

## Tufts' post office to remain open for the time being

BY CHRISTY MCCUAIG  
Daily Editorial Board

Students worried about having to walk to Medford Square to mail their boxes and letters can breathe a sigh of relief: Tufts' United States Postal Service (USPS) branch, which was under review for possible closure, will stay open for the time being, USPS announced last week.

The decision to keep the post office open came after discussions between the postal service and Tufts officials, according to USPS Greater Boston Discontinuance Coordinator Dennis Tarmey.

A local division of the American Postal Workers Union also sent USPS a petition with 163 signers — many of them Tufts students — who opposed closing the post office, according to Bob Dempsey, a union official.

The postal service had considered closing the Tufts branch as part of cost-cutting measures that would shutter hundreds of locations across the country. Tufts' post office is housed in Curtis Hall near Brown and Brew.

The Tufts location and nine other Boston-area post offices had been placed on a list of offices that USPS is currently reviewing and considering closing to decrease

expenditures. Six of the nine have been removed from the list and will remain open, according to Dempsey, who is the vice president and treasurer of the Boston Metro Area Local 100 division of the American Postal Workers Union.

"The Postal Service looks forward to continuing to work as partners with the administration at Tufts University so that the campus Post Office will remain a useful resource for the students, faculty, staff and citizens in the neighborhoods surrounding Tufts University," Tarmey, who serves as the postmaster in North Reading, Mass., told the Daily in an e-mail. He did not respond to numerous e-mails over the past week requesting additional comments.

Tufts Mail Services employees met last month with USPS officials and suggested that the postal service should better market the branch and make changes that would appeal to students, according to Sheila Chisholm, Tufts' support services manager and one of the employees involved in the discussions.

Chisholm said she and Ron Drauschke, the supervisor of Mail Services, met with officials from USPS evaluating the branch last month.

"USPS was interested in new ideas, and what we ended up going away with was that we had to try and give them information on why it should stay open," Chisholm said.

When Chisholm met with the representatives from USPS a second time, she had come up with ideas to improve the branch's revenue in order to convince officials to keep the location open.

"We feel [that] with more marketing they could increase the current business that they already have," Chisholm said.

Holding more passport days, — when customers can come to the post office to apply for new passports or renew current ones — would draw additional people in, as would increasing signage around the store itself, Chisholm said.

"Right now you could walk by and almost not notice that it was there," she said.

She also emphasized that Curtis Hall is an ideal location for the branch, because it is very close to a planned stop on the MBTA T subway system's Green Line extension.

Meanwhile, three Boston-area branches remain on the USPS' list under review; those post offices are



YURI CHANG/TUFTS DAILY

Tufts' post office will remain open for the foreseeable future. Discussions last month between Tufts officials and postal service officials staved off talks of closure.

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## Class raises 'going trayless' with Senate

BY HARRISON JACOBS  
Daily Editorial Board

Students supporting the move to 'go trayless' are one step closer to their goal. On Sunday, members of an environmentally focused class raised a proposal calling for the elimination of trays in Tufts' dining halls to the Tufts Community Union (TCU) Senate.

The new initiative is the result of a campaign by members of the Experimental College class Environmental Action: Shifting from Saying to Doing. Part of a class assignment, the trayless initiative is a feasible way to reduce Tufts' environmental impact and cut down on food waste, according to students taking the course.

"We wanted to do something that had a large-scale impact on campus that could help the environment a significant amount," said sophomore Frances Wilburn, a member of the class. "A lot of people feel Tufts hasn't lived up to its claim to being a sustainable campus, a green campus."

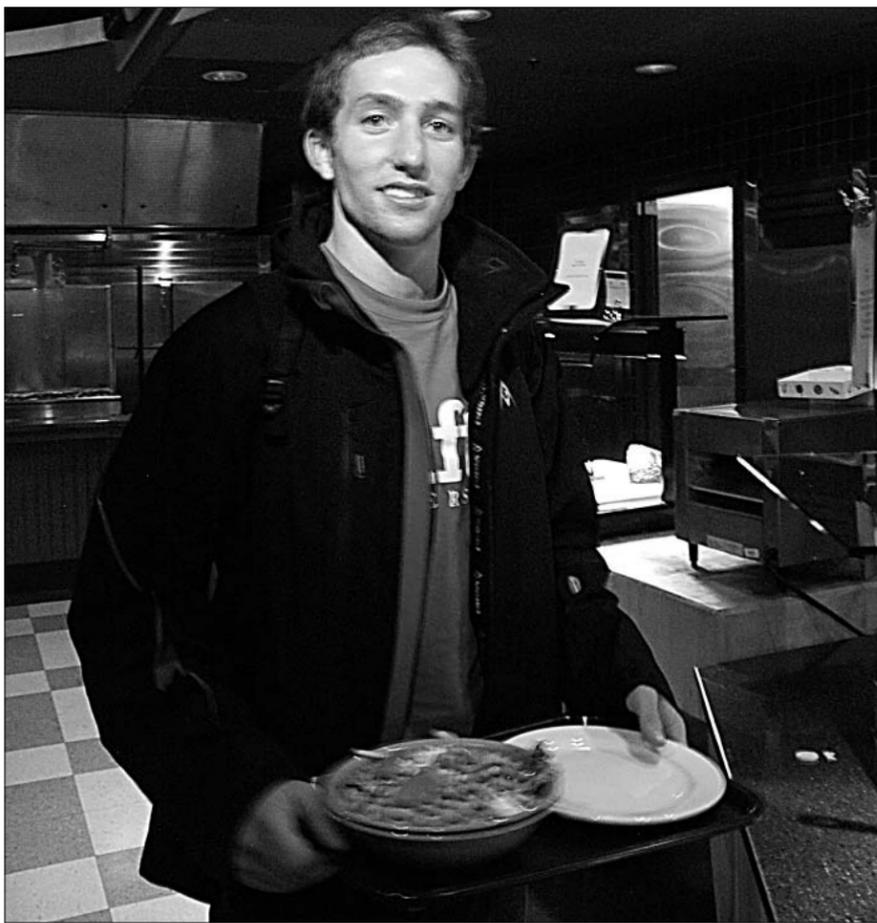
Sophomore Alex Freedman presented the initiative to the TCU Senate alongside other members of the class, calling not only for meals sans trays but also more collaboration among student groups pushing for environmental action.

"We brought up the trayless issue, but even more firmly we pressed for a more permanent venue in Senate for students to address environmental and sustainability issues," Freedman said.

Senior Callie Kolbe, who serves on the Senate and is also in the class, echoed calls for more streamlined "green" projects.

"What happens on campus right now is a bunch of environmental groups each come up with projects and then they work in isolation," Kolbe said. "What we would like to see happen is for the Senate to have an arm or some way to help these green projects... We need to focus on environmental initiatives, not in isolation, but as a campus."

What began merely as a class project has



HELAINA STEIN/TUFTS DAILY

An Experimental College class brought to the Senate its initiative to eliminate trays from dining halls.

escalated into a debate throughout campus, including the rise of several Facebook.com groups covering both sides of the issue.

Kolbe was surprised by the response from students.

"None of us realized that the trayless initiative would cause such an impact or draw

so much attention," Kolbe said.

Junior Miki Vizner questioned whether going trayless would be taken seriously by students.

"If it would truly cut down on the amount

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## Students push for Tufts health insurance reform

BY ELLEN KAN  
Daily Editorial Board

*This article is the second in a two-part series examining student health insurance. The first section looked at student insurance programs statewide. This article focuses on health insurance at Tufts.*

The Student Health Organizing Coalition (SHOC), a Tufts-based organization that seeks to bring a student voice to discussions on student health insurance, is taking a magnifying glass to Tufts' student health insurance plan, as group members work with legislators to push for statewide reform.

The release this month of a state-sponsored report showing that insurance carriers are making higher profits on student health insurance plans than those for the average client spurred students to take action.

Health administrators at Tufts maintain that the process to reform student insurance is far more complicated than many think. The report's findings, they say, shed light on issues that they are continuously trying to address.

According to the Student Health Program Baseline Report, Aetna Student Health, the provider for Tufts students' insurance, had an average profit margin of 14 percent for the Tufts plan compared to the 2 percent industry average for non-student insurance plans.

The report also found that insurance carriers spend 88 percent of their non-student premiums on medical expenses on average; for Aetna's student plans, 68 percent goes toward medical costs.

SHOC members see the report's findings as reason to urge Tufts' administrators to reeval-

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### Inside this issue

"Precious" presents the moving story of an illiterate, abused 16-year-old growing up in Harlem in 1987.



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In its season opener, Tufts' hockey team played then-nationally ranked No. 7 Middlebury to a 3-3 tie.



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## Police Briefs

### THE SMOKING GUN

A fire marshal called the Tufts University Police Department (TUPD) at 1:55 p.m. on Nov. 19 after finding a stop sign in a suite on the fourth floor of the west wing of Sophia Gordon Hall.

A TUPD officer responding to the call found a cutout of a Daily police brief entitled "To stop or not to stop?" hanging on a door next to where the sign was found. The police brief, published Sept. 29, reported that TUPD officers had noticed over the prior weekend that three stop signs had been stolen from locations around campus.

"So we do have some leads, let's put it that way," TUPD Sgt. Robert McCarthy said. A report was sent to the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

### TRAPPED IN THE CLOSET

TUPD officers responded to a report of a loud party in the east wing of Sophia Gordon Hall at 2:26 a.m. on Nov. 22. Officers at first found one student in the room, amid evidence that people had been playing drinking games.

Officers then found four more people hiding in a closet; all four were from different universities. All students were of legal drinking age.

"It was very crowded," McCarthy said. "It was either that or a big closet."

Officers also discovered tables belonging to the Interstate Rental Service in the suite; the officers had the students bring the tables to the TUPD office.

### IDENTITY THEFT

A TUPD officer near the Sigma Phi Epsilon (SigEp) fraternity house at 114 Curtis St. saw two people running across Curtis Street at 3:33 a.m. on Nov. 22, carrying two framed photographs and a red-and-black logo. The people, who were later identified as Tufts students, ran in the direction of Sawyer Avenue and into a nearby yard. The officers stopped them on Whitfield Road.



An interactive map is available at [tuftsdaily.com](http://tuftsdaily.com)

The photographs turned out to be composites with the photographs of SigEp fraternity brothers from the 2003-04 and 2004-05 academic years, and the logo belonged to SigEp as well. A SigEp brother later confirmed that the objects were missing.

The officers also found a screwdriver and a small, red-and-blue hammer.

The two students, both of whom lived at the Theta Chi fraternity house at 100 Packard Ave., said they had been drinking.

A report was sent to the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, and the students were told that they could also be summoned to court for criminal charges.

### LATE NIGHT AT TISCH

TUPD officers received a call at 3:05 a.m. on Nov. 23 reporting a suspicious male on the steps by the front of Tisch Library. When they arrived on the scene, they identified the man and determined that he was not affiliated with the university.

The man said he had been at Gillette Stadium earlier, did not know how he got to the library, did not have money to get home and was looking for a cigarette lighter.

When officers asked if he had been drinking, the man replied, "Of course I've been drinking. I've been drinking a lot of beer," according to McCarthy.

He said he wanted to go to Curtis Street, and officers offered to call a cab for him, but he turned it down and stated that he had no money. They told the man that Curtis Street was only 5 minutes away, but he refused to leave.

He said that he was just a "civilian," that the officers were also "civilians" and that he would not leave unless the officers printed out a report. The officers did not know what report he was referring to.

The man was arrested for disorderly conduct and was transported to the Somerville Police Department.

— compiled by Ben Gittleson

## Post office to be reviewed again next year

### POST OFFICE

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located at Logan Airport, Faneuil Hall and Boston University.

Dempsey, of the American Postal Workers Union, said that student support as well as university officials' lobbying probably contributed the most to keeping the branch open.

"We're obviously thrilled for the customers and the students of Tufts," he said. "We just don't want to see the service ... deteriorate to the point of pushing the public down to

Medford Square," the location of another post office, he added.

Dempsey warned, however, that this decision does not mean that the Tufts branch will remain open forever.

"We were already cautioned that every office is going to be reviewed next year," he said. "And will we make the list next year? We just don't know."

Chisholm said that if USPS takes Tufts' suggestions for increasing revenue seriously and continues to work closely with the university, it will be able to keep the branch open.

## Class meeting with dining services to discuss trayless options

### TRAYLESS

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of waste coming out of Tufts University dining then I would support it, but if it's just a feel-good hoax, then let me keep my tray," he said.

Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn., which implemented a trayless policy this year, has reported nearly 150 pounds of food waste saved daily.

It is numbers like the ones reported by Concordia that have the group so enthusiastic about the project.

"Right now, students go to the dining hall and fill their tray up with everything they think they want, then eat half and let the rest become food waste," Wilburn said. "When there are no trays, students are more likely to fill up a plate and finish it and then go back if they want more, or find that they are full."

As far as the many negative reactions the new initiative has received on campus, Kolbe said the issue was likely more about convenience than the environment.

"The negative reactions show what people value," Kolbe said. "Those negative reactions are reactions that I have too. Yes, it is inconvenient. Some people value convenience more than they value other things."

Though eliminating trays is the project's goal, Wilburn said that it is not the only option the group is exploring.

The students are also exploring a "trayless by default" policy in which there would be fewer trays placed in a less prominent location, thus allowing students who desire a tray to acquire one without encouraging the practice.

"It makes people think about their use of trays and the environmental issues that are involved," Kolbe said. "It can help change students' habits of using trays."

For now, the project is still in the planning stages with room for student input.

The group plans to meet with Director of Dining and Business Services Patti Klos after Thanksgiving and believes it may make headway with the alternative option.

"As of this moment, it's looking a little unlikely that Dining Services and the student body would be receptive to a cold turkey cut-off," Freedman said.

Wilburn was optimistic about the meeting. "We're going to her with a full proposal for an extended trial period and a couple steps for monitoring the program and getting numbers for savings on water energy and food waste," Wilburn said. "We're hopeful that we'll be able to collaborate with dining services soon to get this thing going."

Saumya Vaishampayan contributed reporting to this article.

## Students scrutinize insurance program

### INSURANCE

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uate students' health care needs.

"In addition to trying to reform this on a state level, we're really focusing on changing the Tufts plans," said junior Vivian Haime, an SHOC organizer. "As we started meeting with students at Tufts and hearing about their problems, we really felt we needed to address the problems at home."

But Senior Director of Health and Wellness Service Michelle Bowdler said that the report was not necessarily an accurate representation of the situation at Tufts, where about 50 percent of graduate students and 20 percent of undergraduates purchase the Tufts insurance plan.

Bowdler explained that the situation was more complicated than the report suggested and said that the report's focus on the two academic years between fall 2005 and spring 2008 provides only a snapshot of the bigger picture.

She cited an arrangement with Aetna in which part of the profits in excess of the target specified in the contract would be applied to student health insurance for the following year.

Senior Elisabeth Rodman, another SHOC organizer, said that though Tufts' health insurance offers low premium costs, its structure is problematic. "Although premiums are low, there are extremely high-hitting costs throughout the plan," she said. "There are certain types of exclusions and limitations that make students' health insurance unaffordable."

One such limitation in the Tufts plan cited by SHOC organizers is a \$1,500 cap on prescription drugs, which has caused problems for students. "It means that if you have a chronic condition, the Tufts plan only covers prescriptions for three to four months

and you have to pay the rest out of pocket," Haime said. "It has led a lot of students to forego treatment."

SHOC members shared the testimony of one graduate suffering from endometriosis, a uterine tissue condition that causes considerable pelvic pain. Her treatment costs about \$400 a month and the financial strain forced her to choose between pursuing her education and getting treatment.

Bowdler said that crafting an adequate insurance plan that met all students' needs was a difficult balancing act. Increasing the prescription benefits for situations like that of the graduate would raise the premium for all students on the plan. The cost of insurance would increase to meet the needs of a minority of students suffering from severe conditions.

"When we look at how many people are going over the \$1,500 cap, one year it was like 12 students. If we decide to raise the pharmacy benefit next year, with each choice like this there is a cost; the premium goes up," Bowdler said. "We use student input and data to try to come up with a plan that meets a majority of students' needs."

Doctoral candidate David Proctor, a classics department administrator who served on the Graduate Student Health Advisory Board for a number of years, said that although the Tufts plan still has problems, it has noticeably improved.

"I've seen a lot of positive change over the last five to six years, there are still problems ... but overall there's been a tremendous improvement," he said. "There's also been improvement in Health Service's work in trying to feel the pulse of the community."

Bowdler emphasized that the administration is working with SHOC and responding to the group's concerns.

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Aetna Student Health is the carrier for Tufts student health insurance. A report this month showed the company having higher profit margins on student insurance than the industry's standard for non-student plans.

# Features

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JAMES CHOCATUFTS DAILY

The “Laughs of Love” festival hosted by Cheap Sox included comedy troupes from BU, BC, Emerson, Harvard and Brandeis.

## Student groups host intercollegiate events to burst the ‘Tufts Bubble’

BY ERIN BRAU O’SHEA  
Daily Staff Writer

Often referred to as the ultimate college town, Boston is impressively home to over 250,000 students. With such a young population, the city offers an accessible setting to meet students from other schools. And yet a trip into Boston can sometimes seem as daunting as climbing Mount Everest. Comfortable on the Hill, many students tend to stray no farther than Davis Square.

This past weekend, however, Jumbos had the pleasure of having a bit of Boston come right here to campus thanks to the comedy festival, “Laughs of Love,” organized by Cheap Sox and Major: Undecided. Boasting the participation of comedy troupes from Boston University, Boston College, Emerson, Harvard and Brandeis, the event raised money for Seeds of Peace, a nonprofit organization devoted to teaching youth from conflict-ridden parts of the world the value of peaceful dialogue.

When asked about the advantages of involving other schools, senior Ned Berger, a member of Cheap Sox and one of the main organizers of the event, explained that it all comes down to providing some variety.

“I think that it’s important to bring troupes from other schools because often throughout the year you’re just seeing Tufts people at shows, the same faces,” Berger said. “[An event like ‘Laughs of Love’] allows people to see different techniques and styles of comedy, as well as different faces.”

He explained that it “really allows people to get a broader view of the comedy going around in the area rather than just at Tufts because we live in a bubble.”

Senior Daniel Casey, president of Major: Undecided and another key figure in organizing the event, echoed Berger’s sentiments.

“Apart from bringing in people from an outside community, you give the larger community the opportunity to hear or see communities they wouldn’t have seen before,” Casey said. “The sketch comedy scene is a bit fragmented and varies from campus to campus, and it’s nice to see what they bring to the table.”

Interestingly enough, it seems this desire and enthusiasm for intercollegiate collaboration is widespread throughout

the comedy community.

“[The students from other schools were] for the most part, really jazzed to get on board and were really excited at the chance to come and perform since it’s not often that you get the chance to go off campus,” Casey said. “It’s so easy to get stuck on campus or stuck doing what you’re doing.”

Building on this notion, Berger explained that members of participating troupes were happy to make it over to the Medford/Somerville area despite the distance.

**“Apart from bringing in people from an outside community, you give the larger community the opportunity to hear or see communities they wouldn’t have seen before. The sketch comedy scene is a bit fragmented and varies from campus to campus, and it’s nice to see what they bring to the table.”**

Daniel Casey  
President of Major: Undecided

“[They] were really excited and willing to come out to Tufts on their own, even if we weren’t providing transportation or anything,” Berger said.

Following the success of the festival, participating schools showed interest in returning next year and even invited Tufts groups to join them for their own comedy events. Although another on-campus event of such a grand scale is not in the works, both Major: Undecided and Cheap Sox will continue to join forces with other schools at other events.

Major: Undecided is in talks of collaborating on a project with schools such as Brown, Brandeis and Bard, while Cheap Sox is looking into working with BC and Brandeis. While not all of these plans are confirmed, the general motivation and willingness to work together is strong. Berger, who participated in the

Chicago Improv Festival alongside Cheap Sox earlier this year, discussed the importance of not limiting oneself to the Tufts community. He explained that these collaborations are helpful “because the troupes that are performing are so diverse that it gives us a new perspective.”

Casey echoed this sentiment.

“It’s a really great community of people and it’s nice to bring outside groups of comedy, because as funny as we are, it’s nice to have some variety,” he said.

While the main advantage of intercollegiate events among the comedy community may lie in an appreciation of new and unknown styles of performance, other groups on campus value their interactions with universities for different reasons.

One such group is the Tufts Quidditch Team, which celebrated its first match this past weekend against Harvard. Although novel at Tufts, Quidditch is popular on other campuses around Boston including Emerson, BU and MIT. Yet Harvard was the team that Tufts Quidditch approached, since both squads are newly formed.

“It was cool because we’re both on the exact same page; we started teams around the same time, about a week apart. They don’t have more experience, so we’re well matched for scrimmaging,” junior Molly Newman, one of the team’s beaters, said.

“Our goal at this point is to get experience because Quidditch is a very confusing game and no one has played it before. We’re all brand new at it, and every time we play a new school we’ll learn strategy from them. In the long run, we hope to get involved in the league and start playing official games,” Newman said.

Evidently, in the case of Quidditch — as in most sports — the value of intercollegiate events goes beyond the benefits of collaboration and diversity; strategy and competition play a key role as well.

Despite the natural competitive streak of athletics, Newman seemed to agree with Berger and Casey that intercollegiate events provide an opportunity to not limit yourself and learn from others.

“The whole point of the game was to have fun and to get experience playing other teams, and we learned a whole lot from it,” she said.

EMILY MARETSKY |  
NICE SHOES, LET’S DATE

Txt msg  
d8ing



Neither of my parents understand the subtle advantages of sending a text message instead of just making a phone call. I’ve tried to explain why it’s easier to just ask a blunt question instead of making small talk or how it sometimes feels awkward calling someone you don’t know well.

However, they still don’t get why I often prefer to type out a message when it would just be easier to call. A lot of times they’re right — calling would simplify many situations. Text messages are nice conveniences when you want to cut the small talk, yet they often provide us with the worst headaches.

There are many potential text mishaps that occur when we take the easy way out to communicate.

First off, there are some subjects that just shouldn’t be brought up in two-sentence messages. Think twice about topics that are a little more serious and warrant some discussion. For example, I was out with a friend a few weeks ago and his girlfriend sent him a text along the lines of, “oh btw, i got birth control today.”

Talk about being blunt. My friend and I sat there and bounced back and forth over how to respond to her declaration. We considered, “great! now i don’t have to worry about impregnating you!”

But would she understand the joke? What kind of response was she expecting anyway — doesn’t birth control warrant a real conversation?

Besides serious subjects, breakups and date invitations are also not text message appropriate. It’s one thing if you’re already mid-text-conversation and suggest hanging out later in the week, but don’t wimp out of a phone conversation if you’re aiming for a real date. Breaking up via text? It just reminds me of that infamous “Sex and the City” episode in which a guy breaks up with Carrie through a message on a Post-It note. The least you should do is have an actual talk about it.

Another issue is message misinterpretation. It’s convenient and straightforward to mass-text your pre-orientation group to meet up for dinner or to remind a housemate to pick up milk, but it’s also quite easy to cause a 160-character disaster when intended sarcasm goes awry or punctuation marks are taken too seriously.

Just the other weekend, I tried to coax my boyfriend into putting his homework down for the evening (it was Saturday night!) and stopping by my house, but he put his foot down and said that he had a lot to do.

I texted back, “OK...” in the I-understand-but-I’m-still-a-little-sad sense, but he took my ellipsis as a guilt trip-esque sigh. When he responded with, “don’t make me feel guilty. i feel bad enough already,” I assumed he was using an angry tone of voice.

When we caught up a little later, we cleared things up. He realized I didn’t mean to guilt-trip him, and I realized his message was one of I’m-stuck-in-Tisch-on-a-Saturday-night despair, not anger.

Another friend told me how a girl on his hall texted a high-school flame about hooking up over Thanksgiving. “You. Me. Thanksgiving. Done.” she texted him in a we’re-all-set-and-I’m-excited kind of way. But he took it to mean “we’re over.” Oops.

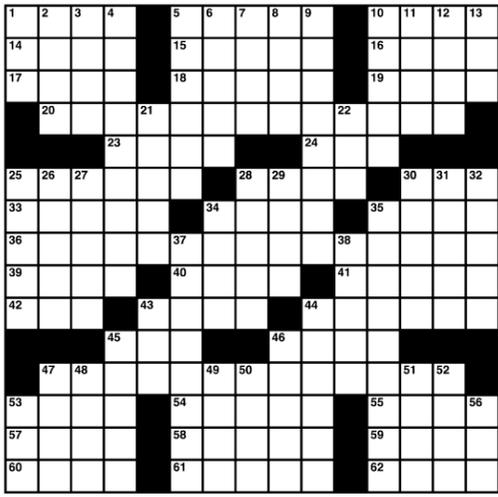
I know text messages seem like a frivolous subject, but the point is, most of us have worried over one at some point. Sometimes I get a little anxious if someone doesn’t respond right away to an “important” message. But then I remember how many calls and texts I’ve accidentally missed and how ridiculous it is to get bent up over a tiny little message.

So think twice before you hit send and take a page out of our elder generation’s book when an actual phone conversation is needed. And don’t even get me started about “sexting.”

Emily Maretsky is a senior majoring in engineering psychology. She can be reached at [Emily.Maretsky@tufts.edu](mailto:Emily.Maretsky@tufts.edu).

CROSSWORD

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By Gary J. Whitehead

11/24/09

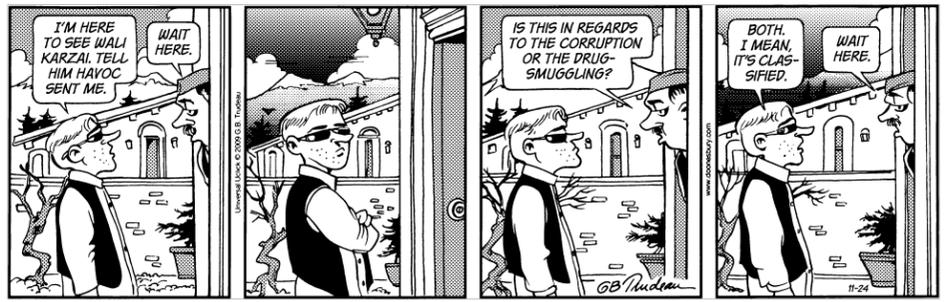
MONDAY'S SOLUTION

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DOONESBURY

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

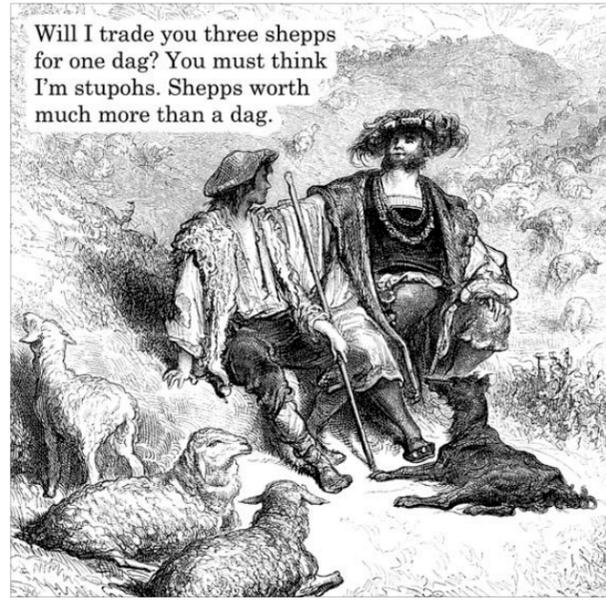


NON SEQUITUR

BY WILEY



MARRIED TO THE SEA



www.marriedtothesea.com

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Mike Argirion and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CHACO

ESTAE

TAYFUL

CUDISS



NEW BIBLE Jumble Books Go To: <http://www.tyndale.com/jumble/>

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: "O O O O O O O O" "O O O O O O O O"

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: AXIOM MESSY SYSTEM HARBOR  
 Answer: What the tenants gave the landlord when they didn't have it — SOME "HEAT"

SUDOKU

Level: Gaining weight over Thanksgiving break

			5			2	7	
	6		2		4		8	
5	8							1
	9			3	1		5	
	3		7	6			4	
8							6	9
	4		8		9		2	
	7	5			3			

Monday's Solution

7	8	2	4	5	9	3	1	6
1	9	3	8	7	6	2	5	4
5	4	6	1	2	3	8	9	7
9	1	5	3	8	7	6	4	2
3	6	7	2	1	4	5	8	9
8	2	4	6	9	5	7	3	1
2	3	8	7	4	1	9	6	5
6	5	1	9	3	2	4	7	8
4	7	9	5	6	8	1	2	3

LATE NIGHT AT THE DAILY



Dave: "F--k the Daily; I'm going to be a rapper."



Please recycle this Daily

MOVIE REVIEW

## 'Precious' is bleak, but rewarding

BY ARIEL ROSEN  
Daily Staff Writer

It's nearly impossible to accept the idea that people live like the characters in "Precious" do, and even harder to do so

**Precious**



Starring **Gabourey 'Gabby' Sidibe, Mo'Nique, Mariah Carey**  
Directed by **Lee Daniels**

knowing that they're just a subway ride away from the bright lights of Times Square and Neiman Marcus.

Based on the novel "Push" by Sapphire, director Lee Daniels' movie "Precious" paints a violent, overwhelming and compelling image of poverty and abuse in 1987 Harlem, ultimately teasing a thread of hope from the darkness marking the narrative.

At 16 years old, black ninth-grader Clareece Precious Jones (Gabourey Sidibe) is illiterate. She's been abused by her despot mother (Mo'Nique) and impregnated twice by her father. When she is threatened with expulsion from school, Precious senses that the opportunity to attend the alternative school Each One/Teach One is her last option, and goes to find out what this type of "alternative" means.

The risky casting choices of stand-up comedian Mo'Nique as Precious' mother and pop star Mariah Carey as a social worker pay off, and prove to be highlights of an already good movie. Mo'Nique delivers an astounding performance while portraying Mary Jones, a horrifying character who regularly beats and molests her daughter. And Carey puts forth her best acting to date as Mrs. Weiss; she is unrecognizable in her first moments on screen. Daniels reportedly offered her the role pending her agreement to arrive on set without her entourage, limo or any makeup.

As a relief to the unrelenting tragedy of the subject matter, the film has fantasy sequences depicting Precious' dreams of having a light-skinned boyfriend and a movie-star life. Giving viewers a chance to breathe, they supplement comedic moments that pepper the rest of the film. By



Lenny Kravitz makes an appearance in "Precious" as Nurse John McFadden. Mo'Nique, Mariah Carey and Sherri Shepherd are some other celebrities who lend their talents to this indie film.

making the audience laugh (or rather allowing them the opportunity to), "Precious" emphasizes its human element — the scenes and characters we can relate to in this unimaginable poverty-driven hell.

As the film's title character, newcomer actress Sidibe portrays Precious with a veracity, strength and power that are impossible to ignore. Her ungainly appearance, which might at first be distracting, eventually melts into the background as her character's humanity, intelligence and sense of self become apparent. The viewer finds herself relating more and more to this overweight, seemingly impassive teenager, whose mental life is nowhere near as dreary as her reality.

The film has elicited some critical backlash, with people rejecting it for being "poverty porn" or for creating a negative image of the black community — more specifically, of black women. Such reactions do not take into account the power of the movie's sympathetic characters. Ms. Rain, who devotes her life to teaching children who would otherwise fall through the cracks in society, provides a foil to the monster that is Precious' mother.

In the culminating scene between mother and daughter, the mother's own story

gets told, and forces the viewer to rethink a categorical dismissal of this horrid woman. Examining the mother's actions in context of the society that produced her forces deeper examination of a twisted social system — one in which a girl can be impregnated twice by her own father and reach the ninth grade without learning to read. Viewers can hate the mother, but they can't trivialize the forces that shaped her.

Though the movie skips portions of the narrative from "Push" out of necessity, Daniels does an admirable job of conveying the novel's essential qualities. That being said, the level of depth and development woven into the book gets lost in translation. While Sapphire's story tells a ruthlessly dark narrative that ends abruptly, the movie is not so pessimistic. In fact, the ending may be a little too saccharine in light of the series of events Precious undergoes and has yet to face. The film seems to want to lull the viewer into a false sense of comfort and hope.

Despite this, "Precious" exposes viewers to a world of which most were probably never conscious. The movie shows that even at rock bottom, a way out always exists; seeking it only requires will and courage.

DEREK SCHLOM | I BLAME POP CULTURE

## Precious

VS.

## Bella



I'm drawing battle lines. In the war between realism versus escapism, the latter seems to always win handily when it comes to the general public's cultural preferences, at least on the commercial front. Box office receipts and television ratings overwhelmingly support the fact that we, as a whole, prefer crap with questionable entertainment value over movies with more "challenging" or "difficult" subject matter. Quality is apparently irrelevant; it seems that even if one film is vastly superior to the other, we'll still go for the cheap laughs or corny romance. But why?

I witnessed the front lines of the conflict this weekend, when I went to see "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire" and found myself submerged in a terrifying Running of the Bulls-esque scenario in the middle of downtown Boston last Friday.

The perpetrators: teenage girls and their raging hormones.

The victims: me, along with everyone else at the theater with a penis and/or a post-1993 date of birth.

The cause: the opening night of the abstinence education propaganda known as "The Twilight Saga: New Moon."

"Precious" is an extraordinary, devastating, searing piece of work. My first thought when I recovered from my post-film daze: if only the throng of squealing "Twi-hards" in the lobby was clamoring so desperately to see "Precious."

I get that people crave to be entertained, but the stark disparity in the commercial fortunes of these two films adds a new layer to that point of view. I'm just puzzled as to why (how?) "New Moon" made 14 times more money this past weekend than "Precious." Why do audiences flock en masse to the mindless and flee from that which challenges and provokes?

An obvious argument is that "New Moon" is easier to sit through than "Precious." The latter depicts the story of an obese, pregnant (by her father, for the second time), illiterate, impoverished, horribly abused, HIV-positive, black 16-year-old. And, yes, the movie's just as depressing as it sounds. But "New Moon" sounds even rougher; according to various critical eviscerations, it's utterly insufferable and somehow entirely devoid of a narrative. If I were a glutton for punishment, I'd be first in line for "New Moon" over "Precious."

In real life, I'm drawn to people to whom I can relate, but apparently this principle doesn't apply to the general public's taste in culture. There's a fine line between the "comfortable," to which we flock, and the "familiar," from which we run. The hot, brilliant doctors of the predictable, cliché-ridden "Grey's Anatomy" seem to appeal more to the public than the honest portrayals of painfully relatable high school scenarios in swiftly cancelled relics like "My So-Called Life" and "Freaks and Greeks." Aspiration takes precedence over familiarity.

Beyond the horrific realities of Precious' circumstances, she's a fairly normal, relatable teenager: She longs for a boyfriend, for acceptance and to look like a model. By contrast, Bella of "New Moon" seems to have it all: she's gorgeous and waif-like and at the center of a love triangle between an oft-shirtless duo. Teenage girls would obviously rather see — and thus would apparently rather see — Bella than Precious.

Phenomenal movies like "The Hurt Locker" (2009) about bomb diffusers in Iraq fail commercially, while more fantastical pictures like "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" (2009) succeed spectacularly, despite analogous levels of violence. It might just be that the realities of life are rough enough without the situations staring back at you on a massive movie screen — it's like cringing when you hear a recording of your own voice.

So it boils down to this: Maybe, if "New Moon" is sold out next weekend, check out "Precious." It's just as rough a sit, but it's actually worth your time and money. Realism may yet win the battle over schlocky escapism.

Derek Schlom is a freshman who has not yet declared a major. He can be reached at [Derek.Schlom@tufts.edu](mailto:Derek.Schlom@tufts.edu).

ALBUM REVIEW

## The Killers pat their own backs with latest CD/DVD release of live performance

BY MEREDITH PAUL  
Contributing Writer

Those already hypnotized by The Killers' pop-rock spell will likely swoon over their latest release. But for the less fanatic, a DVD

**Live From Royal the Albert Hall**

The Killers



Island Records

the early 2000s.

The Killers' mainstream success is undeniable. The band's first CD, "Hot Fuss" (2004), had four major hits and stayed in the top 50 of the Billboard Top 200 for over 50 weeks. The following three albums — "Sam's Town" (2006), "Sawdust" (2007) and "Day and Age" (2008) — also achieved commercial success. The release of "Live from the Royal Albert Hall" as a CD with an accompanying DVD of the show is the next natural step; now fans can hear all their favorite songs from the aforementioned albums performed live. The recording captures the acoustics of the performance with remarkable sound quality.

Die-hard fans will definitely enjoy this release more than a listener looking for musical progression from the Killers. The album includes no new songs and the self-indulgent nature of the band's showmanship makes the two-hour concert a bit excessive for newly acquainted fans. The song selection reflects almost the entire repertoire of the band's previous albums. It includes the Killers' more obscure, artistic songs as well as the hit singles for which the band is famous. Songs like "Mr. Brightside" are juxtaposed with songs such as "This River is Wild," to present a comprehensive look at the band's ability.

The Royal Albert Hall in London offers a large and fitting venue for the recording of the performance, especially considering that England originally boosted the band

into mainstream success. When the concert first begins, the almost 9,000 person audience erupts into a sea of camera flashbulbs and cheers. The backlit stage lends a dramatic flair to the band's entrance. A single spotlight highlights lead singer Brandon Flowers as he begins to sing one of the band's most recent hits, "Human." He lets the audience sing almost half of the song, highlighting the concert's ego-padding nature.

With inane lyrics such as, "Are we human? Or are we dancer?" and "You know you've got to help me out/ You're going to bring yourself down," the band misses the mark. The Killers confuse their ability to write catchy pop choruses with the talent of more insightful or visionary lyricists. When a song's words seem more than pure saccharine, as in the case of "I've got soul, but I'm not a soldier," the song completely relies on the one catchy verse, repeating it up to 10 times.

Throughout the concert, Brandon Flowers addresses the audience in a quivering voice, clearly attempting to split the difference between Isaac Brock of Modest Mouse and Julian Casablancas of The Strokes. "Live from the Royal Albert Hall" doesn't strive to hit a new level in the post-punk revival movement, but rather attempts to rest on the laurels of mainstream success. The \$12.99 price tag for the movie, which can be purchased on iTunes, is worthwhile for hardcore fans only.

of the band's best tracks set to dramatic lighting and screaming fans won't impress.

With multiple hits from multiple albums, The Killers are veterans of the music scene, and they know it. In early November, the band released a live concert recording entitled "Live from the Royal Albert Hall" (2009), a CD/DVD that fails to offer anything but a pleased pat on the back for The Killers.

Brandon Flowers, David Keuning, Ronnie Vannucci, Jr. and Mark Stoermer formed the band The Killers in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2001. They hit it big after signing with British indie record label Lizard King in 2003. In August of that same year, the band's first hit, "Mr. Brightside," dominated the airwaves in the U.K. After that, the band's discography reads like a road map to the major pop-rock hits of

## THE TUFTS DAILY

GIOVANNI J.B. RUSSONELLO

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## EDITORIAL

## Paying premium for less-than-premium health care

Student health care plans are exempt from the rules that regulate insurance coverage to the general public. Insurance companies do not have to abide by a minimum coverage percentage for people in school. This allows Aetna Student Health, the company that provides Tufts' student health coverage, to put only 63 percent of insurance premiums towards medical coverage. The coverage that students on the Tufts plan receive has a capped limit on prescription drugs and mental health care, and is not enough to fund preventive care and dental procedures. State reform of student health care is necessary to ensure that students are receiving the maximum coverage that their premium can provide and that there are multiple premiums available for students with different health care needs.

Insurance companies make higher profits on average on student health insurance than they do on insurance plans for the general public. Student health care providers are exempt from the Massachusetts mandate requiring that insurance companies put a certain percentage of payers' premiums towards medical coverage. The premium that

Tufts students pay with Aetna Student Health is \$1,535 — with only 63 percent going to medical coverage, that leaves \$568 of each student's payment going toward Aetna's administrative costs and profits. Massachusetts should no longer allow student health insurance providers to take advantage of students, profiting off them more than the general public. A bill proposed by State Sen. Richard Moore (D-Uxbridge) would require that student health care providers abide by the Minimum Creditable Coverage mandate that regulates insurance provided to the general public. This is an important first step to improve efficiency and maximize the returns students receive from their premiums.

Students using Tufts' health insurance plan are often faced with the choice of foregoing medical treatment or incurring debt. Aetna Student Health caps prescription drug coverage at \$1,500 per year, which is often not enough for students with chronic health conditions. Reform of student health care should also include multiple premium options which would allow students with greater medical needs to receive adequate coverage

without increasing premium costs for the general student population.

With inadequate coverage from student health insurance providers, some students fall back on the Health Safety Net Trust Fund, a state fund that compensates students whose insurance cannot cover their medical expenses. Students with inadequate coverage thereby burden state resources and incur medical debt. Massachusetts should allow these students, if eligible, to enroll in Massachusetts' state-subsidized Commonwealth Care insurance plan rather than stick with the inadequate Student Health Program. This would allow students to receive lower-cost health insurance, avoid debt and alleviate strain on state funds.

The current system of student health insurance is inefficient and inadequate. Students are paying premiums that do not reflect the care they are receiving, and many do not have plans that adequately cover their medical expenses. Massachusetts legislators should follow the lead of State Sen. Moore in calling for dramatic student health care reform to improve and expand coverage and regulate insurance providers' allocations.

## DEVON COLMER



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

In the Oct. 19 edition of The Tufts Daily, an editorial about the recent campus power failure reported incorrect information about safety and security systems in university residence halls. Regrettably, efforts to have the Daily correct those errors have been unsuccessful.

The editorial stated, "The lack of functioning fire alarms and smoke detectors was a significant issue." This assertion is incorrect. Fire alarm systems in residence halls include a battery back-up in the fire alarm panel and are designed to function as long as the battery remains charged. Had a pull station or smoke detector been activated during the campus power failure, the fire alarm warning devices would have sounded. One battery was found to be defective in a residence facility and was immediately replaced.

The editorial also stated, "If fires erupted with the alarms and smoke detectors idle, no one would have been swiftly alerted to escape the building and sprinklers would not have responded to extinguish the flames". This statement is not only incorrect, it is irresponsible. Sprinkler systems are mechanical in design and function upon the detection of heat. During the recent power outage, all sprinkler systems remained functional.

Lastly, the Daily reported that "the power failure prohibited fobs from working." The electronic-access control system also has its own battery back-up and during a power failure defaults to a secure mode. Propping of residence hall doors is never recommended under any circumstances.

Recognizing the security and safety challenges during the power outage, the university deployed additional Tufts University Police Department (TUPD) police and campus security

officers, resident assistants and Tufts Emergency Medical Services members to patrol residence facilities, and 2-way radios were distributed to contact TUPD. Additionally, dozens of flashlights were also distributed during the power outage by TUPD personnel. We recommend that all students consider having a flashlight available in the event of a power outage. You can pick up a free key chain light by visiting the TUPD station in Dowling Hall.

The university continues to evaluate ways to prepare for and respond to various emergencies. We look forward to working with the Daily to provide helpful and accurate information to our community.

Sincerely,

John M. King  
Senior Director of Public & Environmental Safety

## Corrections

In Friday's article "Somerville financial committee reconvenes to evaluate effects of state budget cuts," the continuation headline on page 3 incorrectly stated that the City of Somerville had a \$5 million budget for Fiscal Year 2010. In fact, the city cut its budget by \$5 million, and the budget now stands at \$160 million.

# What's up with the tents? An explanation and call to action

BY ERIN TAYLOR AND SARAH YOSS

It's cold outside. But the two of us and the rest of the Leadership Campaign, whose members represent 24 Massachusetts campuses and dozens of community organizations, have been sleeping out in tents anyway, and we want to explain why. We are not out there because we think that forgoing our beds, blankets and heating will end global warming. We're out there to send a message to the Massachusetts legislature and the country that our bill, calling for a 100 percent shift to renewable energy by 2020, needs to be passed. We're there to make it clear that reducing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions is not just an issue of personal importance to us, but represents a vital change that needs to happen everywhere to ensure the health and wellbeing of people now and for generations to come. We're also out there asking Massachusetts, the state that started America's first revolution, to start another one and lead the way for the rest of the country to make a similar shift. We're out there because our leaders have just admitted that even the United States, which produces almost a quarter of the world's carbon emissions, is not prepared for the United Nations climate negotiations set to begin in Copenhagen on Dec. 7, because we have yet to pass any comprehensive legislation.

So we sleep outside all week at Tufts and on Sunday nights we move our tents to Boston Common, risk arrest and take a stand right in front of the State House so that we are ready early each Monday morning to go lobby in favor of our bill. These sleep-outs have been exhilarating, inspiring and fun. We read a chapter of a book together every night in the tent. We have listened to experts like NASA scientist James Hansen, who slept in our tent and got a citation with us. And our lobbying is working; 21 legislators have already signed on in support of our bill and Gov. Deval Patrick is ready to negotiate with us. But the experience is also exhausting, and not just because the police wake us up in the middle of each Sunday night to give us citations for trespassing. We're getting emotionally tired, spiritually drained, and we need backup.

No, we are not asking every Tufts student to forsake his or her dormitory and turn our campus into a tent city, although that would be pretty sweet. One of Tufts' most unique and amazing qualities is that almost everyone here is dedicating a lot of time to improving the world in some way. We don't think that everyone needs to abandon every other project to put all of their energy into this movement. But we would like to remind the Tufts community of how pressing climate change is and how connected it is to the other issues that Tufts students are working on so diligently. When it comes down to it, we have goals in common. Most of them are about equality and stability, and we all need to get behind this bill in the various ways that we can to support those goals.

What good will a quality education be to a future generation that will have no water to drink because the Himalayan glaciers, which quench the thirst of almost half of the world's population, will disappear by 2035? How will we address the concerns of refugees when their numbers swell exponentially because the entire population of the Maldives, along with tens of millions of other people, will be displaced from coastal homes due to rising sea levels? How much more difficult will peace negotiations in already tense and nuclear-armed regions like India and Pakistan be when water, grains and fuel become increasingly scarce?

Even today, climate change and environmental degradation already affect the global poor and minorities in the United States disproportionately. According to a recent CNN report, "across the U.S. black children are three times more likely to have



COURTESY IAN MACLELLAN

'hazardous levels of lead in their blood' as a result of living near hazardous waste sites," and that is only one example. When one doesn't look too closely, the environmental movement can appear to be about saving plants, which never sounds as important as saving people. It can also be difficult to conceptualize the gravity of the situation since it does not threaten our day-to-day life at this moment, but when you look at the science it is clear that climate change is about people and that it is a moral issue that needs to be addressed right now.

All of those statistics and projections can be pretty terrifying, and both of us have struggled with the hopelessness that easily follows a good hard look at them. However, there is hope and there is time for change if we act now. Many Tufts students, and certainly Tufts as an institution, have already made lifestyle changes, large and small, to try to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Tufts is a leader as a green campus and has made an impressive institutional commitment to environmentalism. On an individual level, many students diligently recycle, ride their bikes and unplug their appliances when they are not using them. That kind of consciousness of one's own consumption is a laudable first step and is difficult in the system in which we live. It is heartening to see so many Tufts students making such efforts.

But it is impossible to live a normal life in the United States without contributing massively and disproportionately to global warming, no matter how hard you try, and that is what the Leadership Campaign is trying to address. We need to pair these personal behavior changes with systemic change that only governmental policy can address. That is why we are sleeping outside and that is why we are trying to pass this bill. It's great to hear how many people support our goals and think we're doing a great job, but as the campaign picks up steam we would love to hear more. If so many Tufts students feel that this is important,

we would like to call upon all of you to help pass this legislation however you can so that Massachusetts can set a precedent for the rest of the country.

We would like to call on you not to sleep outside every night, but to take one day to go lobby or leave a two-minute message for a legislator from a pre-written script once a week before you eat lunch. We would like to call on you not to drop your own cause but to look at which of our goals overlap with yours and attack the problem from that angle. We are simply tired. Tired of sleeping on the ground, tired from expending so much emotional energy and mostly just tired of hearing, "Good luck, let me know how it goes" instead of "Good idea, let me know how I can help." Every time a new person joins us, every time we see someone connect this huge issue to their personal life, we are re-energized.

Last week, members of our campaign met with Gov. Patrick to ask him to introduce the bill. His response was warm and he was open to the possibility of working together. Our members left the meeting uplifted and encouraged by Gov. Patrick's positive response and we continue to be in conversation with him about how we can move forward together. Change is happening. This is crunch time and if this movement goes the way we hope it will, it will go down in history as a turning point in the fight against climate change. We invite you to join us in becoming part of it.

To get more involved in the Leadership Campaign or learn more, visit [theleadershipcampaign.org](http://theleadershipcampaign.org) or e-mail the Tufts branch at [climatesleepovers@gmail.com](mailto:climatesleepovers@gmail.com).

*Erin Taylor is a senior majoring in international relations. She is an active member of the Leadership Campaign at Tufts. Sarah Yoss is a senior majoring in anthropology and community health. She is Tufts' campus coordinator for the Leadership Campaign.*

## OFF THE HILL | HARVARD UNIVERSITY

### Standing up

BY EDITORIAL BOARD  
The Harvard Crimson

Ten-year-old Will Phillips of West Fork, Ark., isn't your average disobedient kid. Despite repeated promptings from his elementary-school teacher, the young boy refused to say the Pledge of Allegiance in class on the grounds that the U.S. fails to live up to its promise of "liberty and justice for all" by barring gays and lesbians from marrying. In an interview with CNN, Phillips stated that he thought that "[gay people] should have the rights all people should" and that he was "not going to swear that they do."

Phillips's act of defiance was a brave move for a 10-year-old — or anyone,

for that matter — especially in the face of criticism from his teacher and his peers. Phillips claimed that other students at his school reacted negatively toward his behavior, hurling derisive epithets at him for bringing up the issue of gay rights. He acted all the more admirably by standing up for his beliefs in the face of opposition and prejudice.

Certainly, Phillips's reasoning was somewhat simplistic and his manner of objection crude — his decision to tell his teacher to "go jump off a bridge," for example, may not have been the most diplomatic way to deal with her attempts to make him say the Pledge. But the argument behind his protest was a sound one. Phillips demonstrated a remarkable level of political and

social awareness well beyond his years in recognizing that equality and justice for all citizens has not yet been achieved in America.

Only a few weeks ago, the passage of Maine's Question 1 overturned recent state legislation allowing same-sex couples to marry. Prior to the repeal, Maine had been one of only five states to legally recognize marriage between same-sex couples. The vast majority of states have Defense of Marriage Acts — limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples — on the books. Given that the right to marry is still withheld from many individuals because of their sexual orientation, Phillips had good cause to question the existence of "liberty and justice for all."

Phillips clearly found the meaning

of the Pledge inconsistent with the status of equal rights in America, and he should not have been pressured to say it against his will. His refusal to pledge allegiance to the flag was in fact a patriotic form of dissent in keeping with the best ideals of the republic for which it stands. Numerous important movements in U.S. history began with individuals who recognized injustice and inequality in society and did something about it. His conscientious objection was a principled act of disobedience that deserved respect and encouragement rather than derision. The ideals of the Pledge of Allegiance may never completely align with the realities of society, but there's no reason to why people like Will Phillips shouldn't strive to narrow the gap.

## ICE HOCKEY



ANNIE WERMIEL/TUFTS DAILY

Tufts' hockey team tied Middlebury 3-3 on Friday, asserting itself as a force to be reckoned with in the NESCAC. Middlebury had beaten Tufts for 13 straight games prior to the tie, and a 2-0 loss to Williams on Saturday did little to dampen the Jumbos' spirits.

## No wins, but historic result for Jumbos

BY EVAN COOPER  
Daily Editorial Board

If there was ever any doubt that the hockey team belongs in the NESCAC, perennially one of the toughest Div. III hockey conferences in the country, it has been erased now.

ICE HOCKEY				
(0-1-1, 0-1-1 NESCAC)				
at Valley Forum II, Saturday				
Williams	0	1	1	— 2
Tufts	0	0	0	— 0
at Valley Forum II, Friday				
Middlebury	0	0	3	— 3
Tufts	0	2	1	— 3

In the opening weekend of its 2009-10 campaign, Tufts pulled off a historic 3-3 tie against powerhouse Middlebury on Friday and then barely fell to Williams in a 2-0 grudge match one day later.

"We're in it to be in the hunt," coach Brian Murphy said. "We're not just in this league to be in the league."

On Friday, the Jumbos registered their first point against a Middlebury program that has beaten them in 13 straight games, the first dating back to the reinstatement of Tufts' hockey program in the 1986-87 season.

Despite carrying a two-goal lead into the third period, the Jumbos found themselves on the edge of defeat as the Panthers netted three unanswered goals to turn the tables and take a 3-2 advantage into the final minute of play.

But, with sophomore goaltender Scott Barchard pulled for an extra man and Middlebury down to just four skaters after a cross-checking penalty, the Jumbos finally reversed their fortunes.

With 57 seconds remaining, freshman defenseman Trevor John scored his first career goal, assisted by junior forward Tom Derosa and junior defenseman Andy Davis, to knot the score at 3-3. Neither team scored in overtime.

"The freshman class has really filled a lot

of holes we need them to fill," Derosa said. "Trevor had a great game and is going to be a big part of our team going forward."

After a dead-locked first period, the Jumbos seized control of the contest in the second period, hammering Middlebury sophomore goalie John Yanchek with 20 shots and scoring twice. Derosa struck first at 4:41, aided by junior forwards Mike Vitale and Zach Diaco. The latter would add a tally of his own with a short-handed strike at 12:27 for a 2-0 lead.

Barchard stopped all 27 shots he faced through the first two periods and finished the game with 43 saves.

"At the end of the day, we got one more point out of the weekend than we did last year," Murphy said. "But Friday was still disappointing because we had a two-goal lead in the third period at home and we should win that game, regardless of who it is against."

But for Murphy, that sort of disappointment is a good sign.

"I don't think the guys were happy with the tie," he said. "A lot of guys were disappointed. That to me is a progress. It doesn't matter who we are playing; we want to win. Mentally, this group is not going to be intimidated with whoever our opponent is."

It was that sort of maturity and grit that carried the Jumbos through Friday's battle with the then-No. 7 team in the nation. Though the Jumbos' power play struggled, going just 1-for-8, their defense and penalty kill were stellar, holding Middlebury to 1-for-6 on its opportunities — a major feat, as Middlebury claimed both the best scoring offense and power play in the NESCAC last year.

"We blocked a lot of shots, especially on the penalty kill," Barchard said. "We didn't let [Middlebury] get comfortable in our zone and set up the plays they wanted to. We were getting our sticks in the passing lanes and disrupting plays."

"I'm proud of every one of the guys and the work they did in our zone and their strong back-checking," he continued. "They keep it simple for me."

"On the penalty kill they'd get the first shot off but then we'd knock the rebound right out

of the zone," Derosa added. "And Scott was stopping every shot we let him see, doing everything we needed him to."

On Saturday, Tufts and Williams battled heatedly through the first two periods of their matchup at the Malden Forum. Both squads battered the opposing goaltender with a continuous flurry of shots, but neither side was able to dent the scoreboard until nearly the end of the middle frame.

With less than three minutes remaining in the period, Williams sophomore Justin Troiani picked up a rebound off of Barchard and banged it in for what proved to be the game-winning goal. Though Barchard stood tall in the third period with 13 saves to give the Jumbos a chance to get back in the game, they were just unable to capitalize and could not knot the score as senior goalie Marc Pulde stymied them with 11 saves in the final period and 35 in the game. Barchard finished with 42.

"At the beginning of any season, you're always trying to see what works best," Derosa said. "We just need to get a few things together to get our offense going. It's just a matter of time before we start scoring goals."

Williams added an insurance goal in the final minute when senior forward Alex Smigelski cashed in on the empty net, as the Jumbos had pulled Barchard for an extra man.

The Jumbos were not without their scoring opportunities, as they went 0-for-6 on the power play, continuing to struggle with the same issue that troubled them last year.

"We need to find a way to be a little more consistent on the power play," Murphy said. "Saturday we were a little out of sync, but [Williams is] a top-four NESCAC team without a doubt in my mind. The power play let us down a little, but we hit some posts and had our chances and just couldn't put it in."

Though Tufts was relatively pleased with what it saw this weekend, it is not yet content. The Jumbos will now look to register their first win of the season tonight versus Curry of the ECAC Northeast before participating in the Rutland Herald Invitational over the Thanksgiving break.

"We're not here to have moral victories," Murphy said.

## ALEX PREWITT | LIVE FROM MUDVILLE



## A pox upon thee

Start a bonfire, break out the monotonous chants and go see a Rastafarian Shaman, because Tufts University is cursed.

Yes, I went there.

Over the past few years, numerous near-misses within the athletics department have led me to one simple conclusion: The Jumbos are hexed. In 2000, women's soccer lost the national championship at home on a goal in the final seconds of the game. Men's basketball saw a 2006 Sweet 16 victory snatched away when a buzzer-beating three-pointer pushed the game into overtime. Field hockey last year fell in the national final to Bowdoin in double-overtime.

Of course, this past weekend was no exception. In a valiant effort, volleyball became the first New England Div. III school since 2004 to win a set in an NCAA quarterfinal match but ultimately fell to Hope College 3-1.

Likewise, the field hockey team, thanks in part to a hospitalized coach, two players with the flu, one with two broken fingers, and a fourth with a hamstring tighter than a hipster's leather pants, lost 1-0 in the Final Four on Saturday. Incidentally, watching their inspirational performance was like having a homeless, hungry, talking puppy come up to you and give you a hug.

So why is it that Tufts can continue to put so many teams in the NCAA Tournament and still not come out with one solitary national championship? Well, after years of painstaking research — okay, it was one car ride home with Twizzlers and canned Gatorade — I have come up with five fool-proof theories sure to blow the proverbial lid off of the mystery as to why Tufts can't bring home that elusive trophy, Sherlock Holmes style.

**Theory One:** The Location Curse. Tufts University was built on top of Walnut Hill in 1852 when founder Charles Tufts donated the land, saying he wanted to create a "light on the hill." While uphill and downhill have remained a staple of Jumbo life for over 150 years, what we fail to overlook is that our campus was built on an ancient Indian burial mound — certainly not the innocent light-giving hill Charles Tufts envisioned. Since we disturbed the remains, they have come back to haunt us and have put a hex on our athletic success until all is restored. It's as simple as that.

**Theory Two:** The Color Curse. Tufts University's colors are brown and baby blue. Those aren't college colors — those are the hues of an albino smurf's poop.

**Theory Three:** The Curse of the Beelzebubs. When Charles Tufts founded this prestigious university, he made a pact with the devil, which stated that Tufts would be given only one nationally prominent group, while other clubs and teams would wallow away in misery for all of eternity. That one group? The Tufts Beelzebubs, who will soon make an appearance on NBC. Thanks a lot Charles Tufts for screwing the rest of us over.

**Theory Four:** The Swine Flu Curse. H1N1, which plagued many of the stars of the Jumbos' field hockey team this weekend, was actually created by a combined laboratorial effort from Amherst and Williams in an attempt to stifle our athletic progress.

**Theory Five:** The Curse of the Ashes. This harkens back to the Location Curse, theorizing that, until Jumbo's ashes are properly buried, we will never find success. Sure, it's tradition and all, but ashes — especially elephant ashes — should not be kept in an urn in the Athletics Department's office. That's just bad luck waiting to happen.

Now, with all of these theories out in the open, how do we proceed?

Well my friends, it's up to the Athletics Department to see to it that these get amended in the near future, for the sake of our sports programs and our athletes.

Because if not, I may have to start brewing up the first-ever rhinoceros flu.

Alex Prewitt is a sophomore who has not yet declared a major. He can be reached at [Alexander.Prewitt@tufts.edu](mailto:Alexander.Prewitt@tufts.edu).

## Men's and women's swimming open 2009-10 season

The men's and women's swimming teams both opened their seasons with three meets apiece this past weekend, but they arrived at very different results.

The men's team is now 3-0 thanks to wins over Colorado College on Friday and two wins in a tri-meet against NESCAC rivals Middlebury and Conn. College on Saturday. Senior quad-captain Rob Matera won both the one-meter and three-meter dive events on both days, while fellow

senior quad-captain Lawrence Chan and sophomores Owen Rood and E.J. Testa were part of winning relays on both days and delivered individual wins.

The women's team started off strong on Friday, winning 14 of 16 events against Colorado College and boasting a string of swimmers who delivered multiple first-place finishes. The Jumbos had a bit of trouble on Saturday, however, when they suffered losses to both the Panthers and

Camels in close battles. Nonetheless, the meet was not without its highlights: Senior Lindsay Gardel won both dive events, and sophomore Valerie Eacret capped a great individual weekend with Tufts' lone swimming victory along with a second-place finish as well.

See [tuftsdaily.com](http://tuftsdaily.com) for further coverage of both teams' opening weekends.

— by Ethan Landy