 5-4 ruling determined that corporations had a First Amendment right to spend unlimited amounts of money on campaign advertising. That same year, outside groups spent \$489 million in the midterm elections—a 450 percent increase from the previous midterm elections in 2006. The “super PACs” (Political Action Committees) created by the *Citizens United* decision have already spent over \$689 million this election cycle, compared to \$239

million in the entire 2008 election. Besides the drastic increase in the absolute cost of elections, unlimited corporate spending also allows for large national fundraisers to exert greater control over local candidates, elevating campaigns of their choosing and destroying those they deem unfit.

The influence of money on politics does not stop with campaigns alone. Earlier this year, political scientist Martin Gilens of Princeton University published an extensive study in which he outlined how economic inequality affects political power. His analysis of the past four decades of federal legislation showed that the probability of policy change was proportionally responsive to the percent of Americans favoring the change, except when the preferences of low- and high-income voters differed. In these cases, the 90th income percentile’s preferences still had a demonstrable effect on actual policy change, whereas preferences of low-income groups had virtually no effect.

Gilens’ conclusion that affluence buys political power is particularly relevant to an era in which income inequality in the United States is at a peak and campaign spending is running rampant. The 2012 election has featured such characters as Harold Simmons, a billionaire banking tycoon who has spent \$18 million supporting Republican candidates individually and through his corporation. Set against the shadow of the *Citizens United* decision, 2012 has been the first major election cycle to feature a new explosion of outside spending on elections, and the trend has been a foreboding one.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

As the influence of the affluent increases, the issue of ballot access for disadvantaged Americans has been repeatedly taken to the courts this year. Since the 2008 election, several state legislatures around the country have been enacting laws that require

voters to bring photo IDs to the ballot booth. Ten states have photo ID requirements that will be in effect this November. The poor, the young, and poorer racial minorities in urban areas who do not have drivers' licenses are disproportionately represented in the population that does not own a valid photo ID. In addition, recently married or divorced people whose names do not match those on their identification could also be affected.

Proponents argue that the laws are required to combat voter fraud. Evidence of fraud, however, is scant—a five-year investigation by the Justice Department culminating in 2007 revealed only five cases of fraudulent voting in that period. Critics have compared the laws to poll taxes, accusing them of disenfranchisement. The demographics most affected by the laws are found solidly in the base of the Democratic Party. Although the Republican drafters of the law have repeatedly claimed that this is a non-partisan issue, Pennsylvania State Representative Mike Turzai tellingly slipped up during a June speech when he said, “Voter ID, which is gonna allow Governor Romney to win the state of Pennsylvania—done.”

State courts have temporarily blocked voter ID laws in various states this year, but the

battle is far from over. In six states—including crucial swing states Pennsylvania and Wisconsin—some verdicts have merely delayed the laws until after the election, while others have punted the decision to 2013 or 2014, off-cycle years when the cases will be less controversial. The next election will feature more of these laws kicking into effect, potentially altering the electoral map by skewing the two major parties' demographic bases.

INSTITUTIONAL FAILURE

Perhaps most pressing of all is the exacerbation of institutional failure that Washington has seen over the past four years. Our political inheritance has given us problematic institutions, such as the Electoral College and the Senate, whose undemocratic implications are severely affecting the way elections are conducted.

The Electoral College has been problematic ever since the states' rights and distinctness began eroding after the Civil War. Built for a time when interstate travel and communication were difficult, it is set up to elect presidents based on states' preferences rather than those of individuals. With the

advent of modern polling technology, presidential candidates are incentivized to maximize electoral vote gains by focusing on a few key swing states, an exclusive group that at most includes 11 states. Advertisement investment and candidate appearances are increasingly focused on the few states where polls are close, and the debates have featured both candidates pivoting to issues that are pertinent to voters in those states. As of October 21, the Gallup Tracking Poll suggests the plausibility of an outcome whereby Obama wins the Electoral College while losing the popular vote in an outcome more skewed than Bush's 2000 victory.

Meanwhile, Congress has mired itself in greater gridlock than ever before. An arcane piece of Senate rules allows for the filibuster, a process of blocking legislative procedure that requires 60 votes to overcome. This allows for the minority party in the Senate to block any legislation, a tactic that has been used to an alarming degree in the past few years. As a consequence, this Congress has been the most unproductive since the Second World War, passing almost no major legislation. With six-year terms and tiered elections, it is unlikely that either of the two parties will succeed in getting a safe super-majority with which to enact their legislation.

WHAT THIS ALL MEANS FOR US

The spread of influential faceless money, voter suppression tactics, and institutional failure has corrupted the political process, resulting in systemic changes to the state of our democracy. In recent years, we have begun to lose any semblance of a national debate. Meanwhile, large campaign donors push the two major parties into a political space of their preference; the Republican party has even taken to altering its electorate. D.C. has been exhibiting an electoral failure of unprecedented magnitude. The combination of these factors means that major national questions such as marijuana legalization and same-sex marriage have been relegated to ballot measures and heated court cases, instead of being debated by our duly elected government.

Every political ad seems to feature a comment on how “we are burdening the next generation” with our national debt. However, while the national debt is repeatedly discussed in the context of tax policy for the rich and spending cuts on entitlement programs, other issues of major long-term importance are routinely ignored. Where is the debate on the burden of climate change and energy policy? On the costs of college education? On the ramifications of the large and expensive national security apparatus constructed over the past eleven years? As we evolve into middle-aged America, it remains to be seen whether we will be able to tackle the problems of our generation effectively in a political system that is hurtling towards more and more disenfranchisement.

The future of any country's politics is nigh impossible to predict. Perhaps the Occupy movement will see a resurgence that tackles the ties between economic inequality and political power. A new civil rights movement may emerge to deal with voter ID laws; or gridlock in government may reach such a height that the party system will realign once more. What we do know is that, however we choose to deal with it, our generation is about to inherit the problematic democracy embodied by the 2012 election.

We inherit both a looming political and economic burden. The problems of campaign finance and voter suppression are long-term ones, to be shaped by battles over many more years and elections. They will affect the way our generation interacts with politics, much in the way that newly empowered primary elections and Watergate-style tactics from the 1972 election charted a new course for American democracy. Against this backdrop, the stage is set for Washington's institutional failures and undemocratic characteristics to worsen. 2012 is a crucial election year, but beyond its momentary ideological battles, there lies a deep and problematic disenfranchisement that our generation will have to face, sooner or later. ☐

ARE WE LOSING OUR RELIGION?

by Tamar Bardin

CAMPUS

At Tufts, there is an undeniable clash between devotion to one's religion and the secularly charged atmosphere of an intellectual, liberal community. Most students at Tufts believe in calculated patterns of global politics and human reaction rather than the immeasurable presence of a divine power. This disengagement from religion is not unique to Tufts, but rather a logical transition that many college-aged students experience. Attempting to forge their own identity and form of spirituality, students on campus often turn away from organized religion to discover alternative ways to find meaning and purpose in their lives.

Rabbi Jeffery Summit, executive director of Tufts Hillel, recognizes that many students compartmentalize their religion while at college. He says, "When people go to college, they are actively trying to define their own identity. For lots of people, that translates to breaking away from what they did when they were younger at home. It's not unusual to be at college and try to broaden your experience by stepping away from the past." Despite a majority of irreligious students on campus, the small but strong group of students who are connected to their religion should not be overlooked. Tufts' Protestant Chaplain Rachael Pettengill-Rasure identifies this religious group and its inherent value to campus. She states, "It is incredibly important to have communities of faith

on campus because there are still students who choose to continue to practice the tradition they grew up in as well as explore new ones."

Sophomore Leif Inouye falls into the religious group of students. Inouye was raised Mormon and grew up going to church every Sunday with his family. At Tufts, he continues to attend a weekly service at a congregation in Harvard Square that is designated specifically for college-aged students. While Inouye's religion and practices are fairly unique on campus, he benefits from being a minority at Tufts. Inouye states, "People tend to view Mormons as being aggressive with religion, but I am trying to create a bridge between secularism, faith, and God. I like being an example of religion in a way that debunks myths about the religion itself." He finds that Tufts students are generally very open to learning about his religion. While educating others is an underlying principle of Mormonism, Inouye admits that he is not entirely comfortable with the idea of participating in a mission and proselytizing. This is not a unique phenomenon; many religiously observant individuals question the applicability of fundamental principles of religion. As a result, they turn to other methods of discovering meaning in their lives.

Sophomore Leah Petrucelli, an active member of the Catholic Church, finds that religion is still prevalent on campus and that college students are simply exploring reli-

gion in new ways. She says, "I participated in a Bible study last year and the group of Tufts students that attended varied greatly in their dedication to Christianity. Some wanted to try another form of worship, some wanted to learn more about the foundation of many faiths, and some were just looking for something to believe in." Petrucelli feels that the desire for significance and value is still present on campus, but is being sought in an alternative light. Students are searching for meaning, which is something traditionally provided by religion.

One needs only to look at the plethora of clubs on campus to understand the notion that many students are actively searching for purpose in their everyday lives. For example, Inouye turns to hiking with the Tufts Mountain Club for an element of spiritual satisfaction. He explains, "Humans inherently want those defining moments in life. Hiking and being alone on a mountain is as close to God as you can get. Completely devoid of any influence, it's you and the world. You're as alone as you can possibly be. Sitting on natural creation, your phone is out of range, you're completely unaltered. It's almost more religiously fulfilling than church. It's more real." Devout or not, students may gain exposure to religious experiences through different lenses, including feeling something bigger than themselves by exploring nature.

Both Rabbi Summit and Chaplain Pettengill-Rasure acknowledge that the fluid nature of religion at Tufts mirrors a nationwide trend. Pettengill-Rasure purports, "It is true that Christian churches are in decline throughout the country, but I believe this is part of a larger shift in culture and religion. We are in the process of exploring new ways to be a church in the 21st century." While the face of religion may change with time, judging by the desires and outlook of each individual, the core of religion is enduring. As students, we might not take time out of our busy schedules to sit in church every Sunday morning, and we might not personally believe in a concrete idea of God, but we are certainly surrounded by people who are trying to sift through the mundane to find those rare moments of exception. The quest for meaning is ongoing at Tufts, and in that sense, religion is all around us. ☪



ROBERT COLLINS

THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON OUR PRESIDENTIAL RACE

A *Global Election*

BY AARON LANGERMAN

From negative political ads flooding television channels to President Obama and Governor Romney lashing out fiercely in the debates, nearly breathing accusations down one another's necks, each candidate has worked tirelessly to persuade the public that his policies would lead to a radically different America. For both, the focus has been on the economy and health care—domestic issues that the American public obsesses over. But what about international policy? The bottom line is that, in terms of foreign affairs, the election isn't as important as the presidential candidates—or other countries, for that matter—would like you to think.

The 2008 election was a different story. After the ultimately unpopular presidency of George W. Bush, President Obama achieved unprecedented popularity rates among citizens of other countries, especially in Europe. Opinion polls from Pew Research Center reveal that 86% of Europeans and 85% of the Japanese had confidence in Obama when he was inaugurated into office in 2009. Simultaneously, America's world image improved markedly. For example, only 42% of the French had held favorable views towards the US under the Bush administration in 2008, whereas those ratings skyrocketed to 75% with the inauguration of Obama in 2009—an increase of over 30%. In nearly every region of the world, a similarly positive increase in America's image occurred, with the notable exceptions of

Middle Eastern countries like Egypt, Lebanon, and Pakistan.

Obama's superstar popularity has waned since 2009, however. Only Poland, Russia, and Japan have more favorable images of America in 2012 than they did in 2009, when Obama first came to power. The President's use of drones is particularly controversial and despised abroad. According to the same Pew Research Study, the United States is the only country in the world where over half the population supports the use of drones (62% of Americans support the use of drones in a military context). For instance, in Greece, only 5% of the people agree with Obama's use of drones. Britain comes closest to approving the use of drones with a 44% approval rate, but even then the number of people disapproving the use of drones is greater at 47%. Despite President Obama's talk of multilateralism and changing America's foreign policy, it seems that other nations are disenchanted with Obama's administration, especially with regards to continued American unilateralism in military affairs.

The question becomes more interesting when comparing President Obama's image to Governor Romney's abroad. Despite declining ratings towards Obama overseas, 79.49% of people in other nations would rather have Obama win the 2012 election than Romney, as revealed in a study conducted by The Economist earlier this month. The important ques-

tion, then, is how much these popularity ratings really matter. Will other nations drastically change their relationship with the US based on their prejudices towards each candidate? Most experts conclude probably not.

Unlike the election in 2008, the 2012 election simply isn't particularly important to other nations. As the Pew Research study explains, "Global publics are much less interested in the 2012 US presidential election than they were in the 2008 contest. For example, four years ago 56% of Germans were closely following the race, compared with just 36% now." Despite the fact that Obama enjoys higher popularity than Romney, Bruce Stokes of CNN argues that, "In the long run, if Romney wins, none of this may matter as Europeans get to know him." Stokes does admit, however, that there may be a short-term impact on America's public image if Romney were elected. He cites the 2004 reelection of George W. Bush, which led to a temporary decline in favorable opinion towards the United States among other countries. A similar reaction would likely occur if Romney was elected, but it doesn't seem that the election will drastically alter America's public image.

Another important fact to remember is that US foreign policy, unlike domestic policy, is surprisingly bipartisan. American foreign policy, as revealed by a 2012 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy,

doesn't change drastically between administrations. Comparing both Obama's and Romney's platform on foreign affairs yields more similarities than differences. They agree on issues ranging from ending the war in Afghanistan to supporting Israel to intervening in the affairs of other countries. Both candidates recognize that the United States cannot be bogged down in more foreign conflicts and they both agree with shifting the emphasis on foreign policy away from the Middle East and towards Asia.

However, it is unlikely that both candidates would run foreign affairs in exactly the same way. With regards to three countries in particular – Israel, China, and Russia – who wins the election may make a substantial difference in our relations with those nations, even if overall American foreign policy stays the same. Most notably, Romney criticizes China, telling Americans in his political advertisements that, "It's time to stand up to the cheaters and make sure we protect jobs for the American people." He maintains that China has manipulated its cur-

rency, and that America needs to increase its military presence and arms sales to allies in the region. Romney's approach to China, as a recent *New York Times* article explains, "would amount to a profound shift in a policy toward China that has remained remarkably constant for decades across Republican and Democratic administrations."

Mitt Romney levels a similar critique against Obama's supposed "reset" in relations with Russia. Instead of achieving beneficial gains, Romney claims, Obama's policies towards Russia have been too accommodating to Russian interests. As *The Washington Times* explained in July, "Mitt Romney has assembled a foreign-policy platform rooted in the belief that adversaries such as Russia must be confronted for backsliding on democracy." With a strategy based on bolstering military alliances in Central Asia and increasing military train-

ing and assistance, Romney appears to consistently be more hard line and hawkish than Obama.

Obama's policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been an abysmal failure, says Romney--and he's not alone in this feeling. In 2009, 46% of the international community believed Obama would "be fair" with the Israelis and Palestinians. Today, only 18% believe he has been fair, while 59% say he has not. As explained on his website, Romney's two-part plan includes working with Israel to maintain its "strategic military edge" and making it clear that "the United States will reduce assistance to the Palestinians if they continue to pursue United Nations recognition or form a unity government that includes Hamas, a terrorist group dedicated to Israel's destruction."

It's difficult to determine if Romney intends to carry through on these war-hawkish promises or if these claims are merely an election strategy meant to garner more votes. Uri Dadush, director of the International Economics Program at the Carnegie En-

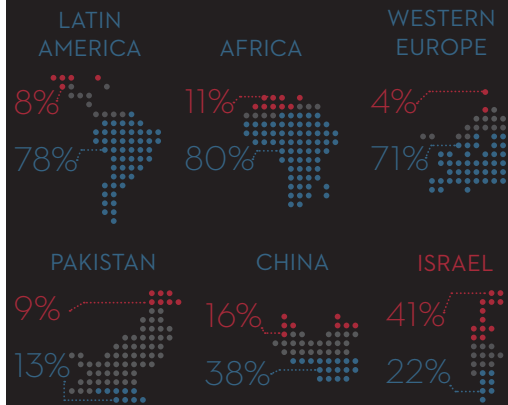
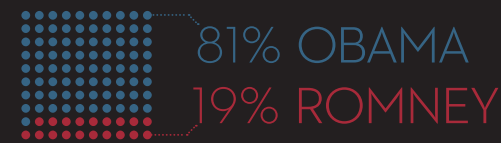
dowment for International Peace, thinks that Romney won't follow through on most of these hard line approaches towards other countries. "There is a lot of game playing on both sides," Dadush explains. "Once in office, presidents tend to recognize that the Chinese don't react well when you point a gun to their head." The *New York Times* holds a similar view, admitting in October that, "In the 2008 presidential campaign Mr. Obama also promised to label China a currency manipulator. But once in office, he opted for behind-the-scenes pressure on Beijing to let the renminbi strengthen. So has every president since 1994."

All in all, the historical record and both candidates' platforms seem to indicate that, except for a few notable exceptions, American foreign policy would stay mostly the same regardless of who sits in the Oval Office, Democrat or Republican, Romney or Obama. 🌐

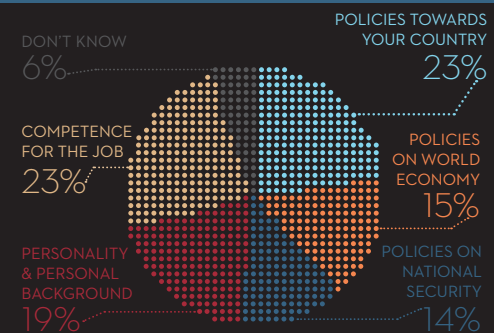
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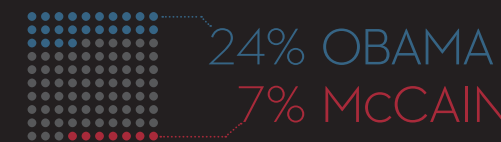
ELECTION RESULTS IF IF THE WORLD VOTED IN THE U.S. ELECTION



MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR VOTE



VERSUS 2008



JENNY SMITH

Rwanda's *road*

BY SHANE GOETZ

As the plane carrying the 21 members of our Tufts Hillel interfaith service and learning trip to Rwanda descended onto the tarmac at Kigali International Airport, the city lights below juxtaposed against the darkness of the areas outside of Kigali, Rwanda's capital. This served as the first reminder of just how different Rwanda was from Tufts. Outside of Rwanda's major cities, many people still live without electricity and other "necessities". It is still trying to build up new infrastructure, grow economically, and overcome the national grief from the Hutu-Tutsi genocide 18 years ago.

Led by the Cummings/Hillel Program for Holocaust and Genocide Education, the service and learning trip took us to Agahozo Shalom Youth Village (ASYV), a Rwandan village for orphans of the genocide about an hour outside of Kigali. Created six years ago by Hillel board member Anne Heyman, ASYV offers a home and four years of intensive education to each of its 500 students. I had heard about ASYV and how it offered students a "chance for a

future" time and time again in the months leading up to our trip, but when I stepped off the plane I was still unsure of how the village operated and what kind of impact it could have.

There's nothing quite like seeing Rwanda in the daylight for the first time. From the doorway of my room, I could see ASYV's farm (from which the village plans to become self-sufficient in the coming years) and beyond that, miles and miles of green fields and hills. Waking up in a new country is always an interesting experience, but waking up in Rwanda—a land and culture so different from my own—was especially shocking. Unlike the bustle and noise of Boston, that first morning in Rwanda was absolutely silent. Rwanda is a beautiful country with a devastating history. Interactions with the Rwandans enlightened me of their determination to turn the page on the ethnic divisions that once tore them apart.

After admiring our first sunrise, the Tufts group set off across the village for breakfast with the entire Rwandan student

body. That first breakfast of hot porridge and a single bread roll was a little unnerving. We tried to come across as friendly and approachable while the ASYV students tried to communicate in English, a language that many of them had only just begun to study. After overcoming the initial nervousness, the ASYV students shared stories about their times back home and in the village, while I told them about Tufts and my hometown. I was initially worried that I wouldn't have enough in common with the students to carry a conversation — after all, these kids had grown up in a different world, so what could I tell them about my life at home that they'd find interesting? But after I was asked at least 10 times in the first 24 hours about my favorite rapper, my favorite soccer player, and whether Tupac was actually dead, I figured out that our interests weren't so dissimilar after all (and not one of them was happy to hear that Tupac is, in fact, dead).

An important aspect of bonding with these students, of course, lies in recognizing that the struggles of their nation have



ed to Recovery


kept them from being just like us—college students and global citizens. ASYV has been working to ensure that each student has a chance to overcome the horrors of the 1990s, which left an entire generation of youth without families or a clear future. Each incoming class is organized into houses of 16 women or men, and those 16 students and their house ‘mama’ live together for their four years at ASYV. For many, these groups become the first families they’ve ever known.

After classes during the week, the village offers extracurricular programs and student groups ranging from Leadership Club (in which students work together to address and resolve school-wide issues that arise during the year) to the Modern Art program (in which one can study perspective, sketching, and painting). That being said, even though ASYV’s commitment to its mission was evident through the students’ progress in school and the village, it would have been impossible for me to appreciate just how far Rwanda has come without

our group’s trips to genocide memorials in Kigali and in Murambi.

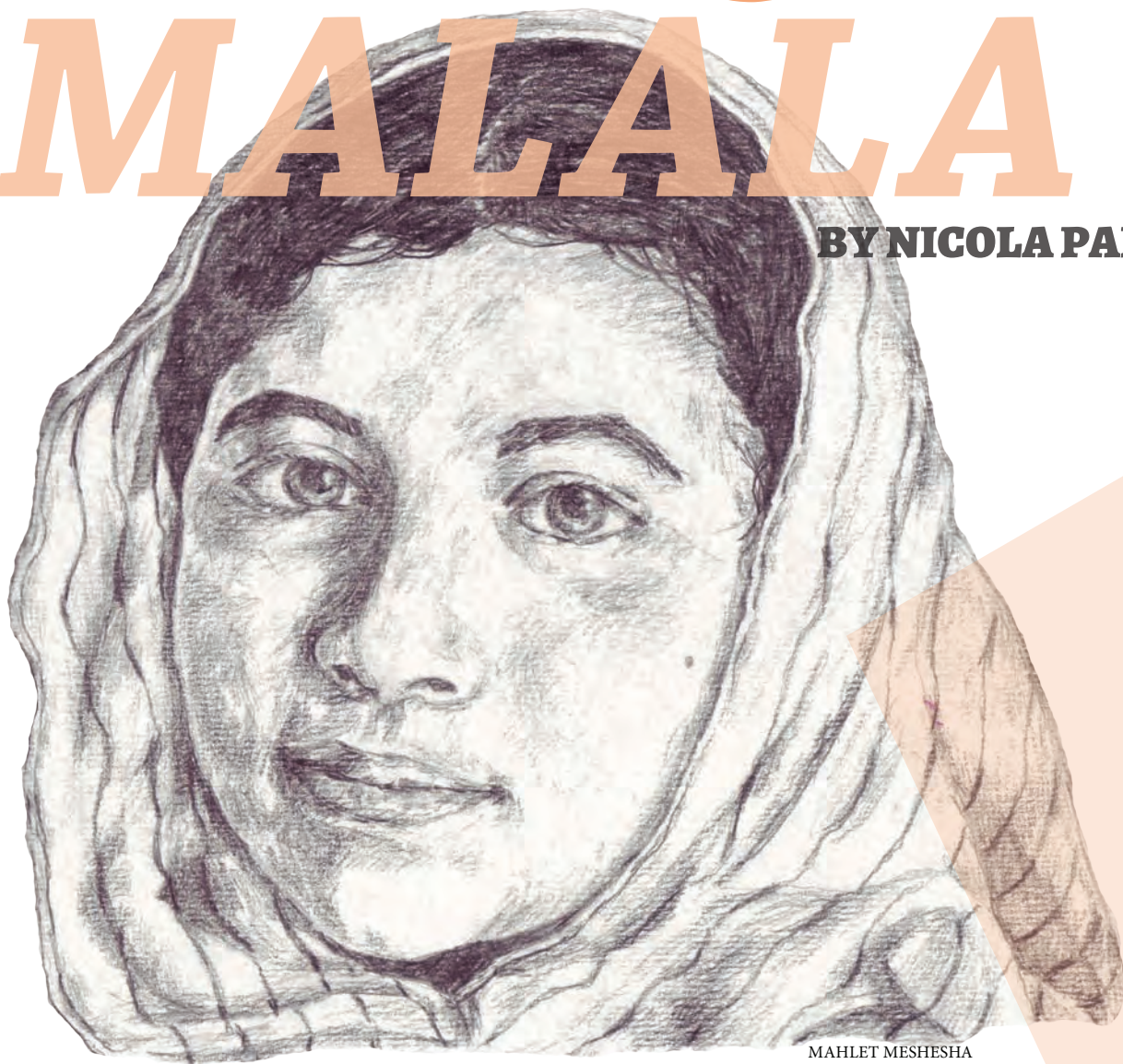
The Murambi Genocide Memorial is located in Murambi Technical High School, in which over 50,000 Tutsi sought refuge and were ultimately betrayed and slaughtered by the Hutu government. Bodies of men, women, and children lie preserved in lime around the grounds, a frozen testament to just how real the horror was. Standing outside of the school, I began to understand the contradiction that is Rwanda. Murambi Technical High School sits in the center of a circle of rolling hills, all breathtakingly, stoically beautiful and representative of how lush Rwanda can appear; yet the patch of grass that I stood on was the same spot upon which tens of thousands of Rwandans had been murdered.

We spent our time at the memorial talking with a Tutsi survivor. He served as the principal of ASYV until this past year, and thus had a strong grasp of the importance of distancing the Rwandan youth from the ethnic divisions of past generations. Before we walked around the grounds, he painted a picture of the genocide through his eyes: how roadblocks were set up across the

country to capture fleeing Tutsi; how he left the country to train with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the resistance movement that eventually retook Rwanda from the Hutu government; how he spent years without knowing the fate of his mother, brother, and sisters. He also made it clear to us that the genocide of 1994 was not a freak occurrence; rather, it was the result of European intrusion and decades of persecution of the Tutsi minority by the Hutu government. The Rwandan government under Paul Kagame (who has held power since he led the RPF) has banned Rwandans from discussing the Hutu and Tutsi ethnicities in an effort to close off all historical prejudices. The nation is slowly moving away from 1994, but there remain people, like the Tutsi survivor we met, who will never be capable of full forgiveness. For many of that generation, the genocide will forever be too personal to forgive. It is for that reason that many Rwandans believe this current generation, including the students at ASYV, is the key to the future. They must be ready to overcome the horrors of their childhoods in order to lead Rwanda toward success. 

MIRACLE MALALA

BY NICOLA PARDY



MAHLET MESHESHA

***How a school girl
struck fear in the hearts
of Taliban militants***

Malala Yousafzai does not look threatening. She has soft brown eyes and a round, girlish face. The corners of her lips seem forever upturned into a calm smile. For the Pakistani Taliban, though, Malala represents the very face of peril.

When a Taliban gunman approached 14-year-old Malala and her friends on their way home from school and shot her in the head and neck, the extremist group's fear of this barely adolescent activist became clear.

This story began when she was just 11 years old and had just started blogging for BBC Urdu about life in the Taliban-controlled Swat Valley region in Pakistan. Writing under a pseudonym, she spoke out against Taliban efforts to ban girls from attending school. Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, ran one of the last schools in defiance of Taliban orders to end female education. According to CNN, the Taliban had shut down approximately 200 schools when Malala rose to prominence in 2009.

Of what importance is one teenage advocate of women's education to the Taliban? Its anti-feminist beliefs are rooted in its steadfast (albeit warped) interpretation of Islam. If the Taliban's beliefs and devotion to the word of Allah are so withstanding, how does the small oppositional voice of a single schoolgirl even stand a chance? While Malala Yousafzai certainly brought some international attention to the situation in the Swat Valley through her writing, the immediate ramifications of her activism were hardly influential on the outcomes of life there. To this day, the Taliban maintains a high degree of influence over the area.

For this band of armed men and self-proclaimed warriors, Malala represents more than just a symbol of defiance. She is a living, breathing force of progression; the seed of activism that holds the potential to grow beyond the Taliban's grasp. More than this, she is proof that dissidence does not always originate from outside Western influences—Pakistani born and raised, Malala Yousafzai is the proof of local empowerment. In *Slate* columnist William J. Dobson's article, "Why the Taliban Fears Teenage Girls," he explains that in a nation full of Mala-

las, the Taliban would have no future. "For the Taliban," he writes, "an outspoken, freethinking girl is the beginning of the end."

The content of Malala's aspirations for equal education opportunities also undercuts the Taliban's survival. Education has time and time again proven to be a guiding path for democratization and an antidote for problems like poverty and political instability in underdeveloped nations. Swat Valley's poor standard of living sustains the Taliban, allowing it to thrive on the suffering of others.

In the article "Islam and Authoritarianism," political scientist Steven Fish discusses the negative influence of gender inequality on democratization in underdeveloped Muslim societies. Minimizing societal gender gaps, he found, improved the quality of civil society and fostered a participatory atmosphere necessary for democracy to succeed. The Population Council conducted a study to examine the benefits of female education and found that countries with higher education levels consistently had higher average household incomes, better local services, and smaller, healthier families. All of these factors come part and parcel with democratic reform. For a radical militant group whose integrity withers in the presence of democracy, what could be more frightening than this?

In 2009 Malala wrote in a blog post, "I am afraid. I had a terrible dream yesterday with military helicopters and the Taliban. I have had such dreams since the launch of the military operation in Swat." Of course she was scared; she knew she was on the Taliban's hit list from very early on. But Malala never feared the Taliban in the way that its members feared her. Her commitment to her beliefs ultimately trumped any fear that might prevent her from attending school or continuing to blog and give interviews.

The same cannot be said for the cowardly men who hide behind their weapons and warrior beards. Their shooting was an act of sheer desperation and evidence of the uncertainty in their own beliefs. On October 9, these men showed that they were too weak to confront the

challenge of even a schoolgirl's writing. World Politics Review columnist Frida Ghitis rightly said, "We have discovered who the biggest cowards on the planet are today."

"Miracle Malala," as she has recently been called, is currently recuperating in Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. She was flown to England on October 15 for better medical treatment and increased protection from attack attempts. The Taliban has vowed to target her again, should she survive now. While the bullet caused significant physical damage to Malala's brain, doctors are still unsure of whether or not there has been functional damage. As it stands, medical director Dr. David Rosser has said that she has been "communicating freely through writing." And now her voice is even louder. Through her acts of courage, Malala Yousafzai has transcended symbolism. Her actions have triggered real changes—all over Pakistan, inspired youths and adults alike have held demonstrations for equal education opportunities and vigils in honor of her bravery. These changes, we can rest assured, are powerful enough to keep Taliban members shaking in their boots. ☺

Taliban restrictions and mistreatment of women include:

Ban on women being treated by male doctors. Modification of all place names including the word "women." Ban on women riding bicycles or motorcycles. Ban on women laughing loudly. Ban on women's pictures printed in newspapers and books. Ban on women washing clothes next to rivers or in a public place. Ban on women's wearing brightly colored clothes. Whipping of women in public for having non-covered ankles.

Feeding the Face

by Julia Malleck

Coming back from the sleepover,
My brain is clogged with hair, cement,
the whining air conditioner,
Hollow yelling and cursing and
the pulse of drums.
Our faces caked in glitter, in
inks and powders,
Our faces marinating in
tocopheryl acetate, in
acrylate crosspolymer, in
Red #5.

In the soft light the approving click
of the camera,
We flatten ourselves into
flawless, facet-less creatures,
Into pixelated pouts
On the cold, uncaring monitor
For raking eyes.

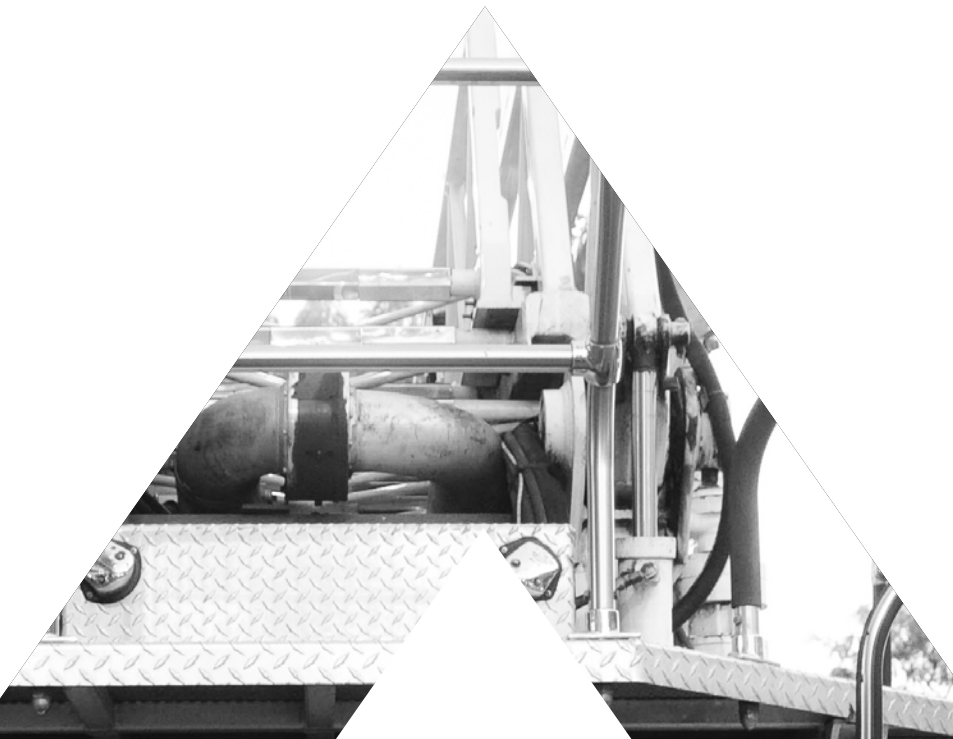
We revel in our cow patties of rouge,
dashed on our cheeks,
Our satisfaction at being bright and young and tender,
Faces and bodies sweating,
limbs akimbo,
Hunched around our hearts.

When I get home I run to
the dog,
Sitting on the floor together,
I defrost and
feel the dog is the only
real and honest thing in the world.





LOCAL VOICES



Interview by: Nicola Pardy
Photos by: Bernita Ling and Lenéa Sims





**GAY MA
I THINK IT S
LEGAL**

**THEY WON'T
TRUTHFULLY
ANSWER ANY-
THING IF IT
HURTS THEM
IN THE POLES.**

TIM FLYNN

**I FEEL LIKE I'M EXTREMELY
LIBERAL, I'M TRYING TO BE MORE
OPEN MINDED TO THE OTHER SIDE.**

JESSICA VAN

**MARRIAGE.
SHOULD BE
LEGALIZED.**



**I FEEL LIKE THE
PEOPLE WHO
COMPLAIN ABOUT
POLITICS, CAN'T
COMPLAIN IF THEY
DON'T VOTE.**

VICTOR REBELLO SILVA

**RATHER THAN PICKING ONE
SIDE OR THE OTHER, THAT IT IS
MORE ABOUT THE ISSUE.**

**MEDIA CONTROL IS A REALLY BIG
INFLUENCE ON HOW PEOPLE WILL BE VOTING...NOT
REPORTING CLEAN ON THE LINE, WHICH IS REALLY
FRUSTRATING.**

AJ WILLET



**I DIDN'T KNOW WOMEN'S RIGHTS
WERE STILL SUCH AN ISSUE.**

OLIVIA GHIZ

Down the street
lived a man. Divorced, a musician,
a former friend of my father.

One fall he built a sign in front of his house.
A huge white board with four nails in it,
each nail holding a small square with a number painted on it
in crisp strokes of black paint.
In stern block letters the sign was titled
“American casualties in the Iraq War”
and he would swap the numbers
to reflect the growing toll.

Standing starkly bright against the drab scenery
of his brown house, brown lawn,
it captured the eyes of passers-by.
With ruthless determination
the number rose into the thousands.
One day at a time,
one life at a time.

Now, back then,
when I was a teenager
I wanted to understand anarchy,
rebellion, dissent, anger,
but I couldn't.
I would drive past the sign
and gaze with awe,
forcefully believing in its
political discourse;
its air of significance.

Then I got older
as people tend to do.
I moved out
as people tend to do.
I went to college
as some people do.

At first I would return home
to the brown homes and brown lawns,
and stare at the sign as I passed.
But the stare became a glance.
Then a thought.
Then nothing.

Then today
I came back to the brown lawns
and drove by the bold, determined sign.
I stared again.
The structure was the same
but the title was gone.
Four new squares hung from the nails,
each with one letter
painted in black
spelling out the word
“clap.”
And I stared as I drove by and wondered if I should.

The Battle for Leverett Road *by Gene Buonaccorsi*

LET THE BASS DROP.

by Aaron Langerman

Dubstep is a mutilated patchwork, a monstrous conglomeration of electronic music. The bass echoes—deep, haunting, grimy. Blasting, reverberating every object to its core; raw, untamed, booming. At a dubstep rave, the sweat of hundreds of dancing people hangs heavy in the air. So hot it's nearly impossible to breathe. The air vibrates with energy and sweat and the smell of drugs. The bass is at eardrum-shattering levels, the thick whomp and wobble overpowering everything else. But the drop is the most important part of this spectacle—the point in the song where a synth buildup leads to a sudden intrusion of bass that is louder and more significant than everything else, wobbling to the beat. Previously an experimental, underground genre, dubstep first infiltrated London's mainstream club scene in 2006. Before long, it had spread to clubs across Europe and soon spilled over across the Atlantic to the United States in 2009 and 2010. Since then, dubstep—and the bass—has been taking over America. The scale of such raves and festivals has grown in unprecedented ways.

A dubstep rave is a party crazier and more surreal than any college kid could ever hope to experience on his own. At a rave, your voice—everyone's incessant, nagging voice—is silenced by the might of the music. Everybody submits to the power of the bass. It blasts loud and raw, as if it stands in defiance of everything, and demands your undivided attention. With speakers the size of cars, the entire venue shakes and vibrates to your core. On the stage, a light show flashes brightly, a dazzling spectacle in and of itself—intricate and grand, a testament to the absolute ear-drum shattering entity that is dubstep. You dance as if nothing else matters, as if trying to appease some all-powerful bass god. For one night you transcend the shitty, everyday routine.


Dubstep wasn't always geared towards huge venue raves. Its transformation into a rave-friendly genre of music is well documented by *The Guardian*: "In its formative years, dubstep had been a connoisseur's sound: deep and dark, moody and meditative, appealing to an audience largely composed of former junglists and 90s-rave veterans... DJs such as Skream and Plastician found themselves playing bigger halls and, consciously or unconsciously, started gearing both their sets and their own productions to what would make a big crowd go nuts. Whatever the case, dubstep transformed into a big-room, peak hour sound: proper rave music."

A number of dubstep DJs emerged out of the woodwork, each with their unique style. British DJs like Rusko, Nero, and Flux Pavilion wowed audiences with aggressive wobbles and powerful bass lines. Excision and Datsik took the intensity of dubstep to new extremes. "Excision isolated the most aggressive, industrial sounding tracks around," Best explains. "Nothing but the hardest dubstep." In Israel, Borgore's hyper-sexualized and violent lyrics ("But the thing I love the most is cumming on her face. Suck it, bitch!" – *Love*, Borgore) seemed to perfectly reflect the grime of his bass. Canadian artists like Zeds Dead and Adventure Club integrated a cleaner, more slow-paced but equally monumental bass sound to their dubstep. In the United States, artists like Bassnectar, Skrillex, and Porter Robinson emerged as headliners at dubstep festivals across the nation.

Some of the newer dubstep, most notably Skrillex's music, has been slandered by dubstep die-hards as "bro-step." Considered overly rowdy and macho, many dubstep fans criticized "bro-step" as a degradation of dubstep. But these accusations did nothing to stem the tide of artists like Borgore and Skrillex from achiev-

ing stardom. Especially in the US, people embraced the aggressive tendencies of bro-step. Today, dubstep festivals are colossal in scale—both in terms of attendance and revenue. “With day tickets selling at around \$125 and well over 300,000 attending over three days,” the Guardian calculates, “the Las Vegas EDC [Electric Daisy Carnival] must have grossed in the region of \$40m.”

By 2011, dubstep had become established in American culture. “Whatever your opinion, it was undeniable this year [2011] that mainstream America throbbed with wobble, a development heretofore unseen,” said MTV. In 2012, Skrillex was awarded three Grammys—the first dubstep artist to win one. In the US, dubstep became especially popular among college students. The culture on college campuses has been changed by the genre, unifying under one rallying banner on party nights: the bass. Though certainly not for everyone, a walk around campus here at Tufts on a Saturday night would expose the muffled beats of hammering subwoofers from dubstep blasting in the basements of fraternities and house parties. In an interview with Rolling Stone, Skrillex (Sonny Moore) explains why he loves dubstep. “It’s so fun,” he says. “It just lets so many people in and there’s nothing about it that seems shoved down anybody’s throats. You can connect with it culturally because it brings so many different types of people together, from ravers to hip-hop people to whatever people like to dance.”

It’s hard to say whether dubstep is a fad or a lasting trend but its current popularity is undeniable. “Dubstep has become a locus for generational identity in America,” says Best. “The mid-range bass sound just captured the attention of young people. It’s like the high-pitched, aggravating sound of a guitar solo in the 70s. Something your parents are going to hate.” To an older generation, dubstep sounds like electronic garbage, worse than the crap their nine-year-old daughters listen to on the Disney channel. But the youth are always more impressionable, and college is an environment perpetually geared for something new. Our generation’s youth are a bunch of disenfranchised rebels waiting for something to unify them—just like our parents were with rock ‘n’ roll. “Dubstep was moving in to claim the space abandoned by rock,” Best argues. “That space was the perennial demand for a tough, aggressive but forward-looking sound for the release of pent-up frustration.” A dubstep rave is just that—an experience like none other, evoking a furious excitement, chaotic disorder, ground quaking intensity, and thousands of kids our age going wild. Though dubstep’s popularity may fade, the youth angst that made dubstep so widespread seems to be an integral part of American culture. Whether it’s rock n’ roll or dubstep, kids—especially college students—love to claim something new as their own. Like it or not, dubstep may be our generation’s rock n’ roll. 

“ At a rave, your voice—everyone’s incessant, nagging voice—is silenced by the might of the music. Everybody submits to the power of the bass. ”

MONICA STADECKER

BEHIND THE BU

by Anastaysia Lobacheva

America is a brand with many logos: the eagle, the statue of liberty, the slice of apple pie, the good ol' red, white, and blue. It is a brand that sells everything from the promise of change to the ultimate attainment of the American dream. America wants people to buy in bulk—to buy, and to believe in what they are buying. But what price does America want us to pay for the prize of hope, liberty, democracy, or freedom? There are many answers to this, but with the current energy of the presidential election, the most powerful currency with which we contribute to the American brand is our vote. Political campaigns are competing brands within the larger American corporation. And what is a brand without its characteristic artwork? Disney would be a boring animation company without Mickey Mouse, McDonalds just another burger place without its golden arches. The role of political campaign artwork and branding is imperative in achieving America's goal of selling the American dream. In the same way that Tony the Tiger and Toucan Sam help Americans choose their cereal, campaign artwork helps Americans choose the kind of American dream they want.

Even separated from the platforms that the candidates represent, the branding of the campaigns in this demonstrates the kinds of goals the candidates are selling. Mitt Romney's logo features three red, white, and blue "R"s coming together as one, perhaps representing the desire for people with different political viewpoints striving to make a change in the country. The shape of the "R"s themselves suggests



ROBERT COLLINS

BUMPER STICKER

a pull to the right—a pull forward, or away from the policy of the current president. The slogan, “Believe in America,” again reflects the traditional, value-centric brand conservatives want Americans to continue to buy. Mitt Romney’s logo evokes solidarity and a belief in traditional American principles.

On the other hand, Barack Obama’s logo is a single word, “Forward,” with the symbol for the Obama campaign in the “O.” Obama’s branding is so effective that the logo does not even need to contain the word “Obama.” The capitalized block letters evoke the loud cry for hope that dominated the campaign strategy of his last election. The one-word slogan itself echoes the powerful themes of hope and change from the last election. Obama’s graphics highlight a continuation of forward movement while Romney’s try to emphasize that his product of the American dream will be better than the latest version.

While many voters do not explicitly analyze the aesthetic structure of a candidate’s logo in order to make a decision about which candidate to vote for, a logo can subconsciously influence a voter. Campaign art is effective because the effect of art is both visceral and universal. You do not have to have prior knowledge or be a particular type of individual in order for artwork to have an effect on you. Graphic designers use techniques to render specific design choices into unconscious reactions. For example, Shepard Fairey’s iconic 2008 Hope poster appeals to an audience that does not have to be informed about health care policy or foreign affairs. Obama’s

strong outward gaze and the inclusion of both red and blue to signify bipartisan solidarity would appeal to any voter. Campaign branding is thus both a gift and a curse to the American who believes in progress. It makes politics more accessible, but this access extends to people using branding as the sole basis for making a decision to vote. Political branding lies in the fine line between artwork and propaganda. The role of the voter thus becomes finding an effective balance between consumer and citizen.

Political candidates have always used branding to appeal to as many voters as possible. The slanted type of the Bush/Cheney logo of 2004 shares some similarities with the logo of their Republican counterpart in 2012. The Bush and Cheney type in italics proposes a move forward and the American flag linked to Bush’s name suggests the same type of solidarity evoked in the Romney logo of the 2012 campaign. The unity expressed in the Bush/Cheney logo was especially poignant to an America torn apart after the events of September 11, 2001. Thirty-three years earlier, Robert Kennedy’s iconic campaign poster for the 1968 presidential election utilized a similar capitalization on the events of the time. The caricature of the candidate in the middle of the poster with yellow, fluid writing atop a purple and green backdrop stating, “Bobby is my choice in ’68” was designed to appeal to young voters amidst the counterculture movement of the late sixties. Robert Kennedy’s poster resonated with youth jaded by the policies of running mate Lyndon B. Johnson during the Vietnam War.

However, most people tend not to remember campaign artwork of the distant past. The artwork itself does not become iconic, but the brand lingers in the minds of Americans. We likely do not remember the posters distributed by Eisenhower, Reagan, Lincoln, or Carter. We do, however remember slogans like, “I like Ike” or “Not just peanuts.” Additionally, we are able to identify the stoic portraits of Reagan or Lincoln. Political campaign art is a vessel through which a candidate establishes a brand, and it is this brand that becomes iconic.

Whatever the time period, a candidate’s use of effective aesthetic techniques in his political campaign artwork can help him progress from being just another name on the ballot to becoming a brand for Americans to believe in. Art and politics are inextricably linked. (Art, after all, is the medium that popularized the timeless “Uncle Sam wants you” image.) But does the success or failure of a candidate’s campaign depend solely on the colors accentuated on his bumper stickers or the witty lines employed in his slogans? Probably not. Perhaps it would be too harsh to equate the citizen’s most important right and responsibility to the choice between Frosted Flakes and Fruit Loops. However, it is important to remember that branding can create a fog over the reality of the product. Though a logo can easily evoke comfort or inspiration through key words or visual attractiveness, it is up to the American citizen to evaluate the quality of the product she is buying from a presidential candidate—the future of America. ☺

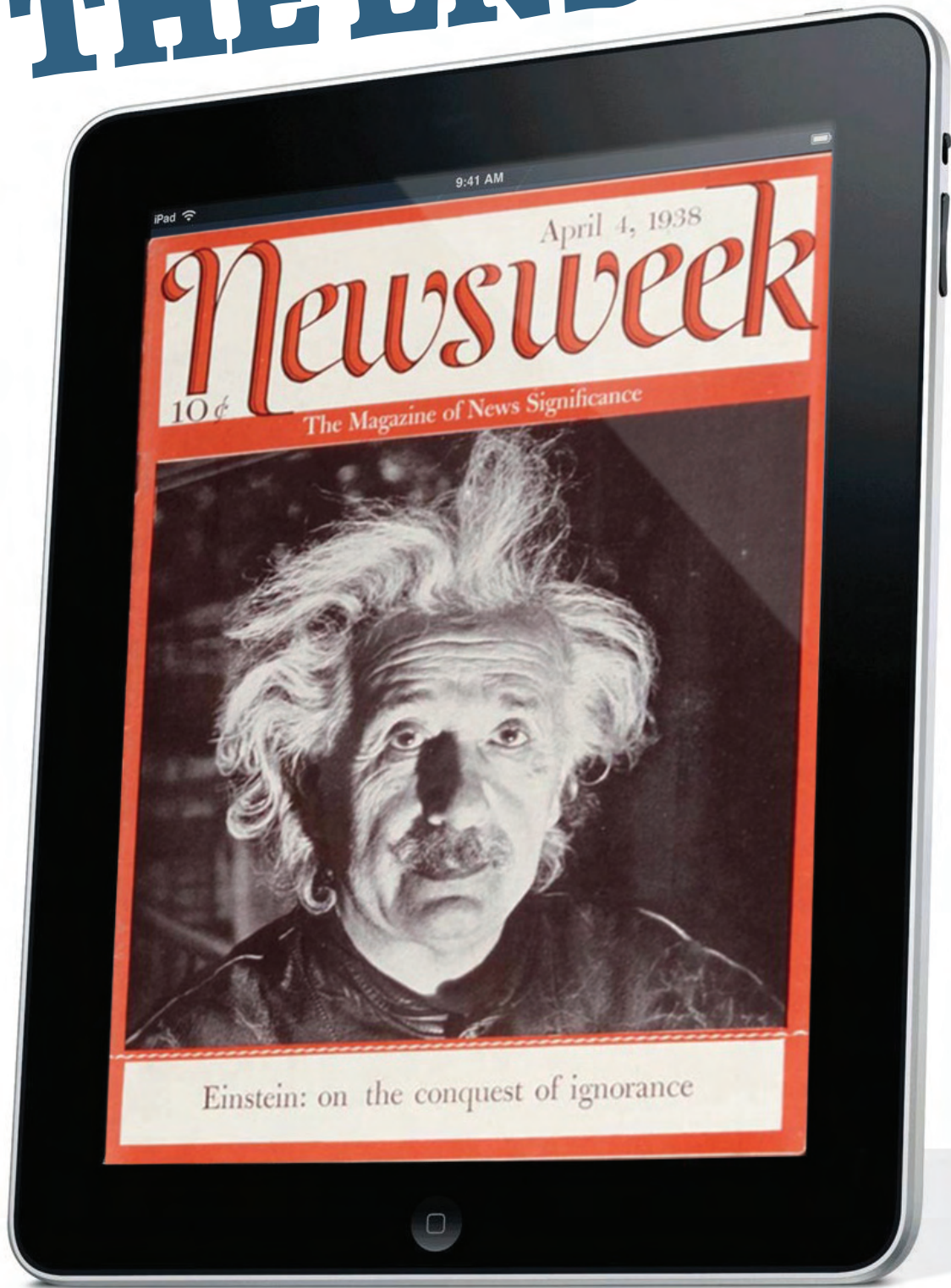
“

Whatever the time period, a candidate’s use of effective aesthetic techniques in his political campaign artwork can help him progress from being just another name on the ballot to becoming a brand for Americans to believe in.

”

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

By Justin Kim



MISAKO ONO

“We are **transitioning** *Newsweek*, not saying **goodbye** to it.”

Newsweek Editor-in-Chief Tina Brown wrote these words on the heels of the announcement that, after 80 years in circulation, the magazine was discontinuing its print publication in favor of a purely digital format, starting early 2013.

The move doesn't come as a total surprise; weekly news magazines in general have been struggling significantly in recent years. In fact, other news publications, including *U.S. News & World Report*, have abandoned the print format altogether, except for special editions such as school rankings issues.

There has been an overt paradigm shift in the way that audiences interact with information. Personal computers, tablets, and smartphones have combined with social networking platforms to create an alternative medium for news. People don't want to wait a whole week to hear about the latest issue; they want to be in the loop at all times—and because of technology, they can be. *Newsweek's* decision to completely digitize its publication only perpetuates the notion that we are all part of the growing trend from print to online news, and that there is little we can do about it.

It was difficult for me not to cringe at *Newsweek's* fate. I enjoy my magazines in print, and reading them on the Kindle or iPad just seems plain awkward. I hate the fact that carrying a physical copy of *The New York Times* will eventually become an anachronistic practice. But to me, the decline of print media is inevitable; and it isn't even the biggest issue raised from this announcement.

Newsweek was once heralded for its comprehensive coverage of polarizing issues. It was known for consistently exhibiting depth and significance in all of its featured stories, including owning the coverage of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. But in recent years, it has undoubtedly struggled. In 2010, the Washington Post Company infamously sold *Newsweek* to the late stereo mogul Sidney Harmon for just a dollar in return for also transferring its \$47 million debt. Its circulation has dropped by more than 50% since 2007, and its troubles forced them to merge with *The Daily Beast* website in November 2010.

Critics have pointed out that Brown, as editor-in-chief, has taken *Newsweek* in a more sensationalist direction similar to its sister publication *The Daily Beast*. Publishing cover articles calling Obama the “first gay president” and hiring conservative pundits such as Niall Ferguson to make incendiary remarks about the president drew more backlash than anything else. Moves like these created a public impression that the magazine was more focused on making biased and misleading claims for the sake of creating buzz, than on reporting factual information. And to a degree, the criticism is understandable. Brown has been fighting an uphill battle in an industry going through a financial—and creative—drought.

The real issue raised by *Newsweek's* decision is one of quality journalism. At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter if I'm reading the news in print or online. What matters is that magazines like *Newsweek* are able to report to the public meaningful and relevant articles without settling for controversial or sensationalist issues simply to generate more viewership.

The new all-digital format is a much-needed change of scenery for *Newsweek*. It can incorporate the current vigor and energy of *The Daily Beast* and eliminate trivial articles focused on the Casey Anthony trial or “Pippa on her famous bottom.” We have plenty of sources of entertainment; journalism doesn't need to be one of them.

There is clearly a sense of reluctance that permeates throughout the publications industry when it comes to

“We have plenty of sources of entertainment; journalism doesn't need to be one of them.”

abandoning the print format for a completely digital one; if there weren't, they would have done it already. With this new direction, however, *Newsweek* can set the benchmark for its competitors. It is estimated that the company will save about \$40 million annually with its new business model. Hopefully this means that it escapes financial turbulence so that it can focus more on being a reliable source of breaking news; one that brings a fresh perspective, catered to the digital age.

All due respect to Brown, but maybe we are saying goodbye to *Newsweek* as we know it. And maybe that isn't such a bad thing. ☺



CAMPUS

SHOSHANA SPENCER

VOICES VYING FOR CHANGE

What would a perfect Tufts look like? There are many passionate individuals in activist and cultural groups on campus, each of whom identify with different struggles. The Observer spoke to student representatives from five groups on campus to determine what they agreed on and where they differed. by Moira Lavelle

Those five groups were the Women’s Center, the Pan African Alliance, the Queer-Straight Alliance, the Association of Latin American Students, and Students for Justice in Palestine. We wanted to know which issues incite action, and what each respective group deems critical. Although the groups might appear to have nothing in common, their responses shared many surprising commonalities.

The mission of the Women’s Center is to advance the personal and intellectual growth of all students, with a particular focus on women. The center looks to “educate the greater Tufts community—students in particular—about men’s violence against women, the current status of women, and gender identity and ex-

pression at Tufts and beyond.” The Women’s Center also works to advocate and strengthen the Women’s Studies program at Tufts.

Senior Amy Wipfler is a staff member at the Women’s Center. She detailed what the center would like to see in an ideal Tufts. Some immediate changes that she would like to see include: “gender-neutral bathrooms in every building and on every floor of residential halls at Tufts... more women in leadership positions both within departments and the administration... preferred gender pronouns to be asked of people during introductions at every club meeting and in every classroom, and for the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program to receive enough fund-

ing to conduct research and hire faculty.” Wipfler said that “Tufts needs to take an active stance against rape culture to prevent female-identified and gender non-conforming people from feeling marginalized on this campus. We need to take responsibility for the culture we live in and work actively to change it.”

The Pan African Alliance’s view of a perfect Tufts is similar to that of the Women’s Center in that they want to advocate acknowledgement and integration of their perspective inside and outside the classroom, but with a focus on students of color as opposed to women. They would like a strong program of Africana Studies as well as racial equity in all aspects of life, both on and off campus. One specific

change they would like is for the Africana Studies program to be more promoted by the university. The Pan African Alliance Twitter posed the question: “@TuftsUniversity when will the #AfricanaStudies courses and new hires-taught courses [be] available via SIS? [How about sending a] University-wide email? #reeducation”

The Pan African Alliance is the overarching name of the many organizations that advocate for concerns of students of color. Their mission is to promote community and a sense of identity among members of the black community, and teach others about the black experience. The Pan-African Alliance works to voice the concerns of black students to both the university administration and students. The Alliance hosts various social, educational, and cultural events at Tufts to aid in meeting these ends.

Max Tanguay-Colucci, a sophomore, is the president of Tufts’ Queer Straight Alliance (QSA). Tanguay-Colucci described the QSA primarily as a forum for dialogue, discussion, and support at Tufts for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students and their allies. The QSA covers issues of sexual orientation, gender identification, and diversity. The QSA wishes to educate the student population and have its issues discussed, much like the Women’s Center and Pan African Alliance, but it doesn’t have an in-the-classroom component. “The Queer Straight Alliance is needed at Tufts in order to continue the discussion of LGBTQ issues on and beyond campus,” explained Tanguay-Colucci. “Too often I forget that the environment at Tufts is not the environment elsewhere. Moreover, as students at a seemingly progressive university, we often fail to recognize evidence of damaging prejudice and unchecked privilege that continues to exist both within and outside of the LGBTQ community.”

The main change Tanguay-Colucci would like to see on campus is more dialogue, acceptance, and awareness: “An

ideal Tufts is a place where all students feel safe to exist—to know that all of their interests, passions, and attractions are valid and that each and every aspect of self is significant... [but] the struggle for self is a part of life. In order to combat strife, all of us can work harder to make our campus a safer place where mental health and self-awareness is accepted as priority number one.”

A discussion-based group like QSA, the Association of Latin Ameri-



An ideal Tufts is a place where all students feel safe to exist—to know that all of their interests, passions, and attractions are valid and that each and every aspect of self is significant.

can Students (ALAS) works on creating a dialogue, but focuses more on creating community. Sophomore Gabriel Lara is the president. Lara explained that “the overall mission is to bring together the Latino community within Tufts and to provide a space for intellectual discourse outside the classroom—a place to be able to speak about specific issues. Additionally, we want to reach out to the Tufts community... and get rid of some stereotypes that we all know are there.” Lara spoke at length about unifying not only the Latino community, but also the Tufts community as a whole. “ALAS is needed for the same reason the Women’s Center is needed, why the Africana Center, the LGBT Center are needed—they’re all places where students can go to con-

nect. ALAS is more than just a place for Latino students to hang; it is there if anyone is interested in the culture, to provide an opportunity to learn about it.”

Students For Justice in Palestine (SJP) is a relatively new group on campus—only three years old. Munir Atalla, a sophomore, stated that SJP works to “offer an alternative narrative and enhance the discourse on campus through intellectual activism and direct action.” The focus is not only on promoting justice for those living in Palestine, but promoting justice everywhere through the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: “In the short time we have existed, we have completely shifted the campus discourse from a very narrow right-wing Zionist-dominated paradigm where any criticism of Israel was seen as anti-Semitism (a ridiculous allegation as a large portion of our membership of our membership is Jewish) to a healthy on-campus debate where light has been shed on the oppression faced by Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli state.”

Like the other student groups, SJP would like a perfect Tufts to be more tolerant and aware of the issues effecting their members: “Ideally, Tufts students would have a greater awareness of the political reality on the ground in Israel-Palestine, and through direct action push our administration to make changes that reflect the high social responsibility at Tufts, things that we feel are in line with active citizenship so often referred to on the hill,” explained Atalla.

It may seem surprising to most students that the most common goal of these student groups is acceptance and understanding, as Tufts is typically credited with embracing any student, regardless of background, gender, or sexual orientation. But the people involved in these struggles share a vision for a better campus. Each group would like their struggle to be better acknowledged and addressed. Although each group addresses inequality from a different point of entry, their dream of a more liberated Tufts is the same—one that we can all stand behind. ☺

How Tufts students are getting

by Bronwen Raff
President of Tufts Democrats

democrats

As the largest political organization on campus, Tufts Democrats has 75 active members, including 27 interns on the Elizabeth Warren campaign, 13 executive board members, and 4 partner organizations (the Emerging Black Leaders, the Tufts Institute of Political Citizenship, the LGBT Center, and Tufts Votes). This active involvement has allowed us to accomplish a great deal both on and off campus.

On campus, we've held voter registration drives three times a week this semester and registered 1,000 students—roughly 30% of the eligible student voters—by the October 17 deadline. We also hosted four Presidential Debate Watch Parties, four Senate Debate Watch Parties for Elizabeth Warren, and are currently assisting in the organization of an “Election Night Extravaganza” hosted by the ExCollege.

The size and strength of the Tufts Democrats has also allowed us to help in campaigns locally, statewide, and nationally. Our members have been working diligently on campaigns for President Barack Obama, Massachusetts Senate Candidate Elizabeth Warren, New Hampshire Congressional Candidate Annie Kuster, Massachusetts Congressional Candidate Joe Kennedy, and the Question 4 “Invest in Somerville” campaign to increase affordable housing and public parks.

We've been particularly engaged in the Elizabeth Warren campaign with 32 Tufts students attending a recent rally at Boston University, 12 who trekked

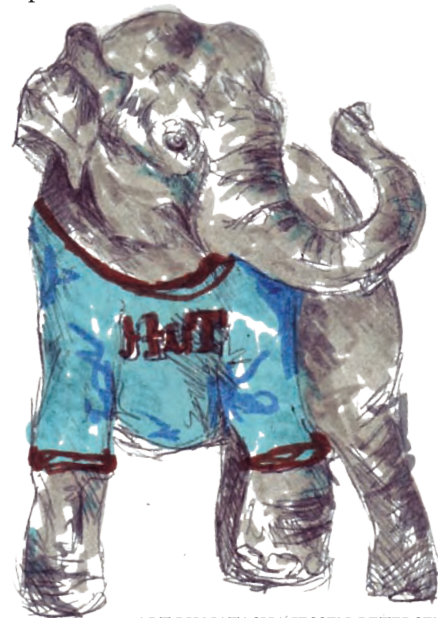
to Lowell for her second Senatorial Debate, 15 students that attended an environmental justice event for Warren at Soundbites hosted by Rhode Island Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, and an 8 person delegate that attended a rally with Zach Braff at Northeastern last weekend. Michael Maskin '15 attended the debate in Lowell and said, “The energy in the auditorium was thrilling. I feel like a part of something bigger than myself in this election and the debate was a great way to see this first hand.”

Vanessa Vecchiarello '15, attended an environmental justice event and stated, “It is clear that the stakes in the Massachusetts senate election are high and we're doing all we can on and off campus to ensure a win for Warren. These rallies are a great way to see her in action.” In addition to these rallies, the Tufts Democrats and Tufts for Warren students have dedicated more than 500 hours for her campaign between phonebanks, visibility efforts, and canvassing events around the state.

In late September, a Tufts delegation of 15 students headed south to campaign for candidates Elizabeth Warren and Joe Kennedy in Taunton, Massachusetts. In conjunction with the College Democrats of Massachusetts, 100 College Democrats from around the state knocked on 6,000 doors in just two days. The Tufts Democrats have also made campaign stops for Obama in New Hampshire and will be sending students north for the Get Out the Vote weekend, November 3 to 4.

The overwhelming turnout for these events and the enthusiasm going in to the last three weeks of the campaign makes me incredibly proud. We are a campus of engaged, dedicated, and active students who care about the future of our country. Taylor Barnard-Hawkin, president of College Democrats of Massachusetts, said, “The Tufts Democrats have been an integral part of... election efforts. They've built a strong presence on campus, worked well with various campaigns, and are a model for other College Democrats around the Commonwealth.”

This election is perhaps the most important election we've faced in our lifetime, and the Tufts Democrats are stepping up to the plate. 🐘



ART BY NATASHA JESSEN-PETERSEN

FOR THE WINNERS

involved this political season

by Bennett Gillogy
President of Tufts Republicans

T republicans

Following the late Senator Ted Kennedy's death in 2009, few Massachusetts Republicans wanted to run in the special election for a Senate seat that was predicted to remain in the hands of a Democrat without any real contest. After all, the last time Massachusetts had elected a Republican Senator was in 1972. But, like a lot of people in Massachusetts, State Senator Scott Brown, Tufts Alumnus of the class of 1981, was upset with the political maneuvering surrounding the Democratic machine. Brown's life experiences and political career had taught him that politics is not just about representing one's party but rather about solving problems and serving the people.

Today, he is one of few bipartisan officials reaching across the aisle to enact change. For example, Senator Brown sided with the Demo-

crats to cast one of the deciding votes in Wall Street reform and to ban the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. Although he is a social liberal, he has remained passionately conservative on economic issues.

Committed to understanding and exploring political viewpoints on all sides of the spectrum, Tufts Republicans is devoting the semester to reelecting this true independent. The group is under new management and has just begun to pick up some momentum by turning their passions for Senator Brown's reelection into action in his campaign.

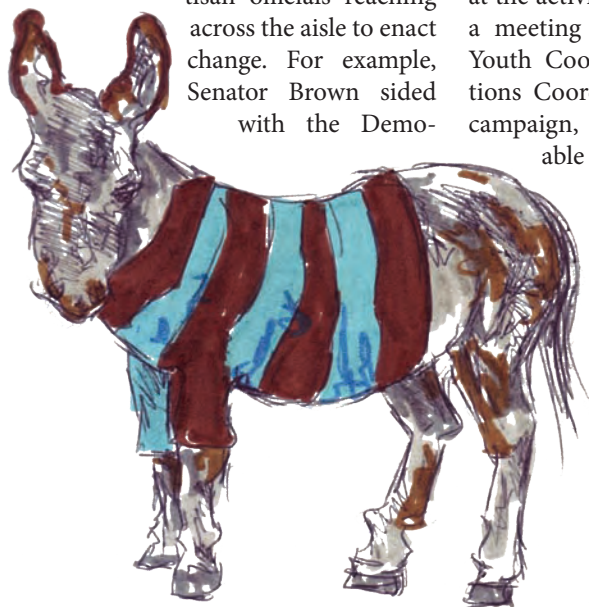
Tufts Republicans kicked off the year by passing out Scott Brown water bottles to everyone who signed up for the club at the activities fair. The group then held a meeting with Ross Hemminger, the Youth Coordinator and Deputy Coalitions Coordinator for the Scott Brown campaign, in which they gained valuable insights into the role students play during elections. Ellie Monroe, treasurer of the Tufts Republicans, used the meeting with Hemminger to better understand how funds are used to facilitate the grassroots organizational aspects of the campaign.

In September, the group made a trip down Route 3 to Lowell for the second of Senator Brown's

debates against his opponent Elizabeth Warren, a liberal Harvard law professor. Fifteen members of the club sported Scott Brown t-shirts and participated in politically charged standouts before attending the debate amongst a crowd in the thousands. Marshall Hochhauser, a junior, remarked, "I'm from New York and had no idea that Massachusetts politics were so intense. It was a ton of fun to attend the debate and get a feel for everything going on in the state." Freshman Danielle Feerst summarized the views of all who attended by saying that she was, "just excited to be a part of the political process!"

On Wednesday nights, the Tufts Republicans attend College Night at the Campaign. The group meets at the Campus Center and drives to campaign headquarters in South Boston, where they get to experience first hand the nation's most-watched Senate race. While at headquarters, members meet with various staffers and learn about their roles in the campaign. They also get the opportunity to make phone calls on behalf of the Senator, asking for votes and gathering voter information for the data team to analyze.

For the last two weeks before the campaign, Tufts Republicans will follow up its Wednesday nights with a trip to JP Licks for (free) ice cream. It's these last few days of the campaign that will be the most crucial to Senator Brown's reelection and Tufts Republicans will stop at nothing to ensure that it happens. ☺





Romney brings back the 80s while Obama brings back his wit.

CROSSWORD
by Lindsey Kellogg

The key will be posted online at tuftsobserver.org

ACROSS

- 1. Fido or Spot
- 4. a misspelling of a nasty cussword
- 8. going ---- to a dance or wedding (sans date)
- 12. poem type
- 13. to de-mask, as in a mystery
- 16. a congressional ---- (a

coveted

- 17. Wes Anderson's latest
- 20. "therefore," in the Vatican's language
- 21. group of badgers
- 22. scrumptious breakfast including famous hot sauce and a breakfast staple
- 28. one's part in a play

29. Toni Morrison's

- novel from 1973
- 31. degree for a nurse
- 34. sickly adjective; a good reason to miss school if it applies
- 38. Dillon or Damon
- 40. highest (or lowest) card in the deck
- 41. pin that is a kitchen must-have
- 43. ---'s Declassified School Survival Guide
- 44. the director von Trier
- 46. "I -- ----," or a broken English way of saying "I haven't the slightest"
- 47. spiny Vietnamese fruit
- 48. action for babies
- 50. with -son, a

nearby arts college

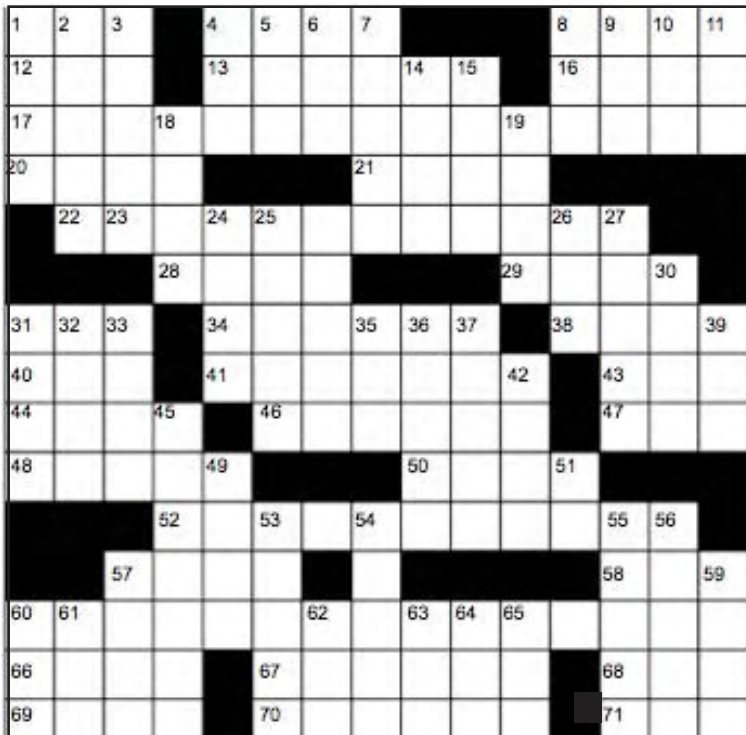
- 52. why a general would wave a white flag
- 57. spicy tea
- 58. little battery size
- 60. coastal Southern town with neat architecture
- 66. the host with the ----
- 67. the girl from Seinfeld
- 68. a river in New Hampshire, or an acronym denoting a middle school-type English class
- 69. angry cat sound
- 70. buttery French cookies
- 71. -eally -imple -tuff

DOWN

- 1. King's Under the ----
- 2. smells
- 3. prefix of a discipline dealing with maps
- 4. cats are covered with it
- 5. British short term for college
- 6. Davis Square's most useful chain
- 7. tree that sounds like it should be near the sea
- 8. slump
- 9. combined with -bit, a small amount
- 10. Much --- About Nothing
- 11. something shiny and rare
- 14. place to buy furniture, simple and cheap
- 15. word for some low-calorie foods
- 18. film ----
- 19. results of developing film

(abbr.)

- 23. leonine sound
- 24. one who makes such a sound
- 25. large string instrument
- 26. it's sticky and often minty
- 27. not proper language
- 30. what you might be offered during an English afternoon
- 31. hairless
- 32. Mufasa's brother
- 33. a Roman emperor, or, a headmaster in A Series of Unfortunate Events
- 35. type, kind
- 36. a member of a San Francisco football team
- 37. one may live in a garden
- 39. Tufts' largest student group!
- 42. lead singer of No Doubt
- 45. "-- ----" what that does"
- 49. bank noun
- 51. one step above an RA
- 53. trigonometric proportions
- 54. addiction recovery place
- 55. quite excited
- 56. synecdoche for "trains"
- 57. plural of 6-down
- 59. high-level minor league baseball teams
- 60. disappointed internet acronym
- 61. common consonant-less Japanese name
- 62. "at the " in Anney
- 63. male nickname that recalls fish
- 64. the second-to-last letter in hermano







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PLEASE RECYCLE