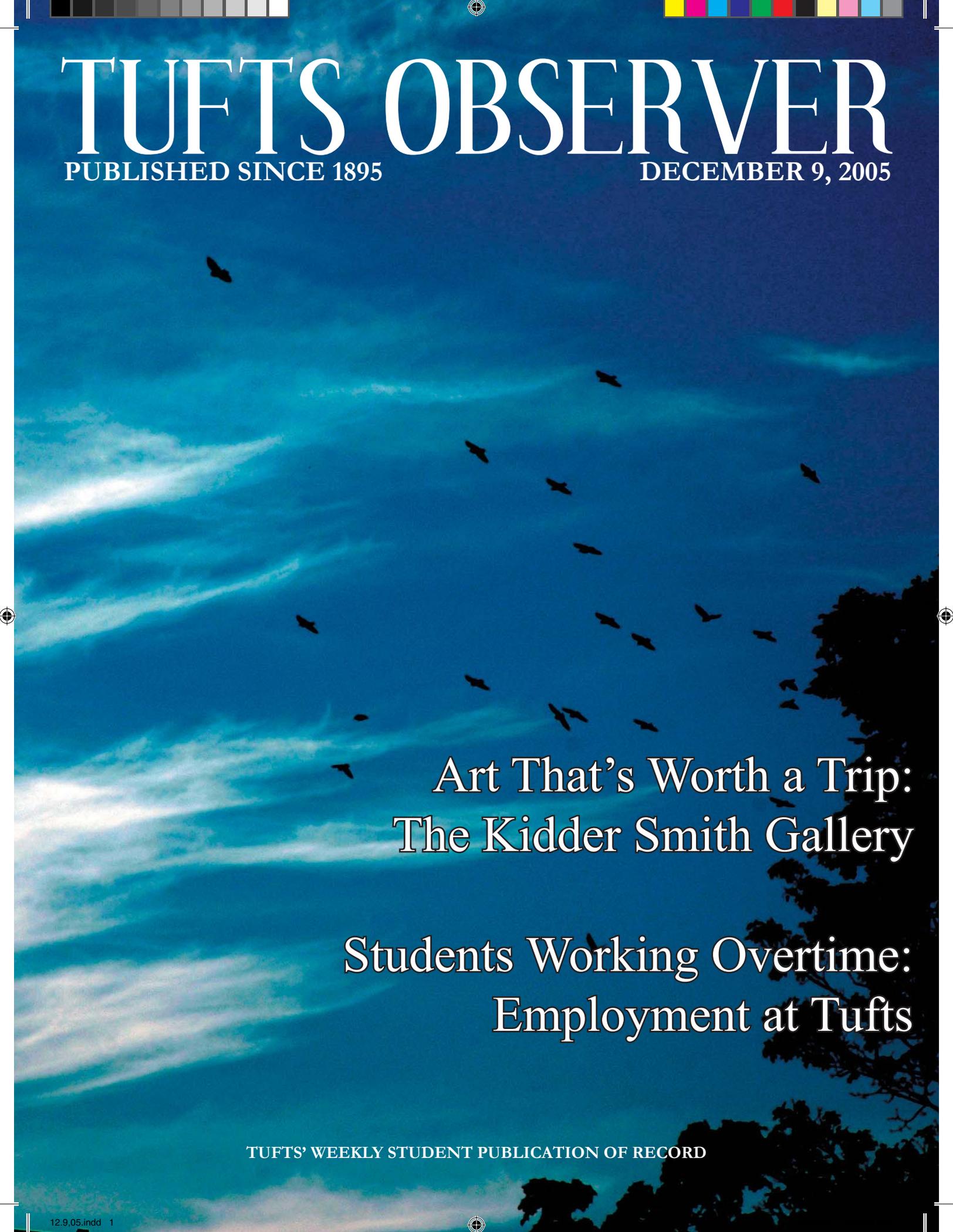




TUFTS OBSERVER

PUBLISHED SINCE 1895

DECEMBER 9, 2005



Art That's Worth a Trip:
The Kidder Smith Gallery

Students Working Overtime:
Employment at Tufts

TUFTS' WEEKLY STUDENT PUBLICATION OF RECORD

During my four years at Tufts the *Observer* has more or less been my second home. When I first stepped into the *Observer* office during a general interest meeting my freshman year, I did not plan on getting particularly involved. A few months later I found myself writing almost every week, helping with layout and spending Saturday nights at *Observer* parties.

From there I began the process of growing up at the *Observer*. I went from on-the-town editor, to opinions editor, to editorials editor, to managing editor, and finally editor-in-chief. With each new title, a new piece of my personality developed. The *Observer* challenged me in ways I never expected to be challenged, both personally and intellectually. When I saw the way the *Observer* was affecting me I began to take ownership of it. Before I knew it, the limited involvement I had originally planned on having had become my biggest commitment outside of class.

I knew I wanted to be editor-in-chief sometime during my sophomore year. Still, the magnitude of what I was getting into did not hit until the day my first issue was supposed to be delivered. When I got to Curtis Hall that day, I expected to see hundreds of matriculation issues ready to be handed out, but to my surprise there was nothing there. At that moment I discovered that calling previous editors-in-chief to solve my problems was not going to work, and no number of angry phone calls to the publisher would make the *Observers* arrive on time. There would be no *Observers* at matriculation.

That afternoon, as I sat on the president's lawn watching entering freshmen and their parents eagerly reading the *Daily* and the *Primary Source*, I wanted to run up to them and explain that there was another publication they were missing, a publication that represented an essential part of my Tufts experience. And as I found myself wishing I could tell complete strangers all about the long history of the *Observer*, the high writing quality, and the incredibly dedicated staff, I finally understood why I had wanted to be editor-in-chief for so long.

It is impossible to explain why the *Observer* is so addictive. The past semester has certainly been full of late nights, last minute panics, computer malfunctions, and even a few angry conversations. But these all seem well worth it every Friday, when the issue comes out. And while I have grown to love the magazine itself, it is not the product, but the people that have made my experience here so memorable. As an underclassman the *Observer* staff took me in, made me feel at home, challenged me, and allowed me to create some of my funniest, craziest and most unforgettable early Tufts memories.

As an editor-in-chief I have gotten the chance to work with a group of unbelievably motivated, insightful and innovative staff. I could not have gotten through the last four months without their support. Thank you and good luck to each member of the masthead of fall '05. I hope you are able to look back on your *Observer* experiences as warmly as I look back on mine.

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Letters

BY LYDIA HALL

I wish letter writing hadn't gone out of fashion, as it seems to have done. Granted, the correct thing to do upon receiving a present is still to send a thank you note by mail, and in matters of business a formal letter is still standard. But what happened to the days when people put pen to paper to share their latest gossip, their various trials and tribulations, their secrets and hopes? I for one know I don't do things this way. AIM, text messaging, and the phone are my standard methods of communication—even e-mail seems to require too much work. The people with whom I typically communicate are no exception to this rule. Still, sometimes I open my Tufts mailbox and wish there was a letter inside it for me. Not a dull bill or business letter—a long, newsy missive; a letter to make me smile and reminisce.

For about five years when I was a child, I spent a few weeks during each summer at camp, which I generally liked. The problem with camp was that they

Sometimes I open my Tufts mailbox and wish there was a letter inside it for me. Not a dull bill or business letter—a long, newsy missive; a letter to make me smile and reminisce.

didn't allow you to communicate with the outside world in any manner other than letter writing. Letters, for me, took on a new importance. I would pour my heart out into the cheerfully decorated note paper my mother always provided in my trunk, and eagerly awaited "Rest Hour" every day, when the counselors would distribute the mail we'd received from home. One day during this past summer when

I was bored, I was rummaging through my room and found a box of letters that I'd saved from my summer camp days.

The thing about some letters is that they still have the power, even after years and years, to surprise or compel people.

Some were letters that I'd written to my family at home, and others were letters I'd received, from various relatives and friends. Reading them, I could recall the amount of happiness these little pieces of news inspired in me. One that my parents wrote told of my dog at the time, who had somehow eaten an entire baseball and survived. Another, from a friend of mine, told of a dance at her co-ed summer camp, at which people shockingly held hands and kissed. Others from my mother told of simpler, more mundane happenings in her daily life at home, like going out for ice cream or having dinner with my aunt, but had the power to make

me feel like I was there with her.

When I read these letters, I also found myself thinking of all the things that have changed since the days when they were written. One from my mother told of the day my adopted cousin, now nine, arrived from Russia. At the time, she was just a shy toddler, but now is an outgoing older child. Another missive from my family brought back bittersweet

memories when it talked about a visit from one of my favorite cousins, who passed away last year. I thought about

changes in myself, too, when, for example, I found a letter I'd written home to my parents when I was about nine. In the letter, I described my bunkmates and myself as "wild and crazy." I wonder what that child would think of some of the times I've had in college.

The thing about some letters is that they still have the power, even after years and years, to surprise or compel people. When I was on vacation with my family this summer, my aunt recalled how, while cleaning out my grandmother's house after her death, she found a letter to my grandfather from my great uncle, telling him why he shouldn't marry my grandmother. This was a complete surprise for everyone, seeing as my grandparents obviously did get married, and stayed married for over 65 years. Other letters, despite their age, can still be incredibly touching. In a desk that we have at home in our living room, there's a pile of letters written to my great-grandmother. They're sympathy letters, written after her son died in a mountain climbing accident at a very young age. Despite all the years that have passed since they were written, their messages remain the same, and remain equally poignant.

Forgive me for sounding just a bit sentimental and sappy. But wouldn't it be fun, for once, to open your mailbox and find something other than a flier for a campus event, or a bill? Those were the days ...

POLICE BLOTTER

Monday, November 28

At 3:00 p.m., a student reported that he had been receiving a number of annoying telephone calls for months, mostly hang-ups in the early morning hours. The student believes that the calls are related to his position as a teaching assistant. He also expressed frustration at receiving very few serious phone calls, especially from cute females.

Tuesday, November 29

At 10:45 a.m., there was a report of a stolen license plate in Cousens Parking Lot. Sometime between the previous day and that morning, unknown persons had stolen the Massachusetts rear license plate. According to police, it is unusual for someone to steal an in-state plate.

At 1:00 p.m., there was a report of a past disorderly conduct. The RD of an uphill residence hall filed a report at this time regarding an incident that occurred at 3:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 20. The RD claims that three white males were making a lot of noise in the main lobby of the hall while drinking beers and eating Chinese food. The RD approached the individuals, and told them to go home, as they did not live there. One individual responded disrespectfully, and attempted to snatch the phone from the RD as he dialed the police. At this point, the group left, and on the way out they knocked over a concrete ash tray and a trash barrel. The RD attempted to record the car that the group was leaving in, but was concerned for his safety.

At 1:00 p.m., there was a report of a larceny in Cousens Gym. The Tufts Hockey Coach reported that gloves and 15 hockey sticks had been stolen from their locker room during the holiday. The coach also claims that this incident caused psychological distress to players and cited it as reason for poor performance of the team in the recent games.

Saturday, December 3

At 2:45 a.m., there was a report of vandalism to university property. Officers found that unknown persons had smashed the window of a soda vending machine and that some products were missing. One-Source was contacted to clean the broken glass and the incident was reported to the vendor.

At 10:00 a.m., a non-Tufts contracted employee was arrested because he had not registered as a sex offender. An officer and a detective went to the dining hall and took custody of him.

—Compiled by Spencer Maxwell with the cooperation of the Tufts Police Dept.

COLLEGE BULLETS

Homeschooled Boy Wins Science Contest

On Monday, December 5, Michael Viscardi of San Diego, CA won first prize for scientific innovation in the Siemens Westinghouse Competition for Math, Science and Technology. The judges selected Viscardi from a group of six finalists to take first prize, which is a \$100,000 college scholarship. The 16 year old had developed a new approach to a mathematical problem regarding airplane wing design.

Displaced New Orleans

Students Face Hard Decisions

Of the 18,000 college students displaced because of hurricane Katrina's damage, this year's freshmen, a quarter of the total, must decide whether or not to return to New Orleans next semester. The decision is proving to be difficult for many. Some, including Amy McClendon at Harvard University, are enjoying their time at their current school and would prefer to stay where they are rather than having to face readjusting to a new school. Tulane University has said that 80% of their students have committed to returning in the Spring, although other colleges, such as Loyola University, are citing much lower percentages. Those who choose to stay where they are must apply as transfer students.

—Compiled by Spencer Maxwell

Tufts Trivia of the week



When did the ExCollege begin running film classes?

Answer: 1966.

Students Working Overtime:

Employment at Tufts

BY LYDIA HALL

It's a well-known fact: college students are often just a bit strapped for cash. As anyone who hasn't been living under a rock for the past few decades knows, things like textbooks, school supplies, clothes, and, yes, alcohol tend to be a bit expensive. So what to do when you find yourself a little short, and Mom and Dad aren't willing to pay up? That's where getting a job can come in handy.

"I started working for financial reasons," said one student, who works several nights per week as a dishwasher at Dewick. "Not just to supplement my income, but also to need to take less from my parents." Another student, who works as a self-described "office bitch" in the admissions office, echoes this. "I didn't earn as much money as I wanted to over

work find a job? Advertisements are often a good thing to look for. Individual departments and offices at Tufts, from TUPD to Dining Services to ITS, often list available jobs specifically for students on their websites. The Student Employment Office (SEO) also acts as "an employment opportunity clearinghouse for all Tufts students on the Boston, Medford, and Grafton campuses." On their website, they have a feature called JobX, which is a database containing on- and off-campus jobs. Any student, regardless of whether or not they are work-study, can use this website to browse available positions, and can even sign up for e-mail alerts when new jobs open up.

What is work study? According to the Student Financial Services website, it is defined as a program that "was developed by the federal government to help students

study students who work in the office are the tour guides, who are unpaid volunteers. However, this doesn't necessarily mean it's easy to get a particular job if you're on work study. "There were a lot of applicants [for my job]," said the admissions worker. "And they took a long time to decide [who they were going to hire]." However, she is happy with the work she secured.

So what are the job opportunities like for non-work study Tufts students? Reviews are mixed. The student who works at Dewick commented that when she was looking for employment, there was "not really a wide range of jobs at all! I didn't find any other job well-advertised." She found her particular position because, "I knew Dewick really needed workers and I had a friend who worked there." The student who works in the bio lab had a different experience. "Professors are

"I started working for financial reasons," said one student, who works several nights per week as a dishwasher at Dewick. "Not just to supplement my income, but also to need to take less from my parents."

the summer," she said. "And I wanted to be more financially independent this year."

Others have different reasons for seeking out a job. "I actually started my job because I wanted more experience in a bio lab," said a student who works for the Department of Biology. "I found out it was a paying job only right before I started working there, which only made it all the better." Also, he added, "I was looking for some kind of paying job just because it would be the only way I could earn money during the school year, and although it's not much, it's still extra money that I can save or spend." Still another, who works as a dishwasher in Carmichael, admits that he needed "to pay for increasing amounts of alcohol consumption."

How does someone searching for

with financial needs help themselves by meeting educational expenses." It includes part-time employment during the academic year as well as employment full-time during vacations, either on- or off-campus. According to the site, "the government subsidizes a certain percent of the student's wages and the department or organization is responsible for paying the remainder." Some positions are reserved especially for students on work study, such as community service positions like America Reads, and certain on-campus jobs. The student who works in the admissions office is a work study student, and is satisfied with her job, calling it "cushy." Hers, which she found through the Student Services website, is a position exclusively for those in the work study program. In fact, the only non-work

always looking for undergrads to help out in their labs," he related. "For me it wasn't that difficult to get my job since I knew the person who had the job beforehand, and one of my bio TAs worked in the same lab. So basically I had connections."

How do students feel about their pay at their particular jobs? Reviews, here, are mixed as well. The student who worked at Dewick commented that her salary was very low compared to, for example, the pay of those who work at Brown and Brew "for a much harder and grosser job." The admissions office student, however, is happy with her pay. "It's very fair," she said. "Much higher than my summer job paid." Another student who works as a dishwasher in Carmichael is also fairly satisfied. "I make \$7.25 an hour working



ASE.TUFTS.EDU

in Carmichael, which isn't bad because I get a free meal every time I work, which has a value of around \$8." He adds, "Considering the work is so mindless and I get to chat and listen to music, the pay is sufficient, and increases after working a set amount of hours."

because they tend to need people to work shifts of more than 3 or 4 hours, it can become very time consuming. It forces students to give up other activities like going to the gym or volunteering." Also, she added, "it tends to make me more tired at the end of the day and I have

the student working in the bio lab. "I don't find it hard to balance it with my [four] classes."

Students also noted the non-financial benefits of having jobs at college, such as the valuable experience that can be gained. "I really enjoy working in the lab," said the student who works for the biology department. "I am getting lab experience, working closely with a professor who is now my adviser, and getting paid for it. I think it's a pretty sweet deal. The lab sometimes gets frustrating because I have to figure out how to do certain procedures on my own, which could take up time, but it all pays off in the end." Others also appreciate the skills they learn in the workplace. "I think students that work, especially those who work at the bookstore, tend to do very well in their classes because it forces them to make schedules and use time efficiently," said the bookstore employee. She added that "I think working prepares students for the real world and gives them some sense of time management beyond simply studying and making good grades. Many students at Tufts simply charge things to

The admissions worker also approves of the way her office is flexible with scheduling for its employees. "That's what I love about it," she said. "They remember that you're a student first and a worker second."

Working while also being a full-time student, no matter how you look at it, has its definite ups and downs. There are so many responsibilities that come with college life, and to add a job to the mix can at times be very stressful for some. One student, who works for Tufts Telecommunications, finds it difficult at times to concentrate on her job if she has a good deal of homework to worry about. "When you have work to do, and then you go to your job, and there's this influx of calls, you're stuck in a pinch, [and it's stressful when] everyone is calling," she said. Other student workers also find it challenging at times to balance it all. Said one girl, who works in the Tufts bookstore (which is owned by Barnes and Noble, so employees aren't paid by Tufts), "The bookstore offers flexible hours, but

trouble getting to classes on time if I'm coming from work. Also, if I work for four hours in the afternoon between classes, I usually don't get the chance to eat lunch or dinner." The Dewick dishwasher echoed this, saying that there were times when it all could get "very stressful." However, she also noted, "they are usually very accommodating to the fact that there will be times when we can't work, so it's never been a huge problem to cancel shifts." The admissions worker also approves of the way her office is flexible with scheduling for its employees. "That's what I love about it," she said. "They remember that you're a student first and a worker second." Others don't find the balancing act difficult at all. "I work about 8 hours a week, with at least an hour commitment every day," said

their parents and don't think twice about money, but having work experience, especially during the school year when having a job can be tough, gives students a better sense of money and the value of things." The student who works in Dewick echoed this, saying that she definitely is happy with her work situation. "The thing I love most about working is the fact that I have met some really down-to-earth people," she said. "When most people think about working in Dewick they just say how gross it is, or that it's a job they shouldn't have to do." She added, "I like the fact that I've met people that realize that not everyone has a huge income, and that it's not a bad thing to do a menial job while you study. We'll be all the more prepared for the real world!"

Who Are They?: Questions of Muslim Identity and United States Foreign Policy

BY MICHAEL SKOCAY

The moment that two hijacked airliners crashed into the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001, American foreign policy assumed a radical new direction. The nation as well as the news media was caught off guard by what many regarded an unforeseen, surprise attack. Television screens and radio speakers filled our minds with questions. Who were these terrorists? Why would they attack the United States? A litany of new terminology entered our vocabularies and heated discussions were peppered with “jihad,” “extremism” and “al-Qaeda.” Georgetown University professor of religion and international affairs John L. Esposito had been studying Islam, the Middle East, and United States foreign policy for more than three decades and had written over 30 books on the subject. Needless to say, this was a man who provided lucid answers to pertinent questions with unparalleled expertise. Now four years later, the United States is embroiled in a war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan as militant activity in those regions continues to rise. In his November 30 speech at the ASEAN auditorium to a group of students and professors entitled “American Foreign Policy and the Future of the Muslim World: Autocrats, Democrats, Terrorists?” Esposito provided his expert analysis on an topic still plagued by misconceptions.

Esposito began the night with a statement that reflects the cold pessimism of reality in a 21st century world. “Autocrats, democrats, and terrorists ... will be present in the Muslim world for at least a generation before things really turn around ... [we are] in it for the long haul.” Moreover, since the commencement of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, purportedly aimed at diminishing extremism, “terrorists have actually increased in number.” Although it is painful to know that modern terrorism is now only in its infancy and continuing to expand on a global front, it is more helpful to examine harsh truths than to be shielded by the ignorance of ideology. As the founder of the Center for Muslim-Christian understanding at Georgetown, an organization that embraces interde-

pendence and open dialogue, Esposito is concerned with replacing misconceptions with facts to form a more effective foreign policy which accurately reflects the international situation. Esposito laments that, “I have a job where people ask me the same questions ... questions framed in terms of Islam and terrorism ... there is no learning curve here.” In his lecture as well as in his work on foreign policy, Esposito tries to sharpen his audience’s often unclear images of Islam and the Middle East.

The first fact needed to understand the current situation in the Middle East is that the “origins of many modern Islamic states ... continue to play out today.” From their tumultuous history of independence that

includes fallen empires, border disputes, and autocratic rulers, Middle Eastern nations continue to embrace multiple identities as they undergo the process of maturation. Nations struggle with “artificial identities” and rulers who rely on military force because their political power remains unstable. Citizens also contend with multiple identities including strong religious affiliations or identity within a government but the powerful concept of nationalism usually trumps all others.

With a schizophrenic identity, many Middle Eastern states next underwent a process of democratization in the 1980s, when observers thought they were witnessing “the opening up of many political



STEVEN ROSS



STEVEN ROSS

systems in the Arab world.” Some nations, notably Kuwait, did mature into democratic states, while for most, “as soon as it looked like democracy was functioning” the 1990s brought “a shutting of that door.” Professor Esposito calls this a “deceptive” process of democratization whereby leaders embrace a form of democracy that still allows them to maintain significant control over their leadership and over the religious and political social structure. Some leaders did encourage voting, but those parties who presented an adequate challenge to their rule were not allowed to run in elections. The brief opening for democracy was soon followed by the rise of political extremism.

The decade-long Afghan-Soviet war, which lasted the length of the 1980s, provoked a rise in extremist politics and the emergence of a global jihad of “both ideology and reality.” Politically, extremism was expressed in a strong nationalistic identity where law is based on Sharia, the path of God, and interpreted as *fiqh*, “the product of both the divine and the human.” The ideological side of extremism “is a response to political reality.” Calls for political reforms were reinterpreted as “an ideology for global jihad” and a series of Islamic authors “provided the rationale for why the global jihad is a necessity ... incumbent on every individual Muslim.” The rise of globalization and information technology which could connect groups throughout the world in a matter of seconds allowed the ideology of jihad to unite radical Muslims throughout the world. This “begins a paradigm of Muslim support for

Wars of liberation and for wars of terror ... a sacralization of any and all struggles ... and a transnational jihad,” explained Esposito. The struggle for Palestinian independence and the current war in Iraq are two examples of military events that have been transformed into epic, religiously-based battles due to their sacralization. Both events are transnational in the sense that they have attracted Islamic extremists from other nations to join the fight.

With this historical background in mind, the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the push for an independent Palestinian state, and the continued rise of global terrorism can be seen through a more accurate lens. Understanding the difference between the Islamic religion and Islamic terrorists as well as the complex history of Arab states, it is possible to develop a more accurate United States foreign policy or a “how-to” guide to solving the issue of terrorism, extremism, and dictatorships. After three years in Iraq and Afghanistan, the preliminary steps in Bush’s lengthy war on terrorism, “American and British foreign policy is encouraging a culture of violence” in the Arab world. America has developed its own “culture of violence” in the Middle East with bombing campaigns and innocent civilian casualties that has further instigated anti-American extremism and brought this nation’s foreign policy perilously close to the wanton destructiveness of its enemies. President Bush states that the war in Iraq was necessary to “construct a stable democracy after decades of dictatorship” but perhaps the lesson learned thus far in the conflict is that

democracy cannot be imposed on societies which have no experience with republican government and that military force “cannot change the hearts and minds of those in Iraq,” said Esposito.

Despite what Esposito regards as the Bush administration’s failure to properly address terrorism, “it is not clear to me that any administration, Republican or Democrat” could effect real change against terrorism. If neither the current administration’s “militant Christianity” nor any future administration’s policies can prevail against “militant Islam,” then what direction should American foreign policy take? Professor Esposito believes that the first step to ending extremism is pushing the Arab world to “move toward opening their societies” and embracing less dictatorial, if not democratic, governments. The United States should be aware that Arab democracies will not have the same level of freedom as western democracies and that religion will be an integral part of both the state and law.

Second, Islamic radicalism was a gradual development from within the religious and political community. Therefore, it will ultimately be the responsibility fellow Muslims to delegitimize radical Islam and outside Western forces can only be a secondary part of this process. The process can include issuing fatwas condemning radical terrorism. One such fatwa was issued by the Saudi government in 2004 and called for an end to “these acts that disrupt the security of the country, shed innocent blood, terrorize peaceful people and destroy property.” Reform in religion and government is necessary to deligitimate radical forces within the Arab world and to bring all members of the faith into the modern international community. Esposito says this is a “process that takes decades if not a half century” to occur and this is why terrorism will continue to plague the modern world for at least the majority of our lifetime.

John L. Esposito’s lecture delved into politics, religion, and terrorism—issues which make headlines in newspapers across the globe. His expertise on the history of Islam and the Arab world provided insights which are radically important to understanding current events. Without an accurate picture of Muslims, terrorists, and the Arab world, it becomes easy to misdirect American foreign policy in directions which do not accurately address the situation. Only with a full understanding of Arab history and the Islamic faith can foreign policy be directed toward solving the issues of terrorism, extremism, and dictatorships in the Middle East. ☉

Tufts in Incredible India

BY ALLISON JONES

On November 7th, members of the Tufts administration, faculty, and alumni traveled to India to promote Tufts, meet with Indian institutions, and encourage international dialogue with that region of the world. The “Tufts in India” trip was organized as part of the International Board of Overseers’s initiative to encourage international admissions, and the Alumni Travel-Learn Program was also included in the trip to further the involvement of alumni in promoting Tufts. The International Board of Overseers helps Tufts “advance its international mission,” and it is made up of Tufts alumni and trustees. This group meets every year in a location overseas, and this year they traveled to New Delhi and Mumbai in India for their international meeting.

The Alumni Travel-Learn Program joined the Board on its trip to India, a new concept in involving the alumni in the promotion of Tufts in the global community. The Travel-Learn Program offers Tufts alumni the chance to travel together to different parts of the world, and most universities have organizations like this for their alumni through alumni associations. The planned trips bring alumni living in different countries together in different locations, and some trips like the “Expedition to Antarctica” provide ways for alumni to see the world and stay connected to their alma mater. This year, as part of the initiative to get alumni involved and spread the word about Tufts to India, the Travel-Learn program planned their trip, “A Journey to Incredible India,” in conjunction with the International Board of Overseers and participated in the activities in New Delhi and Mumbai.

The members of the Board have defined a list of “strategic interests” in the area of admissions and publicity that coincided with their trip to India. These interests include strengthening the Tufts profile in India, engaging alumni in international

admissions, especially in that part of the world, and cultivating relationships with high schools, colleges, and universities in India. According to both Provost Jamshed Bharucha and University Advancement Vice President Mary Jeka, the trip was quite successful in all of those aspects.

In discussing the importance of India to Tufts, Dr. Bharucha explained that India is the largest democracy in the world, a rapidly-emerging economy in the world market, and an increasingly more visible country politically speaking. These things make India an important country in the global community as well as an important partner to Tufts in continuing to make education more internationally-minded. Tufts also receives a lot of interest from India and second-generation Indians in the United States, and for this reason, it is important to build relationships with counterpart high schools, universities, and leaders in India. Tufts wants to “strengthen its profile in India and in that part of the world generally speaking,” and with all of the great publicity that Tufts received in New Delhi and Mumbai, more people will know about Tufts and its great reputation.

During their trip to New Delhi and Mumbai, President Bacow, Provost Bharucha, Vice President of University Relations Mary Jeka, Vice President of

University Advancement Brian Lee, several deans and trustees, members of the International Board of Overseers, alumni from the Travel-Learn Program, and several faculty members attended events and receptions with speakers and distinguished guests from India. The notable Indian alumni who spoke at the events were Amisha Patel, the Bollywood film star, Sashi Tharoor, United Nations Undersecretary General, and Ashok Mishra, director of the Indian Institute of Technology, India’s top engineering school. This group of speakers illustrated the diverse talents of Tufts alumni in India, and further demonstrated the reputation of Tufts as a school that turns students into global leaders. There were also panel discussions featuring the faculty members who went on the trip, and each dean led a delegation to visit Indian institutions and hospitals. Mary Jeka said that in this respect, “tremendous groundwork was done to continue to build the relationships that we had already initiated.” Other activities included visiting cultural and historical sites in the two cities during their stay in India.

In addition to meeting with administrators from sister institutions in India, Tufts also signed agreements with medical schools and charity hospitals to give Tufts students in the School of Medicine the opportunity to travel to India and learn about medicine and epidemiology in developing



SEBASTIAN JUDE

The Chatrapati Shivaji terminus in Mumbai is the headquarters of India’s Central Railway.

countries. Two similar agreements were drawn up for programs collaborating with School of Dental Medicine, as well. These connections with Indian health institutions will give Tufts students the chance to learn about medicine with a global view of the problems facing doctors and health workers world-wide and how those problems affect different regions of the world. Dr. Bharucha said that this is especially important because "Tufts is a university committed to public service and active citizenship." President Bacow and members of the Tufts delegation met with the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, and awarded him the President's Medal in recognition of the work he has done as Prime Minister. Awards were also given to Tufts alumni Patel and Tharoor, who received the P.T. Barnum Award for Excellence in Entertainment and The Fletcher School Dean's Medal, respectively.

Another specific goal besides including alumni in endorsing Tufts was to involve parents of Tufts students in the promotion of Tufts in India. One parent who spoke at an event is a leader in the Indian pharmaceuticals industry, and he spoke about the need to offer generic, more affordable drugs to countries dealing with large populations that have HIV/AIDS. The discussions and presentations given by both Tufts and non-Tufts speakers were very much geared toward global issues, such as providing clean water to improve health, as well as more specific problems or concerns in India with suggested solutions and plans for the future.

Jamshed Bharucha said that the trip to India was an important one for Tufts because "we see ourselves as a very internationally engaged University, and this is very important especially because the world is getting smaller." Beyond the publicity that Tufts received, the trip established connections that will "create more opportunities for our students in the medical and dental schools to interact with international institutions." Dr. Bharucha also said that Tufts is considering extending similar opportunities to undergraduate students as well, and the administration is even exploring the possibility of a study abroad program in India. All in all, Dr. Bharucha said that the trip was "a spectacular success, and Tufts received great publicity to position it very well internationally." ☉

Need Another Course?

BY ALLISON JONES

How about a course at the Experimental College? When students, especially underclassmen, register for courses during their assigned registration time, they often forget that Ex College courses are not posted yet. If you need another course or want to spice up your class schedule, check out a course in the Ex College.

Each year there are over 1,000 students taking Experimental College classes, and as indicated in the senior surveys, about two thirds of Tufts students end up taking an Ex College class at some point during their time at Tufts. Very few schools have programs like the Ex College, where many classes "bridge academic work and real work" by bringing in a professional in a specific field to teach a course. For instance, a course on violence in the home might bring in a social worker, and the media classes offer real experiences with media and film. An Ex College course may be applicable to a student's area of study or open up a new academic direction, and a few courses can even fulfill a distribution requirement. One of the more popular courses, "Genetics, Ethics, and the Law," counts for a science credit and is also especially helpful to students who plan on pursuing a career in medicine or genetic research.

Courses in the Ex College are unique because they are taught by professionals from outside of the Tufts community. The instructors who teach courses each semester include attorneys, government employees, social service workers, journalists, and artists. Every year, the Ex College advertises in local newspapers and at area colleges and universities, asking for proposals with the intended scope of the course. The Ex College Board meets in a full-day meeting during reading period to decide which of the proposals it will accept. Each semester there are close to 100 course proposals in a variety of subject areas from many different professions, and the people who submit the proposals are given the license to teach the subject in a way that applies what they've learned in their profession. Robyn Gittleman, the Director of the Ex College,

said that any given course taught in the Ex College is "not our course—it's their course, and that's why the courses are so diverse in their approaches and subject matter."

The classes are kept small, (usually no more than 20 students), but Dr. Gittleman said that some courses will see as many as 80 or more students sign up initially. Ex College course registration is different from normal registration in that there is no limit to the sign-up registration and the order in which students register does not affect their chances of getting into a course. Typically, on the first day of classes, the students who have shown up will be asked to fill out a form indicating their major, year, and reason for taking the course. Instructors often look for a group of students with different interests, and a student's year does not keep him/her from getting into the course. In many cases, upperclassmen are given priority, as are students whose major coincides with the material covered in the course.

And this is where Ex College courses offer something that many undergraduate courses cannot. "Ex College courses are very discussion-oriented, and attendance and participation are both important for this reason," Dr. Gittleman explained. For any given Ex College course, the instructor teaches the material presented in the course description but also asks that students explore the topics in relation to current events, their own experiences, and broader world applications. Many Ex College courses act as a "testing vehicle for opening up new areas of study" to students who might not have otherwise known about subjects like forensics, web design, or comedy writing.

While these courses as a whole do not follow a specific area of study like those of other departments, this does not mean that they are not challenging. Ex College courses require several papers or tests throughout the semester, and most also assign a major research paper or a final exam, just like any "normal" course would. The proposals for the Spring semester will be under review during the reading period and should be chosen by the 15th of December. Next semester's listings, once finalized, will be available from the Ex College website, <http://excollege.tufts.edu/>. ☉

Judgement Day

Next week, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California has an opportunity to prove once-and-for-all that he is more than just a political sideshow. He has the chance to take on a difficult issue and make the right decision, in the face of enormous political pressure to do otherwise. Stanley "Tookie" Williams, convicted murderer and co-founder of the infamous street gang the Crips, is scheduled to be executed on December 13. Governor Schwarzenegger should show that he is a man who is willing to do what is right in the face of what is popular, and grant Williams clemency.

Williams is no angel. He was convicted of the murders of four people in 1979, and has been on death row since 1981. Although he maintains his innocence, numerous appeals of his conviction have yielded no results. There is no exculpatory DNA evidence vindicating him, and no reports of misconduct on the part of the prosecution. And even if Williams did not commit the four murders for which he was convicted, he is certainly responsible for countless other deaths over the years through the actions of other members of the gang he helped create. But the issue in this case is not one of guilt. Williams' petition for clemency only briefly mentions the facts of the case. At issue is whether or not Governor Schwarzenegger is willing to weigh 10 years of redemption equally

against more than 30 years of anger and violence.

Over the past decade, Williams has worked tirelessly on peace and anti-gang initiatives. His efforts include a series of eight children's books called "Tookie Speaks Out," which describe the dangers associated with gangs. In addition, he has given anti-gang speeches—over the phone—to schools, churches, and community centers. Williams even brokered a truce between rival New Jersey gangs. Although his nomination by a Swiss legislator for the Nobel Prizes in Peace and Literature was ridiculous, there is no question that Williams has been a positive force in society over the past 10 years. His reputation and experience give him a unique legitimacy in the eyes of the troubled youths that he attempts to reach. Few individuals with a past like his are still alive, much less have experienced the type of change of heart that he has.

Numerous individuals oppose the idea of granting Williams clemency. The families of the victims and the Los Angeles County District Attorney, Police Chief, and Sheriff have all urged Governor Schwarzenegger to deny the clemency request. They point to the brutality of Williams' crimes, his refusal to take responsibility for them, and the violent legacy of the Crips as reasons not to commute his sentence. But while there is no disputing these factors, and family members of one of Williams' victims, Albert Owens, have publicly stated that the execution would bring them comfort, Governor Schwarzenegger still has sufficient reason to grant clemency.

This is a clear example of a case in which society would be better served by allowing Williams to live and continue his work than by taking his life. While he bears responsibility for not only the four murders for which he was convicted, but also for the actions of the Crips since their founding, his work for peace and against gangs has also saved numerous lives since the early 1990s. He should be forced to spend the rest of his life atoning for his crimes by battling the atmosphere of violence that he helped create.

Ultimately, the decision of whether or not Tookie Williams will die on Tuesday rests with Governor Schwarzenegger. In granting clemency and commuting William's sentence to life in prison, the Governor will be making the right decision and at the same time cementing a legacy for himself as a politician unafraid to grapple with a difficult issue. Doing so would not be weak; it would not be too lenient; it would instead be merciful. And in doing so, Governor Schwarzenegger can affirm that redemption is still possible in America. ☪

Information and Policies

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Call (617) 627-3853 or email observer@tufts.edu to place an advertisement.

Correction

In last week's issue of the *Observer*, the Editorial failed to recognize the Tufts Chabad center as one of the sponsors and organizers of the November 16 bone marrow registry drive.

PHOTOGRAPHER'S

CORNER



BY STEVEN ROSS

Please direct photo submissions to ophotoF05@gmail.com

Steal This Opinion

BY AARON SCHUTZENGEL

Although this is somewhat embarrassing for me to admit, and I'm not quite sure how it happened, the other day I watched almost ten entire minutes of Vh1's "I Love The 80s." In the segment I saw, Michael Showalter was reminiscing about descrambling his family's cable box in 1981. He described figuring out the combination of buttons to press to unscramble any channel, and then using this trick to watch soft-core porn when his parents weren't home. What struck me most was the cheerfulness of his story, and how fondly we now remember cable descrambling, which was—and is—an illegal act.

Let's step back to 1981 for a minute. At the time, the development of descramblers must have seemed somewhat apocalyptic to the television industry. Here was a way that anyone could watch and record content that they hadn't paid for, using nothing more than a couple of easily-available pieces of electronics. Cable companies panicked and began an aggressive campaign to stamp out so-called "signal thieves." They sued the companies that were manufacturing illegal descrambling boxes, then subpoenaed those companies for lists of their customers and sued the customers, too. Individuals on the losing end of these suits had to pay statutory damages of up to \$10,000 in addition to an inflated figure for "lost cable revenue."

Then what happened? Cable descrambling did not stop. To this day, illegal descramblers can be got on eBay for under \$100, and even the switch to digital cable has not made it appreciably harder for savvy users to game the system. But the television industry has not gone bankrupt, or even suffered much from the effects of descrambling—advertising revenue, weekly viewing statistics, and record sales of TV series on DVD all point to television being as lucrative as ever. And though descrambling is as easy as it was in 1981, and has the same effects, somehow the industry's reaction to it has changed from panicked

condemnation to casual jokes on Vh1.

I bring all of this up because I am confident that, within a decade or two, internet movie piracy will be remembered just as fondly, even by industry insiders like Michael Showalter. Or like Jackie Chan and Arnold Schwarzenegger, who recently filmed a public service announcement in which they discussed the alleged costs of piracy while speeding down the highway on motorcycles, likening its effects to a dramatic car crash. Or the solemn-faced production assistant who appears in an

mon overseas, in countries where the release dates of U.S. films are arbitrarily set weeks or months later than their American debut. And DVDs which are purchased on one continent are region-encoded so that they won't play on another continent's DVD players. Overseas customers who don't want to wait 6 months to see the latest Hollywood hit, or who want to be able to play their movies when they travel, end up turning to bootlegs. Even Mr. Schwarzenegger acknowledged that piracy has a lot to do with inefficient studio policies. After a

We shouldn't take seriously all those ads that demonize movie downloaders and accuse them of destroying the industry.

ad at movie theaters now, describing how movie downloading is going to cost him his job. History has not borne out the content industry's "sky is falling" predictions about cable descrambling, and, although it's still early in the game, my intuition is that the current panic over online movie piracy is equally misguided.

First of all, downloading, like descrambling, is done mostly by young people, especially males, with technological know-how, low incomes, and a surplus of free time. (Relatedly, in both descrambling and downloading, pornography is one of the most popular commodities.) Michael Showalter stole cable in 1981, when he was eleven, but presumably he pays for it now. Likewise, the movie downloaders of today are the DVD purchasers of tomorrow, once they lose their fast university internet connections and gain a real salary. And downloading has no documented effect on theater attendance: In October, the Los Angeles Times published an article asserting that this year's summer box office slump was actually just a result of crappier movies from the major studios. (Surprise, surprise.)

Secondly, by changing their business models slightly, studios can recapture the areas of the market currently filled by downloading. Movie piracy is most com-

screening of his over-the-top PSA, he told the crowd of executives, "You just have to change the old studio system, where you have a movie coming out, and half a year later you have the DVD coming out ... I think the idea, eventually, will be to have the world premiere, and to do it in a much more high-tech [way] ... you show the movie, you get it out there in one shot, and the next day, you have the DVDs available in the stores. Then, you will cut down on all the mess."

I don't blame the studios for being worried about movie downloading. Pirated movies are answering the demand of a market that wants movies faster, cheaper, and more portable. But the critical point is that there's no reason the studios can't provide movies faster, cheaper, and more portable on their own. In fact, the studios can probably do *better* than internet pirates can, and I'm confident that, within a few years, they will. So we shouldn't take seriously all those ads that demonize movie downloaders and accuse them of destroying the industry. If downloading seems bad right now, that's just because it's new, and content creators have a history of acting like Chicken Little. In a few years, though, it'll all just be a joke on Vh1. ☉

Aaron Schutzengel, LA '07, is majoring in philosophy.

Living in the Garden State

BY JAYSON UPPAL

Meeting a new person always starts off the same way. After the name exchange, and the “nice to meet you,” comes the inevitable question, “Where are you from?” Sometimes my answer will invoke sympathy, but most of the time their face will tense up in all attempts to keep from bursting out laughing. “New Jersey?” they’ll say. “What exit?” Like I haven’t heard that one before.

It is for this reason that I find it necessary to dispel all of the rumors about New Jersey once and for all. This is for all of those from New Jersey who have to live through any unnecessary ridicule and embarrassment.

MYTH: New Jersey is the Armpit of America.

FACT: Parts of New Jersey are ugly, and so are parts of your state.

Most people who have “been” to New Jersey have only seen the strip between Newark Airport and New York City. This strip includes such sights as factories, shipping container parks, low-income neighborhoods, and a landfill. However, these areas are as much a spillover of New York City as they are a part of New Jersey. Every city has its bad parts, and New York’s just happens to be to its west.

As for the rest of New Jersey, let’s look at some statistics. Out of 7,504.8 square

As for the rest of New Jersey, let’s look at some statistics. Out of 7,504.8 square miles of land, 40 percent of them are forested, and 18.1 percent are farmland. There are also 36 state parks as well as 11 state forests.

miles of land, 40 percent of them are forested, and 18.1 percent are farmland. There are more than 800 lakes and ponds, and over 1,400 miles of rivers and trout streams. There are also 36 state parks as well as 11 state forests. Although many people believe that New Jersey is mainly urban, there are over 8,500 farms. In 1991, the New Jersey

gross farm income was \$749,200,000. Next time you buy blueberries, peaches, bell pep-

So the next time you meet someone who lives in New Jersey, make sure to show them some respect. After all, they’re laughing just as hard at you when you tell them you’re from Nebraska.

pers, cranberries, or eggplant, remember that they probably came from New Jersey.

MYTH: New Jersey is a poor state.

FACT: As of 2003, New Jersey is the wealthiest state in the country, with the median household income at \$56,045.

The idea that New Jersey is an impoverished state is downright wrong. The total state product in 2003 was \$397 billion, giving it the highest per capita income in the country. Almost 100 of the Fortune 500 companies are headquartered or conduct business in New Jersey. This is the largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies in the world.

According to the World Almanac, New Jersey has nine of the country’s 100 wealthiest counties. A number of the wealthiest and most famous people in the world own houses in New Jersey. Bruce Springsteen, Jon Bon Jovi, Whitney Houston, Frank Sinatra, and Lauren Hill are from and have lived in New Jersey. Steve Forbes, multimil-

lionaire and CEO of Forbes Magazine, lives just 5 minutes away from me. And both the King of Morocco and the De Lorean family own estates not too far from that. The list goes on and on.

It is true that the urban areas such as Trenton, Newark, and Camden are not as economically prosperous as other cities in

the country. However, they too are on the rise. Crime in Newark decreased 56 percent

in the past year. Newark is also now the third largest insurance center in the United States

MYTH: New Jersey is boring.

STRONG OPINION: Because of its rich history, diverse cultural background, and its geographical variety, it is one of the best places to live in the country.

Settled by the Dutch in the 1630s, New Jersey has seen every war this country has ever fought. Some of the key battles of the revolutionary war were fought on New Jersey soil. George Washington and his troops were stationed in Morristown for a large part of the war. And the most famous image of the period, Washington crossing the Delaware River, happened, of course, in New Jersey.

For its small size, New Jersey has a diverse variety of entertainment. Most of the state is bordered to the east by a shoreline along the Atlantic Ocean. People from all over New Jersey and New York visit Long Beach Island during the summer months. To the northwest lies the mountainous Sussex County, which offers some of the closest skiing and mountain biking to New York City. To the south is Atlantic City, the center of entertainment along the east coast. And of course New York and Philadelphia are both a short car ride away. All of this in such a small area makes New Jersey one of the most interesting and exciting places to live in the country.

So the next time you meet someone who lives in New Jersey, make sure to show them some respect. After all, they’re laughing just as hard at you when you tell them you’re from Nebraska. ☺

Jayson Uppal, EN '08, is majoring in civil engineering.

Sophomoryphilis

BY KRISH KOTRU

Beware! There's a little-known disease floating around campus, and it has its sights set on sophomores. Do you doubt your smarts, your future, or your friendships at Tufts? Haven't declared a major, or don't know how to make a living with a master's degree in African drumming? If you've considered dropping out of school, starting a rock band called *Death*, and hitting the road, or if you're ready to skip life and get cracking on those Costa Rica retirement plans, you've probably caught a serious case of Sophomoryphilis.

In all seriousness, we sophomores ripened ourselves for an infection at the end of our first year. The campus was abloom, as were new friendships, commitments, and interests. We moved through the semester, thinking we had built life-long relationships. We may have even selected a

At last, we took our finals, went home for the summer, and expected to return to something as novel and exciting as freshman year. Oh, how wrong we were.

major advisor, bringing us one step closer to signing our lives away on a blue sheet of paper. Towards the end of spring, we began contemplating the next semester, in particular, all the ways in which it would surpass the last. Some of us wanted to have more fun on the weekends. Others wanted to get involved with activities on campus or bring up our GPAs. Still others hoped to become closer with the newer friends they had made. At last, we took our finals, went home for the summer, and expected to return to something as novel and exciting as freshman year. Oh, how wrong we were.

September rolled around and we returned to Tufts, where both nothing and everything had changed. The campus, the restaurants, the frat parties, the godforsaken dining halls—they were all the same. Even the weather mimicked the early-September heat wave of 2004. Classes were just as hard as before (if not harder), and in turn, time

became a precious commodity. So what happened to our friends? Well, for those of us who suffered the shaft of the old

At best, those relationships consist of superficial smiles and small talk with subject matters ranging from the classes you're taking and where you're living, to how life is with your new roommate.

lottery system, friends seemingly vanished into a parallel universe that sits on the other end of campus. And if it wasn't this netherworld that snuffed out our friends, it was their own jam-packed daily planners that did it. In essence, things got stale, and the people who used to keep us sane were nowhere to be found.

We're now almost halfway through our second year, and Sophomoryphilis is probably at its worst. Chances are that some of our old friends have turned into the "Hey, how's it going?" passersby. At best, those relationships consist of superficial smiles and small talk with subject matters ranging from the classes you're taking and where you're living, to how life is with your new

But there's good news just days away: We're going home! And next spring, upon our return, we won't be quite so naïve.

roommate. Getting involved with activities on campus isn't so simple either. Some groups are weary of sophomores because we have less time remaining here at Tufts, and our day-to-day lives tend to be quite busy. Even social circles are harder to break

into, since many of them were forged through common interests and activities during freshman year. With the end of the

academic year just a semester away, we're getting anxious about picking majors that tie together our interests and the need to make ends meet. The quagmire is deep, and we've been caught without a lifeline.

But there's good news just days away: We're going home! And next spring, upon our return, we won't be quite so naïve. That's the great thing about college. Every semester is a fresh start—a chance to reshuffle our time, bring up those grades, try radically different things, meet an entirely new crowd, or find a new guy or girl—if we want it to be. We can rekindle old friendships with the netherworlders, if we're willing to put on the mountain gear and take a ten-minute hike up or down the hill. We can choose to lighten up the academic load or even take a semester off. Of course, this time around, we won't be as green and innocent with our efforts. When we seek change, we put ourselves out there, and that always involves some measurable risk. The key to beating the budding epidemic of Sophomoryphilis is to sidestep unwarranted

expectations. Mel Brooks said it best, so I'll let him close this one out: "Hope for the best. Expect the worst. Life is a play. We're unrehearsed." ☪

Krish Kotru, LA 08, has not yet declared a major.

Sex on the Hill

BY MIKE SNYDER



Last month, I wrote an article about the overwhelming uncertainty that arises from being a student at a liberal arts college. Everything from the classes you'll take to the friends you'll keep is ultimately subject to life's whims. However, with the Naked Quad Run just around the corner, I would like to take this opportunity to amend my earlier argument and point out that there is at least one thing in college that can be obtained with relative certainty, and that thing is sex.

Sex is everywhere at Tufts. Anybody who wants it can have it, and anybody who doesn't want it can't really avoid it. In fact, sex is so ubiquitous around campus that the pressure to engage in it is enormous—a pressure that ranges from the blatantly overt to the subliminally subtle, depending on who you are and what you do.

Sex is everywhere at Tufts. Anybody who wants it can have it, and anybody who doesn't want it can't really avoid it.

For the socially adept, it's usually understood that sex is the focal point of a weekend fling or get-together. On the dance floor the sexual tension—or sexual frustration—is so thick, one cannot help but

be absorbed in it. At the frats especially, the alcohol serves as a social lubricant in order to shed off people's sexual inhibitions; there sexuality is openly flaunted as a means to attract inexperienced

Mind you, what I'm proposing is far from the American right's "sex is bad" or "abstinence only" arguments, which are clearly ineffective and unrealistic.

first-years looking for a good time. For the socially sedentary, meanwhile, sex manages to find its way into daily life. For example, it's hard to read an issue of the *Daily* or *Observer* without spotting an article on appropriate bedroom etiquette or how to achieve an unusually steamy sexual experience. In addition, the most popular collegiate shows on TV and DVD—*Sex and the City*, the OC, *Grey's Anatomy*—revolve largely around romance and sexual encounters. Even the most socially awkward individuals have been prodded to do the NQR or participate in a fun game of "sexual fantasy."

Despite all of these signs—and the midnight noises one might hear from a neighboring dorm room—I believe that most Jumbos have a skewed perception as to the number of people who regularly engage in sexual intercourse, especially first years. While a good number of sex-seeking outliers do exist—and these are the individuals popularized by the American media in movies like *American Pie 2* and *Girls Gone Wild*—the majority of students are content to wait until they

find a stable, long-term relationship. Sex at Tufts is like that guy who stashes boxes and boxes of condoms on his shelf for all to see, even though he never actually uses them: It may seem like sex is all over the

place, but there's a lot more box than bite.

Nonetheless, the myth of the college "hook-up" culture adds social pressure to first-years who enter college thinking that "everybody's doing it," or who may not have

consciously reflected upon the idea of having sex. To counteract this pressure, I believe Health Services should do more than simply provide contraceptives and STD testing. Some visible research on the actual number of Tufts students who are sexually active, who have participated in oral sex, and who use protection, could prove useful in identifying problem areas. And it would be nice if the administration would say something—anything—on the issue of sex in college.

Mind you, what I'm proposing is far from the American right's "sex is bad" or "abstinence only" arguments, which are clearly ineffective and unrealistic. I'm simply saying that we must continue to have open dialogue on sex and sexual education. While I do have faith in the ability of Tufts students to make responsible sexual decisions, it would be foolish to presume that all college students are mature enough to withstand social pressure.

If something is to be done to combat this pressure to hook-up and have sex, then somebody must take a stand. Rather than an opinion detailing the latest sexual positions, someone should start a column on creative ways to have fun with your partner outside of the bedroom. Instead of an article describing the importance of good sex in a relationship, I would like to see somebody acknowledge that the pleasure derived from sex is no more permanent, no more lasting, than the snow outside my window.

Kira Doar states in the last issue of the *Observer* that "the majority of girls at Tufts are ... having sex to satisfy our own desire for physical pleasure." That's all well and good, but remember: The majority of girls at Tufts probably aren't having sex at all. ☹

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

Top Ten Albums of the Year

BY STEVE MCFARLAND

Back again for 2005, an audiophile rounds out the year with a compilation of the best records of the year. This could never hope to encompass everything that was released in the intervening eleven months since we last spoke, but it again tries to frame records released in the light of the artist's previous works, the album's acclaim, success, and my own damn opinion of things. This was a more eclectic year for your author, one a bit more removed from the goings-on of the music scene; popular opinion will determine how that's affected my list. We made it through *Make Believe*, we made it through Ashlee's appearance on SNL, here's what truly deserves a listen:

10 The Decemberists—*Picaresque*

Whatever mix of accordions and 12-string the band employs for its sea shanties and tales of lost love, it's always enthralling, never affected. With frontman Colin Meloy's well-spoken songwriting and some strong instrumentation, *Picaresque* showcases 'literary pop' at its best: dramatic, complex worlds more rich than anything this Portland five-piece has ever done.

9 Fiona Apple—*Extraordinary Machine*

The story of this album's arduous journey to record stores is now legendary, but to compare the two versions of Apple's first record in six years is to hear two producers with very different ideas about the strengths of this immense songwriter. Fortunately, Mike Elizondo got it right: Apple has more room to move here; it's a softer collection with a very focused spotlight—and the talent to fill it.

8 Okkervil River—*Black Sheep Boy*

Will Sheff renders a lot of anger from a Wurlitzer and a lap-steel, and he's here for that reason. *Black Sheep Boy* is a fiery bit of lyricism, bringing together a myriad of elements of which it seems *everyone* these days is having trouble nailing just one. The dark lyrics invite comparisons to a boy named Conor, but the occasional soft-spoken delivery and *fusion*—not appropriation—of

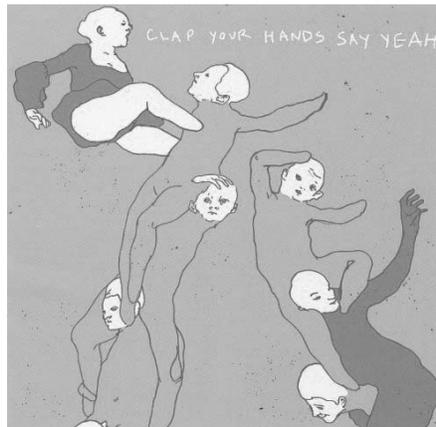
Southern styling is so much more real here than any point on *Wide Awake*. An ambitiously cutting album that succeeds.

7 Spoon—*Gimme Fiction*

2002's *Kill the Moonlight* was a marvel of a record as Brit Daniel, Jim Eno and the band dropped guitars, dropped driving rhythms for something considerably less accessible and executed it perfectly. Spoon is again back to familiar territory, but they're making something new out of rollicking, subtly troubled riffs and lyrics. *Gimme* is constantly original, and it commands attention better than anything the band has yet explored. With the perfect execution of tambourines, building chords, just-right drum licks, and Daniel's classically swelling falsetto, everything coheres. Pop is supposed to light a fire inside of you, *Gimme* is an exceptional eleven-song ticket.

6 MIA—*Arular*

We don't live in a world yet prepared for the seizing cultural and sonic mishmash of M.I.A., and that's a damn shame. Many of those who follow new music on the internet (myself included) were entranced—almost literally—by *Arular*'s first single, 'Galang,' leaked in late 2004, months before the album's official release. It's an incredible track perfectly suited and crafted for the dance floor that owes as much to Crunk as it does to Latin American dance hall movements. Herself a cultural pout-pourri—forced from Sri Lanka to India, then to England during the Tamil rebellion which her father helped lead—M.I.A.



COVER ART BY DASHA SHISKIN

appropriates and toys with a laundry list of sounds and vocal stylings to arrive at a lush, challenging, and wholly unique work that fully deserves the fervor it generated.

5 Sufjan Stevens—*Come on, feel the il-linoise!*

Sufjan Stevens has a lot of recording to do if he's to finish his fifty states project *and* live a normal human lifetime. Warmish on the heels of 2003's *Michigan, Illinois* is here with another thoughtful survey of the identity of a people. This man surely does want to be your indie-folk hero. Stevens has beefed up his showmanship, instrumentation, and songwriting since the last installment of the project and its follow-up, the introspective *Seven Swans*. Both of those records missed their mark when they most needed balance; *Illinoise* has no such problem. This is a deeply, deeply beautiful record that takes great care with its subject matter. A childhood ended too soon ('Casimir Pulaski Day') and the story of murderer John Wayne Gacy are both handled with compassion and aplomb. Stevens knows exactly what step to take and chord to strike on *Illinoise*; we can only hope the next forty-eight states will be as much a marvel as this.

4 animal collective—*Feels*

I don't *do* trippy. I am a boy raised on my father's Who cassettes, *Who's Next* and *Tommy* chief among them. I value the operatic things in music, but I need rock, poetics, structure. So it's understandable that it's taken me so long to come around to the genius of Animal Collective, but it's not surprising. The group I envision recording cross-legged in front of a crackling fire in the plains of some—plains state—tightens things up a bit on *Feels*, only a year after the release of their acclaimed *Sung Tongs*. Now there's something for me to latch onto. Where *Sung* was a hissing, psychedelic, endlessly lush orchestra of noise, *Feels* seems to just make more sense. Both albums are painstakingly crafted: *Feels*, like *Sung* before it, devolves from drums and Beach Boys-esque harmonies into the latter part of the album. 'Daffy Duck' and 'Loch Raven' are set pieces to reflect upon everything you've just heard. While it may

never be possible to know *exactly* what that is, it's a beautiful assemblage that is more often giddy than hissing. *Feels* achieves a range that was absent on *Sung Tongs* and as a result, is pure—challenging—joy.

3 Clap your hands say yeah—*Clap your hands say yeah*

For an album so unbelievably tight, so consistently astounding from start to finish, Clap Your Hands (the name, really, says it all) get off to an odd start on their self-titled debut. For about two minutes, you're in line for the carnival; with whining vocals and layered choruses, obligatory handclapping, and some ephemeral organ. The chaotic wailing quiets just as you step through those rickety gaits: the familiar lead voice remains, but is transformed. The building harmonies are now as tight as double-time tambourine work and a couple of lead guitars. We're now three minutes into a criminally short (thirty four, in total) record with incredible drive. Straight from the Brooklyn party scene into the limelight of a 9.0 from Pitchfork and a national tour, CYHSY admirably fill the stage as fully as they fill this album, though never allowing too much of this synth or that guitar work to sneak in. For an album so clearly grounded in Bowie's later new wave efforts, CYHSY vividly retains its roots in the visceral, gripping feel more associated with Brooklyn bands. *Clap Your Hands* does unadulterated rock better than any other record this year, it's an album from a promising band that so far refuses to miss a single infectious beat.

2 LCD Soundsystem—*LCD Soundsystem*

There's something elegant in James Murphy's drum machine. The man behind LCD Soundsystem achieves a low-fi quality teeming with 80s dance punk nostalgia, but he does it through the most refined of ways. This record never takes the cheap way out—the vocals here are never filtered for extra *grit*, there are no pretensions to be somehow transcending one's own history. Rather, Murphy pries as much irony as possible from his position. That's clear from the opening homage to Parisian dance duo Daft Punk to

the addictively incisive 'Losing My Edge.' *LCD Soundsystem*—which comfortably spans two forty-five minute discs—is an exercise in perfection: of composition, of cowbell, of energy and flow. I've had the pleasure of nursing this record since its release in January; *Losing My Edge* was released as a single—to much ado—two years before *that*. That first taste proved insightful: it begins with ripping, distant guitar squeal that condenses to a simple drum machine lick—to be built upon for eight minutes. Murphy bemoans, "I heard that everyone you know / is more relevant than everyone I know." The track and its subsequent reception drip with irony, but the slow build of synth,



is so incredibly liberating and unspeakably powerful is the way that Antony, our very personal hero here, makes it clear that a certain joy has won out in the end. Growing up in California, the boy Antony saw himself as an outsider among outsiders (a history mined for 'For Today I Am a Boy'). He was lured, in part by the documentary *Mondo New York* to the cabaret scene that thrived in downtown Manhattan through the 80s. Like a surreally androgynous piece of Americana straight from *Blue Velvet*, Antony found a place in the city, going on to act (for Steve Buscemi in 2000's *Animal Factory*) and accompany Lou Reed on two albums and a tour. His relationship with Reed helped produce the greatest track on a powerful album already brimming with stellar guest appearances from Devendra Banhart (the swelling, pained 'Spiralling'), Rufus Wainright (lending the perfect piano work and smoke to 'What Can I Do'), and Boy George (the touching – and gender-bending – 'You Are My Sister'). 'Fistful of Love,' opens in the middle of the piano's note, a creeping jazz lick, and Reed's words, "I was lying in my bed last night / staring at a ceiling full of stars." It's as if we've interrupted an intimate exchange, and when Antony belts "I feel your fist / I know it's out of love" to Reed's distortion-laden guitar and soulful saxophones, we're transfixed. This album means more and is more readily and honestly vulnerable than perhaps anything I've heard; for *that* it is the best album of the year.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

drum, vocal layers and the eventual payoff are unbeatable. This record is everything that *Losing My Edge* anticipated, and necessarily so much more. Almost a year on, *LCD Soundsystem's* inescapable energy and thoughtfulness are all the more evident.

1 Antony and the Johnsons—*I Am a Bird Now*

A piece of quiet rapture, *I Am a Bird Now* covers love, sexual identity, loss, grief, and redemption with a constant undercurrent of mingled melancholy and joy. What

1 WOLF PARADE—*Apologies to the queen Mary*

Don't quite deserve to ditch the Brock/Modest Mouse comparisons.

2 FIERY FURNACES—*EP*

Accessible Furnaces, huzzah!

3 EELS—*blinking lights and other revelations*
Moving, but ninety minutes – really?

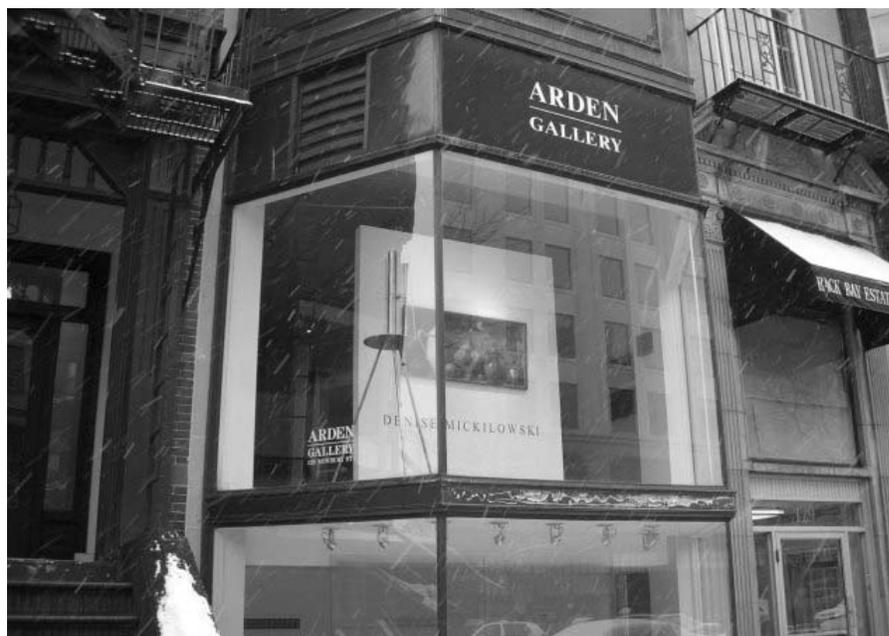
Checkout <http://presta.blogspot.com> for more information and other awesome things. Steve McFarland LA, '08 is majoring in social work. ☺

Art That's Worth the Trip

BY HANNAH WEAVER

With the Tufts weekend comes the promise of frat parties, studying, and excursions into Boston. Jumbos sleep in, buy dangly earrings at Jasmine Sola, and stroll through the Prudential onto Boylston and Newbury. However, few of us from the Hill realize that between the Banana Republic and the Puma Store, a few non-consumer gems are hiding. Aside from the Museum of Fine Arts, the Gardner Museum, and the Institute for Contemporary Art, the best art in Boston can be found in those posh boutiques. In fact, small venues such as the Kidder Smith, Arden and Chase galleries have the freshest work around, denying the old city's cultural conservatism in much the same way as James Levine's programs at the Boston Symphony Orchestra do. Without a major modern or contemporary space in the city—though the ICA is busily constructing a larger home—the gallery scene on Newbury Street is the best place to see contemporary art in Boston. So, with that in mind, here is a guided tour of a few of the best-known and most respected galleries along that famous walkway.

The Kidder Smith Gallery, at 131 Newbury Street, has a sleek, postmodern feel. The space is long and rectangular, almost like a wide hallway. Paintings and photographs hang on the walls with a no-nonsense vibe. In the middle of the space sits a large, black, leather bench that wouldn't look out of place at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The staff of the gallery is not usually in the front room, where the art is. The Kidder Smith shows relatively experimental two-dimensional work. As their website says, they represent "contemporary, abstract and representational mid-career artists, featuring solo exhibitions from painting to photography." The last show featured Ann Strassman, whose large-scale bulldogs festively looked out from the deconstructed boxes used as canvases. Previously, the gallery featured a photographer who printed on aluminum.



HANNAH WEAVER

Currently Miroslav Antic, whose show is in that oh-so-modern medium of paintings made from pictures, occupies the space. This trend, popularized by Elizabeth Peyton, is taken in a Sigmar Polke-influenced direction by Antic, whose surfaces dance with pastel polka dots and stripes. The images, culled from personal history, sometimes take on the dots as though they were residues inherent in the memories themselves, like the spots left in your eyelids after looking at a bright light. Others, notably *Untitled (Pet I)* and *Untitled (Pet II)*, just seem downright silly, with the rabbits of Antic's past mired among bright dots and pastel backgrounds. *Untitled (Trophy Girlfriend)* might be a pinup girl instead of a real memory; she seems too Barbie-esque to be true, especially seen through the striped, gauzy haze. These fantastic or surreal images planted among the more straightforward ones—like *Untitled (First Grade)*, a painting of a class photograph—bring out the inherent oddness of old photographs and memory. While the image stays relatively unchanged over the years, the perception of the event fades and becomes clouded, and may even change to be untrue, as in the case of the "trophy girlfriend." Antic's artist statement focuses on one image of him and his father. He writes,

"My father was the type I sometimes recognize in Irish or Russian novels: handsome and charming, particularly to casual acquaintances, but within his own family, rough and neglectful and often loud and threatening." This literary comparison draws another dimension of meaning to the memories: perhaps his view of his father, who left his family at a young age, has been lost among the recollections he has of literary heroes. The current exhibition at the Kidder Smith questions memory and perceptions, and causes the viewer to reflect on the quality and clarity of his own memories.

Next stop on our tour: Arden Gallery, whose current show has a similar theme to Antic's at Kidder Smith, and which shares a staircase with Chase Gallery, our third stop. At 129 Newbury—right next to the Kidder Smith—Arden has a completely different feel, with wooden floors and a huge window contributing to the warm atmosphere that contrasts with the harder décor next door. During the day, the gallery is soaked in the natural light so coveted by Boston apartment-seekers. The gallery is divided into two small exhibition rooms and another mixed room, where the associate sits and a variety of works of art hang on the walls. The Arden primarily shows painters, although

there is no set requirement for subject matter; their artists vary from color field abstraction to hyper-realistic paintings of fruit and books. Recent shows have included Margaret Gerding, with her lushly painted New England landscapes, and Paul Beliveau, whose exquisite, crinkling old books jump out from the canvas and seem like a gargantuan, rare collection. His cityscapes were reminiscent of Italo Calvino's invisible ones, or of cities woven in dreams that could never exist in reality.

Hyper-surrealism has joined the gang with Sebastián Picker's latest show, now on display at the Arden. Titled *Dystopia*, the show echoes the probing of the mind displayed in Antic's work. The paintings feature a protagonist who seems so alarmed by his anti-Utopian environs that he has retreated into a mind-world populated by repetitive rooms and newspapers. While the theme of the mind is present, more than anything else, Picker's show is a critique of contemporary government, society and media. In *Torre de Palabras (Tower of Words)* Picker painted a "house of cards" made of newspapers, with a king of the castle perched precariously on top. This display of the flimsiness of the information of the media is echoed in many of the other paintings. *En la oficina, Piramide*, and *Ir de compras* all critique modern society by showing one fully realized protagonist among hordes of insubstantial outlines, all doing exactly the same things. *Desequilibrio* shows one king on his throne on one side of a scale, high and mighty, while a pyramid of wailing children weighs down the other side. The fulcrum is a globe—or the world—a repeating symbol in this latest series of Picker's work. In all the paintings the background is comprised of a simple plane or an intersection of several simple planes, as suits his need. The focus is clearly on concept, making this show representative of the growing conceptual art movement. What is striking is that Picker has managed to use an old medium, oil painting, without making it trite or stale. He has also communicated his ideas in a clear, yet not blatant, way. The accessibility, combined with the strangeness of the actual image makes this show the strongest conceptually of the three galleries.

The last stop on our tour is right across the hall, in the Chase Gallery. It occupies a larger space than the Arden, but shares the

same brilliant natural light and pale wooden floors. The larger space enables the Chase to showcase more than one artist simultaneously. Their website claims they are known for "exhibiting outstanding contemporary artists working today with a clarity of vision and integrity of form." Recent exhibits have included the paintings of Dozier Bell, who uses astronomical elements and scenes of destruction caused by war to create large-scale, powerful oil paintings; Bernd Hausman, who restricts his palette to grayscale tones and does a sort of magnified Pollock technique with large pools of white or dark on contrasting backgrounds; and Stephen Coyle, whose focus on interstates and roads has unusual clarity through the fuzziness of the pictorial plane.

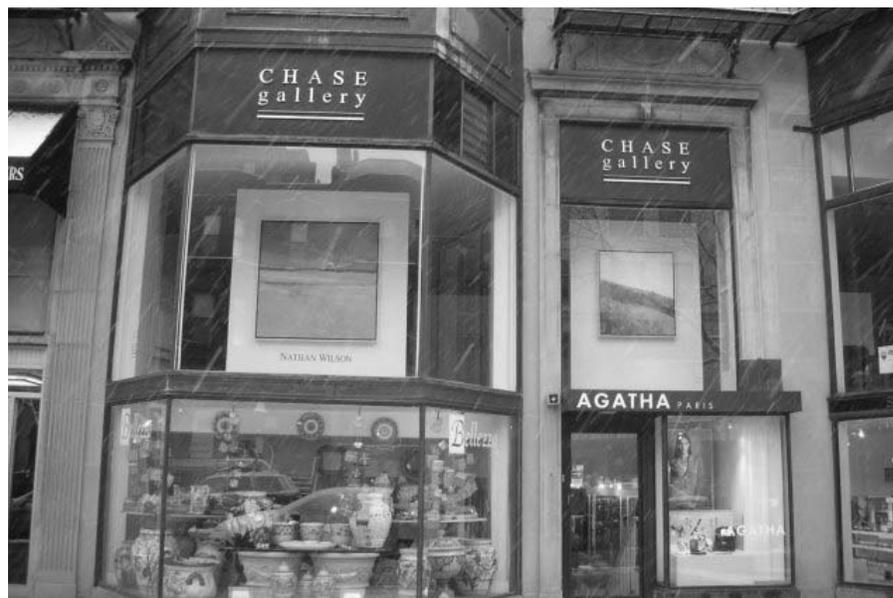
Debra Fritts, a sculptor, and Whitney Rivers, a painter, are currently exhibited. Fritts's sculptures are formed from terracotta and are primarily figurative. They use many of the contemporary conventions in ceramic sculpture, like experimental glazing and odd juxtapositions. For example, *The Bride* has a wire basket form on her head and seems to be in some sort of cocoon; her dress is many-colored through glazing techniques. The figures are reminiscent of dreams or fairy-tales in their strange outfits and positions. Rivers's paintings isolate branches against a color-field background to striking effect. The paintings almost seem like contrast-reversed pictures of lightning. Her artist's statement explains that the isolation helps increase appreciation of each

individual branch; however, it also functions to make the branches into more of a pattern than a physical object. Overall, the Chase presents the weakest of the three current exhibitions in the tour.

All three galleries are easily accessible by either the Arlington or Copley stops on the Green Line T. Nestled in a row, they are small enough that no huge chunk of time needs to be set aside: there is no excuse not to go! That said, making a special trip is definitely worth it for the artistic value and diversity offered among the three. Miroslav Antic at the Kidder Smith continues through January 7, 2006. However, Picker at the Arden and Fritts and Rivers at the Chase have both ended; so here is a sneak peek of what's next at both galleries:

Chase Gallery will be showing beautiful watercolor-like landscape oils from Nathan Wilson from December 1 to 30. The use of color to evoke mood almost echoes the pure color-field painters like Rothko, and the thickness and painterly quality is like the style of Elizabeth Peyton. For more information on this and other exhibits, go to www.chasegallery.com.

Arden Gallery will host a hyper-realistic collection of still-lifes painted by Denise Mickilowski. The *trompe-l'oeil* effects seem like they come from another time, and the colors are rich and dense. Stephanie Chubbick's zipped fruit will also be exhibited. For more information, go to www.ardengallery.com.



HANNAH WEAVER

Solving the Mystery behind *Espionage* at BU

By JOSEPHINE CHOW

When one thinks of the world of espionage, exotic images of agile, black-leather-clad agents slipping through shadows, wild, screeching car chases, aggressive martial arts exchanges as well as other dangerous, high-stake double-dealings immediately come to mind. Although the *Espionage: Intelligence, Secrets and Spies* exhibition at BU does not capture the same external momentum of the American spy world as portrayed in movies, its unique feature of original declassified documents from the FBI and the CIA certainly lends another interesting perspective. Opened since the fall, the exhibition—sponsored by the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center of Boston University—boasts a sample of covert evidence from the 2,000 collections archived at the Center. Telegraphic transcripts, black and white photographs, and epistolary exchanges are only three such mediums of documentation in the coverage of the spy world from World War I to the end of the Cold War.

While having everything displayed in one room certainly grants a cozy atmosphere to the exhibition site, it is also overwhelming for visitors when so much information is being concentrated in one small space. Nevertheless, the logical cruciform arrangement of the display panels help to guide the viewers from the literary world of classic and part-fictive spy works to actual, lesser-known real-life incidents. The tour finally ends with the most controversial cases of that era.

Classic fiction exhibited includes Joseph Conrad's 1907 *Secret Agent*, Graham Green's 1945 *Confidential Agent*, John Le Carré's 1964 *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* and Richard Condon's 1960 *Manchurian Candidate*. Interestingly, each of these classics arises from the influence of the international world wars occurring during each period. Meanwhile, the part-fictive showcase presents Ian Fleming, the author of the James Bond series, as well as W. Somerset Maugham. Their stories were based on their authentic involvement in the British intelligence service during World War I. According to the information presented in the panel, Maugham's "part-fictive" stories actually portray more truth than imagination. After a preview by his friend Winston Churchill, Maugham destroyed 14 chapters because they were discovered to violate

the UK's Official Secrets Act.

As for the controversial cases, the University highlights 20 incidents, ranging from the execution of the Rosenbergs to the Martin Luther King assassination. Most information presented is objective regarding unresolved controversies, but I was slightly disappointed to see the politically biased approach to the JFK assassination. Lee Harvey Oswald was killed before his trial and hence the case was never fully resolved. The U.S. government's Warren Committee later attributed the crime solely to him despite many professional opinions on various assassination theories. Correspondingly, the display includes a series of declassified evidence which adamantly condemns Oswald. In particular, a domestic black and white photograph of the man glowering at the camera while armed with two dangerous weapons—a



rifle and a shotgun—as well as a sample of his unstable ramblings in a diary entry just before his attempted suicide only serves to depict Oswald as the “crazy” murderer.

Similarly, the declassified information on the Rosenbergs is limited and relatively unimpressive. Original letters from the Rosenbergs' children pleading the release of their parents and an epistolary exchange between the Rosenbergs and their attorney Mr. Bloch are the only available declassified evidence.

Nevertheless, most cases offer a variety of balanced, formerly classified sources. The exhibit on Alger Hiss, for example, contains

an interesting display of conflicting covert evidence. The former State Department official was convicted in 1950 of perjury and accused of betraying government secrets to the Soviets. The main evidence used against Hiss were the “pumpkin papers.” So named because they were hidden in a pumpkin patch, they attest to Hiss's alleged involvement. I was particularly impressed that BU possesses the 1940's typewriter that Hiss allegedly used to compose the documents on display. In addition, there is a photostatic copy of a classified testimony from a Woodstock typewriter employee identifying the typeface in the documents. Meanwhile, the supplemental affidavits declaring Hiss' innocence in the case U.S. vs. Alger Hiss are strategically lined side by side to deliver a contrasting sequence of the declassified evidence.

In the lesser known cases, there is Tyler Kent, a culpable agent in the State Department of Foreign Service who disclosed sensitive diplomatic exchanges between Roosevelt and Churchill to London's Rightist Club during World War II. There is also Michael Burke, a successful intelligence agent of the FBI's Office of Strategic Services, who was stationed in Europe from World War II until the end of the Cold War. Burke's exhibit contains numerous previously classified hand-written messages, telegraphic cable transcripts of his communication with other agents, annotated letters of exchange, as well as manual charts plotted during his covert surveillance work.

The sight of the natural browning colors of the aged, classified documents, the faded written secrets sealed in covert ink, and every telling wrinkle and tear of the papers continue to stand as simplistic, tangible equations solving the complex layers of espionage and intelligence operations through the years. For a moment, it is as though you can almost catch the musky scent of history through the display windows. Where else can you find another exhibition that synthesizes so much history with culture? Regardless of the distance, this Boston University exhibition is definitely well worth a visit. ☉

The Espionage: Intelligence, Secrets & Spies exhibit is held in the Richards-Frost Room in the Mugar Memorial Library on 771 Commonwealth Ave. Open Mondays to Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., it runs through September 2006. Admission is free.

Foxes

by Chloe Green

“I don’t know how they get in
those little foxes!”

she says,
in my brain-
convincing me the difference
the *defiance*
of one ounce matters

I am shouting
“Enough is as good as a feast!”
frantically flicking the light switch
fearing the last ditch,
the panic
scatter...

But it stays dark.
I am barely believing
the slithering
fur
writhing
whispering
the scramble,
the scamper
How did they get in here,
(not through my ears
or the little drafty corners of my eyes)
in my otherwise airtight skull?

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

Fat Possum Rocks Into Boston

BY MICHAEL SKOCAY

The independent music label Fat Possum Records was founded in Oxford, Mississippi in 1991 with the motto “We’re trying our best.” The label’s informal attitude is a reflection of founder Mathew Johnson’s belief in recording an artist because of “a howl ... a scream ... an emotion” rather than for his or her commercial viability. While earlier recordings focused on rediscovering “authentic” bluesmen like R.L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough, born and raised in depression-era rural Mississippi, Fat Possum has recently shifted to more contemporary, alternative rock-blues artists. The newer music is undoubtedly more commercial, but the eclectic musical styles still place their roots in traditional blues.

An incongruous pair of Fat Possum label mates played to an eager crowd at the Avalon Ballroom in Boston on November 16. While the two bands had little in common, besides the unusual fact that they both covered songs written by John Lennon (“I Found Out,” “She Said, She Said”), this also gave the bands room to remain stylistically distinct.

From the minute Nathaniel Mayer swaggered onto the stage in a blue leisure

suit with the coat partially unbuttoned to show off his chest hair and “pimp” sunglasses, the crowd knew what to expect. The 61-year-old man with graying hair, a voice ravaged by decades of smoking, and a life of hard living and drinking, acted anything but his age. The singer began his career over four decades ago as a rhythm and blues artist and had a

The 61-year-old Mayer with graying hair, a voice ravaged by decades of smoking, and a life of hard living and drinking, acted anything but his age.

single brush with fame when his 1962 hits “Village of Love” and “I Want Love and Affection (Not the House of Correction)” made the Billboard Top 40. After a disagreement with his Fortune Records executives, the rising star was dropped from the label and was not heard from again until he reappeared in 2002. Still living in Detroit but out of the music business, Mayer jumped at

the opportunity to record an album for Fat Possum in 2004 and has been touring clubs since its debut. On stage, Mayer is making up for lost time and impressing crowds as he hopes for one more hit song in order to go out on top.

Backed by a Detroit garage band which seemed unrehearsed for its part, Mayer sang in an impossibly deep, gravely voice with a

ferocity that challenged even the famed growl of Howlin’ Wolf. For over an hour the singer entertained the crowd as he ran through epic five and ten minute versions of his entire repertoire. In soulful tones he pronounced himself a “Satisfied Fool” in the game of love and proclaimed “I Wanna Dance with You” in a boogie-inspired number. Later he sang a slow song called “You Are The One” while the band played softly and a disco ball sent light spinning around the room for an atmosphere reminiscent of a 1950s prom. When he was hot, Mayer took off his sport coat; when he was thirsty he reached into the crowd and came up with a beer; and when he wanted to admire the females in the audience he shouted for them to “shake what your mama gave you,” or invited them onto the stage to dance. Nathaniel Mayer’s stage presence is undeniable and although the audience was sometimes less than enthusiastic, the singer did manage to get everyone clapping to the beat and singing the choruses.

With applause from the audience Mr. Mayer left the stage with beer in hand and let his backing band show off their skills before the Black Keys took to the stage. The Black Keys are the duo of Dan Auerbach on vocals and guitar, and Patrick Carney on percussion, who hail from Akron, Ohio. In



MICHAEL SKOCAY

2002 the band released their first album, *The Big Come Up*, on Alive Records. The recording was a sparsely produced effort which highlighted the band's minimalist blues sound and garnered critical acclaim. Two follow-up albums, *Thickfreakness* and *Rubber Factory*, were recorded on Fat Possum Records and reflect a more polished, mature, and distinctive sound than the first release. The albums have propelled the band to minor fame and songs like "Have Love Will Travel" and "10 a.m. Automatic" have received significant radio airplay. The Black Keys' sound is unique: equal parts garage rock and traditional Delta blues with a dash of boogie to get you out of your seat.

In contrast to their label mate, Nathaniel Mayer, the Black Keys walk on stage without showmanship. The two musicians wear jeans and shirts, which make them vir-

Although a young white man, Auerbach's voice has the rawness of a blues singer and a distinctiveness far beyond his years. Carney beats drumsticks and almost topples the cymbals as he bashes out a steady sound.

tually indistinguishable from their audience. Neither speak a word as Auerbach picks up his guitar and adjusts the settings on an amplifier and Carney picks up his drumsticks and sits down behind his four-piece drum kit. Without so much as glancing at each other or acknowledging the audience, the Black Keys launch into the opening chords and beats of "No Trust" to loud cheers and applause. The floor of the club is packed with fans inching as close to their idols as they can. The hundreds of people can barely see one another in the darkness but it is no matter, for their eyes are focused on the figures on the stage. They can just barely hear the collective voice of the audience singing along, "girl is on my mind, girl is on my mind" above the deafening sound emanating from the speakers.

The stage is a humble, minimalist scene with two musicians, a small drum kit, a guitar, and two Marshall amplifiers. Auerbach plays his guitar like an extension of his body and produces everything from his trademark "fuzz" to solos which sound positively like

Jimi Hendrix to piercing bottleneck slides up and down the neck of the guitar. His playing is at times intensely loud, and at times sorrowful, with each note drained of its sound as it cries from the guitar.

From the minute Nathaniel Mayer swaggered onto the stage in a blue leisure suit with the coat partially unbuttoned to show off his chest hair and "pimp" sunglasses, the crowd knew what to expect.

Although a young white man, Auerbach's voice has the rawness of a blues singer and a distinctiveness far beyond his years. Carney, whom Auerbach calls "Patrick

bangs along with the beat as he plays in a trancelike state. He breaks drumsticks and almost topples the cymbals as he bashes out a steady sound. The Black Keys had arrived in Boston as a well-rehearsed machine and

ran through a thirteen-song set and a two-song encore in under an hour. The blistering pace of their performance and perfect playing gave the audience exactly what they wanted in 45 minutes. But with the frenzied pace there was no time to stop and enjoy the music and with the masterful playing and patented "thank you, thank you" in response to applause, the performance lost any sense of personality. ☪

Visit the record label, Fat Possum, at www.fatpossum.com and find out more about artists, The Black Keys and Nathaniel Mayer, at www.theblackkeys.com and www.fatpossum.com/artists/mayer.html, respectively. Visit The Avalon Ballroom at www.avalonboston.com to see what else is up.

on the drum kit over there," bangs out simplistic rhythms on the drums. His tall, lanky frame leans forward and his head



MICHAEL SKOCAY

NBA Contenders and Pretenders

BY SARINA MATHAI

Almost two months into the NBA and it seems as if it's the same old story. The San Antonio Spurs and the Detroit Pistons are the *crème de la crème* of the league. Both teams are stacked with talent, have good depth and coaching. The question remains, is there anyone out there who can actually pose a threat to these teams in their prospective conferences?

EASTERN CONFERENCE

With their 13-2 record, the Pistons seem as if they are simply cruising through games. It's not as if these first 15 games of the season were a cakewalk either. The Pistons won the eight games of the season only to have their winning streak end in Dallas against the Mavericks. However, it didn't seem to slow them down as they have won five of their last six games. Richard Hamilton is leading the team in points per game with 21.7 and is ranked 15th in the league. More importantly, he is making all the big shots at the end of the game. Fans fail to realize how important it is to have that security blanket near the end of a close game; to know that if you give a certain player the ball, he will get it done. The Pistons are fortunate to have that in Hamilton, and Chauncey Billips as a second option.

The only other real threats in the Eastern Conference are the Indiana Pacers and Miami Heat (if Shaq is healthy). The Philadelphia Sixers could scare some teams due to the pure fact that they have Allen Iverson on the team. Iverson is having an absolutely stellar season in which he is putting up mind-boggling numbers. One wonders how someone of his stature and size could lead the league with 44.0 (44.0?) minutes per game. Oh yeah, he is also ranked first in the NBA with points per game and fifth in assists per game. While it is early, Iverson's name must come up in any MVP talk since he is single-handedly keeping the Sixers afloat especially when they are receiving mediocre numbers from Kyle Korver and Andre Iguodala.

Cleveland, Milwaukee and Chicago have outside chances of stopping the Pistons yet are unlikely since each of these

teams have huge hurdles to leap. While LeBron James is having a successful season as usual, he has not yet shown the leadership skills necessary to bring his team to the next level. Furthermore, it seems as if he is not using his ability to see the court like Magic Johnson and get his teammates involved. He is ranked third in the league with shots per game.

Rookie Andrew Bogut has provided Milwaukee with steady inside play but they are more impressed with their production from the point guard position where TJ Ford is averaging 7.2 assists per game. If injuries can be avoided, Milwaukee can make some noise in the East. Chicago has good young talent and every year seems like the year where they finally jump the hurdle and turn into a true contender, yet they lack the depth and veteran presence to really be considered that highly. The injury to Kirk Hinrich also does not help and Ben Gordon will need to step up and provide the Bulls with the offense they desperately need.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Surprise, surprise: The San Antonio Spurs are atop the Western Conference and there doesn't seem to be a team in sight that can take them down. They have a great coach in Gregg Popovich who is the Bill Belichick of the NBA, great chemistry, and great depth. Tim Duncan isn't even leading the team in points per game. That honor goes to Tony Parker, who is averaging 20.9 a game with 5.8 assists per game. This may be the year when he finally comes into his own and proves all those who thought Jason Kidd should be the point guard in San Antonio wrong. Ginobili has suffered from nagging injuries so far this season, but the Spurs just hope he can get back to his electric self come spring.

The surprise team of the West has to be the Memphis Grizzlies who have a 12-5 record. They have had five straight wins, two of them being against Houston and one against Dallas. The Grizzlies defense has been one to behold so far as they have held opponents to only average 85.5 points per game. Pau Gasol is having a solid season thus far (and it has nothing to do with the beard), averaging 18.6 points per game

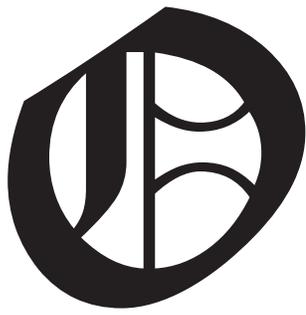
and 8.8 rebounds per game. Memphis has six players averaging double-digit points per game and is a balanced team overall, yet do they have enough to take down the Spurs? Probably not.

As usual, the Mavericks are in the mix thanks to Dirk Nowitzki who is averaging 27.8 points in the 11 wins so far. Yet they need him to consistently play well because in each of their five losses, he has only averaged 17.8 points per game. They still don't have a true point guard (Jason Terry has provided enough scoring but is only averaging 3.7 assists per game) or any inside presence, which they desperately need if they want to overthrow the Spurs as the kings of the West.

Another surprise has been the Clippers—yes, you read that right, the Clippers. The team is now atop of the Pacific division and the Lakers and the Kings are the basement dwellers. The Clippers are 12-5 and haven't reached 12 wins this fast since the 1977 season. They have a very athletic group of players who are talented, yet the depth isn't as strong as other teams and they also lack a real physical presence inside. Brand can hold his own, but Kaman needs to step very much if he wants to go toe-to-toe with Duncan, a grueling task for even the best big men in the league.

Other teams in the mix include Phoenix, Golden State, and Minnesota. If Phoenix can overcome their injuries, especially the one to Amare Stoudamire, they do have a shot. Yet that is a big if considering what a beast Stoudamire is on the court and how they really have no one to replace him. Unlike last year when their defense was horrible, the Suns are holding opponents to a respectable 90.5 points per game, which is a huge improvement for them.

As of now, it looks like it will be a San Antonio Spurs–Detroit Pistons rematch in this year's NBA Finals. They have the best talent, the best coaching, and more importantly, these two teams seem to treasure the team concept more than any other teams in the league. If Detroit wants to show Larry Brown what he's missing in New York, they could have a second chance to do that this summer. ☺



Open Forum

What kind of classes would you like the ExCollege to offer?



“Additional polisci classes, especially on security and policy issues, in order to accommodate interested students who can’t get into current classes.”
—Simone Press, '08



“An interesting math class, for non-math people, that would satisfy the requirement.”
—Michelle Paison, '08



“I’d like to see a class where students could explore Medford and Somerville by volunteering or visiting different community groups.”
—Caroline Wick, '08



“A bar tending class.”
—Sunai Edwards, '08

—Compiled by Rachel Geylin



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