


# TUFTS OBSERVER

TUFTS' STUDENT MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 14, 2007



**Who  
can say  
what?**

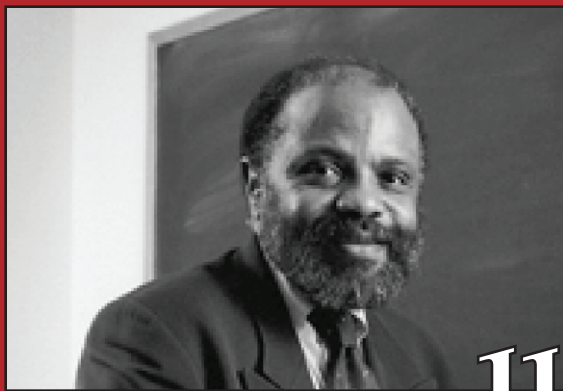
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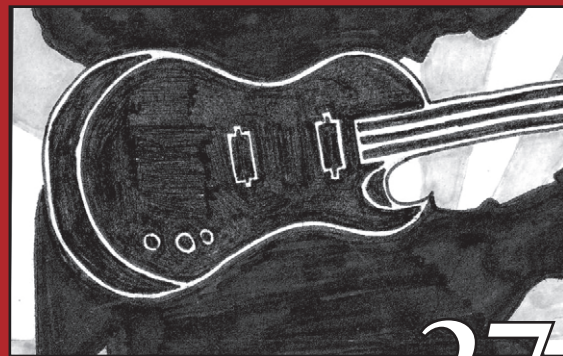
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The Observer has been Tufts' weekly publication of record since 1895. Our dedication to in-depth reporting, journalistic innovation, and honest dialogue has remained intact for over a century. Today, we offer insightful news analysis, cogent and diverse 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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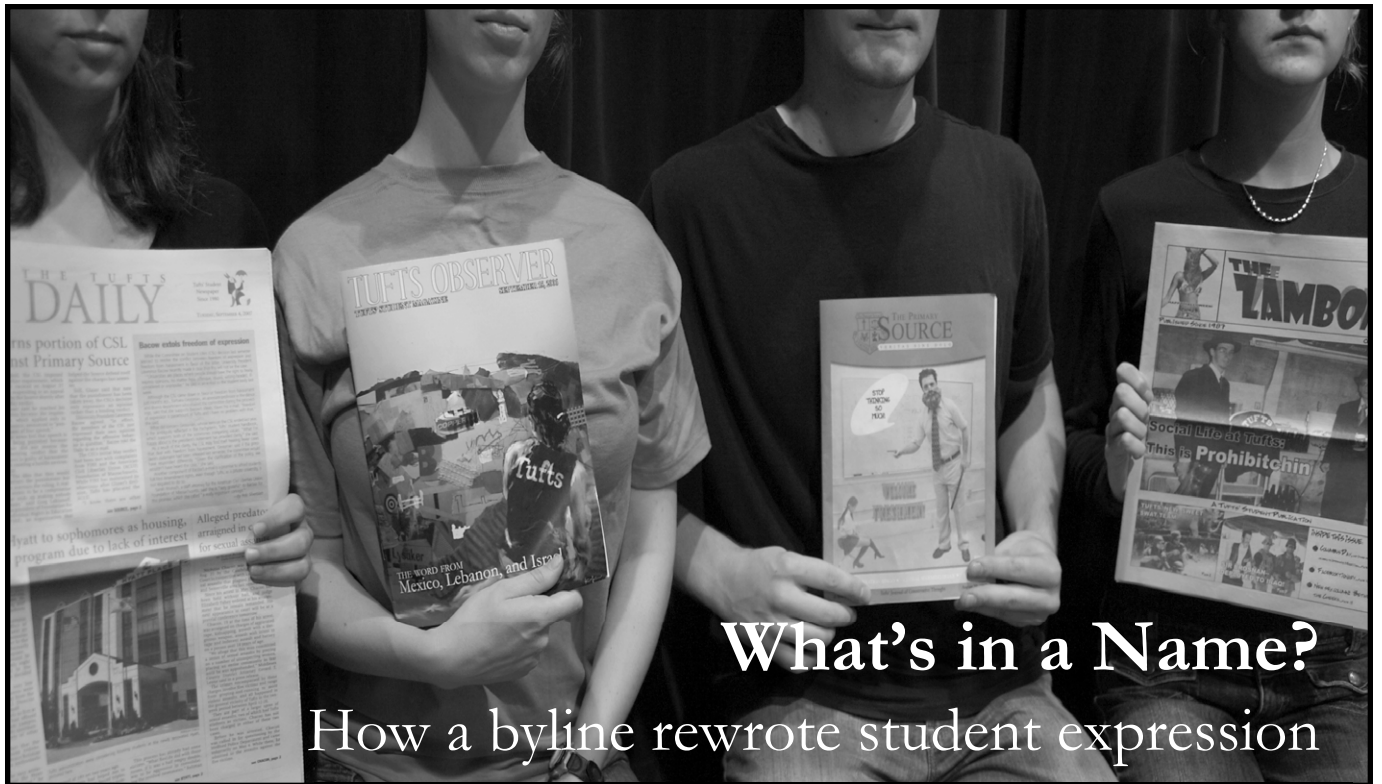
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## What's in a Name? How a byline rewrote student expression

BY DUNCAN PICKARD

It is a story known well. A Tufts student-faculty committee finds that the *Primary Source* “reflects poor editorial practice” that does not “meet the high journalistic standards Tufts expects of its publications.” The committee members “challenge...campus publications” to be “fair and responsible” and affirm the view that community flourishes when people adhere to “basic principles of conduct.”

This might sound a lot like the Committee on Student Life (CSL) decision about the *Primary Source* in May (see the timeline below for the summary), but it actually comes from a decision made in 2002. The CSL condemned the *Source* for a graphic in a special section that made sexual references to the female leader of a student advocacy organization and struggled with handing down a consequence to a publication protected by the freedom of the press. The committee did not find the *Source* guilty of sexual harassment, as was the claim, and resolved to make a list of standards for student journalists to follow.

No such list was developed.

Then, last May, two students brought a complaint to the CSL, charging that the *Source* had harassed them and created a hostile environment with two unsigned

special sections: “O Come All Ye Black Folk” from December, and “Islam—Arabic Translation: Submission” in April. The CSL this time found the *Source* responsible for the claims brought against them, imposed a requirement that all articles in the *Source* must have bylines, and recommended that the student Senate consider the morality of groups when funding them. Undergraduate dean Jim Glaser overturned the byline requirement after an appeal made last August.

If the CSL condemned the *Source* in a similar way five years ago, then why do people carry the same complaints against student journalists today? Without quantifiable standards, what is okay and what is not on the Tufts campus, and how do we respond to speech that we find offensive? What is the role of a judicial body like the CSL in regulating journalism?

### Gavel Journalism

The CSL justified its position by writing that, while its members recognize that freedom of expression is one of the nation’s “founding principles,” “tolerance and respect for diversity are core values at Tufts” and are exemplified in the University’s non-discrimination policy. Their decisions are grounded in the conclusion that “Tufts, as a private institution,

has an obligation to uphold” that policy.

“Our campus should be a place where students feel safe, respected, and valued. Freedom of speech should not be an unfettered license to violate the rights of other members of the community, without recourse,” the CSL wrote in their decision.

A primary reason that Dean Glaser overturned the CSL’s byline restriction is that, in his opinion, it is a violation of the First Amendment. “There’s a whole conversation to be had about whether requiring bylines restricts freedom of expression,” he said. “But that’s not what’s most important here. What’s important is that assigning a penalty in the context of a judicial decision against a publication violated the freedom of expression.”

Dean Glaser vacated the only part of the decision that required journalists to take particular action. Because of this, University counsel Dickens Mathieu believes “that the CSL’s decision in this case will not have long-lasting implications for the student press.”

Dean Glaser reached this decision after consultation with President Larry Bacow, student affairs Dean Bruce Reitman, and other top administrators. “Dean Glaser and I talked over the summer, and he consulted with University counsel, but the decision was his,” said President Bacow in an e-mail.

President Bacow wrote that, while Tufts is not bound by First Amendment expression



requirements like public universities are, he intends to preside over the University as if it were. Kim Thurler, the University's public relations director, told the Student Press Law Center that the intent of President Bacow's statement was to "eliminate judicial review of speech that is simply unpopular or controversial." The president intends to solidify this opinion in University policy with the trustees. "In retrospect, I think that the CSL was ill-advised to hear this case," said President Bacow in an email.

"The implication of President Bacow's announcement is that there will be no 'judicial' recourse at Tufts to contest controversial statements by the press," said Mr. Mathieu. Despite President Bacow's intentions, the CSL's response to a similar case might be different, until the Trustees vote on a new policy next semester. "Given that there have been no changes in policy yet, I suspect that we would hear a [case similar to last May's]," said Ken Orians, biology professor and incoming CSL faculty chair. "We need to examine our policies in relation to the Pachyderm and to the principles of free speech."

Clara Chan (A'10), a member of the CSL last year and its only returning student member, is not sure that a judicial body should be left out of decisions regarding publications. When the CSL deliberated on their original decision, "we struggled trying to find the right balance between protecting students and protecting student rights," said Ms. Chan. "A publication should be able to get what they want out there, to share what they think. But publications should also do a better job of respecting students. We also think they should make their intentions clearer in their publications, making their argument easier to understand. We thought that requiring bylines would help with that."

Ms. Chan also feels that publications should be held to a higher standard of responsible speech because they can reach more people at one time than a single person, and are therefore more capable of creating a hostile environment.

She does not rule out the possibility of punishing a student individually for what they publish in a campus magazine. "If

there were bylines, I think the individuals instead of the publication might have been brought for disciplinary action," she said. "In that case, punishment could be justified from the dean of students."

"Most of the campus was pretty outraged by what they published, so we felt justified in our decision," said Ms. Chan. "We thought that requiring bylines would force the *Source* to carefully consider what they publish and make it more clear before it goes to print. We felt like no one took individual responsibility for what they published. We felt like they were hiding behind their anonymity, and that hurt the clarity of their argument."

Dean Reitman disagrees with Ms. Chan. "If someone was calling you over

bara Grossman said: "The *Primary Source* can continue to print what it chooses, but it should not have the shelter of anonymity from which to launch hurtful attacks."

Dean Reitman disagrees. "The difficult part about the CSL decision and why I was beginning to see it as censorship was that the byline requirement was imposed on only one publication," he said. "If you do it with all publications then you're saying we have a standard at the University. If you do it to just one organization and not the others, then it's a punishment as opposed to a set principle."

Dean Reitman said that, in January, the president and other administrators thought it was a "good idea" to apply a byline requirement to all organizations, a legislated policy decision as opposed to a punishment. "But does it still create an environment that is a chill one for writing?" Dean Reitman said. "You could debate that forever. And how do you enforce it?" The administration dropped the idea.

National civil rights organizations also supported Dean Glaser's decision. "By issuing this decision, Tufts University is saying that its students are not strong enough to live with freedom," Foundation for Individual Rights in Education president Greg Lukianoff said in a May statement. "Tufts knows that the proper cure for speech one dislikes is more speech — but it has instead elected to meet controversial speech with repression."

"Despite readers' curiosity and the public's interest in identifying the creator of a work of art, an author generally is free to decide whether or not to disclose his or her true identity," wrote Sarah Wunsch, a staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (ACLU) in a letter to the Tufts administration. "The decision in favor of anonymity may be motivated by fear of economic or official retaliation, by concern about social ostracism, or merely by a desire to preserve as much of one's privacy as possible. An author's decision to remain anonymous...is an aspect of the freedom of speech protected by the First Amendment."

Dean Glaser's reaffirmation of the right of student expression was rare for the administration of a private university, ac-



and over again after you asked them not to, that's not freedom of expression. That's harassment," said Dean Reitman. "But a publication can't do that. There's no such mechanism."

### The Byline Requirement

At least at one time, President Bacow thought requiring bylines would be a good solution to the problem. "What is particularly troubling about the *Source* article is that yet again a discrete minority within our community has been singled out for ridicule," wrote President Bacow in a April 24 Viewpoint in the *Tufts Daily* condemning the Islamic parody. "And once again, the article is unsigned. No one seems willing to take personal responsibility for this particular expression of opinion." And in defending her committee's decision, faculty chair Bar-



ERIN BALDASSARI PHOTOS

Jim Glaser, dean of undergraduate education, believes that the right to offend comes with the responsibility to respond.

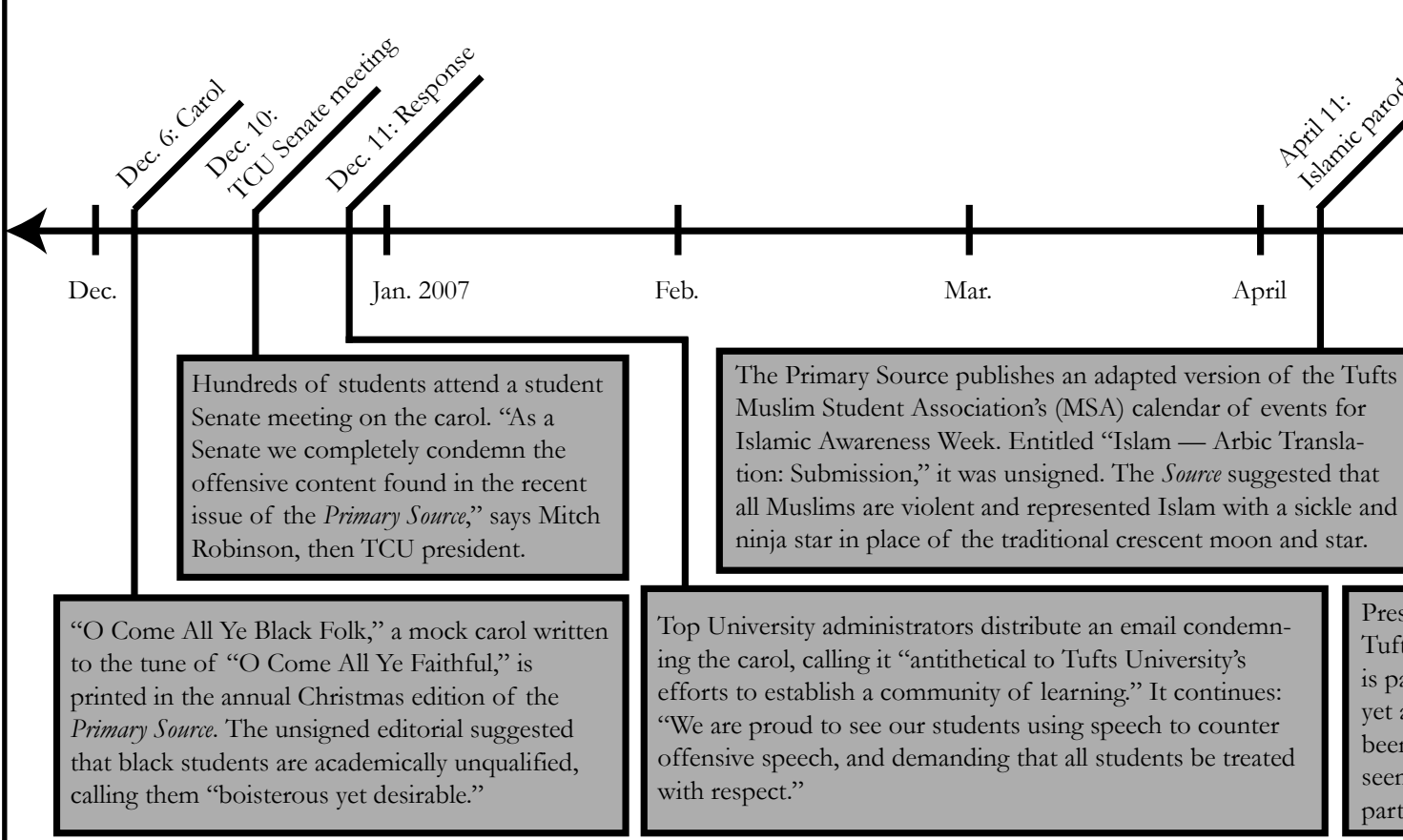
According to an interview with David Hudson of the First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University published in the *Boston Globe* on August 28. Private universities are not held to the freedom of expression standards that are in place at public schools or government.

“I found that the byline requirement was uneasy with me because it did not make sense,” said David Dennis (A’07), an African American student who brought the complaint against the *Source* regarding the carol. “The understanding that it would spread to other organizations didn’t make sense. I supported Dean Glaser’s decision to overturn the byline requirement because it shouldn’t have been there in the first place.”

Dean Glaser agrees. “The CSL issued their opinion about the behavior of the *Primary Source* and, in my view, without the penalty that is all that is: an opinion,” he said. “I couldn’t go back and say, ‘You can’t have that opinion.’ That’s like trying to put the toothpaste back in the tube.”

He continued: “I don’t feel like that

## The Background to Dean Glaser’s Decision





opinion was an infringement on the freedom of expression. In fact I believe the freedom of expression that allows them to say that. It's their voice, the voice of a student-faculty committee."

Mr. Dennis has a different view. "Dean Glaser ignores the real issue. He has just returned everything to the status quo — students still fund a racist organization. Tufts University has always had problems with the *Primary Source* with this specific issue, and I tried to end it like I'm sure many before me have tried, and it just keeps going."

Although Dean Glaser overturned the substantive part of the decision, Matthew Schuster is worried that the freedom of expression is still in danger. Mr. Schuster is the current editor in chief of the *Source*. He was the campus editor when the carol was published, and he said that it was his idea to "draw attention to the issue of affirmative action." With the Islam special section, he was the editor-in-chief.

"I certainly wish he had overturned the dangerous precedent of labeling dis-

senting speech as harassment," he told the *Observer*. "I believe that harassment is a very serious crime, but what Tufts University did with the ruling is they found us guilty of harassment, but they lifted the punishment. They acknowledged that we were not guilty enough to have a punishment, but we were guilty enough to be labeled with harassment. Tufts University is making a mockery out of the very serious crime of harassment."

### Betrayed by the Administration?

At least one of the students responsible for the case against the *Primary Source* feels betrayed by the administration in the aftermath of the decisions.

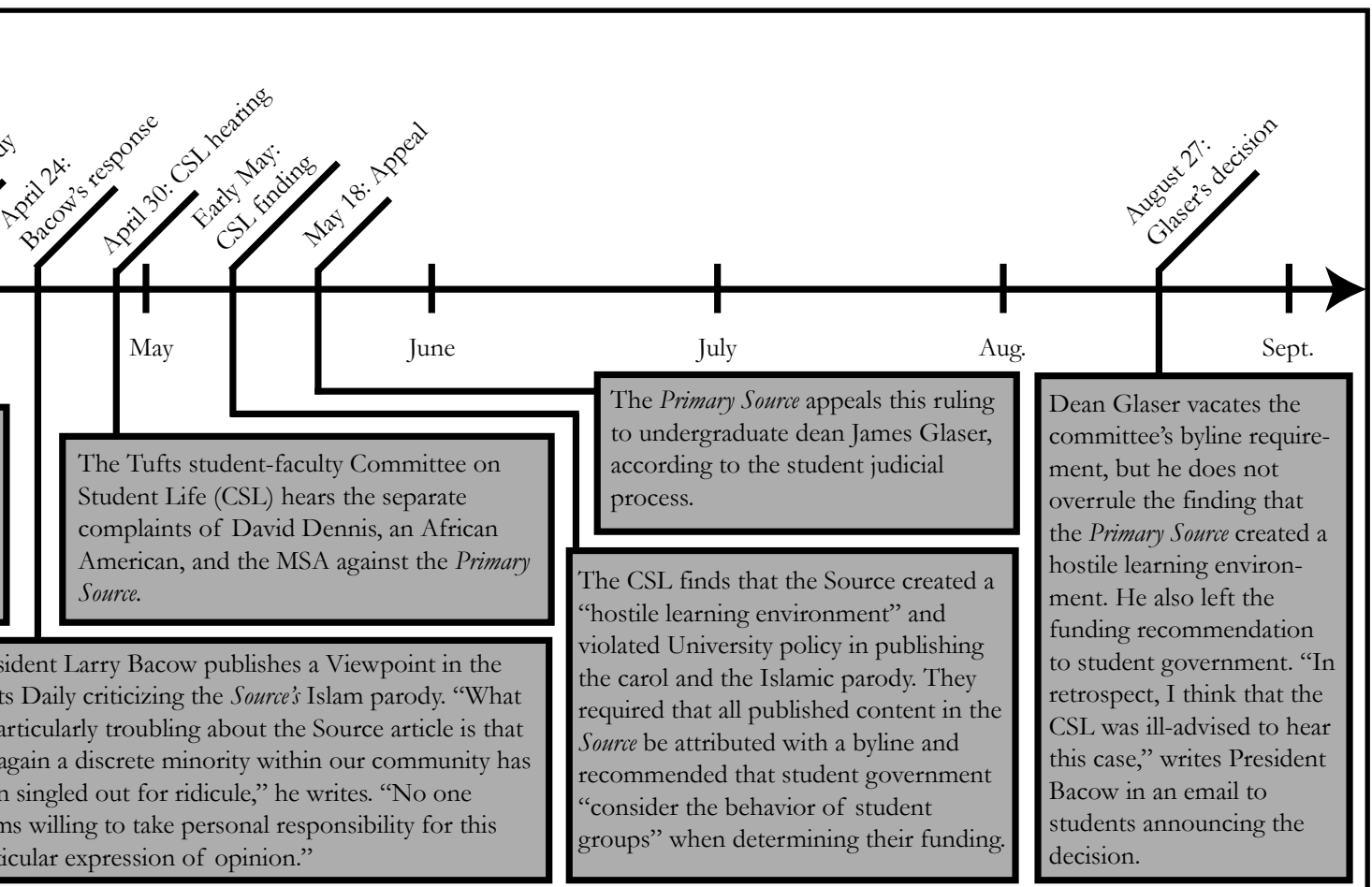
When Muslim Student Association (MSA) president Shirwac Mohamed found out about the Islamic special section, he fielded several complaints from MSA members. "I tried to contact the *Primary Source* and they wouldn't get back to me, so we went to the University." School officials who Mr. Mohamed would not name told him that a case was ongoing against the

*Primary Source*. "They wanted us to join the case, that was the best way to get any reaction from the *Primary Source*. We tried the hearing so we could have some dialogue because they would not talk to us. When the hearings began we started asking things we wanted to ask them about."

Goals changed quickly. "Bylines weren't something that we went in for and asked for in the first place," he said. "Afterwards when the CSL made the decision we thought it was a good decision, but what we really wanted was dialogue with the *Primary Source*."

"We joined this case because the University officials told us it was the best way to have dialogue," he said. "We were one of the defendants, but it seems like afterwards, people blame us for infringing on students' freedom of speech. I think the administration is looking for a scapegoat. I feel betrayed by the administration." He said that neither he nor the MSA particularly care about the byline requirement now.

Dean Reitman said that he had a meeting with Mr. Mohamed to outline the



President Larry Bacow publishes a Viewpoint in the *Daily* criticizing the *Source's* Islam parody. "What particularly troubling about the *Source* article is that again a discrete minority within our community has been singled out for ridicule," he writes. "No one seems willing to take personal responsibility for this particular expression of opinion."

The CSL finds that the *Source* created a "hostile learning environment" and violated University policy in publishing the carol and the Islamic parody. They required that all published content in the *Source* be attributed with a byline and recommended that student government "consider the behavior of student groups" when determining their funding.

Dean Glaser vacates the committee's byline requirement, but he does not overrule the finding that the *Primary Source* created a hostile learning environment. He also left the funding recommendation to student government. "In retrospect, I think that the CSL was ill-advised to hear this case," writes President Bacow in an email to students announcing the decision.

process of filing a complaint, but did not specifically advise him to file a complaint, but just to do what he thought was right for the MSA.

### The Money Question

Mr. Schuster is somewhat nervous that the student government might decide to cut some of the funding provided by the student activities fee, about 95 percent of their budget. But, he said, it is unlikely. "I don't know what the Senate will do about the funding, but I doubt they'd cut any, because it would fly in the face of Bacow's supposed new commitment to freedom of

expression," he said.

The Tufts Community Union (TCU) Treasurer, Evan Dreifuss, is unsure of the *Source's* funding future. "Because the CSL decision was reached over the summer, the Senate has not had any time to discuss this matter as a body," he said.

According to Mr. Dreifuss, the CSL recommends a change in Senate funding policy. "When [we] make funding decisions, we typically concentrate on financial responsibility and how much an event or publication brings to campus. In the past, we have not considered things like the content of magazines."

## The Carol, Reevaluated

While Dean Jim Glaser's decision had a great impact on the role of student publications on campus, overriding messages about diversity at Tufts are not lost in the aftermath of the Christmas carol parody. It gave campus leaders the opportunity to talk about Tufts' admissions process and how the school's commitment to diversity helps shape each class.

"The irony is that we look at Republicans and conservatives and accept some of

remarkable thing was that he saw a record number of African American applicants last year, up 25 percent after 10 stagnant years. There were also a record number of Hispanics who applied. There are 97 African American freshmen this year.

Dean Coffin finds some good that came out of the carol. "Students said after the unity rally that my speech helped a lot of them understand the admissions process and how affirmative action plays a

"It's a very audacious assumption:

**'I deserve to get in, but you don't.'**"

them because we think it is important for those political opinions to be represented in our student body, we hope with civility," said Lee Coffin, dean of admissions. "Affirmative action is a very controversial policy. It's fair for people to disagree with it as a policy, but U.S. law says that Tufts may use race as one factor among many in shaping a class, and we'll continue to do that."

Dean Coffin was worried in December that the carol would demolish the applicant pool, one month before the deadline. "We had spent the fall investing in the Telescope program, joining new agency partnerships to study diversity in admissions, hiring new staff members to target diverse applicants. We really committed more energy to admissions and financial aid because we had to. Then the *Primary Source* came out and I thought it could undo all that." He says that the

role in that," he said. He is also critical of people who do not understand the admissions process and who may be skeptical of another person's place here at Tufts. "It's a very audacious assumption: 'I deserve to get in, but you don't.' Who are they to say who deserves to get in?"

Dean Coffin and his office had a lot of contact with the class of 2010 last year, in particular its black members, after the December carol. "The most contact I had was with the 52 freshmen who were African American, or parts of that group, who approached me looking for validation and assurance that they really deserved to be here," he said. "I told them, 'You should hold your heads up high because the admissions process selected you, and the fact that there are fewer of you is not a function of your lack of merit. You shouldn't let things that are written suggest that you don't belong here.'" ©

"Going forward, we will definitely keep the CSL decision in mind," he said. "Now that it is said and done, it is important to continue to be proactive, but if behavior is something the student body or the Senate feels should be more heavily weighted when considering funding, we will look to adjust policy accordingly?"

Mr. Dennis still disagrees that student money should go to an organization that is so divisive. "I argued at the hearing that the *Primary Source* has the ability to publish and that's fine, but we students don't have to fund them," he said. "My argument was that de-funding an organization is not censorship, to decide to stop funding an organization is a lot different than saying, 'You can't say that.'"

He continued: "The administration is saying that students must support a \$20,000 venue that is spread to every building on campus. The *Source* effectively publishes hate speech, and they are deciding to fund it with \$20,000. The administration has never responded to that argument." Mr. Dennis would support a decision by the TCJ to deny recognition of the *Source*, or a decision from the Senate to revoke funding.

### The CSL: Inconsequential?

If Dean Glaser took out the teeth of the CSL's decision, does it still mean anything? Mr. Schuster believes that Dean Glaser did not go far enough in his ruling, and is still troubled by the CSL decision. He said that Dean Glaser took a "good small step in the right direction, but I'm still troubled by the fact that Glaser and Tufts University upheld the initial harassment ruling, although they tried to push that under the rug after media from across the country criticized Tufts University for taking steps to censor its own students."

Mr. Lukianoff agrees. "It's a shame because Bacow can articulate with some eloquence the ideals of the First Amendment," he said. "This is a step in the right direction, but they didn't undo their most troubling ruling," he told the *Boston Globe*.

Prof. Orians believes that the CSL decision still has substance—and that it is a good thing. "The implications of his decision to overturn the byline provision is something that the CSL will have to consider when we convene this semester," he said. "I don't believe, however, that [Dean Glaser's] decision—which only focused on



the byline provision—removed the substance of our ruling.”

Mr. Schuster holds an alternative opinion. With regards to the president, he said, “I was much less impressed. All he was doing was continuing his McCarthyist fear tactics of intimidating the students who express views that dissent from the mainstream.”

“What the administration should be doing is fostering an open atmosphere where people can feel free to express unpopular voices,” he said. “But by sending out community-wide emails, attacking students who don’t ascribe to the popular views on campus, they’re doing just the opposite. They’re discouraging students from voicing their opinions and they’re intimidating students.”

“President Bacow has gone into attack mode and made malicious, nefarious assumptions about the *Source’s* intentions,” he said.

### Opponents United

The *Primary Source* and the MSA have collaborated on at least one program, with the promise of more in the future.

“I believe our level of dialogue with the *Source* could get better, but it is a start,” said Mr. Mohamed. For instance, the MSA invited *Source* members to iftars, the holy meal that breaks the fast of Ramadan, held this month. “They actually responded and said they would love to come, which is a huge leap from not getting a response at all,” said Mr. Mohamed. “We have made some progress.”

In addition, the MSA and a professor of child development collaborated on an article about lessons from the prophet Muhammad in the August 29, 2007 edition of the *Source*.

“If the *Primary Source* is going to print something that is this controversial they should at least try to make sure what they are printing is true,” said Mr. Mohamed. He sees the carol as out of the context of cogent debate.

“They should at least make sure that whatever they are printing is clear and there is no ambiguity about what they are trying to say,” he said. Nowhere in the carol do they talk about affirmative action. When you write something that says black students get D’s, F’s, and G’s, and you say nothing about it before or after, then people are

going to think you are racist.”

### Going Forward

If the administration will not directly punish the *Source*, then how do outraged students respond to publications they find disagreeable? The answer, say many top officials, is to respond to offensive speech with more speech.

The *Source* is struggling to tread water in what many see as a sea of liberalism at Tufts. “After going through the seven-hour circus of a hearing in which Barbara Grossman... flagrantly disregarded the rule of law and due process, we honestly weren’t surprised at all by the CSL’s verdict,” he said. “It was quite clear from the moment we got there that the CSL had already made up its mind about what they believed.”

“The *Primary Source* since the beginning has advocated unpopular beliefs in an intellectually stifled campus of liberal academia that reportedly values open discussion,” he said. “If you don’t subscribe to the politically correct agenda that the administration is trying to shove down your throat, they label you as racist, homophobic, and bigoted and dismiss you.”

Mr. Schuster says that he does not anticipate the *Source* changing soon. “We’re going to continue to target issues that are of importance to college students,” he said. “Sometimes a risk of presenting these divisive issues is that people will get offended, and that’s a risk that we’re willing to take.”

Administrators criticized the *Source* and provided suggestions to students offended by the publication. They also encourage feedback regarding Dean Glaser’s appeal, which was decided in May but not released until August so the community would not feel like the administration was trying to stifle debate.

“I’m grateful that the response in the community was so strong and clear that it gave us a way of talking about diversity with the next class,” said Lee Coffin, Admissions Dean. “When the prospective



Fall semester editor of the *Primary Source*, Mathew Schuster.

students came to campus in April, there was something to say about how we responded to the *Primary Source* and how the place got stronger as a result. I saw an institutional recommitment to diversity.”

“There is a usefulness in having a broad range of voices on this campus, but I think the *Primary Source* takes itself out of that conversation by using the features sections as a way to get people to pay attention,” said Dean Reitman. “I think the *Source’s* perspective is taken out of the conversation because there is so much distraction by debates about freedom of expression every time they write something that we never get to talk about the issues. I think they’re hurting their own purpose in a lot of ways.”

Other top administrators agree. “People speaking strongly and clearly in response to offensive speech... was far more powerful than any decision of a student-faculty committee,” wrote President Bacow. “It was through our collective voice that we affirmed our community values.”

“What I think frustrates people is that they want a punishment,” said Dean Glaser, jabbing his hand at the air. “But I think the University responded pretty vigorously and forcefully last winter when this first happened. Student answered the obnoxious, offensive speech in the *Primary Source* with... rallies, denunciations, and letters. That was a great response that we were very proud of.”

He continued: “[President Bacow] was not happy that the CSL heard the case in the first place and certainly its outcome. I dealt with the outcome, but I think expects that students, faculty, and administrators to participate in response to... something obnoxious, mean-spirited, foolish, and wrong.”



ERIN BALDASSARI

# Lost in Transition:

## *Tisch College quietly restores its image*

BY ALEXANDER DIETZ

Last April, the Tisch College announced a sweeping reorganization. A week or two of spreading rumors followed the firing of beloved staffer Lisa Brukilacchio, while the College released a document outlining a series of major changes to its strategy and procedures.

Tisch became an integral part of Tufts soon after its founding as the University College of Citizenship and Public Service in 2000. Its purpose is to serve as the arm of the University that promotes active citizenship through civic engagement and research. Its staple program for years has been the Tisch Scholars, a group of 20 to 30 students from each class who work individually on in-depth service programs in communities around Tufts. Administrators concluded, after months of closed-door meetings and

the advice of a firm called Vista Consulting, that it was necessary to revamp its programs in order to maximize its influence on the Tufts community.

But reaction came with speed and intensity, and much of it was negative. Students, faculty, and community leaders sharply criticized the institution for the extremity of its decisions and the secrecy of the process through which they were made. As Tisch tries to continue its transition while respecting the opinions of those who have worked closely with it, the future of this defining part of Tufts' character hangs in doubt.

### **A Lack of Transparency**

According to Tisch College Dean Rob Hollister, internal changes were needed for three reasons: "First, to build on the success of our work to date. Second, to provide opportunities for more students. And third, to

increase Tufts' contributions in the area of civic engagement research."

Many members of the Tisch community agree with these goals but take issue with the way in which they were pursued.

Chief among the complaints voiced after the news of the strategy broke was that the College had failed to consult with Scholars, faculty, or community stakeholders, including even the mayor of Somerville, before arriving at their decisions. Sebastian Chaskel (A'07), a Scholar alum, was one of the leading voices opposing the changes, and he highlighted the manner in which they were developed as a key point of contention. "I am extremely concerned and disappointed at the process the Tisch College employed in designing and communicating its new direction," he said.

He noted that community organizations heard rumors that their partnerships with the



University were being modified, and that Tisch did not speak with them until they asked for a meeting. “The Tisch College’s actions were perceived as extremely disrespectful,” he said, “and damaged relationships that had taken years to form. The saddest part of it all is that the Tisch College violated the principles on which it was built, making those of us who learned and worked with Tisch for years to, for the first time, feel uncomfortable about our association with the institution.”

Susan Ostrander, a professor of sociology as well as a member of the College’s

Dean Hollister said simply, “We should have consulted more extensively with our key constituencies.” After the initial public outcry following the announcement of the new strategy, administrators acknowledged that their decision-making process had been flawed.

At a meeting of the College’s full adjunct faculty on May 9, Dean Hollister announced that he had decided to convert the original document into a mere draft for discussion and revision. According to Prof. Ostrander—a member of a faculty ad hoc strategic planning group Hollister

citizenship.”

Some students involved with Tisch worry, however, that this emphasis on research will detract from their experience engaging directly with the community. Mr. Chaskel saw a sharp distinction between research on civic engagement and the *practice* of civic engagement. According to him, Tufts has opted to focus on the former at the expense of the latter. “I believe this is all a repercussion of Tufts’ new image, and pressure that has been placed on the Tufts administration to make Tufts into a leading research institution,” he explained. “While

## “Tisch College violated the principles on which it was built.”

adjunct faculty, said that, while she appreciates the positive steps Dean Hollister has taken in response to criticism, she was “outraged” by Brukilacchio’s termination and “surprised and dismayed” when she learned that administrators had rolled out a grand new strategy without consulting faculty or other members of the community. John Durant, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering and a member of the institution’s Faculty Fellows Program, was also “surprised,” saying that the announcement “left a lot of people confused and bewildered.”

Jen Bailey (A’09), a second-year Scholar, echoed their concerns. “Tisch has kind of become like my second home at Tufts, and so initially, when they kind of dropped the bomb on us that they were making all these changes, it felt like a part of my family had made a big decision without me,” she noted.

Diego Villalobos, a first year Scholar, compared the announcement to corporate restructurings he has witnessed in the past, most of which have a top-down approach. He felt that given the community-driven principles the College espouses, it should have held itself to a higher standard. “The only thing is that I felt that it was a little contradicting that we were preaching one thing and doing the other thing, meaning that nobody was really informing what it was doing,” he said.

Nancy Wilson, Tisch’s Associate Dean, conceded that in hindsight, the College should have behaved differently.

formed to take a second look at the proposed changes—meetings with faculty, community partners, and others continue, though no firm conclusions have yet been reached.

Ms. Bailey and Mr. Villalobos, who were both involved in Tisch programs over the summer, express confidence that the process is now on the right track, but stress that they will not have a clear picture of the situation until they observe how the institution evolves this semester.

“I’m kind of reserving my judgment until I see the new program in place, and we have a lot of new staff members coming in as well, so we don’t know how that vibe is going to change the whole atmosphere of Tisch,” Ms. Bailey said. “So it’s kind of like a waiting game.”

### Challenges for Research

One of the changes outlined in the April document was a shift to focus on research on civic engagement. Tisch will now devote more resources to bringing prominent academics as well as rising stars to Tufts, hoping that their work will enhance both the Tufts education and the University’s prestige as a research institution. It also plans to support fewer but more serious research projects among professors. Said Ms. Wilson, “It’s not that we’re taking funding out of students and into research, it’s really shifting our investment with faculty from a little bit of research across a lot of areas to really trying to generate some depth of research into particular areas around active

I believe this is important, my concern is about the sacrifices that are being made at Tufts to make room for research.”

Ms. Bailey was concerned that concentrating on competing with other research universities could jeopardize Tufts’ distinguished reputation as a liberal arts college where the relationships between professors and students take center stage.

Mr. Villalobos, meanwhile, was skeptical that research on active citizenship could even attract interest. He has spoken to faculty members involved with Tisch College who told him that they were uncertain that they would find students willing to do this kind of work if it were not directed to an applied field.

Prof. Ostrander, evidently, was not one of them. “I fully support more emphasis on research and scholarship, and have been an advocate for it for a long time,” she said, noting her leadership of the College’s Civic Engagement Research Group. “I don’t see a conflict between teaching and research. Good university teachers should be involved not only in teaching existing knowledge developed by others, but also involved in *creating* knowledge themselves as active Scholars, often in collaboration with students.”

Prof. Durant recognized that focusing on research could take away from the success of Tufts’ community partnerships if administrators “don’t do it right.” But he was confident that they were aware of the delicate balance they needed to strike, and hopeful that input from faculty would help them do it.

## Severing Ties

One of the new strategy's most controversial elements was the decision to eliminate the one-to-one brokering of community partnerships. In the past, Tisch employed two staffers who worked to build relationships with community leaders in Somerville, Chinatown, and the Mystic Watershed. They helped to connect Tufts students looking for service opportunities with businesses and nonprofit organizations looking for volunteers.

Administrators found that more students showed interest in its offerings than its existing programs could accommodate. Moreover, its mission mandated that it reach as much of the University community as possible. As Ms. Wilson explained, "And we started to realize that we had more and more students coming by, saying, 'Gee, the Scholars program isn't for me, but how can I get involved?' And so we really needed to think about how we can reach more students. At the same time, as we talked to our community partners, many of them would say, 'You know, we love it when we get a Scholar to work with. They're prepared, they know how to work in a community. But we also get other students from Tufts who come from this program or that program, some of whom come well prepared, some of whom, not so much.'"

Tisch College administrators decided to do away with one-to-one brokering and instead work with other programs that involve students in community engagement, trying to enhance students' ability to take advantage of such opportunities themselves "so that the overall quality of Tufts' engagement in the community would improve."

Ms. Bailey regretted the loss of such a central and successful program. "That was one of the things that made Tisch really unique, is that we did have that direct communication with communities," she said. "And with our site supervisors, and through our community partnerships team at Tisch, we got to build those relationships."

Mr. Villalobos admired the old system because it empowered the community to address problems and exploit opportunities. "It either encouraged more agency on their behalf to say what was going on, to communicate any issues that they see," he explained, "or express how Tufts could help them better and empower them more."

Prof. Durant said that the way Tufts had done business with community organizations had given the University a unique advantage. Such groups are usually suspicious of big universities, since "they don't always feel that they're going to be treated fairly or equally by the university and that when the grant money dries up, they're just going to be cut free."

When Tisch refashioned its method of dealing with them without their agreement or even consultation, "they started to see Tufts as just being like every other university that they've worked with and haven't been treated well by." The need to repair these relationships, he said, is critical.

Like many involved with the College, Ms. Bailey and Mr. Villalobos also had a close personal relationship with Lisa Brukilacchio, the community engagement specialist fired as a result of the new plan. They saw her as an enormously useful force in Tisch's work, the linchpin of the University's connections to and interactions with the community.

Prof. Durant suggested that the motives for her dismissal might not have been limited to the best interests of the College, though he did not know what they could have been. "I hear rumors that there are significant University pressures on Tisch College not to over-expand their activities," he said. He could not understand why people who had worked closely with him had been laid

essential to Tufts' civic engagement teaching and research. It is foundational to the work. I cannot see how it can be done without staff whose job it is to do it."

Dean Hollister said that as a result of their meetings with community leaders over the summer, administrators had committed to "a single point of contact at Tisch for community partners, maintaining the level of staffing that Tisch devotes to supporting Somerville community partnerships, and sharpening our plans for strengthening the community service work of students in a variety of Tufts programs." Dean Hollister hopes that, in the coming months, these steps will placate those troubled by what had been the College's bold new plan.

## The Road Ahead

Although Ms. Bailey maintained a cautious optimism about Tisch's future, she did have one constructive criticism. "Tisch is doing such amazing things," she explained, "but a lot of students don't know about it. You have to be engaged and kind of know somebody or know exactly what you want to do when you first come into Tufts, and maybe this is a problem with Tufts in general." She noted that many of her friends have approached her interested in the Scholars program, only to find that they were too late to apply. Improving its efforts to inform freshmen about its offerings, she suggested, could go a long way

"I hear rumors that there are significant  
University pressures on Tisch College  
not to over-expand their activities."

off, and had heard that "they were getting pressure from the administration to make some of these personnel moves rather than changes in strategy necessitating the cutting back of some key support staff." No one else who spoke to the *Observer* corroborated that claim.

Prof. Ostrander said that she opposed the elimination of the staff position in charge of brokering community partnerships. "The term 'brokering' minimizes the crucial work of establishing and maintaining the trusting collaborative relationships with community organizations that are absolutely

in helping it to reach more students.

Prof. Ostrander, for her part, suggested that in addition to its current duties, Tisch should gather systematic rather than anecdotal evidence about the effectiveness of the participants' teaching and research.

"It matters that Tisch College is having an effect on student attitudes and behaviors in terms of civic engagement, and it matters that Tufts faculty are getting our civic engagement Scholarship published in good journals and high quality books where it

*Continued on page 12*

# Prof. Gill: A Gentleman and a Scholar

BY MICHAEL SKOCAY

In the many remembrances of Prof. Gerald R. Gill following his sudden death on July 26 at the age of 58, one of the most common reflections is that of the history professor's ability to remember the names of each of his students. At the public memorial service for Prof. Gill, History department chair Virginia Drachman reminisced about her longtime friend and colleague's knack for recollection.

"There was nothing more remarkable than a walk across campus with Gerry. Students would pass by with, 'Hello Prof. Gill,' 'How are you Prof. Gill,' and *every time*, Gerry would answer them, not only by name but with something personal besides," she said. "Meanwhile, I was lucky if one or two students would say hello, and then, in a panic, I would struggle to get my brain to remember their names, *on the spot*." She remembered that Prof. Gill would often provide her with the name she was looking for.

It is that simple talent, however, that many recall a sign of a greater kindness of spirit.

Prof. Gill was born in 1948 and raised in New Rochelle, New York. In 1970 he completed a bachelor's degree in history at Lafayette College and, for two years, taught history in a high school in New Rochelle. Prof. Gill went on to earn a master's degree in history at Howard University, where he also pursued a doctorate while working as a research fellow at the college in Washington, D.C.

In 1980, Prof. Gill began as an assistant professor at Tufts. In Boston he encountered a city struggling to overcome racial strife, highlighted by school desegregation campaigns that divided residents.

"Boston doesn't have the best reputa-

tion in terms of being a city that's hospitable towards African-Americans," Prof. Gill said in a 2005 interview from the *Tufts Journal*. "There are people who would argue that Boston is the most racist city in the United States."

It was this racial disquietude that gave Prof. Gill, a teacher with a passion for African-American history and an author of several works on the subject, a direction for his work. "I became interested in looking at race relations and African-American

historical narrative.

In a 2002 *Tufts Magazine* article, "Another Light on the Hill: Black Undergraduates and Tufts," Prof. Gill illuminated his philosophy. "Individually as well as collectively, black students have contributed greatly to the ambience of the 'Tufts experience.' Their accomplishments, past and present, need to be acknowledged and made more a part of the history and lore of Tufts University," he said. "May the presentation of the history of Afri-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TUFTS E-NEWS

protests in Boston largely because many of my friends from graduate school asked me questions about why I was staying in Boston," he explained in 2005.

Prof. Gill often bridged the line between academic history and cultural activism, and he is remembered by students and faculty for his involvement in local African-American communities in Boston and with students on the Tufts campus.

Prof. Gill realized that uncovering the relatively unexcavated history of race in New England and at the university was in and of itself an avenue for a new cultural understanding—one that included names and faces often forgotten in the traditional

can-American, Caribbean-American and Continental African students spur further research on the historical experiences of students from other racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Then, the history of Tufts will more fully encompass the experiences of all its students."

Prof. Gill was equally versed in the history of baseball as he was in American race relations. He was fond of mingling the two subjects in lecture or during a long conversation in his cluttered East Hall office. He was an expert, particularly, on the Negro Leagues, the professional baseball leagues of mainly African American players that existed from the 1860s to 1948.

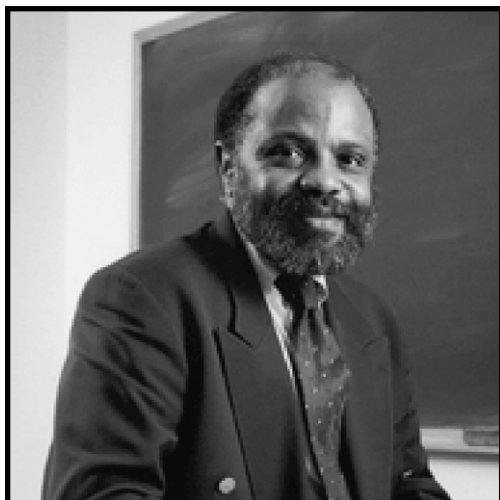
He collected memorabilia from Negro teams and often found a way to proudly share a rare artifact from his collection in his classes.

His zeal of sport filled seats in his classes on the subject, and his continued loyalty to the New York Yankees — a team he continued to support even after almost three decades of living in Cambridge — stirred friendly debate with his students and co-workers.

Prof. Gill was the recipient of numerous awards for his academic and personal work. Twice named the Massachusetts Professor of the Year, Prof. Gill also received the Lerman-Neubauer Prize for Outstanding Teaching and Advising and was honored by the Carnegie Foundation. On campus, his work was recognized by African-American students with a Distinguished Service Award, since renamed in his honor. He also received the first Professor of the

Year from the student Senate.

More than the countless achievements, however, Prof. Gill is remembered as an ebullient personality whose charisma and charm, intellect and generosity filled his classrooms and defined his personality.



In the words of Prof. Drachman, “Gerry was a gentleman and a gentle man. He did not just contribute to Tufts; he defined Tufts.”

“His was a constant and a deeply felt presence and his warmth and generosity were unbounded,”

“His was a constant and a deeply felt presence and his warmth and generosity were unbounded.”

wrote English department chair Lee Edelman on a webpage created for the Tufts community to remember Prof. Gill. “Like his office, which overflowed with the countless treasures and papers he preserved, so Gerald overflowed too: with

patience and concern for others; with dedication to his students and his colleagues; with a goodness and a radiant humanity that touched everyone he met.”

From the dozens of current and former students and faculty who have posted their heartfelt memories it is evident that Prof. Gill imparted lasting academic and personal lessons to those who knew him. Still, for those who remember the familiar sight of Prof. Gill making his way across campus with stack of papers in hand or his open office door in East Hall, the loss is tremendous.

At the memorial service for Prof. Gill, Prof. Jeanne Marie Penvenne, a colleague in the History department, said this of her friend: “He gave and he gave to all of you and to me, and to our friends and to our children. He taught us and loved us and he lived with us — always a gentleman, always gentle.”

A University memorial service in remembrance of Prof. Gerald Gill will be held on Monday, September 24, 2007 at 12:15 p.m. in Cohen Auditorium. The University established a scholarship, the Gerald R. Gill Fund, in his honor. Donations may be sent payable to Trustees of Tufts College to Brigette Bryant, Tufts University, School of Arts & Sciences; 80 George Street — Room 320; Medford, MA 02155. ☎

## *Transitions at Tisch College*

*Continued from page 10*

reaches people of influence,” she explained. “But it also matters for that teaching and that Scholarship to have some positive effect, directly or indirectly, on the local and global communities where and with whom we do our Scholarship.” It might be challenging and not all of what it finds might be good news, “but that’s how all great institutions thrive,” she said.

Most agree that Tisch, despite its challenges, has a bright future at the heart of the Tufts community, and that active citizenship will remain central to the University’s mission. Ms. Bailey said that twenty years from now, she would like to take her children to a

Tisch event to show them how she learned to be an active citizen.

“And I want to have my kids to have the same opportunity, if they choose to come to Tufts, to be Tisch Scholars, and have that network, and have that community, and have that experience,” she said. “And so, the important thing is that it be sustained, and keep suiting the needs that are in our community, both in Tufts and outside of Tufts.” She hoped that the College would expand to become a “much bigger part” of the Tufts experience, to truly fulfill its mission of instilling civic values in every student.

Still, many believe that it has work to do. Tisch will need for its newfound collaboration with professors, Scholars, and com-

munity leaders to have a meaningful effect on the ultimate decisions it reaches in order to recover from the damages its reputation suffered last spring. Apart from worrying about its public relations, however, it must begin an open conversation with students and faculty at Tufts about the direction in which it is headed. After all, questions about the priority of research, the proper ways to teach the values and practice of citizenship, and true engagement with local and global neighborhoods concern not only the College, but are pivotal to the identity of the University. This time, it is essential for the community beyond the college administrators to have a say in finding out the answers. ☎

# -- Ticker Tape --

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

## School Mourns Recent Graduate

David Rawson (A'07) died on June 28 near his home in San Francisco. According to dean of students Bruce Reitman, Mr. Rawson's death was caused by an unexpected arterial rupture in his chest. He died after a cross-country trip with Tufts friends after his graduation in May. He was 22.



Mr. Rawson graduated cum laude with a degree in International Relations and was a figurehead in many organizations on campus, including EPIIC, the Chamber Singers, and several campus publications. He aspired to become an intelligence officer in the United States Navy.

"Between tears and heartache, I have felt a deep sense of gratitude to work at a place that attracts and nurtures students like David," said choral director Andrew Clark in an email to students. "He exemplifies the extraordinary talent and humanity of our students — a marvel and inspiration to me."

A July memorial service was held for Mr. Rawson in San Francisco. Another service will also be held at Tufts during Homecoming weekend on October 7 in the Granoff Music Center. The entire Tufts community is invited to attend.

## Hotung Opening Delayed

The grand opening of the renovated Hotung Café, once expected by this September, is now being pushed up to the spring semester, says student Senate president Neil DiBiase. He cites miscalculations of time by the construction crew for the fluctuations in the expected opening.

"Hopefully we'll be able to use the space in November," he said, "but everything will be done and we'll start scheduling events for the space starting second semester."

When completed, Hotung will include a new dance floor, lighting system, and furniture. Mr. DiBiase said that Hotung will operate under a "1-2-3" system Mondays through Thursdays, where alcohol will not be served after 1:00 AM, food will be stopped at 2:00, and Hotung will be closed at 3:00.

## Tufts Falls in National Ranking

Tufts dropped one spot in the US News and World Report's annual ranking of American undergraduate and graduate schools, released last month. The school is now ranked 28 in top universities, down from last year's spot at 27. Tufts shares its current place with the University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill.

Admissions dean Lee Coffin says that while he does look at and consider the rankings, he is not concerned with this drop. He explains that the largest component — 25 percent — of determining the US News ranking is a reputation survey sent to campus leaders around the country.

"I vote, and I get the list, and I haven't heard of most of the colleges there," he said. "Even the ones I do know, how much do I really know about the quality of their education?" Tufts, being a university, is hurt in this survey, he says, because it doesn't have some graduate schools that are staples at other universities, like a law school. Also, Tufts is the smallest research institution among its peers in the ranking.

Other categories are given much less weight than the reputation survey, sometimes less than five percent of the total score. For instance, Tufts ranks as the fifteenth most selective university in the country and places well above many of the institutions in the top 27 in mean SAT score.

"I think too many people get mucked up in whether they moved up and down a spot," he said. "If you took Tufts out of this category and put us in the liberal arts schools, I think we'd be in the top 10."

## University Receives Two Large Gifts

Steve Tisch A'71, the chairman of the New York Giants and Oscar-winning film producer of *Forrest Gump*, committed \$10 million to a new sports and fitness facility planned for the campus, according to an email from President Lawrence Bacow.

The new facility will be built between Cousens Gymnasium and the Gantcher Center and will include a new fitness and sports medicine center, team locker rooms, and an office suite for coaches. It will also include an NCAA regulation basketball court, a new swimming pool, and squash courts. Construction is planned for fall 2008.

President Bacow also announced a \$15 million gift from Steven Jaharis M'87 for new facilities at the University's medical school in Boston.

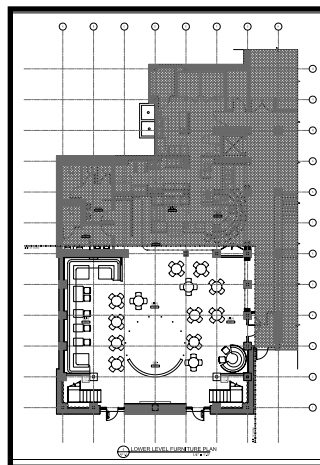
## Professor's First Book

Benjamin Carp, assistant professor of history, published his first book in July. The book, *Rebels Rising:*

*Cities and the American Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 352 pages), chronicles the story of the great cities of colonial America: New York, Boston, Newport, Philadelphia, and Charleston. Prof. Carp describes how these cities pioneered the revolution but watched as the politics of liberty moved to the countryside once the Revolutionary War began.

## Senate Elects Trustee Reps

The Senate elected representatives to the trustees last Sunday: Britteny Sommer (A'08), Academic Affairs Committee; Harsha Dronamraju (A'08), Community on University Advancement; and Adam Kornetsky (A'10), Administration and Finance Committee.



Architect's drawing of Hotung.



# LETTER *from the* EDITOR

When I joined the *Observer*, I saw the magazine as an outlet for my writing, a way to occupy my time, and a means to meet new friends. Indeed, it was all of these things. The *Observer* has been for the last three years my canvas, my cause, and my second family. In the years that followed, however, I began to explore the publication's rich history, and I found a chronicle full of dedicated service, journalistic innovation, and writing for social change.

The *Observer* has served as the training ground for generations of leaders in journalism, business, and the arts, and with good reason; here, journalists practice not only their writing, photography, and artistry, but learn to create, to illuminate, and to positively challenge those around them. These values — those of servant leadership — are the cornerstone of the *Observer* and the foundation of everything we do.

The *Observer* is the oldest and longest running student organization at Tufts. It has outlasted the Great Depression, two World Wars, and 20 American presidents. It has seen myriad editors and numerous format changes, but the *Observer's* commitment to journalistic excellence remains intact. We are excited to carry that tradition on next year.

The *Observer* maintains this consistency and the highest level of professionalism through an exceptional emphasis on staffing and training. Unlike other campus publications, the *Observer* staffs a small, close-knit team while consistently influencing Tufts' student, faculty, and administrative leaders through in-depth news analysis and insightful opinions.

New journalists, photographers, and artists receive challenging, meaningful assignments immediately, and editors actively encourage their participation in planning and brainstorming. Working at the *Observer* gives staff members unparalleled preparation for real world careers in journalism, business, and the arts and prepares them to become the next generation of leaders. No campus organization can boast of such an impressive group of alumni, and we are proud to profile a few of them here in the Welcome Guide.

The *Observer's* dedication to innovation is a direct result of the creativity of our team, and the existing staff has been hard at work for the past several months to prepare a series of exciting changes and initiatives for the upcoming semester.

These values — those of servant leadership — are the cornerstone of the *Observer* and the foundation of everything we do.

The *Observer* will now offer an additional four-page, glossy, color spread to allow more room for breathtaking photography and artwork. The magazine will print even more opinions from campus leaders, including deans and administrators, heads of student organizations and government, and fellow journalists in order to strengthen campus dialogue and encourage diversity of thought.

The News section will redouble its commitment to in-depth reporting while keeping the campus current on TCU government projects and decisions by expanding Sen-



ate and Judiciary coverage. We're also revising our operational and organizational policies in order to streamline the layout and editing process and work with greater efficiency and efficacy.

An exciting new *Observer* statistics program will help us measure our successes and identify and improve upon problems with our production efficiency and shortcomings in our style and content. These are only a few of the advancements we have planned for the coming year.

Although we are incredibly proud of our history, we always look to the future. It is with great pride and excitement that we begin the new academic year, one that we know will challenge the campus in exciting and unexpected ways. We invite you to join the dialogue, engage the community, and reconsider your preconceptions.

Sincerely,

Tim Noetzel  
Editor-in-Chief

# A Band-Aid on a Broken Bone

The Observer commends Dean Glaser and the Tufts Administration on their decision to annul the Committee on Student Life's ruling that all future articles in the *Primary Source* must include bylines. It was a decision that the administration did not have to make: as a private institution, Tufts is not bound to the guarantees of the First Amendment. Indeed, overruling the CSL's byline requirement was a first step in ensuring that speech would remain free on our campus. Dean Glaser's recent annulment notwithstanding, however, the honest dialogue resultant from a free press at Tufts remains vulnerable.

What was most distressing about the Source controversy was that freedom of the press came under such scrutiny from members of our community. Opinion pieces argued for the *Source's* banishment. The halls of the TCU Senate echoed with calls for censorship. Events culminated in the May decision of the CSL to impose a by-line requirement on the Source, an infringement on a time-honored journalistic tradition that Dean Glaser rightly overturned.

Even in the aftermath of the recent decision, important issues regarding journalistic freedoms still loom. In the same decision that mandated bylines for all future articles of the Source, the CSL also found the publication guilty of harassment, a ruling that Dean Glaser upheld. This tacit approval of the CSL verdict by the administration endangers free speech

for Tufts' publications. It is dangerous precedent to accuse a publication of harassment. Harassment implies repeated attacks or continuous pestering, actions that require mechanisms that publications lack. More worrisome is that future staffs of the *Daily*, *Source*, and *Observer*, who may decide to print unpopular or controversial material could now be formally charged and found guilty of harassment, an unwelcome distinction that is a deterrent to those wishing to express themselves freely at Tufts.

The temptation for self-censorship would only grow stronger if the TCU Senate voted to take away the funding of

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Having the freedom of speech means that, at any given moment, we could confront a message or idea that we find morally reprehensible.

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a publication charged with harassment. Unlike public universities, the law does not require private universities to provide funding to student-run organizations. It is entirely within the powers of the TCU Senate to withhold funds from any student organization if the body finds it convenient. Voiding funding for the *Source* or any other publication would be tantamount to censoring speech. Just as poll taxes disenfranchised thousands of African-Americans from acting on their right of suffrage, forcing students to fund their own publication (with production costs reaching well into the thousands of dollars) could limit freedom of expression on campus for those who hold opinions outside the mainstream. Such a move would signal the end of freedom of speech on the Hill.

A campus environment thrives when all avenues of thought find expression. Issues like affirmative action and religious co-existence deserve thorough reviews from all sides of the political and cultural spectrums. At times, opinions may turn malicious. Having the freedom of speech means that, at any given moment, we could confront a message or idea that we find morally reprehensible. But imposing bylines, charging publications with harassment, and withholding funds are not appropriate responses to controversial speech. An articulate, well-reasoned rebuttal works much better because more speech is needed, not less. With their recent decision, Dean Glaser and the administration gave approval to this notion, albeit limitedly. The *Observer* hopes that in the future the administration will mature into a stronger ally and defender of free speech in all its forms. As university students, we should expect nothing less. ©



SARA LEENEN

# The Tufts Identity Crisis

*Tufts prides itself on the extracurricular activities available to its students, and virtually everyone pursues one or more. But, asks BRANDON RATTINER, how does such diverse involvement detract from the Tufts identity, and how can we enhance our expression of school pride?*

BY BRANDON RATTINER

At any moment, the frenzied crowd could lose control. Every pass tested the capacity of the 100,000 person crowd to control its lunacy. The match, called the most important sporting event of the year by ESPN, was near the end and the crowd was wild with anticipation. After the final touchdown, the Ohio State fans screamed with joy as Michigan's undefeated season was toppled. For the next week the largest university in the country celebrated in a way only college students know how: with cheap beer and loud music.

I can only imagine how much fun these students had, and I wish that I could find a collegiate event to invest myself in half as much as the Ohio State students. The part that kills me is the 100,000 wild fans are my age and seem to be having more fun than I will ever have at a game in Medford. With all due respect to Tufts athletics, comparing any of our teams to Ohio State would be an affront to sports. Even with that in mind, I wouldn't say that any student at Ohio State loves their school any more than I love Tufts. They may be having more fun at games, but Tufts has plenty to offer, too. It's important to realize that school spirit manifests differently at every school, but this obvious truth is very rarely announced.

People still assume that a university needs to be great at sports to justify an obsession with the college. Even though I walk around campus and notice many Tufts shirts and hats, there is still an undertone of passivity; as a Division III school, I will

without giant football games. Our lack of Division I athletics often takes the blame for weak school spirit, but the student body should look in the mirror and realize that we need to get more excited about what we do have. Most Tufts students tend to associate themselves with friends and clubs rather than the school at large. With the exception of school-sponsored dances, Spring Fling, and Naked Quad Run, it is very rare for the Tufts community to unite and show collective spirit. It's too bad that the single most unifying event on campus was a response to an inappropriate Christmas carol.

We may not have athletics like Ohio State, but that doesn't mean we can't pretend we do, and more importantly, show our spirit in the same way the Buckeyes show theirs. I really do think that everyone here is proud to go to Tufts, but those individual passions rarely unite in schoolwide sentiment. Homecoming weekend is a great example. For one Saturday, a school wide tailgate and buzz was able to cloak the fact that our football team only finished 4-4. For that one day, everyone wanted to win and everyone was proud of our school's teams. If we all had fun at that tailgate, why don't we all come all the time? If our fun is dependent on ensuring the football game is packed and important, why don't we all communicate



DUNCAN PICKARD

*Tufts encourages extracurricular involvement, but too much individual participation might lead to a fractured school identity.*

the administration's indifference or opposition, but what is stopping the Inter-Greek Council (IGC) from planning a school wide formal—open to everyone—and uniting the campus for one more night?

The only thing stopping this school from showing its spirit is a lack of ingenuity and desire to change. We don't have to be complacent with only celebrating Tufts a few nights a year; considering the ambition of our students, change should not be hard. I love Tufts' emphasis on global affairs and on student citizenship, but we should relax every once and a while and use that energy to honor the institution that makes our activism possible. Although we may not have the attention of ESPN—or even access to the channel in our dorms—we love our school as much as anyone at Ohio State loves theirs. When I put on my Tufts hat, it means a tremendous amount to me, and it's about time that our school spirit starts reflecting the passion of the individuals that go here. ☺

*Brandon Rattiner is a sophomore and has not yet declared a major.*

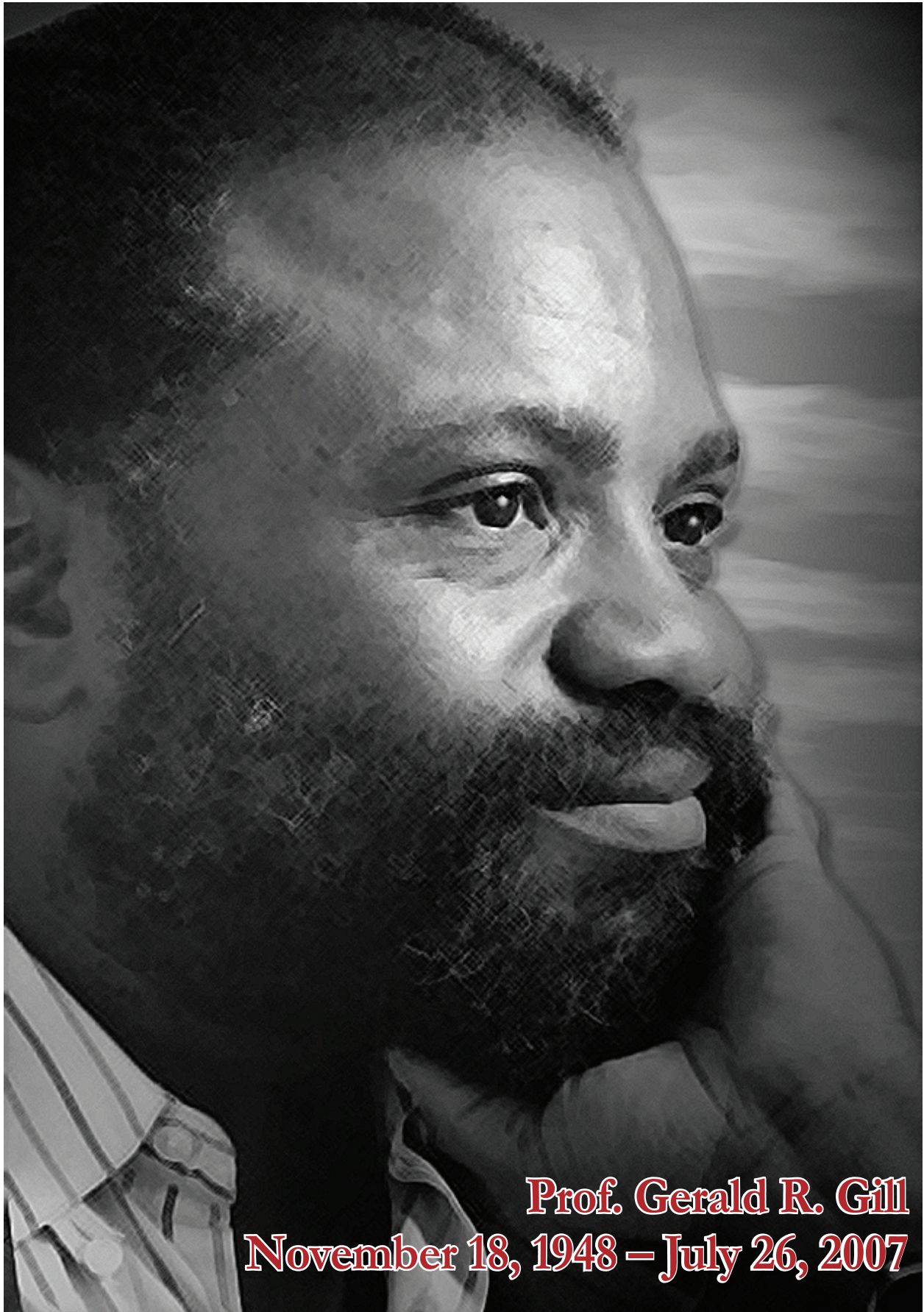
Editors' Note: This article originally ran in the 2007 Commencement issue of the Observer.

## What's stopping school spirit here is a lack of ingenuity and desire to change.

be more likely to remember my academic experience here than any football game. The class sizes may be small here, but Tufts can do more than further intellectualism.

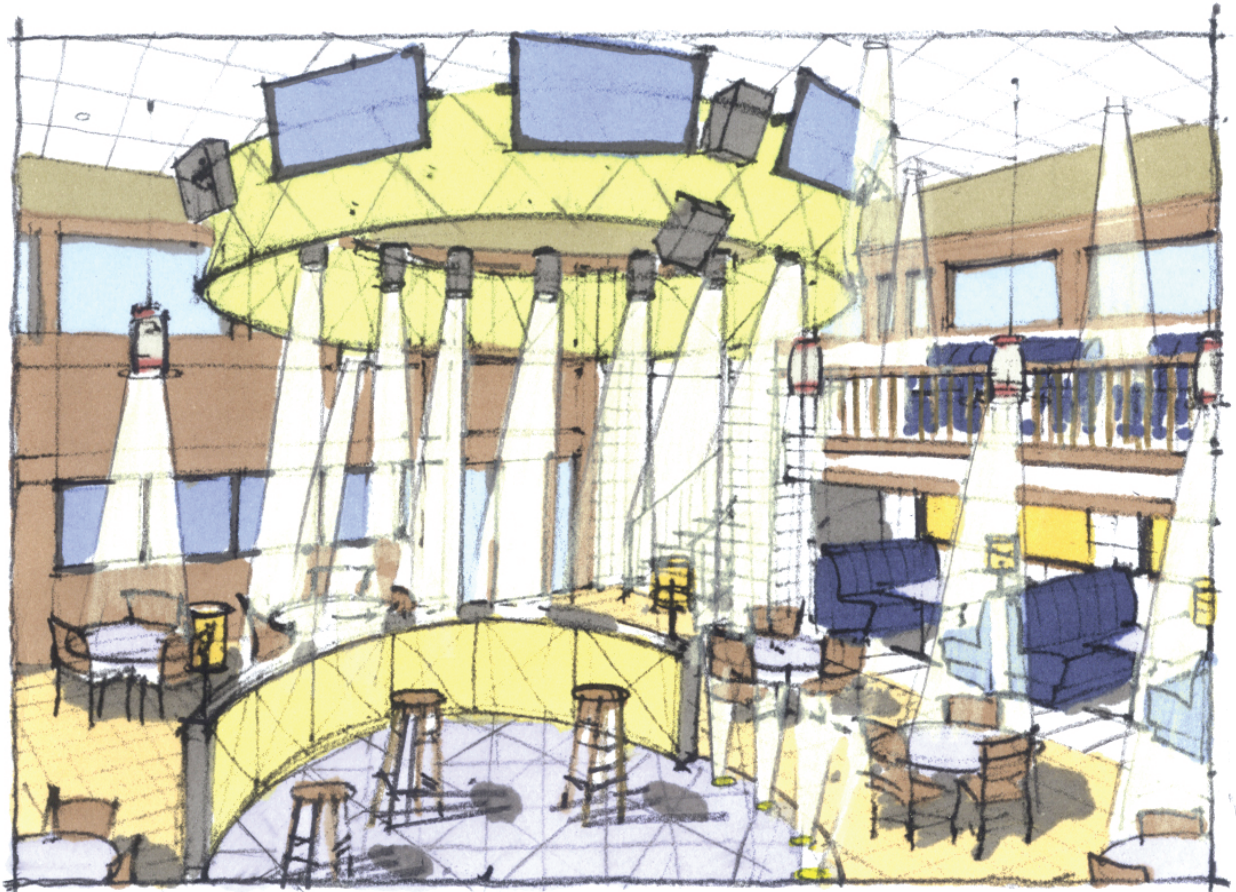
Student clubs can create communities and serve as vehicles to change, but they are not enough. As an institution Tufts has incredible potential to shape our lives even

and make sure this happens every week? Why doesn't Programming Board, the class councils, Senate, or the athletics department take some responsibility and help bolster our pride? I may be coming off as too critical, but my frustration derives from how easy it would be to change this situation. Everyone complains that Greek life is dying due to



**Prof. Gerald R. Gill**  
**November 18, 1948 – July 26, 2007**





*An architect's vision for the revamped space.*

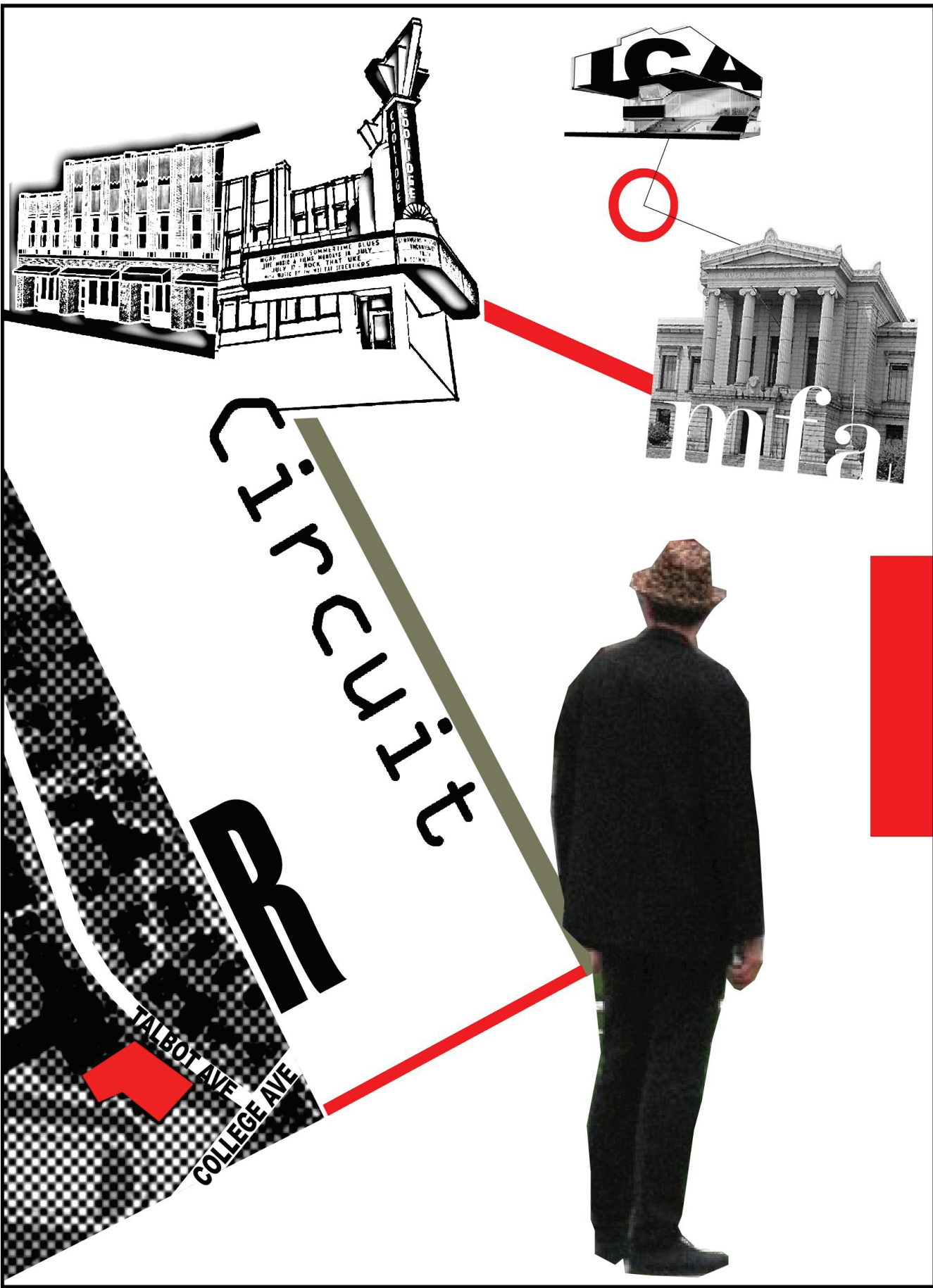
COURTESY OF THE TCU SENATE



*The current state of Hotung.*

DUNCAN PICKARD









*The Bangs-Nye Memorial, Forest Hills Cemetery.*

FOREST HILLS EDUCATIONAL TRUST



*Tombstones at twilight.*

FOREST HILLS EDUCATIONAL TRUST

# Decision 2008: Why Bother?

While some may welcome the upcoming presidential election with open arms, JARROD NIEBLOOM argues that this year voters will have two choices: bad and worse.

BY JARROD NIEBLOOM

“Democratic elections are not merely symbolic... They are competitive, periodic, inclusive, definitive elections in which the chief decision-makers in a government are selected by citizens who enjoy broad freedom to criticize government, to publish their criticism and to present alternatives,” wrote Jeane Kirkpatrick, scholar and former United States ambassador to the United Nations, in offering a definition of the democratic electoral process.

To be sure, in a democratic utopia, voters would be free to choose from the brightest and most experienced candidates the next leader of the Free World. Each candidate would clearly represent a certain demographic through a set of views similar to those of his supporters. Through the electoral process, those views would be weighed by a population as gargantuan and diverse as the actual 3.7 million square miles on which these various geopolitical interests would exist. And such is how the Race for President

der their policies to the tide of public opinion, sort of like the well-known Kerryism, “I voted for the war before I voted against it,” developed by the 2004 Democratic presidential nominee once the war in Iraq became unpopular.

Democratic heavy-hitters for 08

In the first Republican debate, Giuliani hailed himself as being the most experienced candidate in terms of foreign policy. Apparently, being mayor of New York City qualifies one to make imperative and complex foreign policy decisions.

include Senator Hillary Clinton from New York, Senator Barack Obama from Illinois, and former Senator John Edwards from North Carolina. In the Republican arena, the most popular have become former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani from New York, former Governor Mitt Romney from Massachusetts, and as of

place to start will be the Democratic candidates, as few people reading this article are considering voting for any of the popular Republicans anyway.

Frontrunner Hillary Clinton, the former first lady, has been a member of the U.S. Senate for six years. Few have ques-

Few have questioned her level of experience despite the fact that before being the president’s wife, Hillary had never worked as an executive or running a large bureaucracy in any way, shape, or form.

’08 ought to look.

Let us examine our list of 2008 hopefuls who will continue this lofty tradition: a group of candidates that are either unqualified or acquiescing in their own belief systems—some actually achieve both. While a few have had so little leadership experience they have yet to formulate a stance on certain issues, others surren-

dered just September 5th, former Senator Fred Thompson from Tennessee. While there are many others on either side of the political spectrum, few Americans are giving them a second look, even if they are truly qualified and may prove to be good candidates.

First: let’s expose the popular candidates for what they truly are. A good

tioned her level of experience despite the fact that before being the president’s wife, Hillary had never worked as an executive or running a large bureaucracy in any way, shape, or form. Hillary was a lawyer—she dealt with policy questions daily, but rarely did she have to navigate the diplomatic mountains inherent in the job she seeks. Her executive experience is limited to her intimate involvement in the policy-making during those good old Clinton days just by virtue of the fact that she was married to the president.

Most importantly: Hillary cannot, even in the darkest crevices of twisted minds, ever be thought of as a *diplomat*. She is polarizing and venomous. She is the last thing this country needs during a time of such internal partisanship and international shock in what we have managed to accomplish in Iraq.

A final note—unknown to most—Hillary is under investigation by the Federal Election Commission for campaign finance irregularities. This is not the first time the FEC has probed into Hillary’s campaign gifts; in January of 2006, the FEC fined Clinton \$35,000 for failing to accurately report \$721,895 in contribu-



tions from former Judicial Watch client Peter Paul. It is a matter of public record and Clinton did not contest that finding. Hillary has a rich history of being investigated for donor scandals, and that legacy endures, as investigations into copious claims are currently underway.

U.S. Senator from Illinois Barack Obama is also a frontrunner in the Democratic primaries. With two years in the U.S. Senate, seven years in the Illinois State Senate, an inspiring soundbite-worthy DNC address, and two best-selling books, some argue his resume is enough to qualify him to be president. Matt Pearson, Democratic Party chairman in Buena Vista County, Iowa disagrees. "He could use a little more experience," concedes Pearson. Even leaders of the Democratic Party recognize Obama's inexperience.

To be clear, Obama wouldn't be the youngest presidential nominee or chief executive in our country's history. At 45 years old, the eloquent Harvard-educated African-American who calls for national unity is almost a decade older than William Jennings Bryan, who was 36 when he first became a Democratic nominee. John F. Kennedy was only 43 when he was elected. After President McKinley's death, Theodore Roosevelt was 42 when he took the oath of office.

As for experience, Obama's two years in the U.S. Senate and seven years in the Illinois Legislature arguably gives him more experience (at least more time as an elected official) than Woodrow Wilson, who had been New Jersey's governor for only two years when he was elected in 1912. And as for our beloved current president: George W. Bush served only six years as Texas governor before being elected president.

Nevertheless, there are still many Democrats who prefer a more knowledgeable nominee with greater federal experience given our involvement in Iraq and looming problems with North Korea and Iran. Honestly, they're right. There's no doubt Obama will be a good Democratic candidate in the future, but for now, he's too young given the series of diplomatic and security crises he would face upon taking office.

Finally, a quick bit on John Edwards. He voted for the war. Democrats, for the

most part, at least want to see a plan for withdrawal. Even as recently as October 10, 2004, when Edwards was on "Meet the Press," he *defended* his vote to enter Iraq and said he would cast the same vote again if he had the option. Once Edwards became a potential candidate for president in 2008, however, he ad-



SARA LEEBEN

mitted he had made a mistake. His vote sways and blows like his hair in the wind. In short, Edwards decreasing popularity in the polls leaves him little room for recovery.

Without dwelling on other Democrats—as they truly do not have a chance—let's consider the Republican frontrunners: Giuliani and Romney. In the first Republican debate, Giuliani

hailed himself as being the most experienced candidate in terms of foreign policy. Apparently, being mayor of New York City qualifies one to make imperative and complex foreign policy decisions. Giuliani's ability to rally a city after destruction should not be confused with foreign policy experience. Surely, the former mayor could do well alleviating some polarization in Washington—let's not falsely attribute that to his great experience in foreign politics, rather, his appeal to moderate voters who seek a candidate more socially liberal and fiscally conservative. In terms of experience, Giuliani is the *least* experienced candidate running.

One can learn a lot about former Governor Romney from what the people of Massachusetts have to say about him—nothing good. Even better, Romney has shown to be a slave of public opinion, often altering his views on issues like abortion to appease those whom he must placate at one time or another. As a moderate in Massachusetts, Romney was an advocate of a woman's right to choose. A few months ago, when he became the only Republican candidate with name recognition that Evangelicals would even consider backing, he changed his views completely. Fred Thompson's recent announcement that he will, in fact, be a candidate for the presidency may destroy the Romney-appeal for conservatives. Any further exploration of Thompson should only take place after he has a chance to explicate his views and take part in the Republican debates.

The acute lack of decent candidates is not a new problem. In describing the 2004 Bush-Kerry presidential election, comedian Lewis Black could not help but say, "we had two bowls of shit in front of us; the only difference was the smell." And sure enough, four years later, in the first election in which neither an incumbent president or vice president will be running since 1928, there *still* seems to be little choice for a fresh start through an experienced and inexorable leader. Instead, both the Democratic and Republican parties, thus far, seem to support only celebrity politicians. ☪

*Jarrold Niebloom is a sophomore and has designed an independent major.*

# INTERRUPTIONS

## BACKTALK: What was your **first reaction** to Dean Glaser's decision on the *Source*?

I could be saying a lot of **nasty things** about Bacow's e-mail — can he really expect me to believe he is that **pro-free speech** while being so wishy-washy toward ROTC? — and maybe they are things some folks at Tufts want to hear. But I got to **watch myself**: This bit right here's got a byline. — *Mike Yarsky, A'08*

Dean Glaser's verdict was a **courageous** statement in favor of free speech and **liberal education**. The true test of one's principles is whether you can hold them in the face of **adversity**. In the long run, Tufts will be better with **more speech**, not less. — *Prof. Phillip Muñoz*

It is unfortunate that little can be done about a **publication** that personally **attacked** me and my peers. I find it **ridiculous** that this Tufts community does not hold students **accountable** for their actions. — *Ikenna Acholonu, A'10*

## What is Interruptions?

This is your page to interrupt the magazine. This reader-produced content will seek to entertain and inform through fresh interpretations of what's happening around Tufts. It will have new vignettes each week, things that we found funny or interesting. This week we feature phone calls with campus leaders, print reactions to an important news item, and invite you to a question for print in the next issue.

Coming to campus, what pissed you off most?

Email olivia.teytelbaum@tufts.edu

"The Dean of Admissions assures me that none of you claimed to be loud, obnoxious, drunk, or offensive to your neighbors. We do not expect you to behave that way here either."

*President Larry Bacow at matriculation*



## PARTY LINE:

"What would you put on a bumper sticker?"

"Peace!" It would make it a better world, brother. If everyone lived by that, the world would be a damn better place. We try to drill that to our team everyday.

*Bill Samko, head football coach*

"I hate bumper stickers. I don't do causes."

*Jeffrey Taliaferro, professor of political science*

"Tufts is the answer. Do you know the question?" The most creative people are those who ask really important questions. Sometimes people who are less creative have innovative answers but to questions that aren't important. You hear a lot of papers and ask yourself, Well there's nothing really wrong with this, but why are they talk about it? Like, is there anybody home up there?

*Bob Sternberg, dean of arts and sciences*



ANGELA ROBINS



## ARTS THIS WEEK

## TUFTS

Friday, September 14, *Ilya and Emilia Kabakov: The Center of Cosmic Energy*, multimedia exhibition at the Tufts Art Gallery, through November 11. Free admission. For more information, see page 24 for a review, or visit [ase.tufts.edu/gallery](http://ase.tufts.edu/gallery).

Saturday, September 15, *24-Hour Theater Festival*, sponsored by Bare Bodkin. Alumnae Lounge, 8 p.m. Free event.

Sunday, September 16, *French Film Experience: La Doublure*, Olin 011 & 012, 6-8:30 p.m.

Monday, September 17, *Music Faculty Colloquium Series: Richard Kramer*. City University of New York presents guest faculty colloquium entitled "Theorizing the Enlightenment," a look at the final sonata of Emanuel Bach. Light refreshments served. Tufts Music Center, room M155, 12p.m. Free event.

## BOSTON

Friday, September 14, *Boston Fashion Week: The Art of Fashion Photography exhibit*. 647 Tremont Street, Boston. For more information, visit [tonnmodel.com/gallery](http://tonnmodel.com/gallery).

Friday, September 14, *23rd Boston Film Festival*, through Friday, September 21. For more information, visit [bostonfilmfestival.org](http://bostonfilmfestival.org). Prices vary.

Saturday, September 15, *Contemporary Outlook: Japan*, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Through February 10. For more information, see page 24 for a review, or visit [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org).

Thursday, September 20, *Tapestry of Voices*, open mic and poetry reading with Beantown's best poets. Every second Thursday each month, Borders, 10-24 School Street, Boston, 6:30 p.m.

# Places to go, Things to do, Art to See

BY BRIAN McLOONE

**D**ear Freshmen, Does the waffle maker in Dewick still amaze you? Are you still giddy when you get ready to go out to frats? Do you still think the Tufts Police are here to help us? Does the library roof invariably ignite Jumbo pride?

If those questions didn't do it, let me lay out my point more clearly: There might be a time in the not-so-distant future in which you—dare I say it?—get tired of Tufts. To mitigate the inevitable shock and crisis which accompany such a discovery, below is a list of some very accessible artistic destinations that may strike your fancy and enable you to change your pace a bit.

## THE ICA

To begin, there's the Institute of Contemporary Art, a museum that passes the ultimate test of artistic pretension;—you can be two blocks away from the building, ask a taxi driver if you're close, and get a simple, delightful response: "What the hell is the ICA?" In the driver's defense, I've *been* to the ICA, and I'm not entirely sure I know what the hell it is either.

Hailed by *Vanity Fair* as an architectural masterpiece, the ICA is amazingly unamazing in person, with its architectural highlights not visible until you're actually inside the building—not until, in other words, you've paid. This is a convenient reality for the museum coordinators, I imagine, since the work inside the building is often quite unimpressive. By far, the most crowded gallery in the museum was not a gallery at all, but a long, narrow corridor with a glass window overlooking Boston Harbor. The irony of that fact is

just too obvious not to note: people going inside of a building to gaze at the beauty of the outside world.

In all seriousness, however, the ICA does have its perks. For one, it's an ideal spot to take a date. It's in a beautiful setting, conveniently a few minutes' walk to all the restaurants in the North End. Beyond that, the museum has changed up its list of artists rather rapidly, so it's easy to tell if the exhibitions look interesting, or if you should wait a few weeks for something different to come along.

The exhibitions are hit or miss from week to week, and even from floor to floor. I've been there and seen an incredibly moving display of portraits of people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, and then moved a few rooms away to find a twenty-foot-long pink spaceship, transporting cartoon characters to the outer reaches of the Cosmos.

Right now, as it so happens, there's an interesting exhibition of Parisian sculptor and artist Louis Bourgeois' work, as well as a gallery dedicated to artist David McKenzie's look at "the possibilities, limits, and consequences of self-transformation." The former exhibition is too varied to go into any critical depth here, but the theme of the latter is particularly interesting and novel. To illustrate the exhibit's primary motif in masks, Mackenzie displays a documented experiment in which he walked through Harlem wearing a Bill Clinton costume.

Thus, for the avant garde-minded, the museum certainly has something worthwhile to offer. And if I may, there's another, not unimportant reason to go—Boston is a nice, progressive city. It's a good idea to explore it and see how its artists are thinking about life. That being said, I have two caveats: the price of admission is an absurd \$10, and the museum is very small.



TREY KIRK

For more information about the ICA, please visit [www.icaboston.org](http://www.icaboston.org).

### THE MFA

Boston's artistic pride and joy, the MFA is a respected museum of very high quality. Massive in both its architecture and its collections, the museum is a near-paradise for art connoisseurs and wanderers. It's easy—too easy, in fact—to spend an entire afternoon exploring all of the ins-and-outs of this massive structure. The MFA has something for anyone, assuming this “anyone” is even remotely interested in art or archaeology.

Let me take you through a sample of some of the permanent collections, to show the diversity of the galleries. At the far northeastern end of the building, on the second floor, you walk through a hallway of Roman artwork and sculpture, into a gallery of late Classical and Hellenistic Greek work, into a massive room of Roman pieces, and then into a hall of

Classical Greek, ending with a large corridor of Late Period and New Kingdom Egyptian.

This is all in one *part* of one wing of the building. It's rare for a museum, with its impressive collection of 19th and 18th century artwork, to have such a comprehensive collection of ancient art

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At the MFA's contemporary Japanese art exhibition, artists showcases the interplay of technology, sex, and fun in a very esoteric and captivating

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and artifacts. In fact, there are few places in Boston where one would come into contact with that type of material.

Unfortunately, the Edward Hopper exhibit has moved on, but there are currently nine other exhibitions on display,

including an exhibition of American painter Winslow Homer's work (through the end of September), a *very* interesting collection of contemporary German photography (through February 10), and “Glittering Gold: Illumination in Islamic Art” (through January 27 of next year). One of the most interesting current

exhibits though, is the museum's contemporary outlook of Japanese art, where artists of different varieties showcase the interplay of technology, sex, and fun in a very esoteric and captivating format.

But if Japanese post-modernism isn't your particular cup of tea, there's a new exhibit opening in October dedicated to the artwork of the Napoleonic era, the epitome of the “Empire style” of the art history, when politically-inclined artists would infuse

their art—and their leaders—with Greco-Roman themes and allusions. The work, while invariably gaudy, is historically interesting and politically relevant.

The MFA is located at the corner of Huntington and a street with the unfortunate name “Ruggles.” By T, just take the E line to the Museum of Fine Arts stop. Tufts students get in for free, with

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## The work, while invariably gaudy, is historically interesting and politically relevant.

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a student ID. The special exhibits cost money, and vary in amounts.

*For more information, please visit [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org).*

### “THE CENTER OF COSMIC ENERGY” AT THE TUFTS UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

For this fascinating outing, you don’t even have to leave campus. You simply have to leave behind previously held notions of rationality and reason.

“The Center of Cosmic Energy” is artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov’s fictional homage to the fictitious caves that Tufts never found under Walnut Hill. Huh? That’s right, the “story” is as follows. Walnut Hill, the site of the Aidekman Arts Center, rests upon a system of caves, in which there are murals dating back to the first century BCE.

This discovery was made at the turn of the 19th century, but construction crews lacked the finances, technology, and motivation to pursue the matter further. It wasn’t until 1991, when a ventilation system on campus was closed, that crews were able to explore the site with more precision and breadth. At the time, as is noted on Tufts’ website, the discovery sparked a great deal of academic interest, particularly because the cave murals depicted figures with antennae.

Thus, the Kabakovs have taken advantage of Tufts’ well-positioned arts building to present their “Center of Cosmic Energy,” which highlights the

archaeological find itself and the sociological importance of the murals depicted on the walls.

Unfortunately, every aspect of this story is false. More unfortunate, though, is that the Kabokovs remind us that it’s false (if they didn’t make this clear at the exhibit, I wouldn’t be spoiling the fun...). The Kabokovs sap all the fun out of the

exhibit doesn’t do that already. enter-  
prise by  
declaring  
the work  
as fic-  
tional, as  
though  
the  
absurd  
story that  
explains

Nevertheless, the exhibit is entirely fun, even if its lack of authenticity is obvious before you set foot in the door. On the museum-like plaques that line the walls, the Kabokovs illustrate and explain the conceptual foundations for this center of “cosmic energy.” Theorized by the scientist and philosopher Verdansky, a “noosphere” is an ethereal collection of humanity’s artistic and cultural achievements, suspended somewhere beyond the boring old biosphere. This “repository,” as Verdansky calls it, is where the

sible and more creative?” Thus, the paintings on the cave walls depicted people with antennae because the inhabitants had tried to channel the creative, cosmic energy flowing from the noosphere. The Center explains all this and more, as it asks its patrons to sit in an oval room (situated *directly* above the site of the old caves, of course) and look into a glowing circle, set at a cosmologically relevant sixty-degree angle. Now, I don’t consider myself much of a supernaturalist, but I can assure you that the cosmic energy was flowing pretty strongly when I visited the exhibit.

It helps that there’s a relaxing voice explaining the significance of the caves, with subtle music playing in the background to help you focus your creative, cosmic forces. And when you’re done, you can walk down some stairs to the caves themselves, an archaeological site that, curiously, will eventually lead to an exit that puts you at ground level.

The exhibit runs until November 11 and is free.

*For more information on the Tufts Art Gallery and other upcoming exhibitions, visit [ase.tufts.edu/gallery](http://ase.tufts.edu/gallery).*

So there you have it. The avant-garde, the comprehensive, and the fictional. Of course, no list of artistic destinations is never complete, and the context of this one has forced me to be particularly

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## The Center of Cosmic Energy asks us, “Does the brain trust both the past and the future—a reservoir of cosmic energy—to make our lives possible and more creative?”

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“wisdom of the ancients” is faithfully “preserved,” explaining homologous inventions like pyramids, the wheel, writing, and so on.

To give you an idea of how far the Kabokovs are willing to go with this story, the Center asks us, “Does the brain trust both the past and the future—a reservoir of cosmic energy—to make our lives pos-

selective. But this apparent shortcoming is actually nothing to bemoan, for one of the best aspects of discovering interesting, challenging art are discovering them yourself. Boston is overflowing with museums and galleries that are off the beaten path. Explore, discover, find—channel the cosmic energy of the noosphere. ☺

# Starbucks, Play It Again

BY ANDREA LOWE

This past Thursday, September 6, local musicians brought their talents to nearby Davis Square for the Starbucks Music Makers Competition. Established to highlight undiscovered talent throughout greater New England, the competition consists of regional contests in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, and Rhode Island, each featuring five to seven artists performing original music. One finalist from each contest moves on to the final round in Boston, which will take place on October 11, 2007. Several professionals from the music industry judge each semifinal round, and their votes are added to a public online vote to determine which candidate advances. The winner of the final round will receive studio time with a professional music engineer, as well as airplay and promotion on Goombah Radio, a new online music site.

When I was still about a block away from Starbucks, I was suddenly blinded by dozens of camera flashes, a neon marquee, and a rather impressive-looking red carpet. Okay, not exactly. But the coffee shop was completely packed when I walked in, and there was official media coverage and everything. Starbucks employees were even passing out free samples of pumpkin spice lattes before and during the performances (as if they really needed more publicity). Just a bit after seven o'clock, the competition got underway, and there were two solid hours of music performed by seven artists, each with extremely diverse styles, playing three songs each. Three "celebrity" judges were also present, from local radio stations and music promotion companies. The official contest winner who will move on to the Boston semifinals has not yet been announced.

The first performer of the evening was Todd Martin, playing tracks from his newly released album, "Listen Like You Should." His CD, as well as the albums of all of the evening's participants, were available for sale at the end of the show. Unlike many of the performers who had accompaniment, Martin chose to play solo; he played around

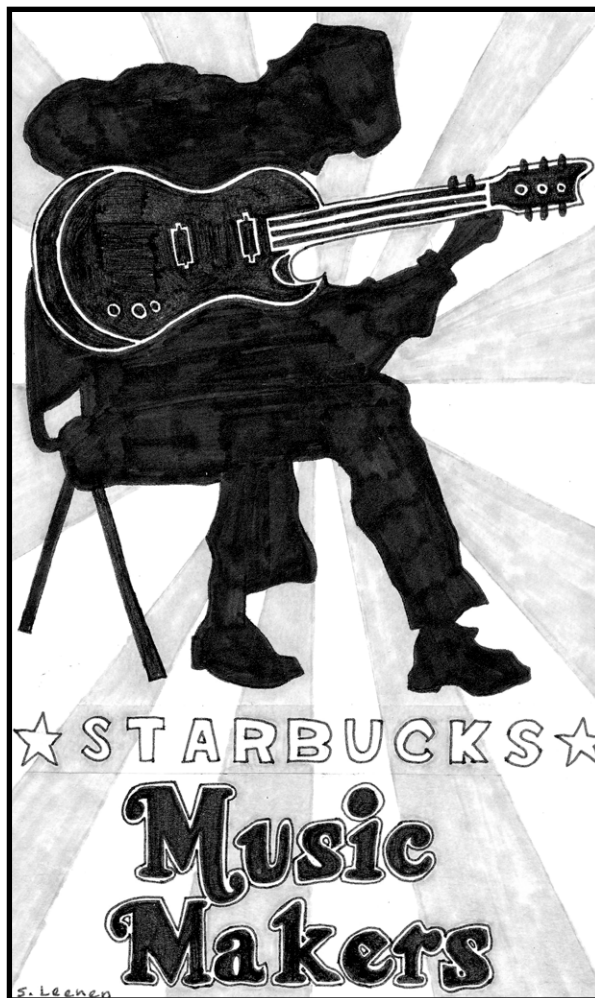
with sampling and looping to create a fuller sound. His three selections were stylistically similar, all belonging to the typical acoustic rock genre. All three showcased Martin's obvious skills on the acoustic guitar, and his last selection, a six or seven minute tale about a strange dream, highlighted his songwriting talent.

The next performer, Dan Gonzalez, also brought along an acoustic guitar, but a completely different musical style. I shouldn't have been surprised at how much I enjoyed his performance, considering he had won songwriting awards from Berklee College of Music and had already received considerable airplay on local radio stations. My personal favorite of the performers, Gonzalez played in a more laid back and quiet acoustic style, performing songs with more serious social themes. His second selection was particularly memorable, a haunting tune reflecting on public executions and the justice system of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Other notable acts included Jen Murdza, new to playing solo, who had an incredibly striking, radio-ready voice. Her alternative-country style was far different from anything else heard that evening.

Additionally, three women forming the group Maeve impressed the crowd with an extremely full sound, thanks to two guitars and one keyboard. Their insightful lyrics and low-key pop style reminded me of performers like Jewel. The other three acts spanned a wide range of musical style as well. Altogether, the evening will hopefully prove successful as part of a wider movement to bring local music back to cafes.

All of the acts at the Music Makers



SARAH LEENEN

Competition in Davis Square were extremely talented, and it would be difficult to predict who will move on to the final round. However, I'd place my bets on Dan Gonzalez, with his impressive list of accolades in songwriting and his unique acoustic sound.

Despite being attached to the corporate name of Starbucks, the contest was not over-commercialized and could have taken place at any local coffee shop. I expect the finalists to be an impressive group of young musicians, and the final contest, which will take place at the Hard Rock Café in Boston on October 11, to be something worth checking out. ☺

For more information on the performers and the Starbucks Music Makers Competition, visit [www.starbucksmusicmakerscompetition.com](http://www.starbucksmusicmakerscompetition.com).

# Meeting Hairy Potter at the Boston Arts Festival



SARAH LEENEN

BY STEPHANIE SGUIGNA

Saturday, September 8 marked the beginning of Boston's arts and crafts fair, playfully dubbed the "Boston Ahts Festival" by locals. An annual event that takes place on the first weekend of September, the festival featured arts and crafts made by local talents. The high for the day was 95 degrees, and I was one of the dozens in attendance, fanning myself with my writer's notepad and scanning the quirky artworks on display.

Visually, the festival was beautiful. I strolled down the sidewalk and peered into dozens of tented showcases set up under the wisteria-laden arcade by the harbor; each tent featured one vendor selling painted postcards, beaded jewelry, pewter figurines, abstract mosaics, and other handmade arts and crafts.

One such vendor, Kurt Kuss, aptly nicknamed the Hairy Potter, hosted a tent filled with ceramic bowls, plates, and decorative cookware. I stopped inside his tent and casually browsed

through his display as another customer decided on her purchase—a bowl painted a deep shade of blue—for a friend, she said.

As Kuss wrapped the customer's purchase, I asked him how business was going thus far (mind you, it was only 1 p.m. on the first day of the festival), to which he replied, "That was my first purchase of the day. [I'm] basting in my own juices!" he laughed. But so far, "[I am] encouraged in the reaction to my work—that's a stroke!" For a while we chatted about the Disability Act of 1990, his and his wife's seeing-eye dogs, and the functionality of his ceramics. Suddenly, he picked up a shallow, miniature bowl—something I would use for dipping sushi in soy sauce—and handed it to me.

Kuss happily told me I was free to take it. I turned it over in my hands, noticed the \$6.00 price tag, and uttered the obligatory, "It's beautiful. Let me pay for this!" To my surprise, instead of insisting I walk away with the trinket, he heartily said, "Okay!" at which point I unwittingly became his second paying customer that day. I wished him luck and walked away absolutely stunned—I usually have much better resilience in the face of cunning salesmen, and yet I had so quickly failed when confronted with the Hairy Potter.

In an effort to regain my confidence, I made my way to the harbor and sat on an empty bench. Directly in front of me, an African dance performance was taking place on the stage set up at the end of the stretch of grass. Energy was in abundant supply everywhere I looked. A father grabbed hold of his son and tipped him upside down, causing his small Boston Red Sox hat to fall on the grass beneath him. By the fountain, tentative toddlers dipped their hands in and out of the flowing water with inexplicable fascination, giggling and looking to their parents for approval—granted, of course.

In the background, the African song ended and I could hear the low horn of the Harbor Islands Ferry as it pulled into the harbor. The afternoon heat had smoothly transitioned from roasting to scorching. I could only have been more uncomfortable if I were one of the poor performers dressed in long-sleeved black cotton T-shirts and pants

singing "Zoot Suit Riot" on the stage for a not particularly captive audience.

One audience member, taking vain refuge from the heat in the shade of a sapling, was Jay, an elderly man in his mid to late seventies. I got up from my bench and took a seat next to him in the shade. Friendly and talkative, he flashed me his toothy grin as he bragged about how only a few moments earlier he had met Mayor Menino while talking to one of the vendors. "I tapped him on the shoulder," he said, "and he turned around and thought that, you know, I was someone he should know. So I got a big hello from him!" He cackled a little and pulled out the Boston Arts Festival T-shirt he bought at one of the tents. "That's such a great name—the Ahts," he said with an authentic accent, "I'm very impressed."

I was impressed too, as everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. At 2 p.m., as I was taking one last lap around the tents, a painting of a woman in a sari standing at an angle that hid the subject's face caught my eye. I was wondering to myself if somehow the painting was political in nature, when the artist, Lucilda Dassardo-Cooper, introduced herself. Dassardo-Cooper has been exhibiting her artwork at this event for three years, and her watercolors of Caribbean scenes have been on display in the Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts in New Delhi, India.

When I asked her about her impressions of the festival this year, she said, "It feels a lot more low-key than previous years. They put backs on the tents so it is a lot less interaction." With a rich accent influenced by her childhood in Jamaica, she explained to me how the colors and poses of her subjects lent them expressiveness and individuality—proving herself to be a seasoned expert in showcasing her work.

I thanked her for her perspective and resolved to make my way back to campus where my air-conditioner was awaiting me. Regardless of the weather, from the outset the festival was an impressive success, both for vendors to showcase their work and for customers to gain hands-on experience with local artists and craftsmen. My experience was certainly positive—perhaps even bewitching. But you can blame the Hairy Potter for that. ☺



# The Beauty and Character of an Unconventional Cemetery

BY ANNA FELDMAN

This summer, I worked in a cemetery. Please allow me to explain, lest images of grave-digging and pallbearers flash through your mind. I was a public relations and marketing intern for Forest Hills Educational Trust, a non-profit organization that operates on behalf of Forest Hills Cemetery, located in Jamaica Plain. Forest Hills is not your typical cemetery, though. It's a *historic* cemetery with beautiful grounds and breathtaking sculptural art. Forest Hills Educational Trust organizes walking tours, concerts, poetry readings, contemporary sculpture exhibitions, and community events, all within the confines of the cemetery, which is itself like a huge open-air museum, something you would not expect to find so close to Boston. It's right under our noses, this gorgeous green space about which many people know nothing, as did I before I worked there. Granted, a cemetery may not be the first place one would think of to go for a walk or to enjoy a picnic or to ride your bike, but bear with me for a moment and hopefully, you will see why Forest Hills Cemetery is a place well worth exploring.

Imagine your surroundings. Rolling hills, scenic vistas, towering trees, shaded groves. You're strolling "White Oak Avenue," then "Rock Maple Avenue," then "Peony Path." You see a couple picnicking by the shores of Lake Hibiscus, reclining in the Poetry Chairs, part of the Contemporary Sculpture Path sponsored by the Trust. A group of people on a walking tour are

admiring the collection of 19th century Victorian sculptured funerary monuments scattered throughout the landscape.

Founded in 1848 by Henry A.S. Dearborn, then mayor of Roxbury, Forest Hills Cemetery, following Cambridge's Mount Auburn Cemetery—of which Dearborn was a designer—was one of the first rural garden cemeteries in the United States. Forest Hills essentially functioned as Boston's

and by the vast, hygienic terraced Parisian cemetery Père Lachaise, inaugurated by Napoleon. American sculptors, unappreciated and untrained during colonial times, were also heavily influenced by European traditions. They studied and worked in Europe, particularly Italy, and returned to the United States refined and refreshed, initiating the 19th century movement of Victorian sculptural art.

With the new artistic mentality also came an intellectual one. The Victorian Era—the years roughly from 1830 to 1900—brought to the United States a new conception of death and the afterlife. Ideas cultivated in Europe by writers like John Milton and Alexander Pope, as well as horticulturists Lancelot Brown and Humphrey Repton, emerged as a driving force in the re-structuring of public cemeteries. Romantic ideals overtook the strict Puritan tradition of eternal damnation, as death came to be regarded in a softer light. The burial plot was merely an earthly resting place, and the afterlife afforded a chance to reunite with family and loved ones already deceased. Communing with nature was also increasingly considered a way to unearth the mysteries of life and death.

The visual quality of the rural garden cemetery was thus of utmost importance, and was indeed one of its most defining aspects. No longer was the experience of going to a cemetery a gloomy one. The cemetery as a town, with its hills, paths, trees, ponds, and impressive architectural and artistic monuments, allowed mourners the chance to approach death with a calm and positive attitude. One would appreciate

first park, preceding the era of Franklin Law Olmstead's stretch of green space, the Emerald Necklace, by 30 years. The concept behind the rural garden cemetery was multi-fold.

First, it addressed a simple sanitation problem. To prevent the spread of disease due to the build-up of decaying bodies in overcrowded urban plots, larger cemeteries outside the city center were deemed more effective. Second, it brought to fruition the intellectual ideology of the times, which re-conceptualized the idea of death in a fusion of philosophy and spiritualism. Finally, accompanying the scholarly was a new aesthetic mentality geared more toward the living. A visual transformation of the cemetery landscape using experimental horticulture was inspired dually by the lushness of 18th century English pleasure parks



the beauty and soothing atmosphere of the surroundings, and paying a visit to the plot of the deceased became a way not to reflect too sadly on their parting but to remember them fondly as they were in life.

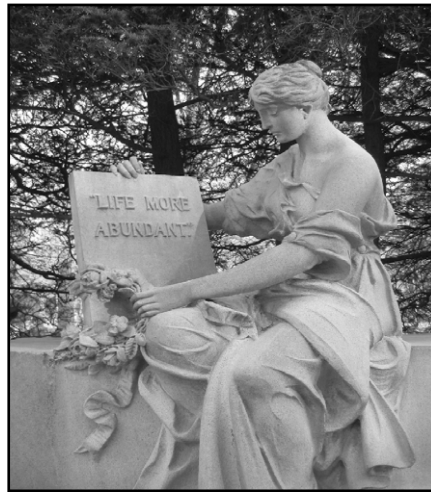
To make the leap from small, flat, sparsely planted colonial cemeteries to the grand, romantic, bucolic Victorian garden cemeteries now being requested by the growing public was no small feat. The transformation of the landscape became a skillful integration of art, architecture and horticulture. Forest Hills Cemetery became a destination not just for the mourning of loved ones and for the experimentation of creative horticulturists, but also as a place to view the most recent artistic trends. Some of the most famous sculptors and architects of the time were commissioned to create funerary monuments for wealthy families or individuals. One of the most famous pieces at Forest Hills and one of the most coveted is the raised relief bronze sculpture of “Death and the Sculptor” by Daniel Chester French, the designer of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

About five years ago, Cecily Miller, executive director of the Educational Trust, initiated the Contemporary Sculp-



ture Path in an effort to revive the 19th century tradition of creating contemporary art to adorn such a unique environment and encouraging the public to come view the art. Thirty-eight pieces of sculpture, both permanent and site-specific, now make up the one-mile Path and provide a fascinating visual contrast beside the Victorian carved statues or Gothic-style mausoleums hidden around every corner.

Another reason to visit? Many famous people are buried at Forest Hills: famous Boston revolutionary war heroes, abolitionists, suffragists, inventors, philanthropists, poets, authors, artists. Abolitionists William



Lloyd Garrison and Lysander Spooner, suffragist Lucy Stone, founder of the fountain pen Louis Waterman, poets e.e. cummings and Anne Sexton, playwright Eugene O’Neill, and basketball player Reggie Lewis are just a few of the illustrious people buried at Forest Hills. In October and November, there are two poetry reading events commemorating poets e.e. cummings and Anne Sexton. Several area poets convene to read the works of cummings or Sexton, some who actually personally knew the poets, with a concluding walking visit to their tombs.

Every season brings its distinct visual appeal to the Forest Hills Cemetery. Spring is glorious, if only for the colorful eruption of flowers, bushes and trees accompanied by the rejuvenating song of birds newly awakened to the season. Summer brings its sweltering heat but respite can be found amid the green shade of towering trees lining the winding paths or by the cool waters of Lake Hibiscus.

Winter finds the floral carved grave-stones, draped urns and Egyptian obelisks peeking out from under the bright white blanket that covers the ground. The shoulders and heads of the female figure sculptures and the tips of the marble angels’ wings are dusted with a clean pure snow, their bodily positions betraying nothing of their frigid environs. The imposing trees, now naked, still bend their branches over their resting brood, the entire landscape serene and tranquil. And then there is fall, a most spectacular time to visit the cemetery and to appreciate the hues and temperature of the season. The reds, oranges, and yellows of the changing leaves are of an unparalleled vibrancy in the setting of the

cemetery.

Forest Hills Cemetery is an environment, a unique natural setting in which one is prone to poetic turns of the tongue and to personal reflections of the deeper mind. Entering through the Gothic revival main gate and spending time amid its art and architecture can be an experience of various degrees: spiritual (Does God exist?), philosophical (Is death the end or will I see an afterlife?), emotional (I cry because I stand before my grandparent’s tomb, remembering them), physical (I walk up these hills, past this lake, around these monuments as my afternoon walk), recreational (picnicking by the lake or riding a bicycle), or intellectual (historical walking tours organized by the Trust). It was not named one of the *Boston Globe’s* “Ten Favorite Places in New England” or added to the National Register of Historic Places without good reason.

A place of old and new, of history and family, of art and creativity, of solitude and splendor—this is Forest Hills Cemetery. This weekend, be a bit unconventional and visit. Only then will you be able to confidently say to others, as I now do: The cemetery is really not that creepy. ☺

*Forest Hills Cemetery is accessible via the Orange Line. Hours: Daily 8:30 a.m.-dusk. Directions and more at [www.foresthillstrust.org](http://www.foresthillstrust.org). Photos courtesy Forest Hills Educational Trust.*

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

Sunday, September 16 at 2 p.m.  
The Great Women of Boston Walking Tour  
Admission: \$9

Sunday, September 30 at 2 p.m.  
The Architects and Architecture of Forest Hills Walking Tour  
Admission: \$9

Saturday, October 6 at 10 a.m.  
“Walk with the Artists” Contemporary Sculpture Tour  
Admission: \$9

Sunday, October 14 at 4 p.m.  
Borromeo String Quartet Concert  
Admission: \$30

Sunday, October 21 at 2 p.m.  
e.e. cummings poetry celebration  
Admission: \$5

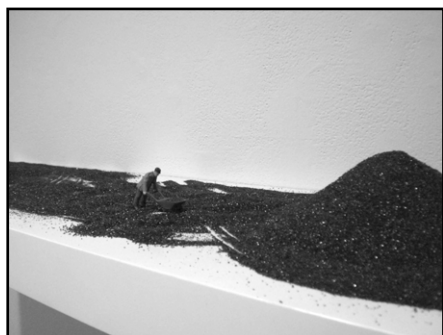
Friday, November 2 from 4-6 p.m.  
Day of the Dead (Tzompantli) Celebration  
Admission: Free

# Defining Space with String, and Miscellaneous Selections of Quirkiness: A Review of the Barbara Krakow Gallery

BY RACHEL TAN

Tucked away on busy Newbury Street, amidst stores like Burberry and DKNY, lies the Barbara Krakow Gallery. Unlike its flashy surroundings and fancy building exteriors, the gallery greets visitors with an unpretentious white space. Though plain and quite stark, the art make up for the plainness of the rooms. The elevator ride takes its time, but the art pieces waste no time making a statement. You either love small figurines like sculpture, or yarn hanging from ceilings, or dislike them—strongly. Once in the gallery, bright clerestory and studio lighting greet the visitor, as well as some intriguing art pieces in the main room and two secondary rooms. Unfortunately, hardly any seating is available in the main space for proper viewing, and the circulation of the space makes it inconvenient for interaction with the art pieces. Nevertheless, the carpeted floors, unadorned walls, and wonderfully lit space are great for viewing exhibitions.

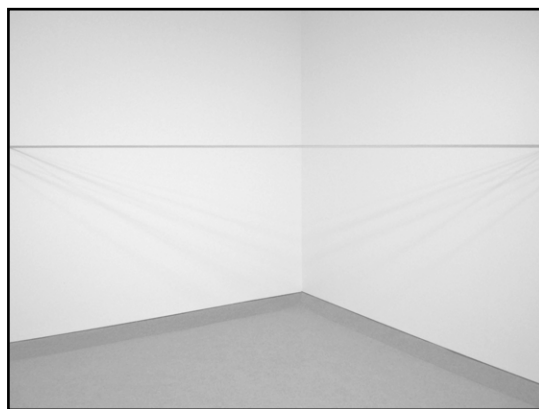
The fantastic thing about Barbara Krakow Gallery is that it offers something for a variety of viewers; well, modern art viewers, at least. It will appeal to the viewer who enjoys something different and quirky. Works at the gallery require acceptance or understanding, as the artists introduce many new ideas. Fortunately, the people working at the gallery are willing to explain



RACHEL TAN

an artist's vision or brief history, if you are willing to ask.

This gallery differs from others not only in its art selection, but in the artists that are featured. They are not mainstream oil painters; they are unconventional inventors. They invent new ways of looking at art, and investigate its essence. Installation artist Liliana Porter uses art as a humorous way of connecting the real and unreal. Using found miniature figurines, she sets them in realistic human situations. They can be seen as adorable toys in delightful displays or as serious pieces highlighting the real world and the imaginary. For example, Barbara Krakow displayed Porter's "Forced Labor,"



RACHEL TAN

featuring a small man with a wheelbarrow in the middle of great piles of black sand, understood as gravel. The surreal aspect of viewing this world-within-a-world is an experience, and its placement at eye-level heightened the effect. Porter's ability to give life to inanimate objects and make them interact with the viewer is not to be missed. She will soon have a solo show at the Barbara Krakow Gallery.

Across from this endearing display hangs a flat screen television, showing different industrial settings created by Peter Downsborough. The scenes of roads and construction sites unfortunately failed to pique my interest. However, this shows that Barbara Krakow does have



RACHEL TAN

an interesting mix of media and artistic style.

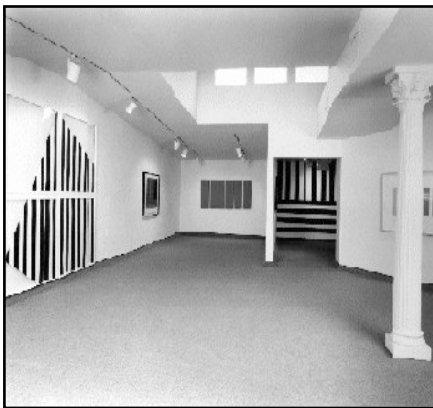
An art piece that really caught my eye was a pair of portraits by Julian Opie, hanging next to Porter's installation. They were a set of unconventional portraits of man and wife, facing each other. Slightly resembling the marriage portraits of the renaissance because of their stiff profiles, Opie gives it a great modern twist by using bold black outlines against a white background, maximizing contrast. Trained as a sculptor in London, Opie brings his attention to precise lines and beautiful form into his work. The holes in his figures give hair and clothing texture, and his use of lasers to cut these holes give it a very clean feel, almost as if it were painted. Opie's works are not solely confined to small-scale art. In fact, he was asked to create a massive background display with LCD technology for one of U2's concerts. His other works include gigantic wall murals, window prints, graphic life-size installations in parks, and giant lightboxes by the roadside, making our urban jungle his canvas. His work can be viewed in the gallery and online at [www.julianopie.com](http://www.julianopie.com).

Those secondary exhibitions were truly one-of-a-kind, but the main exhibition was of pieces by Fred Sandback, a well known modern sculptor. He was educated at Yale, alongside another great sculptor, Richard Serra, who had a retrospective at MOMA this summer. It is surprising to see that the sculptor's work differs so much from

Serra's, especially since they graduated in the same class. Serra focuses more on industrial materials like steel and sculptural forms with weight, concentrating on the way people interact with the piece, or the way the piece fits the site. Sandback looks at the tangibility of space, investigating what creates space: would certain forms be possible if a certain wall or corner did not exist? He questions not so much what is there, but rather, asks what would be different if something was not.

Viewers are not supposed to interact so much as to ponder. Sandback uses elastics and cord to connect corners, or to link floors to ceilings. It is an articulation of his perception of space, down to a bare minimum. It is about things you notice or do not notice. One of his elegant pieces included one of two acrylic cords connecting two walls adjacent to a corner, with their shadows reflected many times on the wall, articulating the structure of the corner. His work appreciates what the building or space offers in a subtle way. At first glance, his work just looks like ropes and threads of yarn, but his thought behind it gives it meaning. This goes for much modern art: background and intention should be known before viewing the work. His exhibition continues until October 17.

The Barbara Krakow Gallery is a destination spot for anyone who is curious to get a glimpse of the modern art movement from a wide range of perspectives, and of course a must-see for anyone who loves art, who creates art, and wants to be inspired. But remember that the pieces that the gallery features require an open mind, and a desire to let your imagination run wild. ☺



FINE ARTS UNLIMITED

## Classy Correspondence

BY SAMANTHA MOLAND

**Y**ou can tell a fair amount about a person from his or her handwriting. You can tell even more about that same person from his or her stationery. The classic act—or rather art—of letter writing has declined considerably since its glory days of quill and ink. Few and far between are the delightful notes of correspondence signed, sealed, and delivered to your rusting mailbox. Yet, when they do arrive, one can't help but feel flattered by the gesture. Take a break from the Facebook messaging, tiresome e-mail, or yet another uneventful AIM conversation and rediscover the paper trail marked with fine stationery, handcrafted cards, and unique invitations. With the number of specialized stationery stores in Cambridge and Boston, it would be silly not to indulge your friends and family. Better yet, the opportunity to make a lasting impression and truly personalize your epistle is easier than licking a stamp.

Look no further than **Papyrus** (18 JFK Street in Cambridge Square) for the perfect birthday or gracious thank you card. Appropriately named after the earliest form of paper crafted from the papyrus plant, Papyrus offers a modern selection of cards, stationery, invitations, and gifts, all of which can be customized. The breadth of the store's selection will make you wonder why you bought that lame Hallmark card for your mom last Mother's Day. It may have been the thought that counted, but the clichéd quote probably ended up robbing you of your intention. Seven Papyrus store locations are dotted throughout Boston and Cambridge, with over 150 locations nationwide, even in Hong Kong. Who knew?

Speaking about international destinations, what about those friends of yours who decided to skip town and are currently studying abroad? While you may want to

omit your grumbles about the cold and the latest ex-boyfriend/-girlfriend drama, you can opt to send your own personalized letterpress stationery to your oh-so-chic amie who happens to be in Paris or Prague this semester. And where better to pick up such fashionable wares than at **Paper Source** (1810 Massachusetts Avenue), which has locations in Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, and Wellesley? Upon entering the store you are quickly immersed in sheer beauty and design possibilities. Who knew paper could be so entertaining? The staff is extremely

helpful and offers top-notch customer service to get your creativity going. The downside to the beautiful labyrinth of patterns, textures, and color is the price, but consider the presentation and your friend's joyful expression upon receiving a dose of your elegant and eloquent prose.

No surprise that Julie Andrews included "brown paper packages tied up with string" as one of her favorite things. Care packages and gift boxes are an absolute delight to send and receive, and become even more splendid when adorned with satin ribbon and decorative wrapping paper. **Bob Slate Stationer** (1975 Massachusetts Avenue) can help out with that, and all three stores can be found within the city bounds of Cambridge. Additionally, Bob Slate sells an array of art and office supplies that you won't find at Staples. A filofax with paisley décor, check. Polk-a-dot planners, absolutely. And if you happen to be in the market for a fountain pen, then Bob Slate is the place to go.

Turn your nostalgia for the good old days of thoughtful, personalized print into reality. Just a quick browse at any of the aforementioned stationery stores will likely leave you inspired to write, create, and think outside of Outlook Express or Gmail. Please Mister Postman, look and see if there's a letter in your bag for me, because who knows what surprises and stories await behind the crisp fold of the next envelope to arrive! ☺



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

# Bulbs

*Kate Berson is a finalist from last year's Observer short story competition. Future selected works will be serialized.*

Marsha fell because the light bulb box was much higher up than she thought. She considered grabbing a stool but climbed up on the counter instead because she was impatient, and the Gidney's were on their way. Jack had insisted that she switch over to these Halogen bulbs, and look where they'd landed her. She loved her son for his conscience and his easy affection and his warm face, but God did she hate it when he looked at her in that way and said things like, "Ma, they're just as bright, and it's an easy way to make a difference." As if she couldn't stand to make a difference in this world if it weren't easy.

She lay there on the ceramic tile, starting up at the un-budged box on top of the fridge. Her buttocks-bone was burning from the fall, and she thought of calling an ambulance but decided to wait it out instead.

"Just wait, Marsh," she whispered, and then she felt silly. She took long breaths in through her nose and let them out through her mouth. She thought of Jack, who was probably just getting home from the city, kissing his girlfriend on the cheek or maybe giving her a pat. Marsha didn't care much for the stringy dance teacher, but her son said he felt like he was dreaming it was so good. And that's what mattered.

Then the Gidney's arrived, and in they came without knocking because they'd all been friends for years, and the two of them insisted that she call an ambulance.

Marsha had gotten up off the floor by then, thank God, but she was lying on the couch, buttocks up. "No, don't be silly," she said. She didn't want to sound like a martyr. She wanted to sound fine. "I'm a bit of an ass, aren't I?" she giggled. But the Gidneys' faces were crinkled up with pity. Gillian had Gary's fingers entwined in hers because the two of them liked to show off their love, but they were so entangled that Gillian had to reach out awkwardly in order to feel Marsha's forehead for a temperature.

After no time at all, Gary said, "We should go and let you rest," and Gillian put

a book, a glass of water, and the portable telephone down on the coffee table, and Marsha would ring if she needed a single thing. Marsha did not yell, "No!" or grab their wrists to pull them back. And so she was left with a humming silence and the carved, curved legs of her Tuscan coffee table to study.

She didn't bother to trek up to her room. Instead, she let her arm hang off the edge of the couch and drifted in and out of sleep. Each time she woke, her buttocks-ache reeling her out of some dream, she half expected to feel Frank sitting at her feet with one hand on her back and the other flipping channels. She thought she might feel her face bathed in the easy glow of the television screen.

Stripes of sun came in through the blinds the next morning. One light strip settled over Marsha's eyes, and she blinked until the living room wavered into place.

She would get up. She would get up.

She hobbled over to the blinking answering machine.

"Hey Ma, I want to come give you a visit after church on Sunday," breath in, "With Diane," breath out, "So prepare

"She used to let Jack help her in the garden when he was still little and wanted to be with her; she thought it might be therapeutic. But he was much too careless."

yourself all right? Right. Nothing fancy on your end, but I'm gonna bring some wine. Call me for red or white." She went into the kitchen to make breakfast. "What if I *can't* have you over on Sunday, Jack," she might've said.

Marsha's rear was still suffering by the weekend, and she had to postpone the gardening she had planned. It was mostly weeding that needed to be done, but it was no easy job, and Marsha was a fanatic. She jerked the weeds out of the earth methodically, one after another, as if she were yanking pages from a diary.

But she was tender with the seeds. She tapped them out of their paper pouches and pushed them gently, one by one, into the ground. The flowers flooded her yard—bowing red Tulips, regal purple Delphinium, spherical bunches of Hydrangeas and Hyacinth, exultant, buttery Chrysanthemums and Freesia.

Marsha started gardening after Frank left her. He'd been fading away from her for months and then one day he disappeared. It was the summer after Jack turned six, June twentieth. He finished painting the front deck as he'd promised, and then he vanished. The following day, Marsha made her first trip to the local nursery and spent a good two hundred dollars on tools and seeds.

She used to let Jack help her in the garden when he was still little and wanted to be with her; she thought it might be therapeutic. But he was much too careless. His chubby thumbs shoved the seedlings deep, deep down, one right up next to the one before it, and she usually wound up recovering and replanting the seeds while he was at school. But when those flowers sprang up she'd say, "Look Jacky! Look at the beautiful color you put on our earth."

Marsha was suspicious about Jack's Sunday visit. They hardly ever drank wine; there weren't many occasions for it. There weren't even any wine glasses in the house. She feared an announcement, but she wouldn't state her suspicions aloud, even when Gillian called her and asked about the tremble in her voice. "I'm still a bit shaky from the fall," Marsha told her.

When Jack's car pulled into the driveway Sunday afternoon, a momentary panic washed over Marsha. Her heart dropped to her stomach, and she limped as quickly as she could to the bathroom and locked herself in. She sank down to the floor, gripping the sink above her with both hands. She heard Diane's fierce knocking, and so she ran her fingers through her hair, roughly rubbed her eyes, and went to let them in.

Marsha took the bowl of chicken salad that she'd made out of the fridge and grabbed the breadbasket, pulling the cloth napkin off the top. She poured three cups of iced tea and plunked a bright pink straw in each of them. It felt like summer.

The two women sat across from Jack—achy mother and petite girlfriend. Before the dance teacher had lifted her first forkful, Marsha said, "Can you scoot down a bit, dear?" She liked to look her son straight in the eyes when she talked to him. They shifted over, and Jack started up a conversation, reflecting on the priest's sermon that morning. They discussed altruism and selflessness. But was it natural, Marsha wanted to know, to look out for others' interests over your own? Diane nodded vigorously, but didn't say much of anything. Jack said fairly that it wasn't the most natural thing, but often it was necessary, and humans, who all had so much in common ("the human condition," he said, and Marsha sighed), owed it to each other to step away from themselves and reach out to others.

As the conversation dwindled, Marsha got nervous. She got up and busied herself,

washing off the plates and getting dessert ready. She brushed crumbs from the counter into the trashcan. She wrapped up the left over chicken salad. She would not go back to that quiet, waiting table. When she had nothing left to do, she started writing out a grocery list on a post-it note; half the things on it she didn't need.

"Have a seat, Ma," Jack told her. He got up and took cups out of the cabinet for the wine. They had brought Merlot. Marsha didn't care much for Merlot. She

"Jack thrust himself away from the table, his chair screeching awfully on the tile floor. 'Let's go,' he said to his fiancé."

wincing as she eased her buttocks down onto the seat. Jack poured the wine and sat down. He was silent. He scratched his jaw hard then studied one of his nails for several uncomfortable seconds. Marsha could feel the growing distance between her and her son, as if the table were getting wider and wider, pushing them outward, away from each other. She felt anxious, and then frantic, and she thought of jumping across the table and swallowing her big

son in her arms.

Diane scowled at Jack. She turned to face Marsha. The dance teacher's little face was mostly forehead and chin, so that her eyes, nose, and mouth were bunched up into a horizontal strip of sharp facial features that ran from ear to ear. The disproportion troubled Marsha, but of course it wasn't the girl's fault.

"We're getting married," Diane said deliberately. The three words sounded like a dance teacher's count: 1, 2, 3. By the tone of her voice she might as well have followed with "So there."

Marsha fiddled with the paper napkin in her lap. She said congratulations with as much spirit as she could scrape up, but the happy word cracked somewhere in the middle, and she could feel Jack's disappointment, even disgust, surging toward her from across the table. But she did not look at her son, and she did not look at the dance teacher. She looked out the window at her colorful garden. She wanted to go out there. She wanted to fall to the ground and immerse herself in the flowers.

Jack thrust himself away from the table, his chair screeching awfully on the

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tile floor. "Let's go," he said to his fiancé. The dance teacher rose gracefully from her chair, and started to gather the cups of wine to bring them to the sink. "Just leave them there, dear," Marsha told her. The couple got their coats from the pantry. And Jack generously kissed his mother on the cheek. "I'll call you later this week," he said, but he couldn't look her in the eye. As they walked out, Marsha did not run after them. She wanted to be left alone. She wanted them to abandon their half-empty plastic cups of wine. She wanted them to leave their impressions on the kitchen seat cushions and walk out of the house.

Marsha didn't even wait a full hour before she called her poor son to beg forgiveness. But it was Diane who answered with a tired hello. "Is Jack there?" Marsha asked. "Yeah, hold on a sec." She was casual. She was impolite.

"Hey Ma."

"Jacky. I'm sorry. I'm sorry about before. I was just caught off guard. That's all. Do you think we could talk somewhere? Just you and me? I need to get out of the house, and I can't go over there. Can we go to the park maybe? Would you meet me at the park?"

He hesitated. "Sure," he said finally, "Yeah, Ma. I'll meet you in ten."

Marsha drove quickly. She wanted to get there before he did. She didn't want to look desperate. She wanted to look collected.

She would tell him not to marry the dance teacher. And Jack would trust her because he was her child, and when his father up and left, she was the rock, the constant, the unblinking unshakeable unwavering source of love in Jack's life. The dance teacher was just a flitty-eyed girl.

She was sitting on a park bench when he pulled up. They used to sit and read children's books together there on that very bench. When Jack sat down, he left a good foot between the two of them. Marsha put her hand on his knee, but he didn't move toward her or hold her hand—nothing. "Jacky," she said, "I just don't know if this is the best idea. Do you really think it's a good idea?" she asked, "Right now? You need to get married now?" Jack let his head hang with his chin against his chest.

Marsha's breaths became quick. She bent down to duck her head under his, and her eyes pleaded with him. She felt she might melt into a puddle and spill off

the edge of the bench.

She got hysterical. "She's such a skinny, little thing, Jacky," Marsha heard herself cry. "Just a stupid little dancer!" Her voice cracked, spit sprayed from her mouth, and she realized what a spectacle she was. Her cheeks were wet with tears. Her chin was wet with saliva. Covering her face with her gray hair, she crumpled up in Jack's lap. She rolled off the bench to kneel on the concrete beneath her son. "Oh, oh!" She was like a baby. "Oh, such a skinny little nobody!" Jack stood up suddenly and sent his mother flying onto her back. He walked away briskly without looking down at her.

Marsha quivered on the concrete. She stared up through her tears at a bright white sky, and the heavens gazed down at her shuddering frame. And God did not shake his head at her or point a solitary finger. He did not cast dark clouds across the sky or unleash torrents of rain. Instead, he filled Marsha's heart with drunken warmth that seeped out in rivulets into her boiling blood, until her eyelids fluttered closed and she slept. ☺

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*Kate Berson is a junior majoring in English.*

# Police Blotter

Monday, August 27<sup>th</sup>

A student in Haskell Hall reported a digital camera stolen sometime between 11:30 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. The student held a party in her room and later admitted to TUPD that she did not know everyone in attendance. Perhaps this fact played a role in the theft.

Wednesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>

At 3:20 p.m., TUPD responded to a fire alarm activation at a fraternity on Professor's Row. When responding to the alarm, the officers saw two big fans blowing air out of a student's room, and upon smelling marijuana, decided to investigate further. The investigation proved fruitful as the officers discovered marijuana in an open drawer. The illegal substance was promptly confiscated and destroyed.

Sunday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>

At 11:53 p.m., TUPD encountered a car that ignored the stop sign at the corner of Packard Avenue and Professors Row. Upon seeing the police cruiser, the car immediately pulled into President Bacow's driveway, and three young men sprinted away from the car. As it turned out, the vehicle the men left behind had just been stolen. One of the culprits, a 17 year-old man, claimed that he was in the car only after being offered a ride by the two other men.

Friday, September 7<sup>th</sup>

At 12:13 a.m., TUPD officers witnessed a female urinating under a tree at 134 Professor's Row. A few of her friends identified her as a Tufts student, and said they were taking their friend back to her dorm. The incident has been sent to the Dean's Office.

—Compiled by Peter Shaeffer, with the cooperation of the Tufts Police Department

## COLLEGE BULLETS

15-year old attends The University of Pennsylvania

On Wednesday, September 5 Brittney Exline began Ivy League classes before she could drive or see R-rated movies. Highly accelerated in both science and math, the 15-year old graduated from high school last spring. Although Exline is not the youngest college student (Jessica Meeker began Penn State at age 13), she is undeniably academically talented and mature for her age. The University of Pennsylvania is confident in her ability to assimilate and flourish during her freshman year.

Hate Crime Investigation at the University of Maryland

A 3-foot long rope with a 3-inch diameter noose at one end was found hanging 10-12 feet high in a tree near a building that houses several black campus groups at the University of Maryland on Monday. The rope could have been hanging for up to two weeks, reports say. Campus police and administration took the finding very seriously and are treating it as a hate crime until further notice.

—Compiled by Molly Posner

### Heard on the Hill

“I can tell you from having spent the past 38 years on a college campus that it is very difficult to predict who among you is likely to make their mark on the world.”

President Bacow's Matriculation Address, August 29, 2007





# Tufts Observer

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