



TUFTS OBSERVER

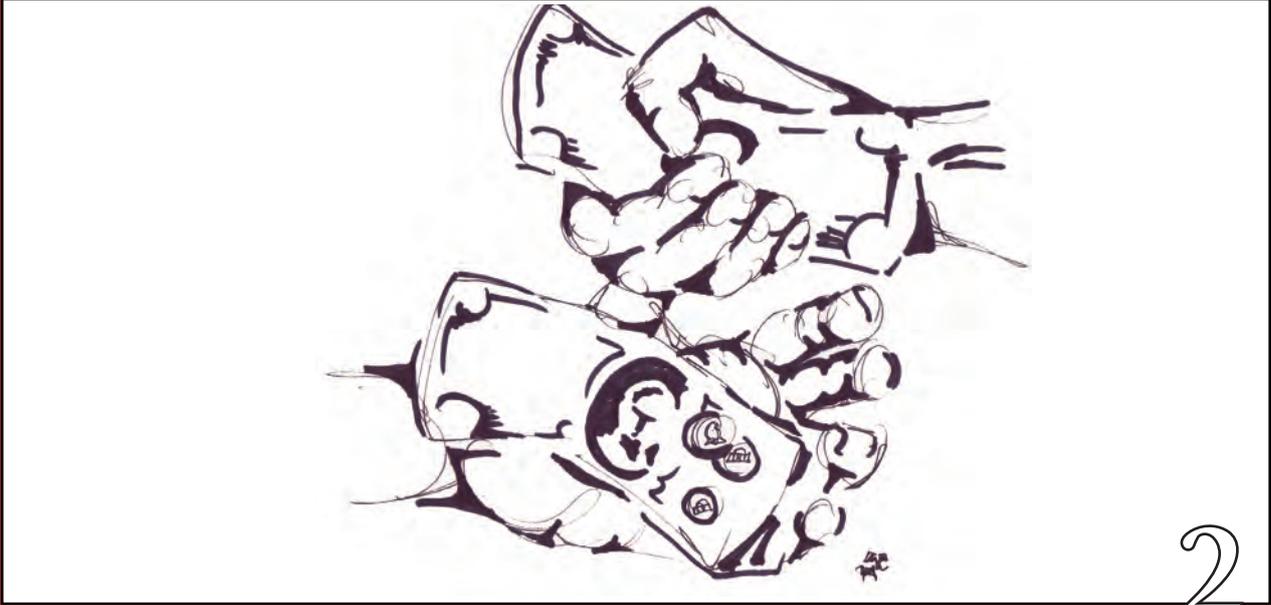
TUFTS' STUDENT MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 13, 2008

Tufts Saves the World*

*With interest. See: the Tufts/Omidyar Microfinance Fund.

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



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Since
1895

Exporting the Dream:

The Omidyar-Tufts Microfinance Adventure

Once upon a time, two young undergrads met on the Hill and fell in love, first with world citizenship, then with each other. After traveling the world and cashing in on billions from their grassroots startup, they decide to marry Tufts-style public service with Silicon Valley-style venture capital. The result? A \$100 million baby.

BY ALEX KAHN

November 5, 2005 was the day Tufts received what was then the largest single donation in its history: a massive grant from eBay founder Pierre Omidyar and his wife, Pamela. Larger than the GDP of some Polynesian nations, the Omidyar-Tufts fund was created with an explicit instruction: the money must only be invested in microfinance. The result of their romance was a \$100 million baby... that no one knew for sure what to do with.

What is Microfinance?

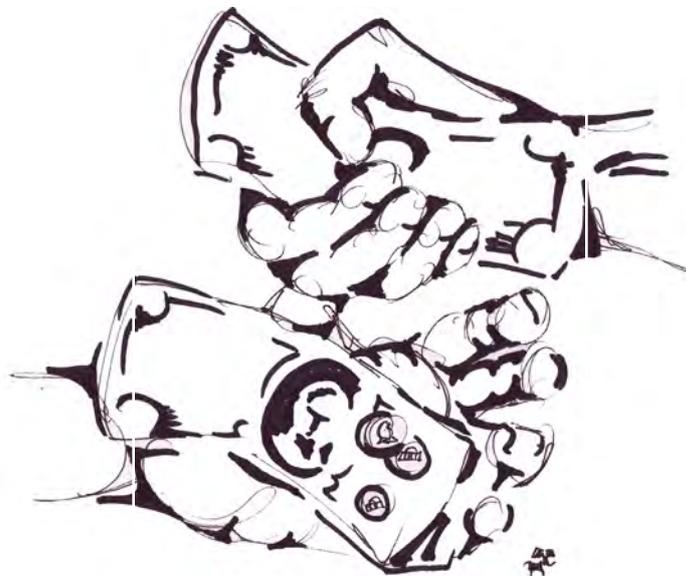
Microfinance is a broad term that essentially means providing financial services to the poor in scaled-down increments. According to the World Bank, half of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day, and an even greater percentage has no access to basic financial services such as savings, insurance, and credit.

Although our trust in the financial system hasn't exactly improved in the last few weeks, many in the developed world take our banks for granted. But the apocalyptic scenarios that Obama and McCain are forewarning from their soapboxes are a reality for many in Africa, South America, and elsewhere. Nowhere to put your savings except under the mattress. No safety net if your business hits a snag or your house gets flooded. No credit to expand your enterprise, no way to lift yourself out of poverty.

Many people with only cursory knowledge picture microfinanciers as Peace Corps yuppies tucking \$100 bills into the reed bas-

kets of African nomads. In reality, the only way that microfinance will ever make a difference is if it becomes a viable industry in and of itself. After all, piecemeal charities have been around for ages, but without massive and concerted efforts, the poor still remain poor. The only incentive we know to be 100% effective at attracting the necessary capital is the smell of profits.

Although common sense would suggest that lending to the impoverished isn't



RYAN STOLP

the smartest business move, microfinance loans are repaid at rates similar to those in the developed world. When lending to women, microfinance institutions have enjoyed the most reliable repayments and most efficient employment of capital. In fact, microfinance banks such as Compartamos in Mexico are some of the most profitable companies in the developing world.

"One billion people lack sufficient financial services," explains Michael Eddy, a recent Tufts graduate who works as a re-

searcher for the MIT Poverty Action Lab. "You can't meet that through small Non-Governmental Organizations, donors, or give outs. Robust markets serve both a social good and a private good. The underprivileged have to be brought into the marketplace."

Enter the Omidyars

Born in Paris to Iranian parents in 1967, Pierre Omidyar came to the United States at age six. After growing up in Washington, D.C., he enrolled at Tufts and graduated with a degree in computer science in 1988, one year before his future wife, Pamela Kerr, got her degree from Jackson College, the former college for women at Tufts. After developing several promising computer codes, Pierre sensed the internet revolution on the horizon and hit the ground running.

Originally titled "Auction Web," eBay was launched on Labor Day of 1995 and quickly grew to become one of the most popular websites and one of the most radical social phenomena in recent history. "In talking about eBay over the past few years," wrote Omidyar on his blog in 2004, "I've emphasized the way it has helped people pursue their individual passions and discover their own power to make good things happen; how they've become empowered by participating in an open and honest marketplace."

When eBay went public in 1998, the Omidyars instantly became billionaires. Yet, coming from modest surroundings, they felt uneasy about what to do with all that money. They saw their Silicon Valley neighbors dining on organics in sprawling mansions while

their children drove Porsches. ‘Philanthropy,’ to the Omidyars’ contemporaries, often meant donating to ballets or symphonies, or maybe sometimes giving passive one-time handouts to the doomed and destitute.

The Omidyars knew at least one partner they could count on to change the face of modern philanthropy: their socially conscious alma mater. They started off small, with a \$10 million donation in 1999 that differed from traditional philanthropy in that it specified the money was to be spent on socially responsible training for undergraduates. The result was the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service.

In 2004, the Omidyar Network (ON) was created with the goal of enabling sustainable, empowering, and active giving not through philanthropy, but through investments. Culled from the goals of eBay and

as regular financial products? If only there were a way to create a large fund that turns a profit by investing in microfinance, the Omidyars figured, then the floodgates would open for investors worldwide to allocate billions of dollars of capital to the poor. With this idea, the Omidyars could strike dead the notion of passive philanthropy, and use their money to connect and help both the rich and the poor.

The Big Check

In keeping with the goals of their foundation, the Omidyars negotiated another gift to Tufts in 2005, one that would be 10 times the size and exponentially more innovative. Normally, universities accept gifts in one of three ways. The first and most high profile method of giving is through a capital gift, which can be used to name a building after

Officer Sally Dungan would have three bottom lines to worry about: securing the endowment, respecting the Omidyar’s wishes to prove the viability of microfinance, and providing the maximum social benefit to the world’s impoverished.

Yet with a 9% expected annual return and the option to pull the plug after 25 years, most in the administration agree that the Omidyar-Tufts Microfinance Fund is a win-win. “Microfinance offers a means to make a difference in the world by enabling people in developing nations to empower themselves economically, while also benefiting the university,” says Director of Public Relations Kim Thurler. These benefits are financial as well as image-related. “This gift is perfectly consistent with our image of Tufts as an active, global citizen,” said President Larry Bacow in an email interview. “We hope that our success with the Omidyar-Tufts Microfinance Fund will inspire other institutions to invest in similar ways.”

Meanwhile, since half of all returns are reinvested in the fund while the other half goes directly to the university for general use, “undergraduates are already benefiting in a number of ways from this gift,” writes Bacow. “A portion of the income from OTMF supports undergraduate financial aid. The gift allowed us to create our Loan Repayment

Microfinance offers a means to make a difference in the world by enabling people in developing nations to empower themselves economically, while also benefiting the university.

the spirit of Tufts, the ON would allow both the people writing checks and the people receiving them to discover their own power.

A \$100 Million Petri Dish

From their experiences with the ON, the Omidyars had a lot of confidence in the burgeoning industry of microfinance, but weren’t so sure that it could continue as a non-profit charity case. Although organizations such as Kiva and the well-established Grameen Bank were trailblazing anti-poverty warriors, the Omidyars believed that such media-friendly guardian angels would eventually max out their potential by dealing with donations, handouts, and apathy. Could we really end world poverty with “Give \$1 to Kiva!” Facebook groups?

At the same time, the microfinance fad was creating a bubble. News of triple-digit interest rates and predatory lending was creating a cloud of suspicion over the for-profit microfinance institutions. The MFIs fought back, arguing that as the pioneers of the marketplace they faced infrastructure challenges that forced them to charge high rates.

Couldn’t there be a middle ground? Wouldn’t it be possible to prove to the world that microfinance is as safe and profitable

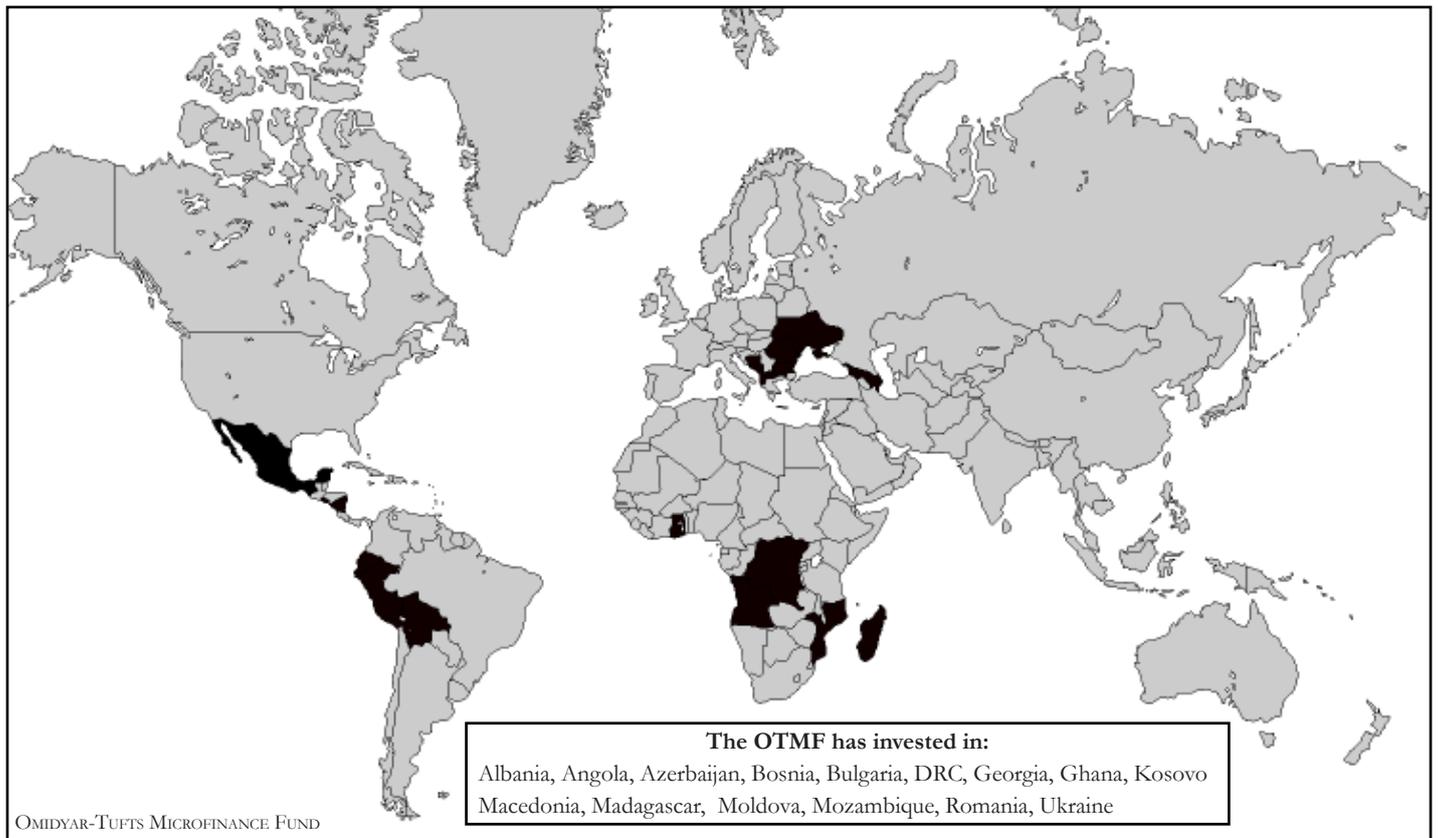
yourself or to create a faculty chair in your honor. This was how the Omidyars helped create the Tisch College. A second way that Tufts accepts gifts is through the general endowment, which can be tapped to make major renovations to the school or to attract better faculty. Lastly, endowment money can be used as investment capital, which generates profits to continue growing the endowment for years.

While giving to the endowment in order to generate more endowment sounds painfully boring as opposed to, say, creating “OmidyarLand Theme Park at Carmichael,” Pam and Pierre decided to let the university invest their donation in order to generate profits. Then came the catch—the money could only be invested in microfinance institutions and products.

Initially, many Tufts administrators thought it might not be prudent to put endowment funds into risky and largely unproven microfinance investments. After all, the number one priority for university money is the advancement of education. In addition to microfinance’s “double bottom lines” of monetary profit and social profit, operating through the endowment would now mean that Tufts’ Chief Investment

Microfinance Opportunities for Undergraduates

- ❖ As early as next semester, the Economics Department is planning on introducing a finance minor.
- ❖ The Institute for Global Leadership houses the “Poverty and Power Research Initiative” student program, as well as EPIIC and a relationship with several MFIs such as ACCION International that provide internships to Tufts students.
- ❖ Of course, the Omidyar-sponsored Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service has several opportunities to get involved, including internship funding.
- ❖ Other than that, undergrads can attend meetings of the Microfinance Club, although it is technically a Fletcher organization.



Assistance Program. The gift also funds our Public Interest Summer Internship Program administered by Tisch College.”

Is Microfinance the Answer?

While the OTMF, if it continues to be viable, is a perfect fit for the university, many around the world and even here on the Hill are skeptical that microfinance can be an easy cure-all for global poverty. “Microfinance is just that: micro,” says Michael Eddy, who is currently conducting randomized control trials in India with the Poverty Action Lab. “In order to bring a poor country out of poverty, there needs to be a government-led, macroeconomic development strategy.”

Kim Wilson, a Professor of International Business at the Fletcher School who specializes in microfinance is even more skeptical. “Microfinance is not even close to being ‘the answer’ to global poverty,” she says. “Poor people have many other avenues of finance, including neighbors and friends. There is no proof that microfinance ends poverty any more than there’s proof a sub-prime loan in the US ends poverty.”

Still, Tufts Economics Professor Margaret McMillan, who specializes in development economics, thinks that “microfinance is a very promising tool for poverty alleviation. There is mounting evidence that the poor in developing countries do not invest

in profitable activities because of a lack of access to credit,” she says. The Tisch College has already provided McMillan with resources to start several microfinance initiatives in Ghana.

Mr. Eddy suggests that the discrepancy in opinions on microfinance stem from the microfinance bubble of the past decade, in which expectations surpassed achievements. “Several recent studies have shed a critical eye on the actual effectiveness of microfinance,” he says. In addition, Eddy and many others are having trouble deciding whether for-profit microfinance investment is good or bad for the poor. “It’s not all black and white,” he says. “On the one hand, for-profit MFIs spur entrance to the marketplace and better competition. On the other hand, they can charge high interest rates, and their efficacy is questionable.”

The Impact of the OTMF

Even if microfinance isn’t “the” answer to world poverty, experts agree that the Omidyar-Tufts Microfinance Fund is setting a positive example for investors in the developed world. “I love that the OTMF is grassroots oriented,” says McMillan. “It’s getting money out of the hands of the government and getting it to the people who need it.”

Even Professor Wilson thinks the OTMF is a good thing. “The fund is doing

what it said it would do, invest \$100 million in MFIs profitably,” she said. “This is admirable. So few things in this world deliver what they promise. It is commendable. They are succeeding.”

“The OTMF is incredible, because it is paving the way for microfinance to be a reliable investment for institutions and individuals,” says Eddy. “There’s not necessarily a problem with making money, unless loans are forced onto the unwilling, which is happening in some places. It might sound strange, but as long as microfinance is done under perfect information, the only way we can alleviate poverty on a grand scale is by making money off of poor people.”

What’s more, the OTMF is consistent with the goals of the Omidyar Network in that it provides intangibles to the poor that can be even more valuable than loans or savings accounts. By removing some of the pitfalls associated with scarce capital and inefficient governments, the world’s poor may soon be able to choose their own destinies.

Much like eBay, microfinance puts power in the hands of individuals. It’s an idea that Tufts lent the Omidyars, and now the Omidyars are lending the world. True, the Omidyar-Tufts Microfinance Fund is exporting the American dream. But, to be more specific, it’s exporting the Tufts dream. ☺

Somali Pirates Test International Political Waters

BY: JULIANA SLOCUM

When most people hear the word “pirate” they likely imagine swash-buckling, peg-legged figures like Captain Hook or Jack Sparrow, waving the skull-and-crossbones flag and wreaking havoc on the high seas. In truth, however, pirates are actually quite common around the world, although they hardly resemble those from mythical lore. Many of today’s bandits are criminals who effectively organize to rob ships of valuable goods and vast sums of money. According to a 2004 article in *Foreign Affairs*, “Today’s pirates are often trained fighters aboard speedboats equipped with satellite phones and global positioning systems and armed with automatic weapons.” Considering that modern buccaneers are so well equipped, it is not surprising that the number of pirate attacks on ships worldwide has tripled in the last ten years. In 2004, the total damage caused by piracy around the world amounted to nearly \$16 billion.

On September 25 Somali pirates hijacked the Ukrainian freighter *Faina*. The pirates surrounded the freighter and eventually wrested control of the vessel from the captain and its 20 crew members. Such attacks on foreign vessels are certainly not rare off the coast of Somalia. According to an October 1 article in the *New York Times*, “piracy in Somalia is a highly organized, lucrative, ransom-driven business.”

Off the coast of Somalia, “just this year, pirates hijacked more than 25 ships, and in many cases, they were paid million-dollar ransoms to release them,” the *Times* continued. Many of the thousands of pirates were originally fishermen who began to patrol the waters in the early 1990s in order to protect the seas from illegal commercial fishing fleets. Even now, many of these so-called vigilantes still claim to be merely protecting what is rightfully theirs. Sugule Ali, the current pirates’ spokesman, even contends in an interview with the *New York Times* that they “don’t consider ourselves sea bandits...we are simply patrolling our seas. Think of us like the Coast Guard.”

However, the motive for this most recent attack does not seem to be the protection of Somalian fishermen. The hijacked Ukrainian ship is not a fishing vessel, but rather a freighter carrying roughly \$30 million worth of advanced weaponry. The pirates claim that they did not stop the ship for its weapons. But, there are many officials who believe that the marauders targeted the ship in order to sell the weapons to terrorist groups. It is also unclear where the tanks, grenade launchers and ammunition were destined. The Kenyan government claims that it legally bought the tanks from Ukraine for the Kenyan military. The *New York Times* reported, however, that many Somali and Western officials believe that the Kenyan government actually secretly intended to funnel these weapons to separatist military groups in southern Sudan.

Regardless of where the weapons were bound, officials everywhere are worried now that the Somali pirates have control of them. The pirates initially demanded \$35 million in ransom, then agreed to settle for \$20 million, and have supposedly lowered the price once again. The pirates contend that all they want is money, but many people worry that the pirates intend to give the weapons to Islamic insurgent terrorist groups in Somalia who are battling against the weak central government. Although Sugule insists that they “are not going to offload the weapons” and that they are solely looking for money, there is still looming suspicion.

In recent years, the link between piracy and terrorism has grown stronger. Indeed, according to *Foreign Affairs*, “terrorist groups have come to view piracy as a potentially rich source of funding.” The article also claims that

“al Qaeda and its affiliates now own dozens of phantom ships--hijacked vessels...operating under false documentation.”

While world leaders agree that the tie between piracy and terrorism poses a grave danger, they disagree on how best to deal with the situation. Currently, the United States Navy has sent warships to the region and has supposedly cornered the hijacked vessel against the Somali shore. A Russian ship is also on its way to Somalia. Neither the US military nor the pirates have taken any military action and the situation appears stalemated. Some officials insist that the Ukrainian shipping company should not pay the ransom because acquiescing to the pirates’ requests would only fuel future attacks.

According to the *New York Times*, the US government has resisted the call for military action. They argue “such a commando operation would be very difficult because the ship is full of explosives and the pirates could use the 20 crew members as human shields.” Instead, US government officials want to wait, hoping that the pirates will eventually give in and withdraw from the tanker. Regardless of how the current crisis is resolved, it is likely that this will not be the last incident of piracy in the region. The growing frequency of piracy, combined with the heightened link between pirates and terrorism, highlights the growing importance of piracy as a security issue. ☉



MICHAEL SCHECHT

COASTAL TURBINES

Wind Farm off Massachusetts Coast Stirs Controversy between Environmentalists and

BY JAKE STERN

Conflicts over alternative energy sources are nothing new. Over a century ago, a debate emerged between environmentalists. The two camps were conservationists and preservationists. Conservationists argued that the sustainable use of our natural resources is the most important step that we, as a species, can take to protect the environment. Preservationists sought to maintain the present conditions of environments uninfluenced by humans. While these two theories of how best to protect the environment are not always at odds, a modern forum for this debate has emerged in

sources in the world. In fact, according to the Global Wind Energy Council, the availability and generation of wind power has more than quintupled since 2000. The growth of wind power, while generally a positive step, does have its drawbacks. Wind power, for example, is limited by its capacity. Even a perfectly positioned wind turbine will only produce on average about 35% to 40% of its power-producing capacity. This capacity is lower than expected due to the inherent unreliability of the fuel source. Cape Wind is expected to produce about 420 megawatts of power at times of peak efficacy. But, due to the unpredictability of wind power, it is likely that the turbines will produce about

170 megawatts at any given time. 170 megawatts, though not Cape Wind's full capacity, is still a fairly large quantity of electricity, potentially supplying about 75% of the electricity needed to

tucket Sound. Several factors, however, make this particular location ideal for a wind project. Nantucket Sound has some of the nation's most favorable winds, which would allow Cape Wind to operate at an incredibly high capacity. The water in Horseshoe Shoal is also very shallow, allowing for much lower construction costs (and ultimately cheaper power) than a similar deep-water facility. Furthermore, Horseshoe Shoal is located in federal waters. According to Professor Robert Russell of the Tufts Urban and Environmental Policy Department, this means a lighter load of regulations than if the project were planned in Massachusetts State waters. Despite the smaller regulatory load, Russell says there are still a fair number of "legal hoops" through which the project must jump.

Horseshoe Shoal is also an ideal site due to the close proximity of the project to major population centers. One of the major problems with wind power is that most locations with favorable wind, namely those in the midwestern United States, are very far from transmission lines with access to population centers. This distance inherently increases the costs related to building infrastructure and also decreases the amount of energy eventually received in the power grid, meaning that the site chosen for Cape Wind also makes good economic sense. Even with all the positive attributes of Horseshoe Shoal, however, the site may become economically infeasible if the opposition to the project is dragged out for long enough. While not united solely against Cape Wind, the Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound (APNS) has listed preventing the wind farm's construction as one of its main objectives.

APNS, in its efforts to gain public support, has come up with a list of ten common misconceptions about the benefits of Cape Wind. One of these alleged misconceptions is that Cape Wind will

In order to find sustainable solutions to our present energy problems our economy will need to become less dependent on fossil fuels



Massachusetts.

Cape Wind, a proposed offshore wind farm, pits these two prominent ideologies against one another. The question at hand is whether to build on a somewhat undisturbed and, as yet, undeveloped area off the coast of Cape Cod. This area, known as Horseshoe Shoal, is a large, relatively shallow portion of Nantucket Sound, an ecologically sensitive and important area. The debate has its roots in the fact that conservationists argue that the best way to protect the environment is to invest in alternative, clean energy sources in order to decrease our overall ecological footprint. Preservationists, however, argue that Horseshoe Shoal is an area that, due to its importance to the environment and economy of southeastern Massachusetts, merits preservation.

The debate over the future of Horseshoe Shoal centers on wind power, one of the fastest growing alternative energy

power Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

Both sides of the Cape Wind debate agree that clean energy is the future. In order to find sustainable solutions to our present energy problems, our economy will need to become less dependent on fossil fuels. Indeed, if completed, Cape Wind would certainly help to ease dependence on fossil fuels in the region. However, in the grand scheme of things, Cape Wind's contribution to quenching our collective thirst for sustainable energy is a relatively small one. Although it has a small impact on climate change, Cape Wind is one of the largest proposed wind farms in United States history and faces strong opposition from many homeowners in the region.

Many opponents of the project are accused of taking a stance commonly known as "Not in my Backyard." Some of the region's highest home values are attached to the aesthetic beauty of Nan-

FAN THE FLAMES

Homeowners as Policy Makers Debate Options and Merits of Alternative Energy

lower energy costs. APNS asserts that the cost of electricity will actually increase for customers supplied by Cape Wind. And in fact, in the short term, prices may increase slightly for consumers. However since the costs associated with wind power are all construction related and the fuel is free, most consumers will likely see a decrease in the cost of their energy in the long term. In fact, according to Professor Russell, wind power is “essentially free energy after the upfront costs” have been paid.

Another purported misconception on the list is that Cape Wind will affect the fishing industry in Nantucket Sound. APNS and The Massachusetts Fishermen’s Partnership, despite evidence to the contrary, contend that commercial fishermen will have serious trouble moving their equipment around between the towers. And since Cape Wind will occupy an area roughly the size of Manhattan, fishermen could indeed suffer from having one of the major fisheries in the area developed over. However, the Cape Wind Organization maintains that since the towers will be one third to one half of a mile apart, the actual area occupied by the towers would be negligible and as such there would be no ill effects on the commercial fishing industry in Nantucket Sound.

One of the major regulatory problems with the Cape Wind project identified by APNS is that air and nautical travel could be disrupted by the project. The proximity of shipping lanes to the project is an issue which has gotten the US Coast Guard involved in the Cape Wind controversy. Due to concerns over wind turbines and towers and their potential effects on radar systems, opponents of Cape Wind want to see federal limitations on how close shipping channels can be located to offshore wind projects. In 2006, a proposed amendment to federal legislation by Representative Don Young (R) from Alaska would have mandated

that shipping channels be located at least one and a half miles from any offshore wind facilities (the current limit for distance of shipping lanes from offshore oil or gas rigs is one half of one mile). This amendment, if passed, would have stopped the Cape Wind project and most wind projects like it in their tracks.

Another possible deal-breaker for the project are the many potential environmental risks, specifically to the health of fisheries, marine mammals, birds (especially migratory birds), and bottom dwelling animals living in the sound. These animals would likely be disturbed during the construction of Cape Wind; however, the long term impact on the ecosystem would likely be small given the small total surface area occupied by the project.

The protection of migratory and endangered bird species has been another major point of contention associated with most wind projects. However, as is usually the case, properly positioned wind turbines can avoid having an issue with bird kills. Russell refers to Cape Wind’s purported problem with bird kills as a “non-issue.” In fact, the federal government has completed two Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) on Cape Wind. Each EIS was completed by a different government agency (the Army Corps of Engineers

and more recently the Minerals Management Service). Both of these studies declare the project’s environmental impacts short term and essentially negligible.

Many homeowners in the region also take issue with the inherent detraction from the aesthetics of the sound. They feel that their property values will decline as a result of the no longer pristine ocean views. Another issue is that the towers, due to their height and the current regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration, will need to be lighted. This regulation adds light pollution to an otherwise dark horizon at night. Supporters of the project counter that due to the distance (over four miles) of the project from the nearest town, the effects should be minimal.

The jury is still out on all of the potential costs and benefits of the Cape Wind project and the argument continues. But perhaps the most important benefit of Cape Wind is that, if completed, it would provide major inspiration to advocates of decreased dependency on fossil fuels. According to Russell, a completed offshore wind farm such as Cape Wind “certainly creates momentum for wind power.” The momentum of a project like this could be Cape Wind’s largest, though least recognized contribution. ☐



Cancer Vaccine Clears the Storm

FDA Expands Approval of Gardasil

BY RACHEL ZAR

Gardasil, the only vaccine proven to prevent cervical cancer, genital warts and other symptoms of the human papillomavirus (HPV), is soon to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration for women ages 27 to 45. The vaccine is currently only approved for younger women, but Merck, the pharmaceutical company that developed Gardasil, began expanding trials to include older women. Now, Merck has completed all clinical trials necessary and, according to Dr. Lauren Streicher, Assistant Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Northwestern University and member of the Merck Speakers Bureau, approval can be expected within the next couple of months.

Gardasil was first granted FDA approval for women ages 9 to 26 on June 8, 2006 through the Administration's priority review process, which can approve a product in only six months if it has a potential to provide significant health benefits. The same priority review was given to approving the vaccine for older women in March of this year.

When the vaccine was first released, there was a strong and divided reaction. While the medical community rejoiced at this potentially lifesaving development, others worried that Gardasil was approved too quickly and hesitated before rushing to vaccinate their children and themselves. While skepticism and hesita-

tion still lingers, there is reason to believe that the drug has provided a much needed solution to a growing problem.

The four strands of HPV prevented by Gardasil cause about 70% of annual cervical cancer cases and about 90% of annual genital warts cases. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the United States, and the highest prevalence of the HPV infection, about 44.8%, occurs among 20 to 24 year-olds. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 6.2 million Americans are infected with genital HPV each year, and by age 50, at least 80% of women will have acquired genital HPV infection at some point in their lives. Cervical cancer, which is caused by HPV, is the second most common cancer in women worldwide and causes over 200,000 deaths each year.

Dr. Margaret Higham, Medical Director at Tufts Health Service, sees the upcoming approval as a positive step. She hopes the vaccine can still be effective in older women even though most abnormal pap smears and issues connected to HPV are appearing in younger women. "I don't think there's a downside to [the approval] at all," she says. "It's just a matter of how much it's actually going to help at that age."

Older women are more likely to be in a monogamous relationship or to have already come in to contact with the disease, but still remain at risk for acquiring HPV. The vaccine is most effective in those not already infected with HPV, so it is beneficial if the vaccine is administered at a young age, prior to any sexual relations.

Despite overwhelming statistics and the widespread approval of most doctors, many young people (including Tufts students) still remain unvaccinated. According to Dr.

Higham, a surprisingly large number of students have not had the vaccine. "They say to me they haven't heard about it, or their doctor didn't encourage it because it was a new vaccine, or their parents didn't want them to do it because it was a new vaccine," she said, "I hear that more than I would have thought."

Despite its high effectiveness rating, negative reports about Gardasil have led some to protest past and future FDA approval. Dr. Higham believes that these reports are not legitimate and should not prevent anyone from getting vaccinated. "There really isn't medical controversy about [Gardasil] at this point," she said.

Besides the potential for adverse physical reactions, many worry that vaccinating girls for a sexually transmitted infection at such a young age will send the wrong message about sex and increase future promiscuity. Dr. Higham asserted that there is absolutely no data to support this claim.

The most extreme reports of negative reactions to Gardasil include paralysis and even death. According to Dr. Streicher, many of these claims are connected to a syndrome called Guillian Barre Syndrome, or GBS, which causes temporary to longer-term paralysis in about two out of every 100,000 people. Statistically, the syndrome has actually occurred less as a result of the vaccine than the average worldwide rate.

"Whenever there's a new drug, pharmaceutical companies must report all adverse effects," Dr. Streicher explained. "If I give someone a vaccine and they walk out of my office and get hit by a bus and die, that's reported as a death connected to the vaccine. If you Google Gardasil and death, you'll get hundreds of results, but if you get the facts, every single death was completely unrelated to the vaccine."

When Gardasil is approved for older women over the next couple of months, low-lying issues will almost certainly resurface. Though the controversy is real, the medical community, including Dr. Streicher and Dr. Higham, does not seem concerned about the vaccine and encourages all those who can to get vaccinated as soon as possible. ☉



CAMPBELL KLIEFOTH

GUSTAV & IKE PUMMEL GULF COAST

BY JULIANA SLOCUM

Hurricane season in America never fails to touch on a broad scope of issues including the economy, class inequalities, and human rights concerns, to name a few. This may be seen as an extra blow to the already weakened US economy or it can be seen as a test of the adeptness of federal response to national disasters. Of the Atlantic storms this year, half were hurricanes: Gustav and Ike made notorious, ephemeral appearances in the U.S. media for their destruction and consequences.

Partly due to the media's marginalization of the story in the wake of the country's economic tribulations, relief and aid groups are left feeling lost and helpless in their efforts to help people affected by Gustav. The Red Cross branded Gustav the "silent disaster" as the group's fundraising efforts for immediate relief to victims fell short by \$65 million.

Volunteer agencies from around the country are working hard to provide much needed aid to not only Gustav and Ike victims, but those still in limbo from Katrina's fury as well. The volunteer group National Collegiate Volunteers (NCV) was founded and based at Tufts and Brandeis Universities and is led by Tufts senior Jonah Ari Peppiatt. NCV has galvanized many in the Boston area to help in rebuilding the "infrastructure of New Orleans' health care system" after Hurricane Katrina. NCV has also raised \$5,000 thus far for victims of Hurricanes Gustav, Hanna, and Ike, and they plan on continuing their efforts.

Gustav rose to a Category 4 storm by the time it hit Cuba on August 30 and dropped to a Category 2 by the time it hit Louisiana on September 2. Ike also took a similar route as it hit Cuba with all its force as a Category 3, reducing to a Category 2 as it hit Texas. Compared to Katrina's Category 5, these two storms may seem trivial, but given the fragile condition of the Gulf Coast following Katrina, these storms posed a major threat.

Ike landed only 12 days after Gustav and was filled with the same rage: 110 mph winds

with surges up to 12 feet. Ike landed on September 13 at Galveston, which had suffered through the deadliest hurricane in the history of the US in 1900 with up to 12,000 deaths (Katrina is the third deadliest). It then proceeded to Houston, 50 miles northwest of Galveston, and struck particularly hard causing major flooding. More than a week after the storm, residents came back to varying degrees of damage. Some people found their homes destroyed while others discovered sodden remnants along with mosquitoes, vermin, and putrid carcasses of livestock. More often than not, people only stay long enough to survey the damage before leaving, as running water and electricity are only available sporadically. County health director Mark Guidry stated that Galveston is "not a healthy and safe place to be at this time." Officials and residents alike see problems ahead beyond cleaning up.

One major problem is that Texas' laws may prevent many people from being able to reclaim or rebuild their houses because due to the erosion from the storm, houses find themselves on the beach, which is illegal in Texas. Frustration with the system at a local level can be found at the national level as well. Although FEMA did a far better job this hurricane season in dealing with the storms, its support is somewhat limited. Instead of supplying trailers to victims, FEMA is setting up temporary housing—mostly due to the controversy over the government's issuing of formaldehyde-contaminated trailers to Katrina victims. FEMA is working hard to provide "affected individuals and families with a safe, secure, and sanitary place to live until it is safe for them to go home." Due to deficient tempo-

rary housing, FEMA is also sponsoring a way for individuals to stay in hotels and motels temporarily. The agency is working with numerous state and federal groups to do search and rescue missions as well as

general cleanup.

Ike and Gustav have also had many direct and indirect negative effects in the economy. The planned \$700 billion bailout of the financial industry may affect the amount of money the federal government will be able to provide for aid. State officials in both Texas and Louisiana have turned to Congress for financial support, initially requesting approximately \$16 billion. The state of Louisiana announced that overall recovery costs will fall anywhere between \$8 to 20 billion due to power outages and the flooding of nearly 26,000 homes. The Department of Labor is providing close to \$16 million for recovery efforts in providing jobs to the 50,000 unemployed solely due to Ike and Gustav.

Businesses of all sizes and compositions have been hurt by the storms. Cattle ranches from the affected areas are still trying to herd back their scattered livestock, and business owners are trying to rebuild area commerce. However, the largest industry to suffer is the Gulf Coast's seafood market, which was obliterated over the course of September right before its peak month. Galveston rakes in \$100 million from its large seafood industry, so it is particularly affected by the destruction. Boats, waterfronts, processing yards, and oyster reefs were all damaged by the storms.

Though these hurricanes have been only Category 2 on landfall, their close proximity in landing times and their locations increased the severity tenfold. As the US tries to recover economically, the after-effects of Gustav and Ike will impede recovery efforts both economically and socially along the Gulf as people find themselves displaced, homeless, unemployed, and frustrated. The presence of aid organizations such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and even NCV will help ease the suffering as well as allow reconstruction to proceed at a faster pace. However, it is essential that those left standing after Gustav, Ike, and even Katrina's sweeping destruction are not forgotten. Reconstruction and recovery certainly aren't completed when media attention ends. 



ALICE TIN

How Six Influence 300 Million

The vast majority of media consumed by Americans, from newspapers, to television shows, to books, is owned by one of six massive media conglomerates. Together General Electric, TimeWarner, Walt Disney, News Corporation, CBS, and Viacom control the majority of what America reads, watches, and listens to. Think of a favorite movie, book, or TV show—chances are it is owned by one of these companies. The reach of media corporations has even extended into the web. Netscape, for example, is owned by TimeWarner, the world's largest media conglomerate. Along with Netscape, Time Warner owns a dizzying array of properties, including CNN, the CW, HBO, Cinemax, Cartoon Network, TBS, TNT, AOL, Mapquest, Moviefone, Warner Brothers Pictures, *Time Magazine*, *People Magazine*, Time Warner Cable—and once again, the list goes on.

There are many consequences of media consolidation, but perhaps the most important are the control of information and the diluting of news-gathering. A large media conglomerate is able to easily control the flow of information from its subsidiaries, effectively spreading the views of the corporation's leaders. By reinforcing a particular message throughout its divisions, media conglomerates are able to turn opinion into fact. News Corporation's indisputable conservative bias, taken from its longtime leader and founder Rupert Murdoch, is a prime example of this problem. The right-wing, conservative message is efficiently spread throughout the entire News Corporation ecosystem. On TV, for example, commentators on Fox News espouse conservative views, while the show 24 villainizes liberal institutions like the ACLU. In print, conservative views are further spread by News Corporation's magazine and newspaper properties, such as the *Weekly Standard* and the *New York Post*.

The efficacy of journalism has taken a serious blow from media consolidation. Because news organizations now have so little competition, they are able to focus less on actual quality, and more on the bottom line. Foreign bureaus are closing or being consolidated, and journalists are

being laid off at record rates. Newspapers and television news rely more heavily on the Associated Press and Reuters for news-gathering than ever before. Journalists are being replaced by celebrity news commentators, who are cheaper to pay than a large newsgathering staff, but more interesting to watch, bringing in more viewers and increased advertising revenue.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is supposed to be the government watchdog against media consolidation. In the past, the FCC has fulfilled its obligations, keeping a careful eye on media ownership throughout the country and ensuring that no company gains too much influence. Yet lately the FCC seems to care more about enforcing vague television decency standards, levying huge fines against stations and networks for even the smallest of infractions. When issues of media control do arise, the FCC has actively worked to remove many of the restrictions that have been placed on media ownership throughout its history. In 2007 it overturned a 30-year-old ban prohibiting a single company from owning both the local newspaper and a television station in the same market. In an unprecedented move, in 2003 the FCC voted to allow one company to own up to three television stations, the local newspaper, the cable system, and up to eight radio stations in one media market. Using Boston as an example, that decision meant that one company could have owned the *W*, all of the major commercial radio stations, the cable TV/internet connection, and the ABC, CBS, and NBC affiliates. Thankfully, a federal court overturned the FCC's decision, preventing a single company from controlling virtually every public outlet for information and entertainment.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of media consumers to be aware of the influences on what they are watching and reading. The FCC may not be keen to follow its directive to break up conglomerates as it should, but consumers can keep an eye out for flagrant biases and contact elected officials when problems arise. With luck, the collective eyes of 300 million will be sufficient protection against the views of six. ☉

A Guide to Media Ownership

To get a picture of the power of media conglomerates, The *Observer* has compiled a list of the major media corporations and some of their subsidiaries.

General Electric

NBC, Telemundo, Universal Pictures, Focus Features, MSNBC, Bravo, The Sci Fi Channel, CNBC, Rogue Pictures, Hulu

TimeWarner

CNN, The CW, HBO, Cinemax, Cartoon Network, TBS, TNT, AOL, MapQuest, Moviefone, Netscape, Warner Brothers Pictures, Castle Rock, New Line Cinema, Turner Classic Movies, Boomerang, MovieTickets.com, Court TV, Warner Books, Little, Brown and Company, and over 150 magazines including *Time*, *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Popular Science*

News Corporation

Fox, Fox Business Channel, Fox News, TV Guide, FX, National Geographic Channel, *The Wall Street Journal*, Barron's, Smart Money, MySpace, SKY, *The New York Post*, *The Weekly Standard*, HarperCollins, IGN.com, RottenTomatoes.com

Walt Disney

ABC, ESPN, Disney Channel, A&E, Lifetime, Pixar, Touchstone, Miramax, Walt Disney Pictures, E! Networks, History Channel, 227 radio stations, Movies.com, NFL.com, NBA.com, NASCAR.com

CBS

CBS Television, The CW, Showtime, Simon & Schuster, 140 radio stations

Viacom

MTV, VH1, Nickelodeon, BET, Comedy Central, Paramount Pictures, Atom Entertainment, Harmonix, DreamWorks SKG, SpikeTV, Logo, TV Land, CMT

Tufts University

Tufts Observer, *Primary Source*, TUTV, *Zamboni*, TUTV, *Tufts Magazine*, *Hemispheres*, *Discourse*

“THE MAN”

Alive & Well



BY WILL RAMSDELL

How does the morally upstanding college student cleave the festering underpinnings of corporate America?” was the question I was asking myself after three days spent in the clutches of American Airlines. Corporate espionage, eco-terrorism, and journalistic blasphemy are all appealing options. You see, this corporate circus got between me and BBQ... and where I come from, that constitutes war. So by Ares, war it is—war on yet another tentacle appendage of the infamous and omnipotent Man, The.

Perhaps, dear reader, you have thus far opted not to believe in this “Man,” thinking it more expedient to work within the system. “It’s not selling out, it’s buying in!” Perhaps you wrote him off as figment of the imagination of of disenfranchised conspiracy theorists with greasy hair and Lord of the Rings action figures imaginations. Well...you’re a jerk. Tolkien’s genius reigns supreme. In fact, the epic struggle of the small and ecologically friendly against the evil of iron-wrought industry is rather a fitting metaphor.

So, let’s say we are the Halflings of The Fellowship. The Man is Melkor/Morgoth, the true author of evil of whom Sauron (American Airlines) is but a shadow. And who better than Ron Paul,

champion of the constitution and sanity in general, to be Gandalf? And The One Ring? Consumer culture: convenient, desirable, and powerful, but forged in evil and inseparably tied to The Man.

Now, down to business. We’re in dire straights. Already 760,000 jobs lost this year, and the only way we can think to amend it is by gifting \$700,000,000,000 to the same big business that endeavored to screw the American people. Accountability ensured? Surely not as accountable as aid to Katrina victims, or the actions of BlackWater mercenaries, or the election system that G.W. Bush cheated his way to a second term in? As accountable as our intelligence on Iraqi nukes (oil)?

Oh yeah, we are \$10,195,915,267,848 and 60 cents in debt (10/6/08. 10:52:26 PM GMT). But don’t fret, your \$33,444 share is less than one semester here at Tufts!

This ¾ trillion in bailout is to “staunch the bleeding,” as Obama put it—until we can recover. Gone are the days of learning from a scraped knee. Over-insulated from the realities of life, we have forgotten how capitalism works. Companies rise, fail and fall, and from the ashes rise new ones for new eras. Some people save, others invest. Some make it big. Others don’t. Some loose jobs and try new things, or sell that car they couldn’t

really afford anyway. It isn’t easy or simple or assured. But that system went the way of our national dignity, our mettle, and our slim figure.

The airlines, like the American car manufacturers, promised their employees post-employment benefits when the going was good, but are now stuck with antiquated equipment, inefficiency, and geriatric staff demanding healthcare. These industries thought the glory days would never end, oil (their lifeblood) would flow, and thus the cash with it. The world changed.

Accountability nil and inadequacy covered for, along these relics plod. American Airlines continues to fail the consumer, providing a once-luxury good in a service industry. But we have to travel, and I have “so many miles with American,” never mind their vomit-inducing levels of customer satisfaction. American Airlines, worst of its brothers, cancels unpacked flights and overbooks the rest, so that even if you’re on time, paid your money, and acquiesced to the dehumanizing TSA screening, you may still be refused your seat. Technical issues plague the 1970s era planes, contributing to stacked delays. Even if we boycott, or fly JetBlue, in the end, the teat of our taxes suckles this gangrenous beast.

So here I sit seven hours late to my

Ron Paul Is Gandalf

Continued from p.11

family wedding (missed the BBQ) and 14 hours late getting back to Beantown. I've got a knife in my bag, just like every time I fly—proof that Homeland Security is laughably impotent. Every stewardess on this flight is over 60 and last night I was put up in a hotel with tax dollars, not because of weather, but because the plane was made out of popsicle sticks and cat spit, circa 1912. But before you jump on me as a spoiled American, taking customer service and punctuality for granted, let me tell you, I've been there. [European airfare in the double digit euros] and these weird snakey things called trains, but even India had the excuse of being a developing country to justify its transit snafus. It's not that I can't hack a delay here and there—but the robbery of the masses for the rich to stagnate and

postpone the inevitable rebirth of the American economy is insufferable. Every nation rises and falls, my friends, and the



fatter they are, the harder they fall.

So, The Man won long ago. He won when he convinced us that throw-away

was the best way, that money was happiness, that the TV is the prophet of truth, and cannabis is the devil weed of the Mexicans. It'll take a lot to change, and since AA has a vampiric lifeline to our bank accounts, maybe we'll just have to dress up like Native Americans and revolt (we'd certainly be held in Guantanamo Bay as terrorists). So if that doesn't work, I'll have to complete my Tolkien metaphor. I'll retreat, build a solar powered hobbit hole, love the earth and my fellow beings, smoke the Longbottom Leaf and pray to Gaia for sanity and dignity to return to the country that was once the envy of the world. But if Ron Paul ever shows up on my doorstep, I'll know that the time has come to bring this mother to its knees. ☺

Will Ramsdell is a sophomore majoring in Philosophy.

BROWN AND BLUE TAKES CRIMSON

BY NIKOLAUS BUGAS

Harvard is known as an intellectual institution, an icon of highest knowledge, research, and achievement. From an outsider's perspective, social life at Harvard is presumably overshadowed into nothingness by academics and work. The diversity of Harvard is often similarly obscured by misperceptions, the most common being that Harvard has only two kinds of people: well-bred sons and daughters of aristocratic legacies; and incessantly active bookworms, artists, leaders, and achievers. Harvard is full of hardworking individuals, but it is also full of students as human and relatable as any Jumbo, full of people as unique and friendly as they are intelligent and industrious.

Harvard students arguably get out—at least out of campus boundaries—more often than students at

Tufts. The accessibility of Harvard Square in comparison with Jumbos' analogous Davis Square is paramount. Proximity allows Harvard students the possibility of short



outings into the Square and the rest of Cambridge, while Tufts students must coordinate with the Joey's thirty-minute cycles, bloating every off campus trip with multiple waiting periods and reliance on disjointed public transport at every step such

that the simplest outing becomes debated trek. Tufts is also hindered by its T access, leading to fewer trips into Boston and surrounding areas. Thus, our student body enjoys fewer extra-campus off—we are essentially isolated to campus activities.

Harvard campus life also has many distinctions. The main difference, however, is manifest solely for the freshman class. Harvard sophomores, juniors, and seniors live in any of thirteen Houses, which are set away from Harvard Yard. Freshmen are clumped into dormitories surrounding the Yard. The intention of this clustering of freshmen dorms is to facilitate friendship and brotherhood within the incoming class. This situation stands distinct from the scattering of Tufts dorms, many of which are of mixed class.

Another illustration of this isolation of the freshman experience at Harvard is in eating halls. Consider-

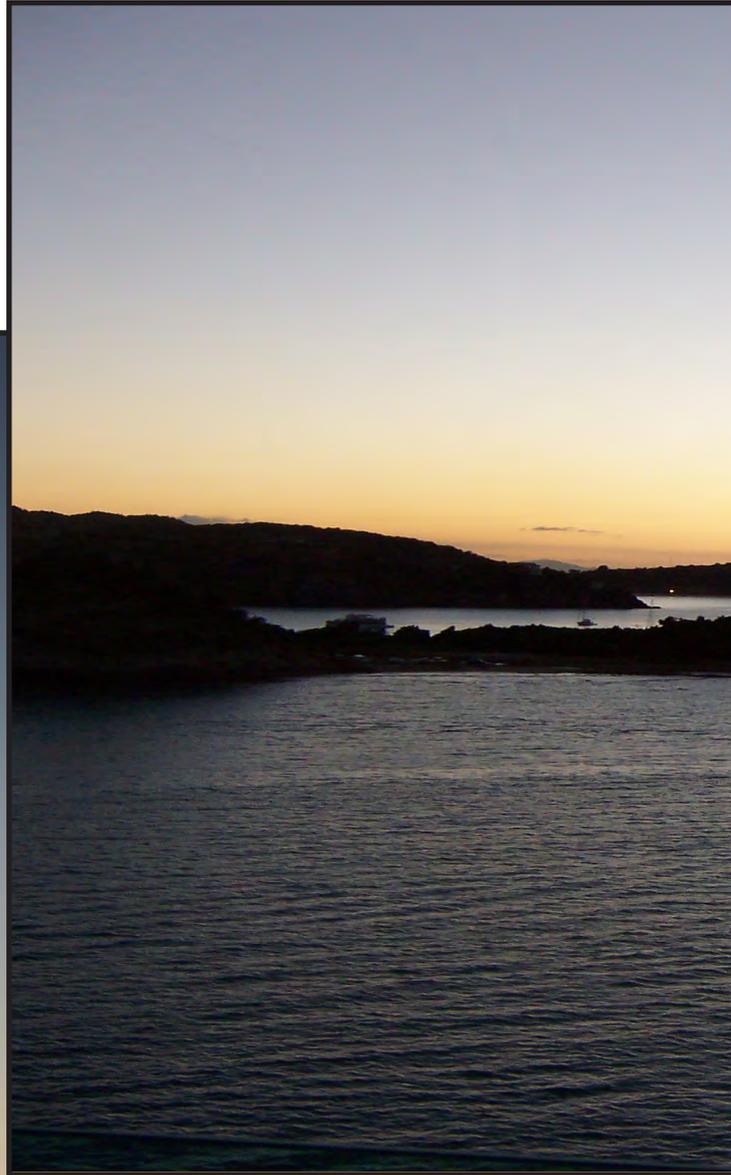
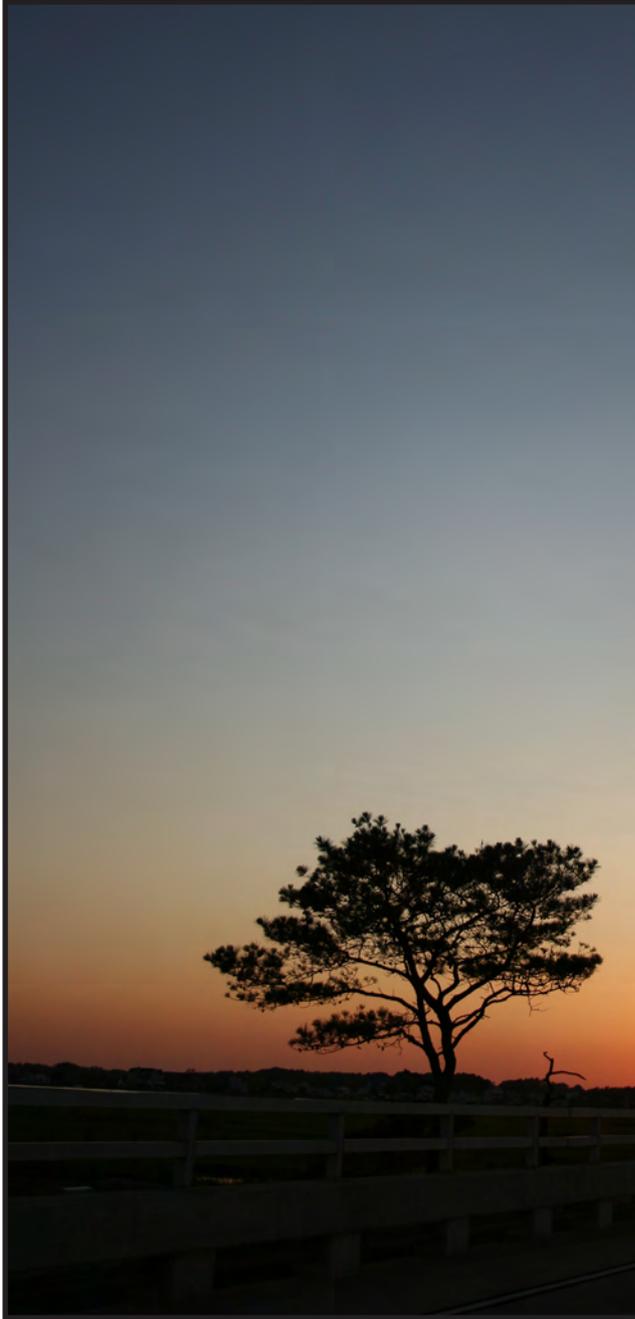
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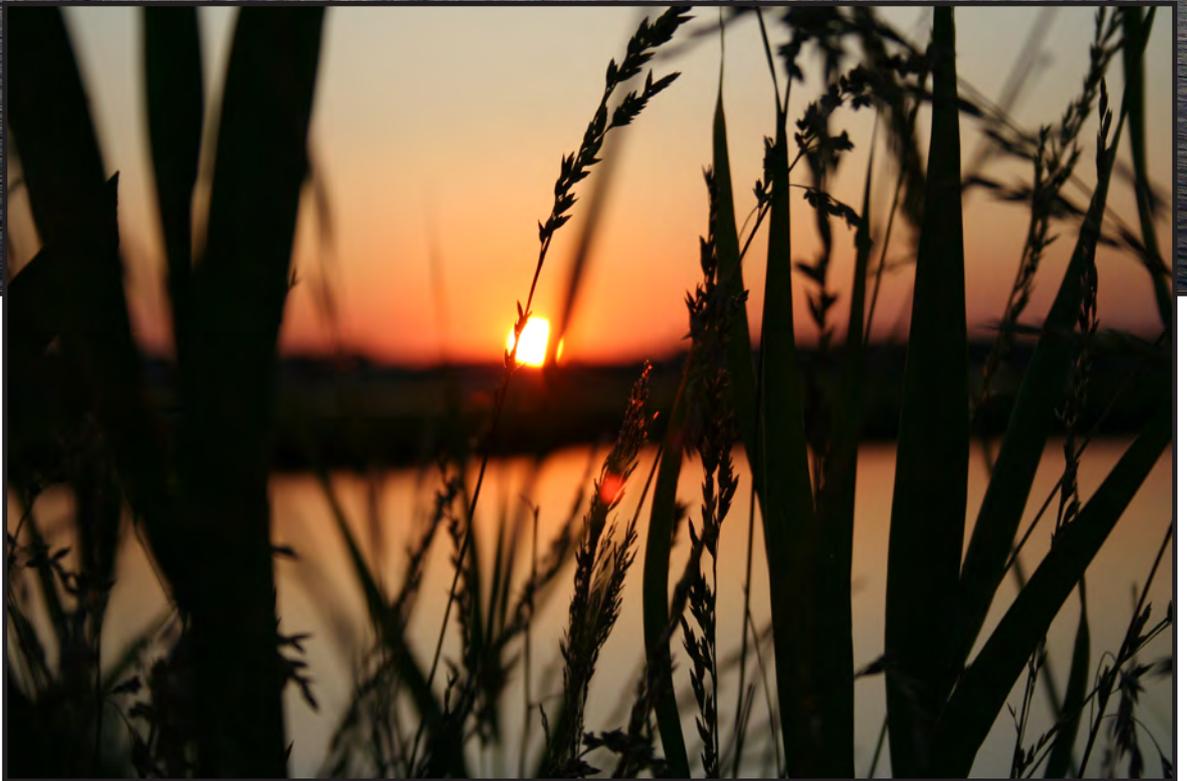
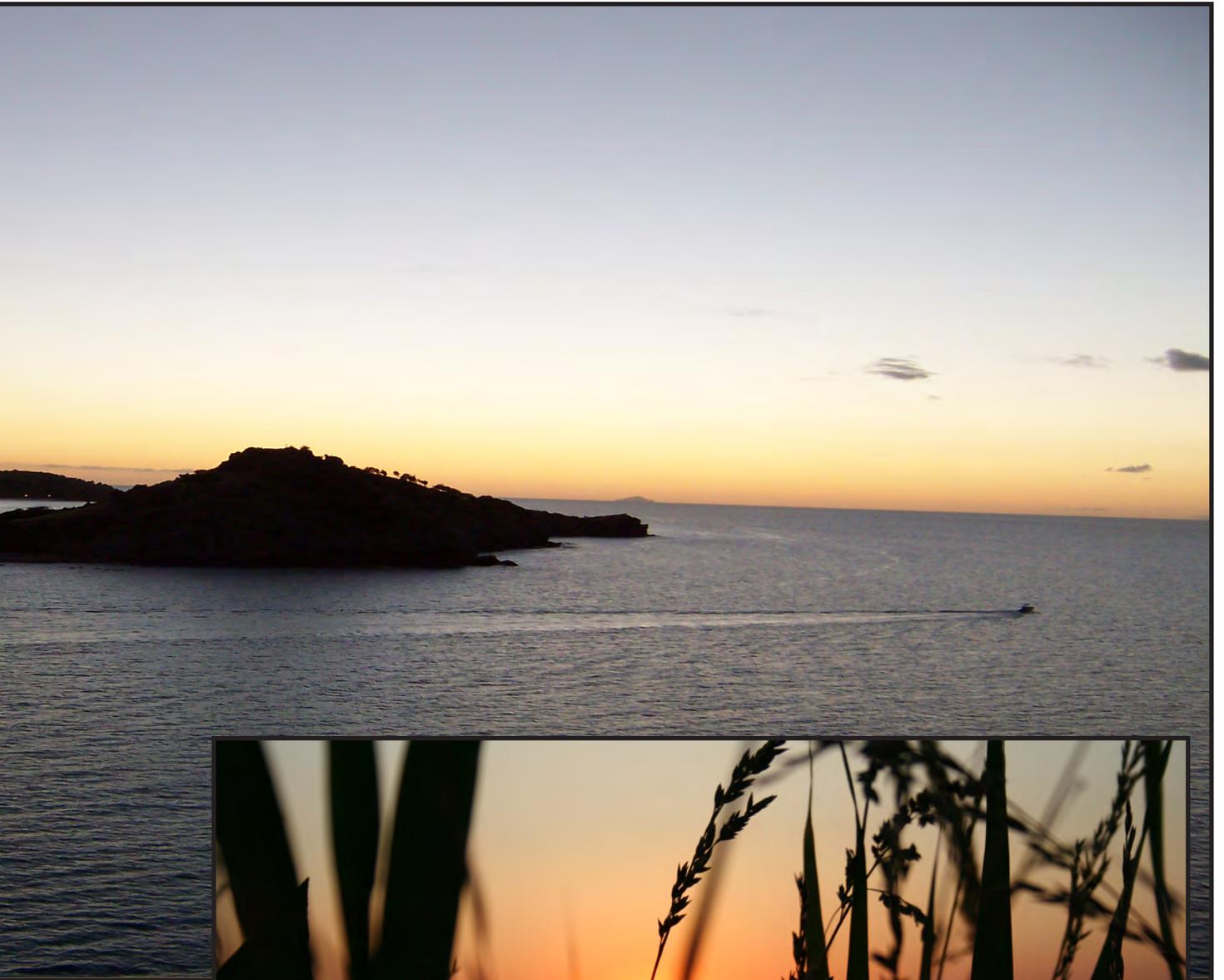


Campbell Kliefoth



Dan Rosen





Photos by Dan Rosen





Photos by Dan Rosen

RECONSIDERING:

David Foster Wallace

BY ZACHARY LAUB

Premature deaths have always been inconceivable to me, leaving me jarred and speechless. If you're older than, say, 75 when you kick the bucket, then you've had a good run. But if you arrive at the Pearly Gates much younger than that, to be frank, it downright disturbs me, partly on an instinctual gut level, but also on an intellectual one. The world never got to know all

that you could have thrown into the mix. How many artists, for example, could have been household names had they not overdosed in their wild youths? How many could have entered—and altered—our collective consciousness? We'll never know, and to me, that's the most frustrating part.

Even worse—more inconceivable, more disturbing—is when someone takes his or her own life. And worst of all, when it's a person with whom I had a relationship. So when I read the breaking news on the New York Times' homepage announcing the novelist and essayist David Foster Wallace's suicide, I didn't grow distraught. Instead, I stared dumbly at the screen, unaffected. Logic prevailed: I don't understand it, therefore it can't be true.

ANGER

I keep dwelling on the thought of Wallace's students at Pomona College, abandoned just three weeks into the new semester. I can only imagine how eager and excited his creative writing students must have been to study with a master, to craft their voices that they might resonate through the din of our generation, the same din that DFW wrote about and cut through: pornography and

vice, the Straight Talk Express, and yes, lobster festivals. Add to that the advent of YouTube and cable news' Talking Heads, and you'll be all the more grateful for the experience Wallace provides: that of exuberant contemplation.

For a man whose work was all about revealing life's absurdities and allowing us to see through them with wit and intellect, isn't suicide a cop out? Isn't that just letting the absurdities get the best of you? I keep imagining being a student of his, showing up to an empty classroom, and wondering what I would feel. Betrayal? Falseness? (Incidentally, Wallace is the editor of my writer's thesaurus.) Fair or not, his suicide strikes me as exceptionally selfish. And while he may not have been my professor, I felt nevertheless as if I was his student, and that's why the betrayal hurts so much more.

BARGAINING

Why is it that so-called creative types are prone to suicide? Can you call it selfish when they haven't given the world all they had to offer? And would Wallace agree that his death was indeed a cop-out—a betrayal of both his readers and students?

Wallace would undoubtedly have had an answer, both funny and profound, to these nagging questions. But part of his talent was that he didn't just state an-



Continued from p. 12

ing on-campus locations alone, Harvard demonstrates the constructed cohesion of its entering students. Although freshmen have the ability to make it into most any upperclassman eating halls (each residential hall has its own dining service), the illustrious Annenberg dining hall essentially remains the central freshman dining location. High-vaulted ceilings, beautiful wood-paneled walls, and stained-glass windows contain an eating area full of long tables where freshmen commune. The setup aids in the creation of friendships among the entering class, but also adds to the isolation of freshmen from the rest of undergraduate students. Tufts multiple dining options stands in contrast to Annenberg's singularity for freshmen. The increased number of on-campus food choices for Tufts freshmen creates a stronger commu-

nity integrating all classes, but with Dewick's and Carmichael's either crowded or vacant tables, many freshmen are left with the chal-

lenging situation of finding friends without the help of environments

Our only environment is on this hill. We Jumbos are an isolated—and united—herd. Traveling away from our campus home may be relatively time-consuming and difficult, but as we remain together on The Hill, housing and eating circumstances bring us even closer together, intermingling students of all years. This does, however, create difficult conditions for freshman, especially when compared to Harvard's strategically coalesced entering class. Finding a niche among myriad clubs, sports, and social groups on campus is an arduous and stressful task for a Jumbo calf. Yet as Tufts freshmen are pressed into searching for a place not within their own class—but rather in courses, organizations, and programs, they are nurtured into discovering and developing their passions and interests above the scope of social scenes. ☪



Nicolaus Bugas is a freshman who has not declared a major.

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swers. With perceptive and entertaining asides, he brought us to answers through his logic as if we had drawn those conclusions on our own.

Try as I might, I don't have the answers for these questions. And in this absurd world, I need them now more than ever before. Explain all this to me. One more essay—that's all I need.

DEPRESSION

Wallace's brilliance seems so simple in retrospect, but it took a writer of his intellect to expose just how absurd things we take for granted often are. The magnitude of the loss is staggering. I want to ask, "David Foster Wallace, how could you do this to me?" I'll admit that's selfish, but consider this: his famed essay "Consider the Lobster" is what first inspired me to aspire to a career in journalism. What began for Wallace as a freelance job covering the gimmicky Maine

Lobster Festival for *Gourmet Magazine* became a twenty page-long treatise on the ethics and neuroscience of the consumption of this crustacean. I didn't give up eating lobster afterwards, but each occasion that I'd go out for one became an intellectual exercise in morality and philosophy, just as Wallace intended. The article, an essay in the truest sense of the word (from the French essay, a trial of ideas) made me realize that journalism could be so much more than the dry prose of the *Times* or the *Journal*. Every assignment, even one as seemingly undemanding as that of a tacky food festival out in the boonies, has the potential for so much creativity, combining hilarity and commentary to leave the reader with an experience that would inevitably linger for days, or years, afterwards. With the absurd background of the lobster festival, Wallace forces each of us to ask the big questions which only begin with:

Why the guilt over lobster, and why do we continue to eat lobster despite our professed guilt? What begins as a report on a culinary festival ends with an interrogation of our morality on the broadest of scales. Here he raises just a couple of the many contradictions of American life that, with the unrivaled nimbleness of his pen, he shone a light on for us all.

ACCEPTANCE

David Foster Wallace taught me to notice the absurdity around us and that it is okay to laugh at ourselves. In fact, it's often all we can do.

But that doesn't mean that every now and then we shouldn't shed a tear. ☪

Nicolaus Bugas is a freshman who has not declared a major.

A CAMPUS UP IN SMOKE...



JAY PEPPER

In the last article I let you into my own world of smoking. Now, as promised, I will introduce you to the other types of smokers I've observed on campus.

There is a lot of overlap between the groups, and people often belong to more than one group. Some groups will be familiar, and others you may not know existed. What separates people amongst the different groups is their understanding of "pot etiquette," the etiquette of smoking weed. But those unwritten rules are another article.

The first group is the beginners. Picking up the habit can come at any time, but for most it comes freshman year. This group, the beginners, did not smoke in high school, and they try it for the first time in college. If they continue to smoke, they can work their way into many different social smoker groups.

If a beginner doesn't smoke habitually, he or she becomes the occasional smoker. This group is the one in which most Tufts students fall. They'll smoke if the weed is accessible and the time is right, but won't make a great effort to procure some green on their own.

Occasional smokers are not to be confused with the third type of user, which is also the worse type—the smoke-em-if-you-got-em smoker. These are the ones who have developed a hearty habit but never see fit to buy for themselves. They hang around parties into the twilight hours of the night,

hoping that someone, anyone, will pull out a baggy. The smoke-em-if-you-got-em smoker will then, and almost always awkwardly, weasel his or her way into the smoking group.

On the opposite end of the spectrum sits a group of smokers who enable the smoke-em-if-you-got-em users. They are the reefer jockeys, people who blaze early and often. (I call them jockeys because they are always sitting on a bag.) They might forget their keys or wallet, but they always have their weed on them.

It is important to note that reefer jockeys are not drug dealers, though they may occasionally sling a bag to a friend. It is only when they begin doing this consistently that they become dope mules.

Dope mules are the workhorses of any smoking community. They disseminate an illegal good throughout the community, but on a small, under-the-radar scale that affords casual smokers a sense of comfort and safety that sketchy townie dealers cannot provide.

There exists a group of smokers that enjoy the act of smoking as much, if not more, than the feeling it causes. Whereas some view joints and blunts as function of utility—something to smoke with—this group has refined the practice of rolling. They are marijuana artisans, crafting perfect-burning spliffs and jibs. In this group, there also exists an odd offshoot, the bong

GOING GREEN

An Alternative Culture Column
by Reggie Hubbard*



fetishists. These people worship glass creations and spend hours drooling over pictures online of gorgeous bongos, bubblers, pipes, and other paraphernalia.

Some users care less for the method of smoking and more for what's actually being smoked. They are the weed connoisseurs.

Much like a foodie might discern between the taste and texture of a cheese, or a wine snob the body and bouquet of a Merlot, weed connoisseurs savor the flavor of what their smoking. They can describe the taste of "The Purp" as a coffee ground meets lavender flavor. They can also highlight the sleep-inducing effects common to the purple strains with indica plants, as a connoisseur actually just recently told me.

The connoisseur smokes a lot, and so does the following group: the who-are-you-kidding smoker. This group is nonexistent on some campuses, but alive and well at Tufts. They are the wealthy, want-to-be hippie stoners who champion peace and free love (and, as of a year and a half ago, Obama). They wear hemp and rug sweaters and have pins on their backpacks supporting social causes only college students care about. They embody the look and demeanor

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“HE’S MAINLY A MACHINE.”
An Arts & Culture Column
by Thomas Sutherland



AN EVEN SLICKER WILLIE

Bill Maher’s documentary *Religulous* hit the screens this weekend, not surprisingly devoid of surrounding controversy.

Directed by Borat’s Larry Charles, the agnostic Maher travels the globe interviewing people of different religions—Christians, Jews, and Muslims—and splices their explanations of their faith with his own witty, rational criticisms of religions which don’t acknowledge modern science.

Firm in his criticisms, Maher especially attacks those who try to convert others in the name of their respective faiths. In a way, *Religulous* is somewhat of a counter, as if Maher is using the entire film to say them, “You might be trying to spend your time converting people to religion—I’m spending my time trying to reason people out of religion... and I’m using this movie to do it.” And for some it will probably work.

If any student body seems ready to receive Maher’s message, it’s the proudly secular humanist Tufts student body.

However, if you’re looking for two hours of senseless religious bashing, this movie isn’t for you. Maher wears his heart on his sleeve and unabashedly lets his cynical view of religion be known, but he presents his case calmly and clearly. Never does he fall back on insults alone; he always has a point to make, but doesn’t throw stones. ☪

The Best Analogies and Metaphors of 2008

Every year, in classrooms all around the country, students are learning how to write well. Here is a compilation of the worst analogies and metaphors pulled right from high school papers, submitted by real English teachers and voted on via an online teacher’s newsletter.

He spoke with the kind of wisdom that can only come from experience, like a guy who goes blind because he looked at a solar eclipse without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it and now goes around the country speaking at high schools about the dangers of looking at a solar eclipse without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it.

John and Mary had never met. They were like two humming-birds who had also never met. He was as tall as a six-foot, three-inch tree.

The revelation that his marriage of 30 years had disintegrated because of his

wife’s infidelity came as a rude shock, like a surcharge at a formerly surcharge-free ATM machine.

The young fighter had a hungry look, the kind you get from not eating for a while.

From the attic came an unearthly howl. The whole scene had an eerie, surreal quality, like when you’re on vacation in another city and Jeopardy comes on at 7:00 p.m. instead of 7:30.

Long separated by cruel fate, the star-crossed lovers raced across the grassy field toward each other like two freight trains, one having left Cleveland at 6:36 p.m. traveling west at 55 mph, the other from Topeka at 4:19 p.m. traveling east at a speed of 35 mph.

Her face was a perfect oval, like a circle that had its two sides gently compressed by a Thigh Master. ☪

Rock the Ink

BY MICHAEL TUCKER

Tattoos are everywhere now. Once the physical embodiment of counter-culture, they have worked their way into mainstream America.

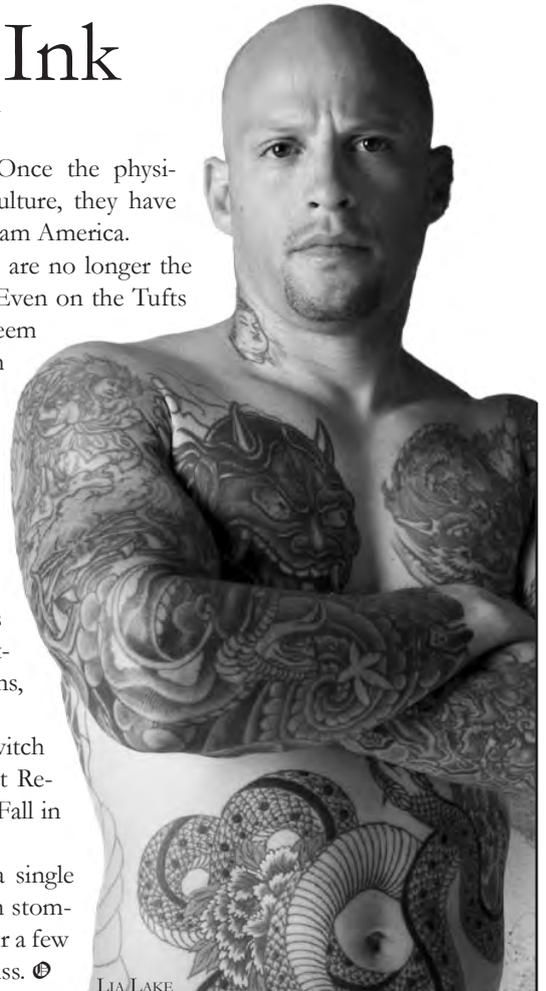
Bikers and stereotypical bad boys are no longer the exclusive titleholders to sporting ink. Even on the Tufts campus, students have tattoos and seem none too worried about hiding them after they graduate.

So far removed from the counter-culture, tattoos now have their own official festival. Clear your calendar the weekend of October 24th-26th for Rock the Ink 2008 in Providence, Rhode Island.

The festival features three nights of rock and roll, on-site tattooing, tattoo contests, local band competitions, and motor cycle exhibitions.

The headlining bands are Killswitch Engage and Godsmack, with All That Remains, Beware the Ides, and Shadows Fall in support, amongst others.

A three-day pass is \$77.50, but a single day ticket only costs \$31.50. If you can stomach the ride to Providence and fork over a few bucks, this is one you won’t want to miss. ☪



...Continued from page 19

or of stereotypical stoners, and extol a 60s mentality that Hunter S. Thompson proved was never real in the first place. The who-are-you-kidding users are the most social of smokers, often sitting around chastising the evils of the American government and our capitalistic economy, or agreeing with one another over the “obvious” appeals of socialism and Che Guevara.

I call them the who-are-you-kidding smokers because when one of them is done smoking with the group, he retreats to his room and calls mommy and daddy back home in Greenwich or New York City or Orange County and asks for more money. There is a beautiful underlying irony: these faux-hippies’ smoke sessions are funded by money earned though the economic system most of them vilify.

The who-are-you-kidding smokers aren’t bad people. They are fun to puff

with, and are often also reefer jockeys. They are not marijuana pariahs, but such a group does exist.

The pariahs are the smokers other users avoid. A good example of one can be found at any frat party past midnight—a drunk girl stumbling around, hollering, “I’m so ’effin’ drunk I just need to smoke...do you have any weed...do you have any weed?” Why one would avoid this person is obvious. Another good example of a pariah is the flat out drug user, the person who adds a grave sense of reality to any situation when he or she whips out pills and powders.

I saved this group of smokers for last because I feel all Tufts’ smokers should aspire to be like them. They are the do-everything smokers. For them, weed is just another thing to do in a full day of things to do, and they are aware of what they can and cannot do stoned.

They are intelligent and academically

active, sometimes branching out into responsible use of otherwise irresponsible drugs (see *Wired’s* article “LSD: The Geek’s Wonder Drug?” for further explanation). The do-everythings show the world that smokers can be productive, and hopefully they will one day bring about legalization.

I’ve talked a lot about the bad groups of smokers, and this is the good group. If you’re reading this during a lecture, look around. There is probably a stoned kid in there with you—and she’s probably doing better in the class.

I did not cover every group in this article, and I’m sure some of the readers have their own groups of which I’m not aware. So, there you have it—my take on the smoking groups of our own Tufts University. Now, if you feel like it, please go and smoke some pot. And if you’re already high, smoke some more. ☺

** The author writes under this pseudonym.*



HURRA TORPEDO

Putrefied shark and Celtic rituals are no longer the weirdest things to hail from Norway. From Oslo comes the best thing to happen to cover bands since Weird Al—Hurra Torpedo.

Playing together since 1993, Hurra Torpedo is most renowned for covering pop songs using only a guitar and kitchen appliances. But this isn’t a poor man’s Stomp. Instead, Hurra Torpedo channels the raw power and emotion that naturally comes from breaking stoves and ovens into surprisingly enjoyable music.

Egil Hegerberg leads the power trio, the guitarist who sports a beard of such ferocity even Leonidas would feel emasculated. He has a rich, Norwegian baritone that is equal parts Kermit the Frog, Viking, and choral singer.

The real flash of the band comes courtesy of drummer Kris-topher Schau, who uses an industrial freezer lid as a bass drum and an electric stovetop as a snare, as well as Aslag Guttormsgaard, the back-up vocalist who accents songs by slamming a 50 pound piston rod overtop an oven.

There is an appeal in the novelty of their act—seeing a band without traditional instruments is always interesting. But Hurra Torpedo’s appeal comes from one thing: the music. It could unjustly be assumed that their music is just racket, but that couldn’t be further from the case. The percussionists are shockingly crisp, a tall order considering their instruments. Hegerberg’s up-tempo chords drive the song, but are strummed softly and clean.

Covering songs such as Bonnie Tyler’s nearly three-decade old “Total Eclipse of the Heart,” Britney Spears’ “Toxic,” and Tatu’s “All the Things She Said,” Hegerberg’s thick Norwegian accent is only further exploited by his purposeful, almost comedic over pronunciation of each word in the song. It is charm-

I DON’T PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS

A Music Column
by Sam Sherman



ing, though, and early on into each song his monotone recital of the lyrics wins the listener over.

Hurra Torpedo might not make it onto many people’s list of favorites, but their light-hearted, sometimes chaotic sound sure can be appreciated by almost anyone. YouTube their cover of “Total Eclipse of the Heart” and get ready to laugh—and be ready to like what you hear. ☺





MMMMM TASTY
An Arts & Culture Column
by Jim Bloom



GRANOFF LETDOWN (And a lot of pianos)

There was much ado awhile back on our campus: we were getting a new music center. The administration was finally ponying up cash for a much needed addition to the student body, and musicians were rightfully excited.

Ushered in by an avalanche of good press and anticipation, Granoff was built. The resulting building is beautiful. The classrooms are functional and comfortable, and the performance rooms are amongst the finest I've ever seen.

Eager to make the most of my tuition check, I went to Granoff last Saturday to see what it could offer me, a fledgling musician.

I, like many Tufts students I'd imagine, have the desire to learn more about making music but don't have the funds to facilitate it. That was what originally spawned my excitement—Granoff was billed as a musicians' mecca, a building filled with instruments and performance rooms open exclusively to students.

With high standards I walked through the tall, stainless steel framed glass doors into Granoff. Guitar in hand, I made my way into the basement and began to search. "Certainly they have a guitar amp somewhere around here," I thought to myself.

I don't know why, but I thought that. If I was a reasonable being, I would have long since been accustomed to being let down by Tufts. But I had faith this time.

"That's tens of thousands of dollars of unused piano sitting in a room and I couldn't find a bass or guitar amp anywhere!"

Working through the bowels of the building, I began to notice something. There are pianos everywhere.

Room after room, students sat and played tunes on beautiful baby grands. Some were beginners, and some gracefully twinkled the ivories. To them, Granoff was

working out. They got their cut, unless each had a \$20,000 piano in his or her dorm room and played at Granoff for the hell of it. Maybe that's the case.

I now must pose another question: why are there a few dozen pianos in Granoff, totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars, and no bass or guitar amps?

There is also an African drum room, which I've never seen anyone in, and I'd argue that there are more guitarists and bassists than world drum percussionists at Tufts. It simply doesn't make any sense.

There is not one reason why Granoff should not have guitar or bass amps.

They won't be stolen if their mounted or bolted down, they won't be blown out if their volume is capped, and they won't be physically damaged if they are only slightly protected. All the risks of giving the student body access to pianos is reduced relative to giving them access to amps.

Again, it simply doesn't make any sense. In Granoff there are baby grand pianos in practice rooms. There are grand pianos in classrooms. There are pianos in random places. I did not go to the bathrooms in Granoff, but I'd bet at least one has a piano.

I even accidentally stumbled into a room with three covered grand pianos. That's tens of thousands of dollars of unused piano sitting in a room and I couldn't find a bass or guitar amp anywhere!

I understand that a lot of the pianos are donated, and that's a good thing. But did no one realize when budgeting Granoff that they were turning a blind eye to a large portion of the musical community? A few guitar and bass amps would please a lot of practicing musicians and only set the school back a few thousand dollars, far less than a single piano. ☹

'JOKE DRY LIKE DESERT'



haikus are quite fun
sometimes they do not make sense
refrigerator

What do you think about Granoff? Visit www.tuftsobserver.org and comment on this article.

Oasis in Medford

Just That For a Meat Lover

BY KATIE CHRISTIANSEN

I've always been more of a Davis Square or Boston Avenue type of girl when it comes to exploring nearby off-campus places to eat. For a quick, no hassle meal away from Tufts, even getting to Harvard Square can be frustrating, given the Joey's track record and the \$4.00 round trip price of the T. So when looking for a place to have a delicious and fun birthday meal with some friends, I followed the advice of a couple in-the-know foodies and booked it to Oasis.

Located less than a mile from campus, it's a perfect warm-weather walk and certainly doable on not-so-nice days as well; either way, it's totally worth it. For meat lovers, this is heaven. Pork, chicken, beef, sausages, hearts, livers—you name it, they roast it. And, unlike most places, you can see and smell your meat sizzling on an open spit as you walk in the door. Mystery meat no more! The meat is carved freshly onto your plate, hot off the spit, so a carnivore could not ask for anything better. And don't worry if you're a vegetarian; although meat is Oasis' specialty, they also cater to those who choose to follow the veggie path.

Traditional Brazilian barbecue, called churrasco, originated in southern Brazil and luckily for us has now made its way to our very own Medford. Various types of meats are either placed on a grill or, more traditionally, held up with spits and rotated for a more even roast. The preparation seems fairly simple—sea salt and garlic are rubbed on the meat—yet the prepared meat has a surprisingly complex taste. The slow cooking on the spits ensures that the meat is juicy, tender, and flavorful.

There are two main entrée options at Oasis: you can either order à la carte or pick from the not-so-standard buffet. The à la carte menu offers dishes such as fried yucca with hot beef jerky, fajitas, pasta, and five specifically vegetarian selections. Both are great choices, but the buffet is hard to

pass up since it is all-you-can-eat for \$9.99.

Among the offerings are mashed potatoes, tomato and hearts of palm salad, fried plantains, black beans, chicken stew, cucumber salad, and a variety of other interesting and delectable choices. It's a pretty "sweet deal" when you can go out with twelve people and the only effort required to pay the check is throwing down a ten and a couple ones. And keep in mind that the price includes just about as much food as you can fit into your digestive system. A lot of food plus a small amount of money equals a fabulous meal.

Dessert is not included in the buffet, but for the price it may as well be. An assortment of puddings, including passionfruit and rice, as well as flan and various other Brazilian sweet treats are under four dollars—and the servings are generous.

One of the best things about Oasis is that it caters to all tastes. For those with more conservative taste buds, the grilled chicken with rice and beans is a wonderful and flavorful option. At the same time, for those who yearn to try something totally new and a little out there, this is the perfect place. You can do all the exploring and experimenting you want for just ten dollars. Beat that Hotung. Oasis is interesting and delicious for anyone, and it is certainly true to its name—it's an oasis for any true meat lover appalled by Dewick's beef tips. ☺

Oasis is located at 373 Main Street in Medford. To book a reservation, call (781) 396-8337. Oasis also offers delivery and take out.



COURTESY OF OASIS



ELIZABETH ROBERTS

The Search for Boston's **Best** Chinese: Vinh-Sun Takes the Cake

BY EMILY ROITMAN

I like Chinese food. Growing up in a small suburb on Long Island, good Chinese cuisine definitely existed in abundance. My town had everything from kosher sit-down Chinese restaurants to those hole-in-the-wall places with decades-old gumball machines and blown-up pictures of the dishes above the countertops.

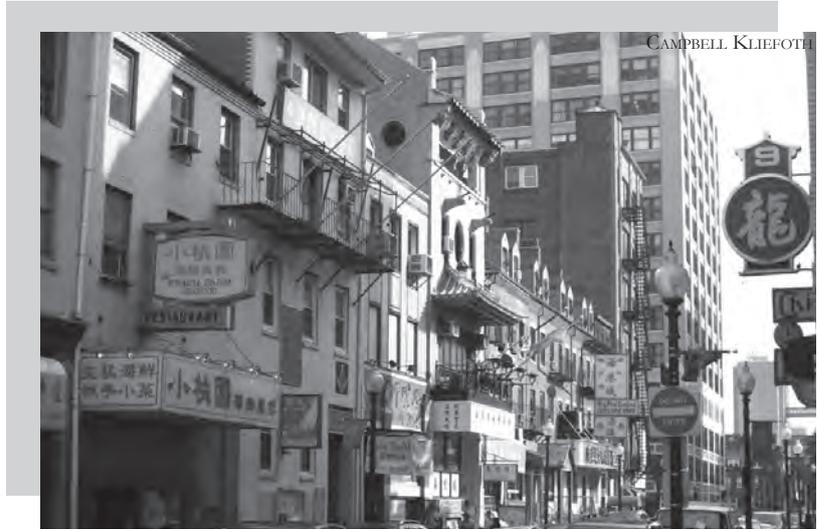
When I first got to Tufts, I was told by a few senior sages in my circle that Rose's was the best option for Chinese food near campus. So I tried it—and I can still remember staring into the take-out box wondering if the Rose's staff had even bothered to glance at my greasy sweet-and-sour chicken at any stage during the cooking process. Clearly, this could not be the best that the area had to offer. So I kept looking.

During a winter snowstorm that happened in February of my sophomore year, I discovered Sugar and Spice, an amazing Thai restaurant that temporarily fulfilled my craving for delicious fried rice and flavorful pad Thai. It remains one of my favorite places to eat—but it still wasn't the Chinese food I had been hoping for.

The search continued with Somerville's Taipei Tokyo, where I was sorely disappointed by dry-as-sand steamed chicken and chewy scallops. I got excited for a bit when an Asian Fusion menu landed in my mailbox during my junior year move-in. Still furniture-less, I plopped down on my living room floor to sample some General Tso's chicken. The process was a bit like spelunking; I managed to excavate very little chicken, but I did locate a few hundred pieces of celery. Clearly, this was not the jackpot either.

Having nearly given up on good Chinese food near Tufts, I was excited when a friend of mine suggested a T-ride to Boston's Chinatown for dinner. I had only been to Chinatown a few times for fabulous Malaysian dinners at Penang (located at 685 Washington St.). If there was good Chinese in Boston, it was going to be in Chinatown.

So I happened upon Vinh-Sun, a neigh-



CAMPBELL KLIEFOTER

borhood restaurant that caters both to the locals in Chinatown and the professionals at Tufts Medical Center. After a quick five-minute walk from South Station, we passed through the Chinatown gates and took in the atmosphere. Officers with reflective vests that read "Chinatown Crime Watch" perused the streets in search of troublemakers. The smell of pork buns wafted out the door of a Chinese bakery where a dozen people had queued up to satisfy their sweet tooth. Someone had neatly strung a line of glazed, whole roasted ducks in the window of another restaurant on Beach Street. I began to get a good feeling about Boston's Chinatown.

Our meal at Vinh-Sun began with a double order of scallion pancakes, which arrived at our table piping hot with a pair of spicy and sweet dipping sauces. The fried triangular treats were crispy, yet tender. The potency of the onion flavor melded nicely with the soft, doughy texture. Between my friend and I, we discovered that a double order meant sixteen slices. And the price was only \$2.95 per order.

Although the menu at Vinh-Sun offered a variety of wacky and unusual options, including "Frog Meat Porridge" and "Pork Innards with Seafood," I selected the Chicken with Garlic Sauce. It smelled incredible, and the plate was laden with mushrooms

and peppers. Cautiously spearing a piece of chicken with my fork, I tasted the juicy meat. The whole dish was infused with hot chili sauce, and had been cooked for enough time to allow the flavors to deliciously blend together. The dish was absolutely amazing, but not meant for the faint of heart—those who appreciate super spicy food will love it. I had finally found what I had been looking for in Boston's Chinese food.

A few more trips to Vinh-Sun confirmed the mouth-watering freshness of the fish used to make their signature seafood noodle dishes. Fans of tapioca-ball bubble tea will be pleased to try the myriad varieties sold at Vinh-Sun that whiz by on a moment-to-moment basis on server's trays. While there are treats for those who make it to dessert, the sweetest part of the meal for some may be the light-on-the-wallet check. On my most recent trip, we ordered the scallion pancakes, a heaping plate of fried rice, fried wontons, and two enormous, heaping entrees—all for the surprisingly low price of \$26.50. If you're looking for a bargain in Chinatown that doesn't compromise fresh, delicious food, stop by at Vinh-Sun for an authentic taste of the Far East. ☺

Vinh-Sun is located at 58 Beach Street and is an easy T-ride away on the Red Line to South Station. Hours are 8a.m.-12a.m., Monday through Friday.



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

Conflict of Interest at Med. School

Dr. Marvin Konstam, a heart specialist at the Medical school who is also a medical director for a private medical company in California, has been accused of having a conflict of interest by a US Senator. Senator Charles Grassley, an Iowa Republican known for singling out such cases, accused Dr. Konstam last week of impropriety in a letter to the National Institute of Health. University administrators have pledged to work with the Senator to address the issues he raised, but insists

TUPD Uses Pepper Spray

At a tropical-themed dance held at Dewick Hall on the night of October 4, a TUPD officer used pepper spray to disperse

a fight that had erupted on the dance floor. The officer apparently felt that her safety was at risk. No arrests were made and no injuries were reported.

Anti-Tufts Op-Ed in the Journal

A September 26 Wall Street Journal opinion piece by Ashley Samelson, a 2007 Tufts graduate, paints an ugly picture of female culture at Tufts. She describes a hostile environment toward women at Tufts, writing, "I often overheard young women discussing their shame after feeling pressured by their girlfriends to participate in a degrading activity."

Tufts Celebrates T.J. Anderson

T.J. Anderson, a long-time Tufts pro-

fessor, leader in the music department, and one of the first prominent African-American classical composers, was honored at a three-day music festival on campus over weekend of October 3. The event coincided with his 80th birthday. Professor Anderson was the chair of the music department from 1972 to 1980.

Tufts Trustees Takes Over DuPont

Ellen Kullman, a member of Tufts' board of trustees, will take over as CEO at the DuPont corporation next week. She will be the third current Tufts board member to lead a Fortune 50 company. ☺

— compiled from a variety of sources, including the Tufts Daily and Boston Globe



TICK

BY KRISTEN BARONE

T ick...tick...tick...

Every movement of the second hand was the catalyst for another wave of nausea and dizziness. Sybil's arm was throbbing under the brand new cast that protected it, and all she could feel was the lancing pain of the broken bone underneath. The doctor had said that she was lucky the bone hadn't completely shattered. Sybil didn't feel lucky. The painkillers she had been given made her head swim and her stomach turn with every breath. She was exhausted, but the last thing she wanted to do was go to sleep.

The air in the waiting room was stale and stuffy, and the white walls reflected the fluorescent light like sterile mirrors. All around her were anxious family members and loved ones, waiting with nails bitten to the quick for any kind of news. She watched as their emotions evolved from worry to hopelessness to desperation. Waiting was the worst fate.

Closing her eyes, Sybil took some deep breaths and fought off the sickening twists of her roiling insides. Every time she tried to take her mind off of her present condition, however, she was interrupted by the harsh slaps of the second hand. Tick...tick...TICK. She looked around, wondering if anyone else was disturbed by the clock hanging in front of her. All she saw was a sea of blank faces, each one withdrawn into his or her own particular horror show. Maybe she was a terrible person for being so bothered by a clock when there was something much more important going on but...TICK.

"This is ridiculous," she muttered under her breath. The woman sitting a few chairs down from her shot a reproachful glance in her direction, as if to chastise Sybil for not being as concerned and as worried as she was. "Sorry," Sybil whispered.

The hum of the air conditioning coming to life coaxed a small sigh of relief out of Sybil, which earned her a huff of disapproval from the woman. She rolled her eyes and pretended to ignore her neighbor, who obviously cared enough about Sybil's business for the both of them. She imagined what sort of

outrageous action would offend the woman more: humming quietly to herself or attempting to do the crossword in the newspaper. The entrance of two new people into the now-cooler room kept Sybil from further antagonizing the nosy woman.

The first man looked to be in his mid-forties and had the air of a person who would much rather be sitting in his office attending to matters of consequence instead of being inconvenienced by personal issues. He walked stiffly and with a large amount of self-importance, as if he was used to people staring at him with a mixture of awe and fear. Sybil could just imagine the man striding down a wood-paneled hallway with feeble secretaries and interns quaking against the walls. This man was too important for waiting rooms, too busy to be annoyed by the unbearably loud ticking of that damn clock. In fact, as soon as he sat down, he glanced at his watch twice, as if he had to make sure that the time was in fact passing. He sighed heavily, yet Nosy Nancy never sent a judgmental

“Every time she tried to take her mind off of her present condition, however, she was interrupted by the harsh slaps of the second hand.”

glance his way.

If the two hadn't arrived together, Sybil never would have guessed that the other person was in any way connected to the pompous man with the briefcase. He was probably the same age as Sybil, and he was in every way the opposite of the man she could only assume to be his father. His dark hair was ruffled and shaggy, unlike the older man's perfectly combed and trimmed coif. The boy's dark brown eyes were worried and brooding, and he seemed to be lost in his own thoughts, unconcerned with the time and the inconvenience of the waiting room. His jeans were riddled with little tears that were obviously not strategically placed by some clothing manufacturer for maximum appeal. His dark sweatshirt bore the logo of a band that Sybil loved, and she imagined starting up a conversation with him about...TICK.

The rude interruption of the second

hand caused Sybil to realize that she was staring, and she quickly looked away. Only a moment later, though, she stealthily glanced back to see that the boy and his father were arguing in heated whispers. Obviously horrified of "making a scene," the father stared coldly at his son, as if to freeze the boy's passionate responses with his disapproval. The dark-haired boy glared hotly at the older man and stood up abruptly. He walked right past the wide eyes of Nosy Nancy and plopped down only one seat away from Sybil. The father whispered, "Damien!" just once, but then decided to cut his losses and proceeded to ignore his rebellious son's existence.

The close proximity of a fellow human being in this room full of apprehensive zombies caused Sybil's head to spin in a completely different way. She desperately wanted to casually begin a conversation with her new comrade, but, as usual, she was struck by paralyzing timidity. Plus, she would probably just say something completely inappropriate, like how annoying that clock was. She was convinced that her seatmate had many more important things to think about than some girl's odd obsession with ticking. Just in case, though, she snuck a peek at his face to see his reaction to...TICK. To her surprise, he glanced up in annoyance at the innocent-looking clock in front of Sybil. She smiled triumphantly, sending Nosy Nancy a mental "so there." Before she had time to

look away, the dark-haired boy turned his eyes toward her. Immediately, Sybil froze with that embarrassing smile still etched on her lips as an even more mortifying blush flooded her face. Luckily, the boy didn't seem to notice and merely graced her with a small, distracted smile of his own before looking away. The ability to move returned, and Sybil quickly turned away, retreating into a bubble of self-loathing.

Trying to draw her attention away from her shining moment of idiocy, Sybil imagined a life in which she was not completely socially inept. Perhaps in that life, she could have done more than stupidly grin and blush when that guy had looked over. They could have started talking, and maybe he would have taken her mind off of her aching arm and the nausea and... She wondered what kind of life it would be if a guy like that was genuinely interested in her. Unfortunately, in the life she had been given, no one like that would ever even give

her a second glance, especially not now. Sybil closed her eyes for just a moment, wanting so badly to escape this horrible reality that she found herself condemned to. She waited for the next tick of the second hand to jar her out of her reverie, but the sound never came.

Her eyes snapped open. The room seemed brighter, even a little hazy, after the brief respite in the darkness behind her eyelids. The absence of the ticking clock left a ringing in her ears, and she looked up at it in confusion.

The second hand had stopped midway between the hash marks around the face of the clock and seemed trapped in between the two, moving forward only to be snapped back to its former place. Sybil raised an eyebrow and got up to look at the clock. She tentatively tapped the face with a fingernail, but the second hand remained in limbo.

"Huh," she murmured. "That's weird."

"That happened once to the clock in my bathroom," an unfamiliar voice chimed in.

Sybil whirled around and realized that the speaker was the guy who had been sitting next to her. He smiled at her and stood up to join her. Sybil could

practically feel the eyes of Nosy Nancy burning holes in the back of her head as she turned to look back at the clock.

The boy took the clock off of the wall and turned it over. The back of it had no screws or latches where the batteries should be, however, and his brow furrowed in confusion. Seeming at a loss, he knocked on the back a few times and shook the odd timepiece but to no avail. Shrugging, he put the clock back on the wall and watched the second hand's strange dance for a few moments before turning to Sybil.

"Nothing to be done, I guess," he told her, almost apologetically.

"That's the strangest clock I've ever seen," Sybil grumbled, still staring at the former annoyance.

It took her a few moments before she realized that Nosy Nancy wasn't the only one staring at the back of her head now. Blushing once again, she slowly turned her head and saw that her clock-compatriot was looking at her with that same barely-there smile he had worn

on his face earlier. Sybil tried her damndest to play it cool but as soon as she looked into his warm brown eyes she felt- dizzy, I'm spinning madly like a child's Technicolor top and the more I try to stop myself the faster I twirl into this smoky mad-hatter world where there are no white rabbits, only his eyes...

"Hey, are you okay?" His voice snapped her out of her strange daydream and back to sterile reality. She blinked once and cleared her throat, thoroughly embarrassed once again. Sybil felt herself drop several notches in the "playing it cool" scale, landing herself firmly in the "deranged loser" zone. Time to recover gracefully, she thought.

"Um...My name's Sybil." She winced as soon as the words clumsily tumbled out of her mouth. Surprisingly, the boy simply chuckled quietly and stuck out his hand.

"Nice to meet you, Sybil. I'm Damien." Sybil looked dumbly at his outstretched hand before grasping it a little too tightly. The warmth of his hand as it closed around hers made Sybil melt a little inside. Still holding onto her hand for reasons unknown but not unwelcome, Damien whispered conspiratorially, "Let's blow this pop stand."

Sybil giggled childishly and let him lead her out of the dead air of the waiting room- away from nausea, Nosy Nancy, and the hovering second hand.



Lookin' Ahead

Like Other Countries?

Study Abroad General Interest Meeting
 Become savvy to policies, procedures and options
 Dowling 745A, Friday, October 24 2:30-3:15

Parents' Weekend

Friday, October 17th:
 Parent's weekend guided tour of gallery exhibitons
 Tufts University Art Gallery, 12:30-1:15

Wednesday, October 1st

At 12:25 a.m., a heated argument erupted between two roommates regarding the placement of a recyclable pretzel container in the trash. The tense standoff was quickly dispelled by Tufts Police, who advised both parties to calm down. This is clearly a sign of Tufts' deep-rooted commitment to environmentalism, but it seems that Tufts' respect for this ideal could benefit from "sustainable communication" skills.

POLICE BLOWTHER

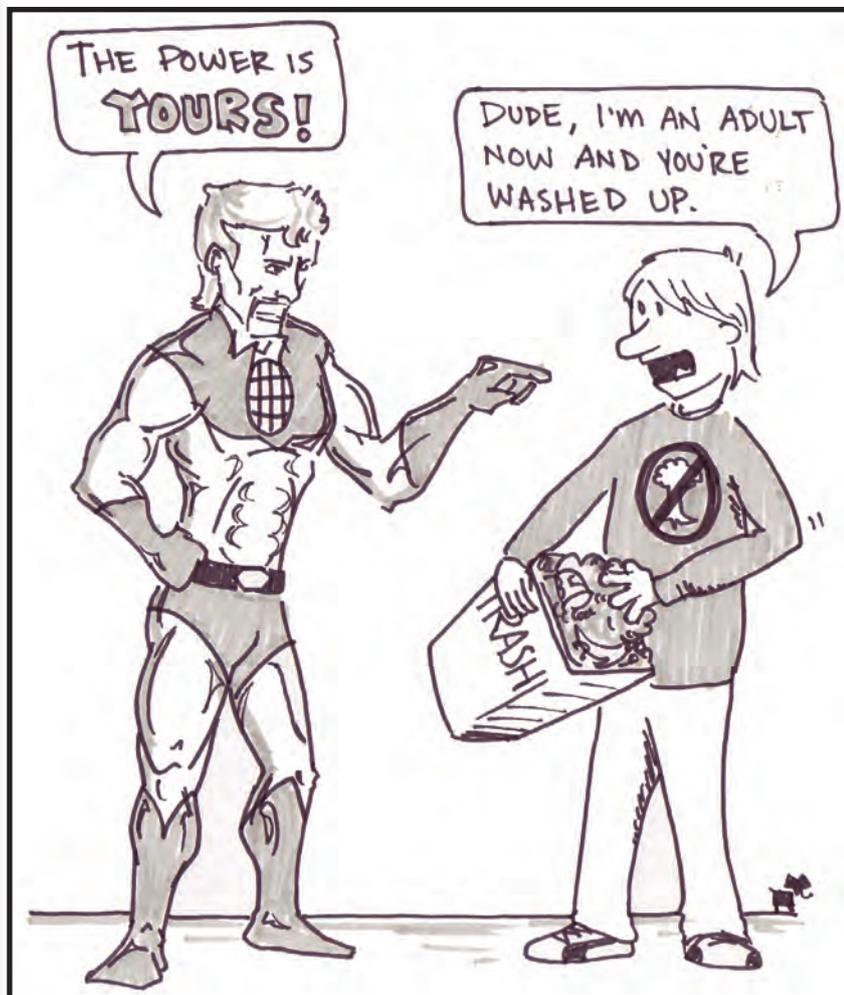
Wednesday, October 1st

At 11 a.m., TUPD received a call from the Medford Police Department inviting them to "meet up" at an antiques store on Boston Ave. and North Street. Though not a date, there was good news for TUPD regarding the suspicious sale of a used laptop. Tufts Police contacted the suspected owner who verified that his computer had vanished during a fire drill on 23 Packard Ave. the Saturday before. The computer was stolen back by TUPD and the seller was arrested by MPD for receiving stolen property.

Sunday, October 5th

TUPD, along with TEMS and an ambulance team responded to a medical call in Dewick Dining Hall at 7:45 p.m. The unresponsive patient, an adult TUDS employee, received CPR and was rushed to Somerville Hospital. Sadly, he passed away that night in the Hospital.

—Compiled and Illustrated by Ryan Stolp





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