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famine relief:
the brain is mightier
than the wallet.

Tufts' Student Weekly Publication of Record





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Contents

March 3, 2006

Volume CXI, Issue 16

The Observer, Year 111

www.tuftsobserver.org

News

- 4 New Ideas, New Solutions, *by Mike Skocay*
- 6 Dealing with Famine the Tufts Way, *by Mike Snyder and Lydia Hall*

Opinion

- 13 A Dying Language, *by Nivedita Gunturi*
- 14 Hypersensitivity to Terrorism, *by Nate Grubman*
- 15 Open Forum: How Do You Define Being a Minority at Tufts?
- 16 Dealing with Anger, *by Mike Snyder*

Arts

- 17 6-Disk Changer: Little Feat's *Dixie Chicken*, *by John DeCarli*
- 18 What the Academy Wants: This Year's Oscar Frontrunners, *by Stephanie Chin*

On The Town

- 20 Not Your Typical T Party, *by Anna Feldman*
- 22 Spice Up Your: Spring Looks, *by Adrienne Roma and Melissa Fiorenza*
- 23 Not Quite 21? A Guide to Unconventional Clubbing in Boston, *by Josephine Chow*

Sports

- 24 There's Something About Barry, *by Evans Clinchy*

In Every Issue

- 2 Editor's Corner, *by Aaron Schutzengel*
- 3 Police Blotter, *compiled by Spencer Maxwell*
- 3 College Bullets, *compiled by Spencer Maxwell*
- 3 Just the Facts, *compiled by Spencer Maxwell*
- 10 Editorial
- 11 Observations, *compiled by Tim Noetzel*

Cover Photo by Vinda Rao



Language Lessons

BY AARON SCHUTZENGEL

The middle school that I went to only had one foreign language teacher per grade. At the end of seventh grade, after a few weeks' dabbling in each, my class was asked to take a vote between French and Spanish. The teacher—a charming, energetic little lady whose foreign language lessons included nursery rhymes and farm animal sounds—did her best (including a field trip to see *Les Misérables* on Broadway) to cajole us into choosing French, but, for whatever reason, my class voted for Spanish, setting the linguistic course that we would take throughout high school. For my part, I was happy to go along with the majority's decision and never gave much thought to a change of language, continuing with Spanish even after I got to Tufts and had other options.

Never, that is, until this Thanksgiving. My roommate and I, both Spanish speakers, had plans to go to Paris over winter break. Although we would be staying with a fluent speaker, I wanted to at least understand a little bit of what was going on around

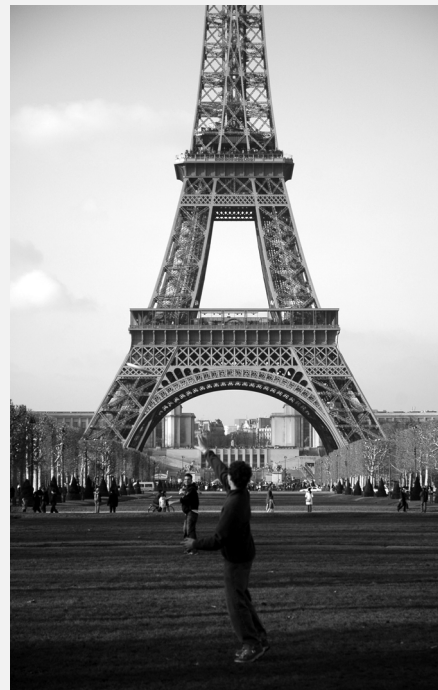
Their target audience, as best as I can tell from my CDs, consists of sleazy, jet-setting old men, and plenty of time is spent teaching you the vocabulary to chat up foreign women and tell them what sort of liquor you have back in your *chambre d'hôtel*.

me. And so, six weeks before our flight, I resolved to find a crash course in French. After some research online, I settled on a set of CDs from Pimsleur. The program (which, in addition to French, offers courses on more than 30 languages) is the brainchild of Dr. Paul Pimsleur, a psychologist who researched language acquisition while teaching at UCLA and Ohio State in the 1960s. His theory is that languages should be taught “organically”—grammar is never explained explicitly, but supposed to be inferred from listening and responding to

native speakers. And, like a child learning her first language, you're supposed to do everything by listening and speaking; there is no written work and only a bare minimum of reading. The lessons are short (30 minutes a day) and highly interactive, which Dr. Pimsleur argued was a more efficient and longer-lasting way to learn a second language.

Today the courses are published and marketed by Simon and Schuster, which has distorted Dr. Pimsleur's academic ideals somewhat. Their target audience, as best as I can tell from my CDs, consists of sleazy, jet-setting old men, and plenty of time is spent teaching you the vocabulary to chat up foreign women and tell them what sort of liquor you have back in your *chambre d'hôtel*. In a drill to teach counting and telling time, you start by asking a woman if she would like to have dinner with you at six o'clock. Each time she says no, you repeat the question, adding a specified increment to the time. (“Not at 6:15? How about at 6:30, then? Not at 6:30? How about at 6:45, then?”) And so on, until she cheerfully tells you to get lost.)

The hero of these exchanges, one Jim Gordon, is a *directeur de banque* who talks down to waiters and never orders anything other than *filet mignon*. (I worried that, after so many times repeating “*je m'appelle Jim Gordon*,” I would accidentally introduce myself that way in Paris.) His tastes (and consequently, my vocabulary) tend towards tennis, shopping, and red wine. In character as M. Gordon, I learned how to describe my swanky apartment or new car, and to ask for directions to the castle or the department store. In some skits he is married, so I



AARON SCHUTZENGEL

The author and his roommate tossing a frisbee on a winter morning.

also learned (as I was surely dying to know) how to say that my daughter is studying medicine at the university but never writes me any letters.

Still, despite all the age-inappropriateness and latent chauvinism, I have to admit that the lessons worked, and were even pretty fun, as long as I didn't take their content too seriously. By the time we arrived in Paris, I could handle myself decently at ordering food, asking for directions, and telling the caricature artists at Montmartre that we weren't interested. Though my accent earned a few giggles (especially from our hostess), people at least understood what I was saying. And, continuing with the lessons since I've been back, I've even learned such subtleties as the informal *tu* form, and how to speak in the past tense.

So here is my endorsement: if you need to learn French in a hurry, the Pimsleur course is the way to go. It's amazing how much you can learn in just 30 minutes a day. And afterwards, if you have the time, maybe you'd like to have a drink with me. No? Alors peut-être à 8:00? ☺

POLICE BROTHER

Tuesday, February 21

At 9:00 p.m., there was a report of a robbery in Delta Upsilon Fraternity on Professors Row. A resident of the house saw a suspicious older man lurking on the first floor of the house. The suspect fled on foot out the door as the brother approached him. A short chase ensued, and the suspect got away. A resident later found that his cell phone was missing from him jacket that was left on the first floor.

At 11:00 p.m., a student reported that someone had broken into her car, which was parked in Cousen's parking lot. Only a few CDs were missing. This incident was the twelfth of its kind to occur within one week. All of the car break-ins had taken place in either Cousen's parking lot, Hill Hall parking lot or on Massachusetts Avenue usually between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. Tufts Police reminds students not to leave any valuables in their cars.

Wednesday, February 22

At 4:00 a.m., there was a report of a disturbance at 14 Curtis Ave. Neighbors complained of loud music coming from the second floor of the house. Police responded, contacted the residents but were not received well by a certain male student, whose band was practicing. The officer proceeded to issue a noise complaint citation to the resident.

Thursday, February 23

At 4:00 a.m., there was a report of the use of illegal substance in Miller Hall. An officer responded to a complaint by the RA that students were smoking marijuana in a certain room. A student answered the door enthusiastically, hoping that someone had ordered a pizza. The student voluntarily surrendered a small amount of pot and a pipe. The incident has been reported to the Dean of Students. The student described the incident as a "major buzzkill."

Saturday, February 25

At 3:00 a.m., there was a report of suspicious circumstances at the Capen House. A female resident reported that an unknown black male was exposing himself with his pants at his ankles at the entrance of the house. The man claimed to be looking for a bathroom. The man fled, and police were unable to find anyone fitting the description.

At 3:00 a.m., there was a report of an assault in the yard of Zeta Psi Fraternity. The victim, a non-student, suffered serious injuries in the face allegedly from a suspect armed with a baseball bat. The incident is being aggressively investigated by TUPD.

—Spencer Maxwell, with the cooperation of the TUPD

COLLEGE BULLETS

The Supreme Court Declines a College Newspaper Case

On Tuesday, February 21, the Supreme Court declined to hear a case involving a student newspaper versus the administration of Governors State University in Illinois. Two editors and a reporter claim that the university's decision to stop the printing of an issue violated the right of free speech. The university justifies their decision because the issue contained articles critical of the administration that the organization had failed to submit to them for approval. The students were appealing an earlier dismissal of their case by a lower court.

Student Warned for Honking at an Officer

Clay Palmer, a student at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga argued before a judge that the police were wrong to have issued him a ticket for honking at a patrol car. The student had honked at the car because it ran a red light with no apparent reason. The judge agreed to change the ticket into only a written warning.

—Compiled by Spencer Maxwell

Just the Facts

The main library at Indiana University sinks over an inch every year because when it was built, engineers failed to take into account the weight of all the books that would occupy the building.

—SOME-GUY.COM/FACTS.HTML

New Ideas, New Solutions

BY MICHAEL SKOCAY

In his 2003 matriculation address, President Bacow explained to an eager crowd of entering students that Tufts is truly a multicultural university. "One reason why you have come to Tufts is to be exposed to people who are different from you. We value and embrace diversity because we learn from our differences . . . it is only when we confront others who see the world through different eyes that we come to understand our own assumptions, biases, and expectations." Shortly after the address freshmen were further introduced to the patchwork of cultures, languages, and races that compose the student population.

One then-freshman student was Biodun Kajopaiye, an African American, who later recounted his initial experience with "diversity" at Tufts. He describes the self-segregation encouraged by cultural houses, "they introduce the different houses and they are all separate. This is where this group of people resides, this is where another group of people resides; this is where I belong." He continues, "Race is a very sensitive topic at Tufts. I feel that people try not to step on each other's toes

. . . and so they don't bring it up . . . and they feel that is everything is o.k."

Even at Tufts University, with individuals raised in a culture where diversity is celebrated and tolerance championed, actively practicing diversity is still an elusive target. This is not to say that students do not believe in the concept, but that a glance into the dining hall during meals reveals many tables grouped by race. Kajopaiye believes that this tepid display of interaction between different ethnic and racial groups on campus may simply amount to a lack of communication. "Different racial groups or student organizations are afraid to approach each

open environment of Tufts because of a lack of initiative, then it is no wonder that in the modern "melting pot" of the United States, there is still remarkably little dialogue between racial and ethnic groups. A highly public instance of a leader rebuffing contact with a major civil rights organization occurred in the 2004 and 2005 when President Bush rejected the NAACP's invitation to speak at their annual convention. In July 2004 Bush commented, "I would describe my relationship with the current leader [President Kweisi Mfume] as non-existent."

While Tufts University does have a

"Different racial groups or student organizations are afraid to approach each other because there is no initiative on each group to say 'come talk to us.'"

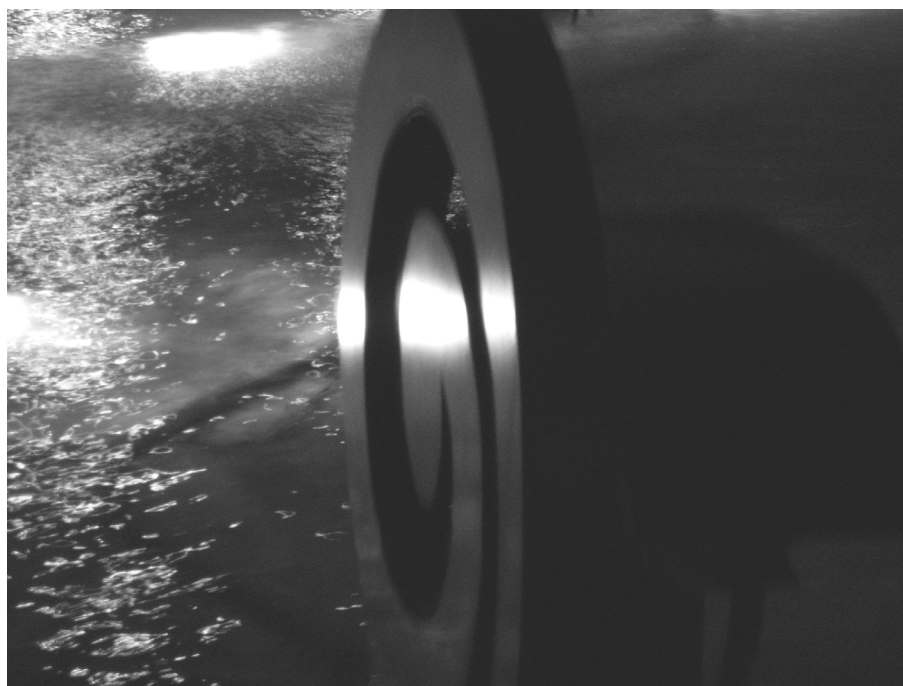
other because there is no initiative on each group to say 'come talk to us.' There's that sense that if I go to them, what are they going to think of me? . . . so I'm going to stay away and let things be."

If active interaction is a problem in the

much more open dialogue that encourages diversity, the fact that only seven percent, or 350 of 5,000 students, are African American speaks to the great challenges that still need answers in the quest for true racial equality. The 2006 Emerging Black Leaders Symposium, to be held Saturday March 4th in the Cabot Auditorium, will bring together African American leaders to answer questions facing their race as well as national and global issues.

Subtitled "Remembrance, Respect, and Responsibility," this is the second annual Symposium held at Tufts. The 2005 event brought together more than 400 graduate and undergraduate students, leaders in the local community, and an array of speakers that included former Secretary of Education Rod Paige, Massachusetts State Senator Diane Wilkerson, and "Apprentice" contestant Kwame Jackson. In 2005, panels discussed the issues of health, criminal justice, education, and economic empowerment in relation to the African American community.

The 2006 Emerging Black Leaders Symposium will again challenge participants to find solutions to major problems and to





BIODUN KAJOPAIYE

At the 2005 Emerging Black Leaders Symposium, panelists answer questions from the audience.

actively engage in positively affecting the African American community. Biodun Kajopaiye is the co-coordinator of the 2006 EBLS, one of five returning executive board members, and co-producer of the “black family” panel. He says that the group learned from last year’s experience and has improved the event in 2006. Among the changes include inviting high school and community college students to the event and promoting the Symposium to alumni and community members.

ELBS organizers have spent months organizing the event and are paying for the speakers with student fundraising and the support of Tufts University. One speaker who will not have to travel for the event is Tufts Professor of History Gerald Gill, author of several texts on affirmative action, civil rights, race relations, and neoconservative policies toward African Americans and the poor.

The main idea behind EBLS is to promote “active citizenship in the African American community and looking to...find solutions within our community,” says Kajopaiye. The event is also about honoring the legacy of African Americans who have come before as well as “going past the surface and asking questions people don’t talk about.”

The keynote speaker of the 2006 Symposium is Tennessee Congressman and

2006 Senate Candidate Harold Ford, Jr. The young politician was born in 1970 and was first elected to the U.S. Congress in 1996. Although a Democrat, Ford is a member of the “Blue Dog Coalition”, a group of moderate congressman working to bridge the partisan gap in an effort to create real solutions to national problems. In addition, according to his website, “when government is ineffective or gets in the way, he works to reform it and remove barriers that prevent people from getting ahead.”

Nicknamed “The Prince of Memphis”

“Our generation of African Americans has an itch to move forward in leadership...and leadership can come from a father, a student, a congressman, a professor.”

by the media and named one the “50 Most Beautiful People” in Time magazine, the leader has been compared to Illinois Senator Barack Obama—currently the only African Senator, as a rising star in the Democratic Party. His candidacy to replace retiring Senator Bill Frist, a Republican, has provoked heated debate among both parties and his conservative opinions on religious, moral, and social issues have caused uproar among some liberals and

African Americans.

The subject of the first panel discussion is politics and among the speakers are Gloria Fox, Massachusetts State Representative, Marche Raynor, Vice Chair of the Boston School Committee, and Kim Williams. The latter of the three, Kim Williams, is an Associate Professor of Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is the author of the forthcoming book *Mark One or More: Civil Rights in Multiracial America*, which examines the results of the 2000 U.S. Census as the first time an individual could identify themselves as multiracial. As an educator, Professor Williams teaches on American racial politics, social movements, and immigration policy.

Arts and Media is the focus of a second panel which includes Daphne Reid, the co-founder of New Millennium Studios and famous for her role as “Aunt Viv” on *Fresh Prince of Bell Air*, and Julieanna Richardson, Founder of the History Makers—an archive commemorating significant African American figures throughout history. Joy Bennett-Kinnon, Senior Editor of *Ebony Magazine* will also be speaking at the Symposium. She has written numerous articles for *Ebony* that range from portraits of Civil Right leaders, to lighthearted entertainment, to stories about African Americans in the arts. Kahlil Byrd is the final speaker on the Arts and Media panel. Byrd is co-founder and Director of the African Public Broadcasting Foundation (APBF), an organization working to bring television to the 500 million residents of Sub-Saharan

Africa, utilizing the “audio-visual power of television to stimulate Africa’s social and economic transformation.”

The third panel will focus on the Black Family—its history and its current state, and includes four speakers. It features two academics, Sociology Professor Katrina Bell McDonald of Johns Hopkins University and Erica Woods-Warrior, Adjunct Faculty of Old Dominion University. Dr. Joseph Marshall, Founder of the San Francisco Omega





Boys Club and winner of the “Use Your Life” Award from Oprah Winfrey’s Angel Network. The Omega Boys Club runs a program called Street Soldiers that aims to “keep people alive, free from violence, and free from incarceration,” through education and support. The club also encourages its members to later give back to the community that helped them with the phrase “the more you know, the more you owe.” Finally, Irene St.-Roseman, Program Director for the Level Playing Field Institute, will speak about her experiencing helping to create equality for all talented students. St.-Roseman runs a summer program called SMASH (Summer Math & Science Honors Academy) which is an intensive program for promising young students of a lower socio-economic background.

The collective enthusiasm and talent of this group of speakers in addition to the individuals and minds in the audience generate a positive excitement that real change within the African American community can be affected. Co-Coordinator Kajopaiye believes that “our generation of African Americans has an itch to move forward in leadership...and leadership can come from a father, a student, a congressman, a professor.” He continues, “As long as they are willing to sacrifice themselves and willing to take whatever heat comes with being truthful about the issues... they may not be liked, but they will be respected.” Kajopaiye hopes that this generation, especially college students who acquire an education, will return to their communities to incite a passion for active citizenship within those individuals who have become complacent with the struggle in their lives. This kind of active leadership, he believes, will create real change by using the benefits of education to better a community and in turn, a race.

However, the Symposium is not simply aimed at one race, for people do not live in isolation and cooperation is truly essential. The EBLS “can create great dialogue, thought provoking ideas...discussing the issues is the first step to creating change.” says Kajopaiye. This Symposium “is for everybody who is passionate for dealing with the issues in every community” and if they are not already incited to be active citizens, the discussion can give the audience “a fire, a desire to do something different, to make a difference.” ©

Dealing With Famine the Tufts Way

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

AND LYDIA HALL

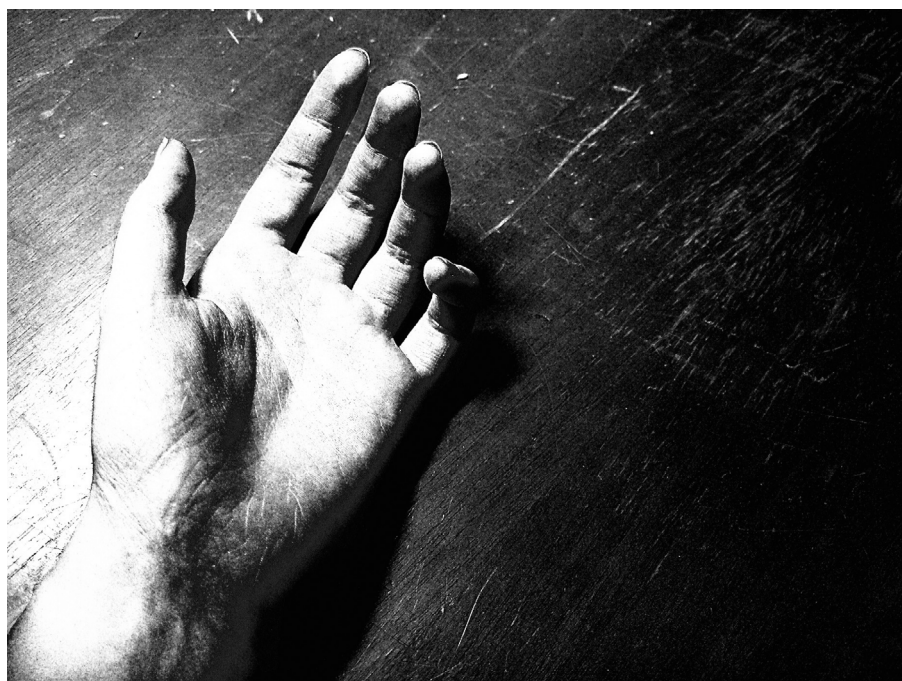
The gaunt faces. The emaciated bodies. The arms with barely enough skin to cover the bone. The ribcages that pierce right through the skin. But perhaps what is most haunting is the look of desperation in their eyes; the urgent need for something—food—that so many other people take for granted. Over the years, the world has seen many pictures of the victims of famine. Organizations such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the World Health Organization, and the World Food Program have put forth many efforts to fight the epidemic—but it still persists, and looks as though it will for a long time to come, as new instances of famine occur seemingly every day.

What can be done to continue this battle against something that, according to the World Food Program, quietly kills 25,000 people worldwide per day and

leads approximately one in seven people internationally, or 850 million total, to go hungry? Already there are humanitarian aid workers teaching victims how to plant crops and sharing agricultural technology, while untold numbers of food crates have been parachuted from planes 1000 feet in the air.

But famine relief is only a small component of the difficult and complex struggle to eradicate famine. What is less often publicized is the many ways in which the epidemic is being addressed outside of the context of direct humanitarian aid, and that is precisely the type of work done at the newly-founded Feinstein International Famine Center, a branch of the Tufts Feinstein School of Nutrition Science and Policy.

Dr. Peter Walker, director of the Famine Center since 2002, made it very clear: “We do not do famine relief! We are a university graduate research center, but we focus on applied research, working in partnership with NGOs and government institutions.” Established in 1996, the Center’s



FAMINE BY THE NUMBERS

Here, some sobering statistics of this ongoing and pervasive international disaster from the Emergency Disasters Database, which provides “a specialized, validated database on disasters that facilitates preparedness, thereby reducing vulnerability to disasters and improving disaster management.”(Statistics obtained from Emergency Disasters Database—EM-DAT)

- According to EM-DAT, this is what constitutes a famine disaster: 10 or more people reported killed, 100 people reported affected, a call for international assistance, and the declaration of a state of emergency.
- The number of reported events of famine has increased significantly in the past 20 years.
- An estimated 50,983,301 people were affected—i.e. injured, displaced, or killed—by famine in Africa between 1931 and 2002 during 48 events of famine. This is more than on any other continent.
- Africa also had the highest average number of people impacted during each event—approximately 1,062,152.
- Of the affected people in Africa, a total of at least 37,539 were killed directly.
- After Africa, Asia is the continent that has suffered most from famine; an estimated 19,000,000 people were affected during the 21 disasters that occurred from 1931 to 2002.
- An average of at least 904,762 were affected during each Asian event.
- By contrast, the total number of people affected by famine in Europe and the Americas combined during the same time totals only 1,013,000.
- One event of famine in Ghana in 1982 affected a total of 12,500,000 people. More recently, famine in North Korea in 2002 affected 2,900,000 people.
- The deadliest famine of all time is still the one that occurred in the former Soviet Union in 1932, in which 5,000,000 were killed.
- In Haiti during 1992 and 1993, at least 1,000,000 people were affected by famine. The country’s total population is barely more than 6,000,000, meaning that about 17% of the country’s people suffered.
- There have been no famines in North America in the past 100 years.

goals are two-fold: “To address the causes of famine...a lot of our work today looks at civil war and war crime, genocide and gross acts of rights violations...and to improve response to famine.”

It sounds like any other desk job at first. Half of the Center’s twenty staff members work at the Medford/Somerville campus, making phone calls and managing budget sheets. However, the rest of the staff spend their time in countries like Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, and Columbia, devotedly researching famine related issues over a period of several months, often in violent and war-torn regions.

“It is dangerous and difficult,” said Walker, a veteran who has been active in humanitarian work since 1979. “First, many of the research programs operate in war zones, or at least zones of civil conflict, so you risk getting caught in the crossfire. Second, much of the information we are collecting is politically very sensitive and in some instances, if government or rebel forces knew we were collecting information on the atrocities they were committing, we would be deliberately targeted.”

Indeed, the humanitarian work of modern times is more perilous than the

days of yore, where it was taboo to harm a field worker. In the mid 1900s, said Walker, there was an agreement during wartime that organizations like the Red Cross would provide assistance to those in need—wounded civilians, POWs—without favoring one side of the conflict over the other. Since both parties received equal treatment, there was little reason for soldiers to attack or harass aid workers.

Nowadays, the struggle has evolved—or more properly, devolved—into roving bands of armed militia, street thugs, and terrorists who often serve their own individual agendas, not the collective objectives of a government or centralized state, and resent or feel threatened by the politically ambiguous services of foreigners. The proof? “We have had researchers held at gunpoint on a number of occasions,” Walker said. In addition, one mustn’t forget that the staff members are “often working in very remote areas where even a simple illness or accident can prove fatal if one cannot get assistance, let alone the more interesting tropical infections!”

Why do Walker and others at the Famine Center so readily risk their lives? What is the significance of the research they gather and what does it have to do

with eradicating famine? Take one look at an official Feinstein International Famine Center research study, or “briefing report” as it is called in the early stages, and it becomes obvious that the international community has much to gain from using Tufts research. For example, a team of eight conducted the first part of an on-going comparative study in Uganda from January to October 2005. With the assistance of international rights organizations from around the world, the team mapped out trade routes for cattle and armaments using a series of intricate charts and diagrams. They also interviewed about 1,300 individuals in the battle-weary country, including government officials, armed forces, religious leaders, and civilians.

Using qualitative research methods, the preliminary study found that Uganda’s 19 year civil war is adversely affecting the traditional patterns of livestock sustainability in the region. In eastern Uganda, increasingly violent combatants are raiding cattle in order to attain personal wealth and fund their military escapades. This scenario can be linked to a Famine Center case study in Sudan completed in June 2005, which found that regional economies can collapse into disarray when looters seize and hoard livestock. As Sudanese rebels raided camels

WAYS FOR ANYONE TO HELP FIGHT FAMINE

Anyone can do small things that will make a positive difference in fighting the worldwide famine epidemic. Here are a few internet resources to start with:

- Visit the Friends of the World Food Program website at fwfp.org. Here, you can find information on, among other things, how to donate money to buy food for needy people.
- Another valuable website is the Care.org world hunger campaign, which focuses on helping children—23 of whom die every minute from hunger.
- Finally, try MercyCorps.org, which focuses on ending famine in African countries.

and sheep indiscriminately, they inadvertently altered the “time-tested livestock management system,” forcing unnatural migration patterns, increasing risk of animal disease, and depleting reserves of grazing pasture.

Combined with insecure trade routes and banditry, the looting had “a direct impact on productivity, in terms of farming and livestock production, both of which have spiraled downwards.” Ultimately, the price of even the most basic food commodities doubled in some cities, plunging the Sudanese populace into enormous economic hardship and, for the destitute, malnourishment and starvation. The study summarizes: “The repercussions of this disruption are felt, in varying degrees, in almost all households and in all segments of the population.” What these studies tell us is that if the situation in Uganda mirrors that of Sudan, then the Ugandans are in for a tough ride.

Who would have thought that a little livestock raiding could yield such disastrous consequences? Yet that is precisely the message the Feinstein International Famine Center wishes to send to international humanitarian organizations: in order to tackle famine and other large scale emergencies, disaster relief barely skims the surface. Boxes of food is not enough. To effect real change, the specific root causes of these disasters must be identified, linked, and explicitly dealt with. This is the most holistic and in-depth approach to date, making Walker and his staff pioneers in their field.

Indeed, there is no better time than now for innovative and forward-looking approaches. According to the Emergency Disasters Database, the number of reported events of famine has increased significantly over the past 20 years. In Africa alone, over 50 million people have been affected between 1931 and 2002 due to 48 separate events of famine. In the same stretch of time, famine has killed millions in Europe. Although “the world has produced more than enough food to feed itself since the 1960s,” the World Food Program estimates that there are currently more hungry children in the world than the population of the United States. But, more importantly, we have all seen the photos.

Unfortunately, research alone does not feed a starving child. That’s why the Famine Center utilizes its groundbreaking findings to recommend policy changes and an action-plan to all groups involved in a famine-affected area. These recommendations are multifaceted and are designed to “best inform policy and program formation.”

For example, the above briefing report recommends that the Government of Uganda “support district veterinary

officers to implement livestock movement regulations to help ensure that all animals that come to market have a movement permit and have been properly inspected by veterinary doctors. Security officers should be tasked to assist the district veterinary officers enforce this regulation.” Additionally, in what is certainly a bold and contentious move, the study states that the international donor community, World Bank, United Nations, African Union, and NGOs must “recognize that the present track of using a military solution to the situation in northern and eastern Uganda is a non-viable option that is further entrenching instability and does little to promote security for civilian populations.” Although this is but a sampling from the report, these detailed and comprehensive recommendations go a long way in illustrating the value of effective research and policy initiatives.

Interestingly enough, the name of the Feinstein International Famine Center somewhat belies the nature of its agenda. Although all of its research can in some way be traced back to famine, the Center actually supports a multitude of interdisciplinary programs, including ones on community-based animal health, humanitarianism and war, public nutrition, refugees and forced migration, and youth and community. Probably the most renowned program, however, is one entitled “Livelihoods Initiative.” Pioneered a decade ago by Sue Lautze, who conducted research for Tufts in Afghanistan, the Livelihoods Initiative investigates the strategies disaster-stricken people use to survive, strategies termed “livelihood systems.” Lautze explained, “The key to effective humanitarian assistance lies in supporting, not undermining these systems. International aid too often assumes local people are helpless and doesn’t take the time to do accurate people-based needs assessment.”

Researchers in Angola have used the

Unfortunately, research alone does not feed a starving child. That’s why the Famine Center utilizes its groundbreaking findings to recommend policy changes and an action-plan to all groups involved in a famine-affected area.



livelihoods approach to reveal that during times of emergency and conflict, trading between warring factions is “a crucial coping mechanism.” As the situation becomes more precarious, more desperate, the populace begins to trade more, not less. Trading (as opposed to, say, migration) becomes the strategy by which soldiers and civilians cope with famine and disaster. This realization debunks a common myth among aid workers, who presume that private markets shut down during times of crisis. This information, if properly utilized, could prove invaluable to the international humanitarian community. “A sack of food dropped from 1,000 feet isn’t a very nuanced way to get at these livelihood systems,” Lautze summarized. “In complex emergencies, we save livelihoods as a way to save lives.”

Obviously, the challenges in the field—safely gathering data, working with locals, coercing governments to adopt policy—are tremendous. But, like any non-profit, working in the office also has its obstacles. “The biggest challenge is getting funding for this work,” said Walker, who has in the past worked for British-based NGOs. “Most of the normal research grant sources do not fund our type of work, so we have to go to private foundations and governments in other countries.” Examine any of the Center’s briefing reports, and one quickly

notices the broad array of international institutions and organizations that provide funding and assistance. The long-term study on Uganda is primarily being funded by Canadian NGOs; another study boasts funding from the United States Agency for International Development and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. Almost all projects are conducted in conjunction with universities in foreign countries, such as Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman, Sudan.

The race to eradicate famine is an ongoing one. Current Center projects focus primarily on Uganda, including an investigation of forced marriage practices by a rebel resistance army, their relationship to international human rights laws and international criminal law, and how this practice deleteriously affects food output. Last year’s projects highlighted such issues as public nutrition in Afghanistan, the livelihood strategies of rural villagers in Bosnia, and the development of a durable measles vaccine in conjunction with the Tufts School of Medicine.

How can Tufts students help with such lofty projects? “We have a few graduate level [students] and the occasional undergraduate who is really interested in the work come in and help out as research assistants,” said Walker. In addition, grad

students have the opportunity to receive a Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance from the Tufts Friedman School and the Fletcher School of International Relations, the only degree of its kind in the country.

It is the students, after all, who will be tomorrow’s humanitarian aid workers, researchers, and policy advocates. But for now, while the world witnesses famine’s relentless cruelty through pictures—the lifeless expressions, the withered faces and torsos, the desperation in their eyes, each dying individual about to become one of 9 million who perish annually from hunger and malnutrition—the men and women at Tufts Feinstein International Famine Center work relentlessly to eradicate the epidemic.

True pioneers in the humanitarian field, Walker, Lautze, and the rest of the staff have seen that cruelty firsthand, have looked straight into the soul of desperation. Yet they remain optimistic. On one report, a message from the team at Darfur said it all: “The hospitality of the Darfurians have warmed our hearts, and we are deeply saddened at the suffering inflicted upon them. It is the team’s hope that this report is worthy of all of their kindness and generosity and makes some small inroads into promoting livelihoods and future peace.”



Not Technically, No

In a story that has for the most part slipped underneath the radar of the national press, three U.S. Senators are asking the Justice Department to investigate the claims of an Arab-American FBI agent that he was passed over for promotions as retaliation for criticizing his superiors.

Republicans Arlen Specter and Chuck Grassley and Democrat Patrick Leahy sent a joint letter to Justice Department Inspector General Glenn Fine two weeks ago, in which they urged him to look into the case of Bassem Youssef, an Egyptian-born American citizen who was considered one of the Bureau's best counterterrorism agents prior to 9/11. Youssef alleges that he was passed over for promotions multiple times despite his counterterrorism expertise and familiarity with the Middle East.

Youssef's case first garnered publicity, albeit minor, last summer, when depositions of several top FBI officials were conducted in relation to an employment discrimination suit he filed against the Bureau in 2003. In the process of interviews of FBI Director Robert Mueller, Executive Assistant Director in charge of terrorism Gary Bald, and his predecessor Dale Watson, it became clear that the Bureau did not consider expertise in either the Middle East or terrorism a prerequisite for advancement in its counterterrorism division.

Bald, when questioned about his knowledge of Middle Eastern history and culture, responded, "I wish I had it. It would be nice."

Watson, who headed the FBI's counterterrorism operations until 2003, fared little better. Responding to a question about whether he knew the difference between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims, he said,

"not technically, no."

Perhaps most distressingly, when presented with Bald's testimony, Director Mueller, who gave Bald his position, defended his choice by listing his assistant's counterterrorism credentials. These included heading the FBI's Baltimore office and serving as assistant special agent in charge of the Washington Sniper investigation.

It is vitally important that people learn about this story, not because of any discrimination that Special Agent Youssef may have faced, although is of course troubling as well, but because it shows that the country is worrying about the wrong national security issues.

Over the past week the takeover of six major U.S. ports by the United Arab Emirates-based company DP World has been the hot story in every major news source. Legislators on both sides of the aisle, as well as numerous radio and television news personalities, have expressed wariness over the prospect of an Arab company controlling American ports. The furor over the announcement of DP World's takeover of the ports has been nothing short of amazing, mostly because it has been so misguided.

Whatever questions people may have about the activities of the UAE, it is ridiculous to extend them to DP World and the proposed port deal. Not only will the same American employees continue to work at the ports; not only will the U.S. Coast Guard and Customs Service continue to be responsible for security; but foreign management of our ports is hardly anything new. According to an op-ed in Tuesday's New York Times written by Stephen E. Flynn, a retired Coast Guard officer, and James M. Loy, former commandant of the Coast Guard and deputy secretary of homeland security, eight out of every ten containers that enters the U.S. are handled by three foreign companies, one of which is DP World.

The irony is, of course, that the first interest that Congress and the American people take in the security of our ports concerns an absolute non-issue. And the Youssef case only illustrates the absurdity of the uproar about the ports. A decorated FBI agent who served as legal attaché to Saudi Arabia in 1997 and participated in the investigations of the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing in Kenya, and the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, Youssef was apparently repeatedly passed over for promotions that were given to less-qualified individuals. But instead of concerns about a lack of expertise, experience, and knowledge in our intelligence and law enforcement agencies, it is the port issue that seizes the country's attention. Instead of concern about the sad state of port security provided by the *U.S. Government*, which scans only a minuscule proportion of the containers that enter this country, people question whether or not a company based in a country that is our ally should be allowed to participate in legitimate commercial activities.

Although one would hope to find other factors at work besides racism and xenophobia, it unfortunately appears more than coincidental when dark faces, faces that bear a slight resemblance to enemies of this country, continually become the subject of mistrust and disparagement. The Congress, people, and media of the United States would do well to focus on important issues, rather than the cosmetic ones. ☹

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*Into Conscious*

Sometimes I feel,
Often I desire,
Desire to take leave of this place.
Sinking is so easy,
To descend into the depths of my own subconscious.
I resist only because i can.
Temptation is present and oh so tangible.
Yet i continue, staggering on,
I proceed with no obvious direction,
The only certainty is that which i fear.
Should I give in?
I feel so close, to the cool whispers, frosty lips of insanity,
Brushing lightly across my skin.
Seducing me at every turn,
I am my own worst enemy,
I fear myself,
Monasteriense intus.

Poetry by Jesse Gassett

Please direct poetry and artwork submissions to Timothy.Noetzel@tufts.edu



February's Lore

She walks an alabaster floor,
Beneath all February's lore,
That is trapped in the twigs
That twine in the trees,
That in icy cocoons,
Rattle in the breeze
With the vanilla moons
That fall on her head,
Having courage to speak,
Before they are said.

And by a pearly creek,
That time did milk,
She stoops to see
Light flow like silk
And call for her
To pluck it out,
Eager to blossom
Before it can sprout.

Even with memories of
Gardenias that adorned
Kitchen tile, she stands to
Leave; she will not beguile.
For the gentle deer,
That take merely bark,
Look only her in the eyes
And have there left their mark.

Poetry by Ferris Jabr

A Dying Language

BY NIVEDITA GUNTURI

It seems to me that fewer and fewer people take the English language seriously, forgetting the importance of having command over words. Last week an article in the Daily mentioned a nationwide low in the number of people who study English, a fate that many of the liberal arts are suffering, for that matter. Unfortunately, this is reflected in the way people speak and write, and most Americans sound like uneducated buffoons. Being well-read is fast becoming an archaic designation, one that very few young people fall under.

There's what we call "normal English" and that to which we ominously refer as "SAT words." At one time, perhaps many years ago, these two categories were in fact the same.

Sitting on the T a few days ago, I heard the following conversation, and you have probably also heard many like this one:

Girl 1: "So, I was like, 'Oh my GOD!!!' He was, you know, like TOTALLY like hot and I was like totally like wow."

Girl 2: "Oh my God, really? That's like totally unfair!"

And so it went on for 10 more minutes, at which point I changed seats, unable to tolerate the atrocity any longer. These girls were supposedly speaking English. I can only say that Noah Webster, not to mention Shakespeare, is probably turning in his grave, unable to bear the barbaric demolition that the English language has undergone since his time.

Part of the problem comes from the fact that books are becoming obsolete. Last semester when Salman Rushdie came to speak at Tufts, a concerned student asked him for his opinion on novels and how much longer people would be reading them. Mr. Rushdie seemed optimistic and reassured all of us that the novel would be around forever. I have to say I have my

doubts. The advent of the e-book makes me quite nervous, as does SparkNotes, CliffNotes, and Pink Monkey. Increasingly fewer and fewer educated people realize the value of actually reading a book cover to cover to understand it. It never ceases to amaze me that English majors—who are supposed to enjoy reading—tell me, "Oh, I just read the CliffNotes, I think I'll BS the response paper." Positively tragic, I think. The flagbearers themselves are turning traitor, which leaves the rest of us with no hope. Some include Sports Illustrated and Cosmopolitan in their lists of favorite books. Reading books is so foreign to these

people that the idea that magazines are not actually books comes as a real shock. And then there are those who count books like the *Shopaholics* and *The Devil Wears Prada* as "literature." It's a sad state of affairs.

Then there's the problem of vocabulary. There's what we call "normal English" and that to which we ominously refer as "SAT words." At one time, perhaps many years ago, these two categories were in fact the same. Now there's a list of 3000 words we are all instructed to memorize when we are in high school. We are tested on these words, and then we promptly forget them. We recall them when we write an essay that is supposed to sound somewhat erudite, and if we can't remember them ourselves we use the thesaurus function on Word. Those who do in fact speak in "SAT words" are no doubt the exception and are regarded either with awe or amusement.

Of course there's the infamous spelling bee. The release of the film *Spellbound* made this phenomenon more famous than it already was with ESPN's broadcast of the National Spelling Bee. The children who participate in these competitions are somehow seen as freaks or weirdos, the

only fraction of the population that actually cares about spelling words correctly. In the age of spell check, the skill of spelling has become, to all appearances, outdated and somewhat unnecessary. I have to say, however, that I have certainly come across misspelled words in headlines of major newspapers, on billboards, in important memos, on chalkboards in classrooms, and other places that they certainly do not belong. In instant messages, I consistently see "definitely," "tomorrow," and "wierd," day in and day out, and the people doing this have no idea that they've spelled anything wrong.

The beauty of the English language has suffered a violent and brutal blow at the hands of modern communication, and not enough people speak properly, write eloquently, or spell correctly. The bigger problem is that not enough people care. Words are the way we communicate with each other, with other communities and nations, and in the end, with ourselves. It is in our best interest to preserve the integrity of the language and to explore its intricacies and complexities. So the next time you find yourself throwing "like" around as if it is a necessary appendage or you choose to watch the movie instead of reading the book, keep this in mind and make the right decision. ☺

Nivedita Gunturi, LA '06, is majoring in English.



MARA SACKS



Hypersensitivity to Terrorism:

Arab Control of American Ports Returned with Uninformed Criticism

BY NATE GRUBMAN

Last Friday, the Daily published its own offensive Arab cartoon. This one didn't cause protests around the world, but it still had an impact.

The cartoon was headlined "You Couldn't Make This Stuff Up!" Under the headline, there was a picture of John Wilkes Booth with a caption next to it reading "John Wilkes Booth Appointed Chief of Security For Abe Lincoln." Beneath the picture was one of an Arab with a caption that read "Major U.S. Seaports Turned Over to Arab Company."

This cartoon wasn't enough to cause riots around the world, but it did something possibly even more profound. Seeing the cartoon, I dropped the paper onto the table, my jaw dropped open, my eyes widened, my glass of orange juice dropped to the floor and a chilling statement escaped my lips. "I think I agree with President Bush."

Ok, that scene may have been a little over-dramatized, but the cartoon reminded me why for the first time in nearly six years, I agree with President Bush (sort of).

Recently, the President has come under attack for allowing a company based in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates to run six American ports. Even members of his own party, such as White House lapdog Bill Frist have attacked Bush for what they call handing over the US's security to a terrorist state.

In response, Bush essentially said that the only reason the port control has become a big story is that Congressmen are holding Middle Eastern countries to a different standard.

Upon first hearing the story, which was delivered to me over the phone by my outraged father, I was ready to fall in line with the rest of the Bush bashers. After all, I do own an "Elect Dennis Kucinich" t-shirt. Yet, there was something about the outrage that felt ignorant to me.

Opponents of the deal claim that it will make the US more vulnerable to another terrorist attack on American soil. By their account, since September 11, nearly five

years ago, the terrorists have been waiting for the day when Americans would let their guard down.

While this scenario seems scary, it simply is not true. In a globalized world, most American ports are operated by foreign companies. In fact, the very ports that will now be operated by Dubai Ports World were previously controlled by a British company. The security standards for these ports are not determined by the company that operates them, but by the US government itself.

Perhaps this is the scariest fact. Security at US ports is notoriously porous and our government only checks about five percent of incoming cargo. Only one of the six ports that Dubai Ports World will overtake has a radiation detector. Why would the terrorists need a foreign company to set up permeable security when the US is doing such a good job of it by itself?

I dropped the paper onto the table, my jaw dropped open, my eyes widened, my glass of orange juice dropped to the floor and a chilling statement escaped my lips. "I think I agree with President Bush."

Critics are right in saying that the Bush administration should have allowed for more Congressional oversight. I would generally agree especially with this administration that Congressional oversight is a generally good thing.

Yet, the central criticism is that the United Arab Emirates is a terrorist nation. Critics cite evidence from the 9/11 Commission Report that states that two of the terrorists on 9/11 were from the Emirates. Furthermore, much of Al Qaeda's money flowed through UAE banks. Also, many point out that the Emirates was one of the few countries in the world recognizing the Taliban before September 11.

To be sure, these facts paint the picture

of a state with a questionable record on terrorism. Like Saudi Arabia, the Emirates is an oil rich government that does not always treat its people well, especially the poor ones, a good ingredient to create terrorists. As the banking center in a volatile region, it is not surprising that the Emirates handled money that was used by bad people. Furthermore, in a country with secular leaders and a predominantly Muslim population, recognizing the theocratic Taliban was a way to gain political capital. Does this mean that the US just made a deal with a state that it should consider an enemy?

Absolutely not. While the Emirates has had a spotty past with terrorism, it has also handed over key terrorist suspects in the War on Terror. In a time when it is dangerous for a Middle Eastern country to do so, it has often cooperated militarily with the US. In the War on Terror, it is precisely states like the UAE and Pakistan, which have the potential to aid terrorists, but decide to work

with the US instead.

The real crime that the UAE committed here was not being a terrorist nation trying to hurt the US, but being an Arab nation. Rather than reading "Major US seaports turned over to terrorist company," the cartoon read "Major US seaports turned over to Arab company?"

When President Bush claims that this whole outrage is racially motivated, he is correct. When he claims that Congressmen are sending the wrong message by saying they do not trust Arab countries, he is right.

Yet, the paranoid, racist mess that has been created is partly his fault. The outrage of the port deal is just an example of the cli-





mate of fear that Bush has worked so hard to create in the years following September 11. Yet this time he is the victim.

After September 11, Bush talked about launching a crusade against terrorism, before his advisors told him that that might not be the best word to throw around. He stated that there was no difference between the terrorists and those that support them. Trying to create a struggle of good versus evil, he claimed that the war was against an evil force that hated freedom. Finally, he led our country into a war in Iraq against Saddam Hussein, claiming that he had ties to the evil organization that was run by Osama bin Laden. Now, he asks us to trust an Arab country.

Perhaps President Bush should be proud when the American Congressmen

and people spring to action this time immediately assuming that a deal with an Arab country is a deal with the enemy. He has trained the American people well.

In the early 90s, political scientist Samuel Huntington predicted that the next clash would not be between states, but civilizations. His logic seemed over-simplistic and borderline racist, painting monolithic, homogenous cultures and claiming that the differences between cultures were irreconcilable.

Yet that is the world in which we live, where we have been trained to fear a culture. When Americans turn on the TV and see Arabs protesting a series of offensive cartoons, they do not understand. When they see sectarian splits exploited by the insurgency in Iraq, they are confused. Finally,

when they see their government making a deal with leaders wearing head-coverings they are afraid.

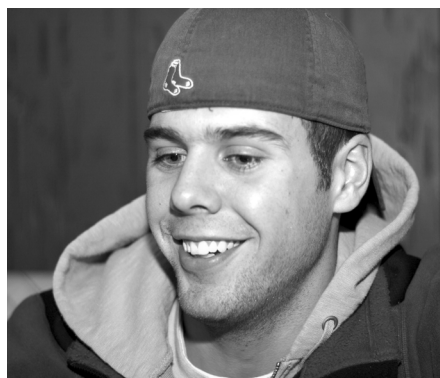
Unfortunately, this has become the War of Terror that President Bush has created. It is not about good citizens of the world versus the small minority of criminals. It is about us against them. It is about Americans and Westerners versus Arabs. This clash of civilizations is self-sustaining. As long as Americans fear Arabs and Arabs fear Americans, the clash will be formidable.

If the US wants to quell the anti-Americanism threatening us abroad, it should start by placing our distrust in terrorists, not Arabs. ☺

Nate Grubman, LA '08, has not yet declared a major.

Open Forum

How do you define being a minority at Tufts?



“We’re pretty diverse, more than other NESCAC schools I’ve seen at least. We could always have better minority representation, but Tufts is better than the other schools.”

—Matt Alander, '08



“We do have a lot of diversity, and because Tufts is such an accepting school, you would have to look at the sheer numbers to know who is actually in the minority.”

—Debbie Neigher, '09



“Being a Republican.”

—Kate Drizos, '06



Dealing with Anger

College students must deal with feelings of anger on a daily basis, but MIKE SNYDER says that keeping these negative emotions pent-up inside of us can sometimes yield positive results.



The Arabic professor was late that morning, and my classmates and I sat around anxiously hoping to get a free block. Visibly bored, the kid sitting next to me pulled out a *Daily* from his backpack and flipped to the Viewpoints section. That's when I saw my name in Ben Bell's column, "Spare Me." I started to get a little nervous, for I had read Ben's column the week before, and I distinctly remember telling myself, "Thank goodness this guy doesn't read the *Observer*." But apparently within the past several days he had stumbled upon a copy of an old issue.

Back at my dorm, I read Ben's column. By then my nerves had evolved into anger, pacing around the room, and a mild stomach pain. Full of emotion, I sat down to collect my thoughts when a friend stormed into my room with such intense fervor that you'd think he was out to hurt someone,

The more we lash out and announce our fury, the more furious we become.

or sue them. It turns out he was just as incensed as I, and went off on Ben using tough words like "slander" and "outrageous." Meanwhile, other friends joined the fray and suggested potential battle strategies. "Bash him in your next column!" "Send him a nasty email!" "Write a response to the *Daily*!" I felt stressed, hyper, and a little short of breath, yet wonderfully powerful and important. With arms crossed and

head lowered, I almost thought I was JFK during the Cuban missile crisis, my room my oval office, my friends my trusty cabinet. All eyes were on me. Do we blockade? Do we negotiate? Or do we invade?

What does anyone do in a situation where he feels he's been attacked and his message misconstrued? How do we handle a scenario where the actions or words of others trigger in us pain, anger, and temporary mental psychosis? What's the proper course of action not just in journalism, but in our daily lives?

I was told at a young age that it is important to express one's anger and rage. Smashing a punching bag, cursing after missing the Joey, asking to speak to the manager, or honking at a bad driver are all perfectly valid methods of handling our emotions, as long as nobody gets physically harmed. By expressing our emotional states and having "outlets" for negative emotions, the idea is that we can let go of our anger faster and continue living a healthy, stress-free life.

I listened to my friends' advice and decided to write a letter to the editor of the *Daily*. A letter, I thought, would function as my emotional outlet: I could tell the campus how angry I felt, end the stress and stomach pain, and return to studying Arabic. The following excerpts from that unpublished letter are factual.

I began, "For two weeks now, Ben Bell has produced what has to be the most offensive writing I have witnessed in the

Daily this year." I paused to take a breath, and noted with intrigue that I felt more riled up than when I first read Ben's column. I continued, "It would appear that Ben is not writing to express an opinion or provoke thoughtful discussion, but to purposely bash his victims." By now I was in an abject fury, my heart rate increasing, my breath becoming staccato in nature. The letter grew to 150 words. With each line of brutal criti-

cism, I became more and more exasperated. Yet I found it easy—and enormously pleasurable—to craft every scathing sentence. I was going to shut this guy down.

As the letter bordered on 300 words, something strange took place, because I cannot remember exactly what happened or what I was thinking. It's as if I blacked out. I literally lost consciousness. My guess is that my mind was so saturated with negative energy and emotions that it forced itself to shut down. My body, however, kept on running. Although I have little recollection of writing these words, the letter ended abruptly: "I took not an ounce of meaning from his column."

Yet Ben's column was full of meaning. It made me realize that the childhood myth is all wrong, and in fact, that the opposite is true. The more we lash out and announce our fury, the more furious we become. Though we may receive immediate pleasure from telling somebody to shut-up, or from yelling at our parents, or in my case, from writing a rude and inappropriate letter to the *Daily*, in the end this anger sticks around even after we've dealt the blow, and escalates. Think about all the times in your life where, after speaking up, a tenser situation was created. This makes sense. How can we let go of anger when our actions make it clear to the universe that we are truly and deeply angry? Had I sent in that awful letter, I would have simply perpetuated what I had initially sought to destroy, creating more unnecessary emotional anguish for myself and in the process offending others.

Next time you become angry, the first course of action might be to take no action at all. Your immediate battle strategy should be to do absolutely nothing. Then, once the crisis is over, once the stomach pain has ceased, and once you have regained full consciousness, the right decision will be made clear to you. And yes, I realize it's not easy to do nothing. I realize it's not easy to resist the sudden urge to speak up and act out. But hey, who said it was easy? So please ... spare me. ☺

Mike Snyder, LA '09, has not yet declared a major.



6-Disk Changer:

Little Feat's *Dixie Chicken*

BY JOHN DECARLI



Everybody's heard of the Allman Brothers Band. I'm sure most Tufts students could identify their "Jessica" without too much difficulty. Likewise, you probably also know Lynyrd Skynyrd, whose "Sweet Home Alabama" is still popular so many years later. However, you might not know Little Feat and that's precisely what I'd like to change.

Channeling the smooth, smoky sounds of southern rock, Little Feat was relatively unknown even during their peak years in the 1970s and have since fallen into obscurity. However, any fan of Duane Allman's signature slide guitar or Gregg's "whiskey and cigarettes" voice should check out Little Feat's 1973 masterpiece *Dixie Chicken*. Founded by singer-songwriter-guitarist Lowell George, a former Frank Zappa sideman, the band takes the southern rock framework laid down by the other two bands I mentioned and pulls it in some very interesting directions. On their first two albums, Little Feat was still striving to

find their voice, a delicate balance between George's diverse musical ideas. On their third, *Dixie Chicken*, they hit the nail right on the head, offering a laid-back, funky take on the sounds of the South, a fun, inviting album the whole way through.

Rejuvenated by the inclusion of new musicians, and heavily influenced by the rich musical traditions of New Orleans, George leads the band through song after song of mellow, soulful rock. What's really special about *Dixie Chicken* is its focus. It's not simply a collection of great songs, it's an album that is greater than the sum of its parts. While the songs range from upbeat blues to slow, slinky ballads and everything in between, they are all in the same vein and will sweep you up in the album's unique appeal.

The first song (and title track) is a perfect example of what George and his crew are after on this record. It starts out with percussion and bass, setting up an offbeat rhythm and kick-starting the disc with the New Orleans soul that it will display throughout. Next come the staccato plunking of a jazzy grand piano and some tasty slide guitar work along with some humorous lyrics by George. Right away, the band's unique mix of southern rock, blues, funk, and other traditional American sounds gets under your skin and draws you in. It's surprising then that the next song, "Two Trains," is just as good. Some funky guitar touches start it off until the slide guitar slowly makes its presence felt. The flawless mixing of the different elements of the song struck me on "Two Trains." Bass, quite a few guitar tracks, keyboard, and that same great piano fill out the sound, texturizing the song.

Next comes perhaps my favorite song on the album, "Roll Um Easy." After the pair of upbeat rockers, this gorgeous, haunting ballad reminds me of all the different moods Little Feat can create with their style. The song highlights George's

fantastic, soulful voice and understated songwriting. A lone acoustic guitar softly plucks out the simple yet beautiful melody, accompanied by the perfect voice to sing about "the angels that live in Houston." The result is a sound so soothing and relaxing, so warm and fragile. The slide guitar that joins about halfway through adds so much by doing so little. It seems like its sound shouldn't be possible, as I've never heard a slide so slow and steady. It's the perfect implementation of such a beautiful sounding instrument to round out this most moody piece.

So much great music and that's only the first three songs! While all somewhat different, every track is fantastic. Be it the slow, heavy blues of "On Your Way Down" or the funny, down-home "Fat Man in the Bathtub," every song adds something to the album, a new dimension to Little Feat's vision. Likewise, each song is filled with great performances from the band's talented musicians, skilled not only in playing technically difficult passages (though they never show off) but also in playing with the feeling and emotion necessary in carrying the album. "Fool Yourself" is a great example of both at work. It's the full-band counterpart to George's solo "Roll Um Easy," a faster, more active song, but one whose mellow sound achieves something similar.

It's rare to hear an album like *Dixie Chicken*; one that isn't afraid to cut the fat for the sake of a better work. *Dixie Chicken* is just what it needs to be; there are no five minute guitar solos, no over-the-top compositions, and most importantly, no filler. Every song is just what it needs to be and has a real purpose of the album. Each one adds something different, like scenes in a movie, committing itself to the vision of the greater work and in the end, *Dixie Chicken* works magnificently. It is seductive, diverse, unique, but above all fun—a true joy to hear. ☺



What the Academy Wants: This Year's Oscar Frontrunners

BY STEPHANIE CHIN

Anyone who is film savvy knows that the Oscars are more than just an extravaganza for Hollywood's A-List stars. This prestigious awards ceremony honors the year's most enjoyable, well-crafted, and thought-provoking films. March 5th marks the 78th Annual Academy Awards. Let's see who's up for the gold this year ...

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

With a whopping eight nominations in the Best Picture category, it's no surprise that *Brokeback Mountain* has already been deemed the critic's choice—as it is mine. Whether it's a story of love set in ancient China (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, 2000) or the woes of a societal outcast (*The Hulk*, 2003), Ang Lee is a master at portraying human tragedy. *Brokeback* follows two cowboys, Ennis Del Mar (Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal), who meet in the summer of 1963 in the beautiful Wyoming mountains and have a strong yet forbidden love affair that will persevere for the rest of their lives. Ennis, brilliantly portrayed by Ledger's captivating performance, is soft-spoken and shameful of his gay desires. Jack is slightly more adventurous and easily breaks the hearts of the audience as he relentlessly tries to convince Ennis to believe in his dream that two gay men can exist safely in the intolerant society of the 1960s. Both men enter empty marriages and carry the entire film in emotional torture to its bittersweet end.

Brokeback achieves its emotional triumph from its silent moments. The movie's critical messages can still be traced through the stillness of the scenery. Judging on past wins, the Academy tends to favor *Brokeback*'s themes of forbidden love (as in *The English Patient* and *Titanic*), as well as human triumph (*A Beautiful Mind* and last year's *Million Dollar Baby*).

The key to *Brokeback*'s success, even



CYNTHIA McMURRY

to its hesitant viewers, is that the love story between Ennis and Jack is applicable to everyone. The main characters happen to be gay, but the same emotions could just as easily have unfolded between any two people. You can't help but weep for the characters in the film. Although most empathize with Ennis and Jack, it's easy to see why their wives, Alma (played by a heartbreaking Michelle Williams, nominated for Best Supporting Actress) and Lureen (Anne Hathaway) are also victims. All of them suffer—yet the film ends with a hopeful tone, proving the power of the human spirit. Amid its controversy, *Brokeback* appeals to the humanity even in the most cynical of us.

MUNICH

We've seen Steven Spielberg make films about modern-day dinosaurs and statements about the brutalities of war. This time, with *Munich*, he incites discussion. The Academy has long favored political thrillers with a message; but it's important to note that *Munich* is a film that uniquely urges the need to negotiate—even if it is through graphic gun violence.

Set in 1972 at the Munich Olympics, Spielberg's film deals with the aftermath of the massacre of 11 Israeli athletes by Black September, a Palestinian terrorist group. The film tells of the retaliation by Mossad (the Israeli secret service) against the Palestinians involved in the attack. The hero of the film, Avner (Eric Bana) is a killer with a conscience. His journey is difficult and oftentimes unrewarding. Without fully understanding what is being asked of him, Avner is called upon to lead a team of assassins. He disguises his identity to protect his government should he be caught behind the attacks. Avner's first killing is a success though the audience can't help but feel the fear in his eyes and the shakiness of his hands holding the gun. Over time, he becomes more desensitized to killing but he never loses sight of his purpose as a fighter for Israel. Nevertheless, by the movie's end he feels he has accomplished little, as he watches the routine replacement of Palestinian terrorists.

Munich is a complex and dense film and it's certainly one of the front-runners at grabbing the gold. The Academy is without a doubt a big fan of Spielberg's films and this may be his most compelling since *Schindler's List*. Spielberg blew me away, but it still wasn't enough to top Lee's *Brokeback Mountain*.

CRASH

In *Crash*, director Paul Haggis makes his directorial debut with intertwining stories in prejudice-stricken Los Angeles. These include an upper-class Caucasian woman



terrified of the stereotypical African-American hoodlum; a number of serious hate crimes committed against an immigrant Iranian family; and a hard-working Mexican-American who suffers from prejudices because of his race. These are just some of the incidents in a movie that culminates in one central theme: the widespread existence of racism. For most of the film, Haggis is rather obvious with the idea that everyone is racist against someone else. Well-known rapper and surprisingly gifted actor, Christopher Bridges (a.k.a. Ludacris) gives an angry speech in the beginning about the ills of racial injustice. Haggis uses very complex and dynamic characters to illustrate this concept; however, his characters are somewhat unrealistic and at times exaggerated. Despite these character flaws, the renowned cast really carries the film.

Another interesting point is the film's form. *Crash* is part of a new genre of movie-making which successfully intertwines isolated incidents. Haggis' vision is innovative and original, but the Academy is looking for something else. It favors films that illustrate human emotion through subtlety, which is something *Crash* lacks. The film is nominated more for its creative style than its content and, while educational, isn't profoundly moving.

GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD LUCK

George Clooney's directorial debut is nothing short of picturesque. Filmed in black and white, *Good Night and Good Luck* brilliantly captures the American paranoia of the 1950s. However, the film may be too quiet for the Academy's usual taste. *Good Night and Good Luck* leaves audiences with a better understanding of the Red Scare, but may not be as emotionally moving as its competition. This doesn't deny the film's importance. In a dedicated performance, David Strathairn plays real-life CBS journalist Ed Murrow, who uses his weekly segment, *See it Now*, as a venue to

dispel the public's fear of "un-American" communists. His battle against McCarthy makes Murrow quite the unwavering hero. Strathairn plays him so convincingly (even eerily perfecting Murrow's signature sign off, "Good Night and Good Luck") that the audience has no choice but to believe in his convictions: responsible journalism and honest storytelling. Murrow's actions open up a maelstrom of thoughts: how much should the media be censored? How much are people owed the truth and at what cost? Perhaps the most memorable moment is McCarthy's bullying personal attacks on Murrow and his CBS team, essentially incriminating himself and inadvertently

non-fiction bestseller, *In Cold Blood*. Capote spends about six years investigating the 1959 murders of the Clutters, a farming family of four in Holcomb, Kansas. Capote initially intended on writing an article for the *New Yorker*, but the two killers, Perry Smith and Richard Hickock, captivate him enough to fill an entire novel. In the process, Capote becomes emotionally involved, especially with Smith (Clifton Collins Jr.). What's unique and different about this biopic is that Miller uses a particular event to portray a major turning point in Capote's life. Capote focuses so much on a single incident that he becomes reactive. The film uses the murder to catalyze Capote's downfall.

Phillip Seymour Hoffman, in one of his greatest screen performances, shows a very tortured man. Capote struggles to find a balance between befriending Smith for the sake of the novel that will make him immortal, and truly convincing himself that he wants to save the man he has come to love.

Although many of the characters in the film are motivated for selfish reasons (Hickock bluntly blurts out statements to Capote, hoping to be portrayed as a victim), there is something remarkably beautiful about the friendship between Capote and Perry. Both are undeniably hurt when realizing the others' selfishness. Perry relies on Capote to become his savior but realizes after months of no contact that Capote isn't going to stop his

inevitable downfall. Capote is frustrated with Perry after several unsuccessful attempts to get his story but is ashamed after realizing he really needs it solely for his book. Nonetheless, Perry remains Capote's friend until the end.

Capote is a film that deserves recognition after taking such good care to recreate an event that changed American literature. Again though, the film pales in comparison (even if just slightly) to *Brokeback Mountain*. Miller shows the complexity of just one man whereas Ang Lee captures that of many.

Hollywood has had an impressive year—all five frontrunners deserve their recognition. However, Ang Lee has truly made a cinematic statement through *Brokeback Mountain*, so I'll be rooting for the cowboys come Oscar night. ☺



pushing the audience to Murrow's side.

We also see great things from the supporting cast which includes Clooney himself, playing *See It Now* producer Fred Friendly, and the reluctant Frank Langella as Murrow's CBS big boss.

Like the other contenders this year, *Good Night and Good Luck* makes a strong statement. The film is subtly fierce, but it seems that Academy voters will choose a portrayal of human emotion over a comment on society.

CAPOTE

The film industry has graced us yet again with another brilliant novice director, Bennett Miller. Miller's *Capote* tells the story of author Truman Capote (Phillip Seymour Hoffman), during the time he wrote his



Not Your Typical T Party

BY ANNA FELDMAN

When I think Boston Tea Party, I think Massachusetts Colony 1773. Crates of East India tea being thrown over the side of a ship by zealous revolutionary American patriots. Echoes of the saying "taxation without representation" ring in my ears from (ugh) high school AP U.S. History. Over two hundred years later, however, a re-definition (and respelling) of the phrase has come about in our area due to the curiosity of Tufts sophomores Ian McClellan and Will Kent. Last semester, they created the Boston T Party, a new group dedicated to discovering Boston, sharing the experience with fellow explorers, and extending their findings to the Tufts student body. Ian admitted that it was Will who penned the clever name and referred to the idea as being "great because it is exactly what we do as a club and it was also a great reference to Boston's history. It was just cheesy enough to be perfect." Will agreed, deeming it "catchy/corny/cheesy enough to stick. Also, since the T so far has been key to our outings we found it appropriate to include the T in our name. The 'party' is symbolic of the amazing times we always have."

Realizing at a Wilco concert at Wellesley last year their mutual interest in discovering Boston, Will and Ian hit it off from the get-go. Ian began joining Will and his group of friends in their weekend explorations, and slowly, by word of mouth, more people began to show interest. The answer seemed pretty clear. Will and Ian decided to open up their weekly sojourns to the entire Tufts community. Considering the immense interest shown by a solid core of "adventurous souls" reason enough, they formed an official club. "The fact that Tufts was right by Boston, a bustling metropolis, was a major draw in my choosing of this school," Will explained, "Ian and I saw this as an opportunity to make this city ours during our short four years here.

Between food, entertainment, history, diversity, and education, this city has an endless amount to offer."

Ian noted the curiosity and envy of people who would hear about their weekends out discovering all the different areas of Boston and wishing they had been told about the outing. "This was really the inspiration behind the club, to make it official so that people we didn't know and who were interested in what we were doing every weekend had a way of finding out what we were up to."

With a fluctuating number of participants from week to week, deciding on a destination and plan of action seemed to me like it would be a challenge, but Will and Ian have it under control. "We have planning meetings on Wednesdays at 9 p.m. in Eaton 207," Will explained, "and usually we will pick a neighborhood or specific destination (a theater or festival, etc.). Ian further commented. "Anyone who is interested in going somewhere is welcome to bring it up and after we have all the ideas we try and create a plan that works best

to accommodate where people want to go and when they can. We try and keep things cheap and also look for special events and such that aren't around every weekend."

But as it goes with all new groups on campus, certain difficulties arise, particularly those involving advertising and informing the community at large of your existence. "Right now we are still working out the kinks that occur when starting a club. One of the biggest things for us right now is just getting our name out so that people know we exist. We started this club in the spring and so are entering a large field rather late in the game. We are just trying to make sure that everyone has a good time so that they will tell their friends and start to bring in more people. Once the membership starts to be more defined we are also hoping to use our status as an official club to hopefully talk to different groups in Boston to possibly set up special tours or other similar activities." Will also added that they "are looking to get funding to work on websites, message boards and other forms of advertising so that people will know about us and what we do."

One method with which the group is



OLIVIA SAUCIER



trying to get their name out there is their blog at www.bostontparty.blogspot.com. "Right now it's very rudimentary but we are hoping it turns into a place where people can check out our discoveries," Will remarked. "The blogging site will theoretically act as a way to convey our findings back to students on campus so they can get to know Boston. If they want to find that perfect restaurant or movie theater or if they don't know too much about a specific neighborhood, they could find it out from us."

Another complexity arises with the TCU's definition of a student group and the consequent funding that can come out of it. As of now, though, the Boston T Party is not eligible for TCU recognition because they are, as Will puts it, an "exploratory group" which focuses primarily on off campus events. Ian, in describing their situation regarding TCU, remains nonetheless optimistic and hopeful. "The system is set up to make sure that the money given goes towards campus activities. But our point of view is that you cannot separate Tufts from Boston and that the city should be considered part of the Tufts experience. We are hoping that we can get the TCU to see eye to eye with us so that we can obtain funding for things like museum exhibits, cultural shows, and other similar activities."

Even though the Boston T Party is



OLIVIA SAUCIER

are people involved on campus, but that there is also an interest in Boston. We would be an established group and it would be so easy for anyone from anywhere to get information about all the cultural offerings that Boston has to offer. In a few years, it would be ideal if people would come to us as the definitive cultural resource about anything Boston. Sure it's a lofty goal, but a great one at that."

The Boston T Party has, up to

“Ian and I saw this as an opportunity to make this city ours during our short four years here. Between food, entertainment, history, diversity, and education, this city has an endless amount to offer.”

still a founding organization, its founders have very clear goals and aspirations for the future. "We're hoping to establish ourselves here on campus — become a name that people know. Our online blog, we are hoping, will turn into a place where people can check out our discoveries. It also seems like a great group to advertise in tours and during orientation. It demonstrates to everyone that not only

this point, ventured into Beacon Hill, Government Center, Haymarket, the North End, and Downtown Crossing, including the Industrial Sector and Chinatown. They have visited the Holocaust Memorial, Mike's Pastry Shop, Be Good organic hamburgers in Copley, and just this past weekend the Brattle Theatre for a Looney Tunes Festival and a stop for dessert at the

infamous Finale in Harvard Square.

Although right now membership is not constant, Ian and Will are very optimistic about the future number of participants. Sophomore Ezra Furman, a dedicated member of the group since its inception, appreciates and agrees with the goals of the Boston Tea Party. "Boston is beckoning to be explored. We should take advantage of it and the Boston T Party is a great way to accomplish it." Fellow sophomore Olivia Saucier echoes Furman's positive sentiments. "It's really a nice change from the routine."

So from the mouths of the founders to you, here is the utmost reason why your Saturdays should no longer be devoid of fun, thanks to the Boston T Party. "We emphasize keeping an open mind, as many times the best part of a trip is something completely unplanned and unexpected. Emphasizing the journey rather than the final destination, we look for adventure around every corner." If you're in the mood to uncover the coolest secrets that Boston has to offer and get off campus for a worthwhile experience, then the Boston T Party is your ticket to ride. ☺

Check out the Boston T Party planning meetings on Wednesday nights at 9 in Eaton 207. Or check tuftslife.com on Saturdays to see what the BTP is up to for that day.



SPICE UP YOUR . . .

Spring Looks:

A List of Must-Do Things for Spring 2006

BY MELISSA FIORENZA
AND ADRIENNE ROMA

Last week we focused on clothes and accessories, but there's more to spicing up your look for spring than just plain old shopping. The second half of our must-do list is all about mind and body. So breathe and reboot ...

4. GET PIERCED (OR TATTOOED).

Never got that navel piercing you always threatened your parents you'd get in high school? Ever get the sudden impulse to just drive to a tattoo shop and ink up your arm? Well, this spring, we say join the revolution. The only place we or any of our friends will go to is Chameleon (617.876.0412) in The Garage in Harvard Square. Every body art place always looks a little sketchy, but this shop is actually extremely clean and safe. The crew at Chameleon couldn't be nicer and more helpful. They're very knowledgeable of their craft and able to answer any questions you might have (if you even have questions after they give you a detailed rundown of how to care for your new accessory.) Piercings are done on a walk-in basis. If you're going for a more permanent look on your body, they prefer that you make an appointment, but it isn't totally necessary. Word to the wise for all those with a queasy stomach—make sure you eat something before you go, have some water or a friend with you, and just relax. It really doesn't hurt as much as anyone says.



CHAMELEON BODY ARTS

5. TREAT YOURSELF TO A SPA DAY.

Has the combination of snow, midterms, and lack of sunshine gotten to your head? Time to rejuvenate yourself, and there's no better way to do that than spending a day being pampered. We suggest Bella Sante (617.424.9930), a ritzy, chic spa on Newbury Street. If you're in desperate need of relaxation, go for the Hot Rock Massage. An ancient ritual in the South Pacific, this 80-minute massage involves a world-class masseuse gently rubbing steamy stones all over you. As the tension rises from your warm body, you'll forget it's wintertime in the Northeast. If you're too ticklish a person to enjoy a massage, then this is definitely a good option for you.

Continuing on with the screw-winter-in-the-northeast theme, splurge on the Body Bronzing package—you'll look and feel like you just got back from the Caribbean. After a full body exfoliation and shower, the pros at Bella Sante lather your entire body evenly with Self Tanning



BELLA SANTÉ

Crème. In just a few hours, your pale skin will be spring break bronze, minus the damaging effects of tanning booths or the sun.

6. MODERNIZE YOUR MANE.

One of the most fun accessories you can play with is your hair. We're not ones to copy A-list celebs on everything they do, but a lot of them are making major switches this season and we like what we're seeing. If you were born and raised blond, go Adams Family and dye your hair jet black (think Renée Zellweger). If you've always had dark hair and played it safe with caramel or honey highlights, try temporary light pink

extensions or go full-blown bleach blond. No matter what you do to it—hair dye, perm, mohawk—you can always change it if you don't like it. Since you're making such a big change, you probably don't want an average Joe salon in Davis Square doing it. Head to Beaucage Salon (617.437.7171) on Newbury. Trust anyone there to do it—not only are they experts, but they have a good eye and will usually offer their own advice on what to do to your locks.



BEAUCAGE

7. YOGILATES, YOGILATES, YOGILATES.

What a great word. Even Tufts alum-nus Peter Gallagher thought so on *The O.C.* This season, make it your go-to great workout plan to get in shape for spring break. There are undeniably great classes to take on and off campus, but if you're anything like us, and would rather do it privately in the warmth of your own home, there's an alternate route to take. Hit www.amazon.com and order MTV Pilates and MTV Yoga, two entertaining videos hosted by well-known pilates instructor, Kristin McGee. Three people work out with her, one for each level of difficulty—from beginner to impossibly flexible. Order a couple of mats online as well, and you and your friends will have your very own Zen room in your dorm or common area.

Some of these suggestions can get pricey, others not so much, but it's worth it to splurge every once in a while, especially if it's to invigorate yourself for spring. ☺

Not Quite 21? A Guide to Unconventional Clubbing in Boston

BY JOSEPHINE CHOW

Let's face it. If you're not 21, nightlife at Tufts and Boston gets old pretty fast. By the second semester, frat parties are over-rated, you can only go to so many other-college parties, and even the few Lansdowne/Tremont clubs you hit up start becoming monotonous. But there are solutions. Whether you're a party animal who is tired of your weekly pattern of "debauchery" or just an ordinary college student searching for some unconventional and inexpensive sophisticated fun, Boston has more to offer than what meets the eye. This week's guide will be focusing on Boston jazz clubs.

A brisk 10 minute-walk from the Central T station, Ryles Jazz Club lies on the fringes of Cambridge's Inman Square. As a local favorite live music and 18+ friendly venue, Ryles boasts an eclectic repertoire of alternative jazz. The artists featured are usually lesser known, independent and international but they deliver quality performances nonetheless. Although the club offers the occasional standard big band or swing numbers and a classical piano jazz brunch every Sunday, the majority has a distinct Latin flavor—from Argentinean and Portuguese jazz, to Cuban and Brazilian blues.

Generously tall and wide windows flank the sides of the lounge, which opens up the space and also facilitates people-watching by day. Since it is 18+, the bar area is reduced to a small corner on the right wing. Evidently, alcohol at Ryles is available but not the main focus. The décor exemplifies a classic jazz club look: dark wood interiors, walls framed with faded photographs of jazz musicians, cozy elegant wooden chairs, and dimly lit candles resting on tiny European coffee tables all around.

The ambience itself, however, is an oxymoron of casual and exquisite. While the club has some dressed-up elegant folks, you can easily find the most dressed-down couple in slacks, pigging out over

deep-fried calamari at the next table. Ryles Jazz Club truly offers a home for everyone.

For those 21+, Ryles also offers cheap booze at \$5. For more sophisticated alcoholic drinks, a bottle of merlot on average costs less than \$20, which includes the corkage as well. However, 18+ goers should not feel excluded. The club also offers virgin cocktails that taste just as fabulous. I highly recommend the virgin mango daiquiri. It definitely rivals its alcoholic twin.

The featured band I saw that Thursday evening originated in Argentina. Called Los



TREY KIRK

Changos, it is a septet of guitar, drums, flute, clarinet, violin, bass and voice. The singer's vocals dominated much of the performance. Reminiscent of Astrud Gilberto, who collaborated with Stan Getz and Antonio Carlos Jobim on "Girl from Ipanema," singer Marta Gomez's vocals have a less breathy and more sustained quality that flawlessly weaves the instruments together. For a classy night of gratification, it is definitely well worth the cheap \$8-10 cover charge. For more information, visit www.ryles.com.

If you prefer a more traditional repertoire of classical jazz, however, there's always the higher-end Scullers Jazz Club located in the Doubletree Guest Suites Hotel in Cambridge, which is about a 5 minute cab ride from the Central T station. It has been voted Best of

Boston in the Best Jazz Club category by *Boston Magazine*, *Improper Bostonian* and *Citysearch Boston* for the last two consecutive years. Tickets range from \$18 - \$40 so make sure you check its website often for the cheaper deals.

Scullers Jazz Club is THE 18+ friendly venue for standard jazz styles: big band, swing, blues, boogie woogie and modern smooths. It boasts of hosting both legendary artists and up-and-coming national favorites. Outside, there is a glass-cased shrine of autographed black and white photographs of famous jazz musicians from Quincy Jones to Harry Connick Jr. Jazz Grammy winners and nominees frequently make appearances as well. Last Thursday evening, I attended the performance by Blues Grammy nominee, Marcia Ball.

There was a fascinating understatedness about the singer's style. Well into her late 50's and casually dressed, Marcia stepped onto the stage and sat down cross-legged, completely relaxed. Three seconds later, she shocked the audience with a dynamic, soulful voice crooning over a rollicking boogie-woogie. Her eyes remained shut yet her fingers traveled magically across the keyboard, without missing a beat nor losing a tone. Suddenly, her music transformed the venue into a Louisianan honky tonk.

The fast blues numbers at Scullers are guaranteed to keep your fingers snapping all night long. And if what you're seeking are slow and soulful ballads, you won't be disappointed either. Whether you're looking for the kind of music to escape from reality or the kind that will pull you back into it, Scullers Jazz Club offers the perfect balance.

For further information, visit www.scullersjazz.com.

Remember: a night of jazz clubbing is not limited to couples. It also provides an alternative, classy and fun time with friends. The best thing is, you don't even have to be 21! ☺

There's Something About Barry

BY EVANS CLINCHY

On the morning of February 20th, San Francisco Giants outfielder Barry Bonds pulled off the flip-flop of the century. Sports fans across America woke up to the news that Bonds was retiring after the end of the 2006 season. The news spread like wildfire, as every TV analyst, sportswriter, talk show host, and fan had something to say about the departure of one of baseball's legends. Hours later, Bonds announced that the reports were untrue—his health would determine how long he plays, and 2007 was definitely not out of the picture.

Especially not if Bonds' quest for baseball's all-time home run record falls short this season.

As I see it, the Giants have no chance of giving their star outfielder a championship ring this October, and right now, they're spending \$18 million on an old, injury-prone outfielder. Clearly, Bonds' motives for sticking around are driven by his own ego, and not his team's needs.

Entering this season with a total of 708 homers, Bonds has a chance of catching Braves legend Hank Aaron, thus cementing his place in the record books. Right now, he falls just six homers short of former record-holder Babe Ruth, and by the end of the 2006 season, the 41-year-old may have found his way to the magical 755.

Now, I am fully aware that a chase of Aaron's record would be great not only for Bonds' legacy, but also for the game of baseball, as it would be tremendous for the game's popularity and its television ratings. However, even with this in mind, I can't help but ask—is anyone else rooting for Bonds to fall short?

As I see it, Hank Aaron is more admirable, both as a baseball player and a human being, than Barry Bonds. There is no man more deserving of Aaron's record than Aaron himself, and I for one am hoping that his mark is never broken.

The first comparison between Aaron and Bonds worth looking at is that of the two men's backgrounds. Aaron was born in a poor section of Mobile, Alabama, and

grew up in the 1930s and 1940s in a deeply-prejudiced region of the U.S. Aaron, despite his incredible talent, had a long road to the major leagues. He spent years grinding his way through semi-pro leagues for horrible wages, before eventually making a name for himself in the Negro League World Series in 1952. Aaron is a great success story, and a hero to a generation of African-American athletes.

Barry Bonds, on the other hand, spent his childhood as the son of a major-league star, outfielder Bobby Bonds. With a superstar father and a household income of hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, Bonds is not nearly the rags-to-riches legend that Aaron is. Bonds broke into baseball with a college scholarship, a first-round draft pick, and a lucrative pro contract.

Barry Bonds is no Hank Aaron in any sense.

You could also look at the reputations of each player, and see that Aaron is better for the game. Aaron clearly had a love of the game of baseball; he played for 22 years in the major leagues, 28 if you include all of his semi-pro experience. He was a great teammate and leader when he played, and after his retirement, he continued to make great contributions to the game.

Aaron began working in the Atlanta Braves' front office after his playing days, becoming one of the first African-Americans to take on an upper-management role in baseball. He is now a vice president of both the Braves and of Turner Broadcasting. He's even a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom (in 2002).

Bonds has spent most of his career alienating his teammates, his fans, and the media. He is consistently identified as one of the most egotistical men in baseball, and, especially in recent years, he has begun lashing out at members of the press, commonly calling them "liars" and at times worse.

To further examine the contrast between Aaron and Bonds, we can look at the circumstances surrounding the two record-chasing performances.

Henry Aaron, throughout the 1973 and 1974 seasons, spent many months fearing for his life. He received thousands of letters every day, many of them hate-filled and racist, and many of them unsigned. Many fans of the legendary Babe Ruth—whom Aaron would eventually pass in April of 1974—were very resentful of the fact that a black man was breaking Ruth's record. Aaron was the target of countless slurs, insults, and even death threats.

Through it all, Aaron persevered, passing Babe Ruth with home run number 715, and finishing his career with a staggering final total of 755. He never let anything stop him from accomplishing his goals.

Compare Aaron's record-breaking quest to that of Bonds. Not only has his contempt for the media and the fans worsened over the past two years, but he has also become entangled in the most controversial issue in all of professional sports, baseball's steroid scandal.

Bonds claimed in 2002 that it would be impossible for him to have unknowingly taken steroids, and then testified a year later before a grand jury saying he had done just that. Bonds has been connected for years now to the Bay Area Laboratory Co-operative (BALCO), and it's now apparent that he is guilty of using two steroids known as "the cream" and "the clear."

Bonds can make all the excuses he wants, but at this point, it's fairly clear that he's disgraced the integrity of the game. The steroid issue is tearing the game of baseball apart, and Bonds is one of the leaders of this movement. As the Giant's slugger draws nearer to the magical 755 mark this season, these Aaron-Bonds comparisons are only going to become more common, and the fans will have a decision to make.

For whom should fans root for? A legend of the game, a man who has inspired generations of athletes and has devoted his life to his love for baseball? Or a man who has alienated everyone in the baseball world, feeding his own ego while tarnishing his legacy, and destroying the integrity of our national pastime in the process?

To me, it's a no-brainer. ☉





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