

TUFTS OBSERVER

TUFTS' STUDENT MAGAZINE

AUGUST 30, 2006



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What Good Is A Student Magazine, Anyway?

BY AARON SCHUTZENGEL

For a school of its size, Tufts is blessed with an astounding number of student media organizations. In addition to a freeform radio station, a 24/7 television channel, a daily newspaper, and a weekly magazine, Tufts undergraduates produce almost a dozen specialty publications. We have a poetry review and a journal of international affairs; a magazine for fashionistas and a magazine for music snobs; a venue for satire and comic essays (which features frequent public nudity) and a journal of conservative thought (which does not).

I wrote that we are “blessed” to have this superabundance of campus media, because it seems like such an intuitively good thing: Students expressing themselves! A magazine for your every whim! But at the same time, that abundance can be a painful reminder of every staffer’s creeping worry: Does anyone even read all this stuff? (I remember feeling floored, once, when I read that BBC News produces about 100 hours of finished television footage every day. More media is being produced than it’s physically possible to consume.)

Now, as I prepare to take my turn as editor in chief, that worry looms large in my mind. What good is a student magazine, anyway? Why should anyone spend time reading the *Observer* when they get the *New York Times*, for free, every morning? The *Times*, after all, is bigger, more reliable, and better-written; how can a student-produced magazine presume to compete for your attention?

I wish that I had a snappy answer to that question, after six semesters as an *Observer* staffer, but I don’t. The best I can do is a questionable metaphor: The *New York Times* is a Metallica concert at the Fleet Center (Bear with me here.); the *Observer* is your roommate at Open Mic Night in

Lewis Hall. One is consistent, polished, and professional; the other is a friend of yours, *rocking out*. One is about an impressive but impersonal display of excellence; the other is about a shared experience with someone you know. In a general sense, they’re the same category of thing—musical performances, publications—but they aren’t really in competition. One is not a substitute for the other.

I don’t mean to imply that the *Observer*

The *New York Times* is a Metallica concert at the Fleet Center (Bear with me here.); the *Observer* is your roommate at Open Mic Night in Lewis Hall.

doesn’t strive for polish and professionalism, because we do. In fact, we spend an inordinate amount of time preoccupied with those things. But though polish and professionalism are important to us, they aren’t the reasons that the *Observer*—or any student publication, or amateur rock band—is worthwhile. If this magazine is worthwhile, it will be because it shows you a side of your school or your peers that you wouldn’t otherwise see: a side that comes out when people write, or draw, or play the guitar not for a class, and not for a profit, but simply because it’s what they love. The writers and artists featured here are the same people you see and interact with every day, and a creative personal essay or a beautiful photograph by one of those people can delight and inspire you not only for aesthetic reasons but also because it was created by someone a lot like you. If you learn something about one of those people that makes you smile, the *Observer* will have done its job.

Of course, not everything at Tufts is delightful and inspiring, and the *Observer*’s

job is also to be honest about the negative things that go on here. Sometimes the message of an article has to be that your peers are troubled, or your administration is benighted; and when that’s the case, we strive to communicate it in a way that emphasizes our common situation and responsibilities. Last semester we tackled many controversies and I hope we will continue not to shy from the difficult topics.

In *Shadows on the Rock*, Willa Cather describes the town of Quebec around the year 1700, a time when its population was about two thousand people. The colonists’ lives, Cather writes, “shine with bright incidents, slight, perhaps, but precious, as in life itself, where the great matters are often as worthless as astronomical distances, and the trifles dear as the heart’s blood.” What I would like the *Observer* to express—and the way I justify having a student magazine at all—is that Tufts, like Cather’s Quebec, is a place both belonging to and detached from the world-at-large, a place where our tiny, personal struggles and triumphs can be as significant to us—or more—than the “great matters” of the world.

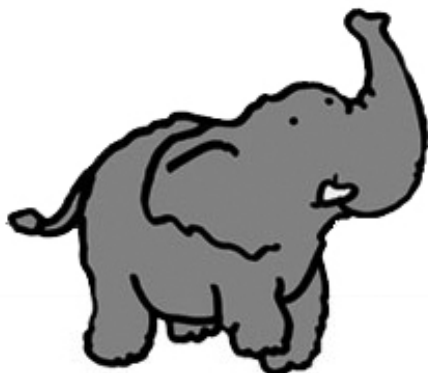
Student journalism is, above all, a means for you to learn about—and become closer to—your fellow students. The world we share here as Tufts undergraduates is very small, but that doesn’t diminish its importance to us. So put down the *Times* once a week, and take a few minutes to find out what’s going on down the hall. ☺

Join Special Friends!

Do you like children and enjoy volunteering? If so, become a Special Friend! In this program, you get paired up with a preschooler at the Tufts Educational Day Care Center and play with him or her for a couple of hours every week. It's a great way to build a unique bond, feel like a little kid again, and just relax from the stress of school.

Please contact Stephanie Leung or Liz Brown at stephanie.leung@tufts.edu, elizabeth_a.brown@tufts.edu or lcsspecialfriends@hotmail.com if you're interested or have any questions.

Also, be sure to look out for us at the **LCS General Interest Meeting on Thursday, September 14th at 9:00 p.m.**, where you can hear more about Special Friends as well as Tufts' other volunteering programs.



COLLEGE BULLETS

Escapee on the Loose Shuts Down VA Tech

Virginia Tech cancelled its first day of classes on Monday, August 21, 2006 and shut down the campus due to an escaped inmate on the loose. Twenty-four year old William Morva was jailed last year for attempted robbery and was later admitted to the Montgomery Region Hospital to have a sprained leg and wrist treated. On Sunday, Morva seized a sheriff deputy's gun and shot an unarmed hospital security guard prior to fleeing the hospital. Montgomery County Sheriff's Cpl. Eric E. Sutphin almost caught Morva on a trail near Virginia Tech's campus on Monday morning until the inmate allegedly shot and killed Sutphin. Officials ordered everyone on the Virginia Tech campus to remain indoors while the police continue to search for Morva.

12 Egyptian Exchange Students Detained

On August 12, 2006, three of the 17 Egyptian exchange students who were to attend Montana State University at Bozeman for a one-month program were arrested in Iowa for violating certain immigration regulations, and nine others were held in custody. The university had attempted to get a hold of the missing students to no avail, and it subsequently alerted Homeland Security to register the students as part of a tracking system devised and implemented by Homeland Security after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Only six students arrived in Bozeman on time. Officials determined none of the students to be terrorism risks, and the remaining two Egyptian students are still being sought.

—compiled by Stephanie Leung

Worst Case Scenario: You Are a Freshman

BY ROBIN DUDDY-TENBRUNSEL
AND JILL RUSSO

You are now a college student. Has that sunk in yet? Don't worry, it hasn't for anyone else yet, either. The admissions office has spent the last year telling you all the good things about being a Tufts student—and there truly are many. However, even though Jumbo was an elephant of great character and bravery, and Tufts is full of smart and pleasantly eccentric people, there will be times during the year when you will feel like you have made an enormous mistake. You might think that this error was coming to Tufts in the first place, or taking physics, or even deciding to eat the dining hall fish sticks and clam strips during the same meal. The bottom line? Try not to worry too much; it will all work out (well, maybe not the fried seafood overdose). But, just in case, here's some friendly advice on what to do if...

You and your roommate have irreconcilable differences.

Your roommate is probably not going to be your best friend. After all, the two of you are total strangers who have been randomly assigned to live together based on a five-question survey. While neither of you smoke, and you both go to bed at a reasonable hour, those similarities will not be very reassuring if your roommate stumbles in drunk and wakes you up on the way to his bed. There are things about your roommate that will drive you crazy, and there may even be times when you fantasize about packing up all of your belongings and running off to join the circus. (If you begin to think this way, you can put things in perspective by imagining rooming with clowns.) The chances are, however, that if you set some boundaries and try to be considerate, the two of you will probably be able to ignore and/or tolerate each other most of the time.

On the other hand, if living with your roommate is making you genuinely un-

happy, and there does not seem to be any way to work things out, you should consider changing rooms. Talk to your Resident Assistant and take a look at the room change form (found under "Forms" on the Residential Life website). It can take a while to get the ball rolling with ResLife, so if you have made your decision to move, submit the paperwork as fast as possible. In the mean time, get acquainted with the library and the campus center and remember that it could be worse—there could be clowns!

You are the only one on your hall that hasn't thrown up in the sink.

It can either be funny or frustrating to be the only sober person in a situation. It is understandable to feel annoyed if everyone around you is trashed, particularly if you are trying to get work done. The first thing to remember is to try to avoid getting into any arguments. Fighting with the inebriated is not productive, and also has the potential to end with projectile vomiting, which means you lost that argument. Instead, calmly try to appeal to the drunken person's better nature. Stress your need to get work done

There are things about your roommate that will drive you crazy, and there may even be times when you fantasize about packing up all of your belongings and running off to join the circus.

or to have some quiet time. Feel free to add some convincing details, such as an oncoming cold or a lack of sleep the night before. This may get you some sympathy, as well as stop other people from trying to get you to join in the drunken revelry. Also, try to talk to the person who is most considerate while sober enlist his or her help in getting the others to quiet down. If worst comes to worst, you can start talking loudly about how you heard that the people two floors

down have a keg. Finally, remember that you are not the only one who does not drink, and go out in search of fellow sober people who won't fall over in the hallway.

You want to party but you don't want to be known as "that freshman who..."

First, keep in mind that Tufts is a fairly small college, and the chances are that you will see people you meet at parties again. The best way to avoid embarrassment is to size up a party before throwing yourself into the middle of it. Here are a few basic rules you should follow until you discover your "party persona":

1. Don't do any excessive drinking at your first couple of parties. Doing so will almost certainly spell disaster.
2. Be wary of anyone with a camera. People can go from friends to paparazzi in zero to five, and you might not want a drunken moment immortalized on Facebook.
3. It's probably best to avoid micro-waves, sharp objects, paint, anything flammable, and, of course, windows.

4. Resist the urge to let other people send text messages or make calls on your phone. Chances are it will not seem so hilarious the next day when your parents call at the crack of dawn, wondering what last night's gibberish was all about.

5. Be highly suspicious of any unfamiliar games. Also, always be aware when dealing with upperclassmen.

6. Go out with a group. Yes, your parents said this too, but it is a good idea.

7. Do not go overboard with the drunken hookups. They could lead to awkward situations later on.

8. Parties are supposed to be fun. Do not agree to do anything you don't enjoy.

You signed up for 20 clubs and now your inbox is filled with their e-mails.

Good for you! Like everyone else at Tufts, you are a bit of an overachiever, and were probably assaulted with free candy and pens at the activities fair. Everything from the amount of online communication to the enthusiasm of the other club members might seem overwhelming right now, but it is a good idea to try as many clubs as possible. For now, keep in mind that just because you went to the meeting does not mean you have made a lifetime commitment. If you go to the first few gatherings, you are much more likely to find something that interests you, as well as to meet people with similar interests. If you try that and feel that you don't fit in, feel free to delete the e-mails with reckless abandon.

Your advisor is just as confused about your courses as you are.

Advising at Tufts is somewhat of a misnomer. You are assigned a professor to help guide you, but it is always you who are ultimately responsible for your academic future. Arrive at your first advising meeting with a list of classes you want to take and some questions to ask. The more you know about the classes and the requirements, the less likely it is that you will end up in the wrong courses.

If you disagree with your advisor, think that he is telling you to take courses at the wrong level, or just want more detailed information, call a particular department and speak to a staffer. Also ask upperclassmen about courses they have taken, or speak directly to the professor.

It's the first semester of your freshman year, so don't stress out too much about picking classes! Remember two golden rules. First, you do not have to take courses just because your parents think you should. Second, if you think you are certain about your major, you have decided too quickly. Take the time to explore all of your interests.

You think that you are failing every class miserably.

You scrunch down in your chair, scribbling furiously with your pencil to look busy, and hope that if you wish hard enough, you might actually become invisible. To your dismay, the professor looks right at you and says, "What do you think?" You try to remember something of what

Often you might awake in the library with your head in a textbook, a puddle of your own drool staining the pages, wondering if anyone saw you in this state.

you managed to read last night: the first ten pages of a seventy-five page assignment. After seven awkward seconds, the professor finally moves on to Mr. Enthusiasm in the front row, who gushes eloquently about the intricacies of last night's reading (yes, you will have one of him in every class).

For many freshmen, the college workload is overwhelming at first. The amount of reading and paper writing can be daunting, and often you might awake in the library with your head in a textbook, a puddle of your own drool staining the pages, wondering if anyone saw you in this state. You might feel like you are falling behind, but adjusting to college classes is not as hard as it seems. You simply need to get accustomed to a new working environment, and pick up some new skills along the way. One way to tackle killer reading assignments is to learn how to skim. Reading every single word is wonderful if you have time, but often you simply run out. Master the art of getting the main idea of a paragraph, highlighting what seem like key sentences as you go. This way, you can go back over the reading later to refresh your memory on the main points. Highlighted sections are also great markers for things you might want to bring up in class discussion. As for class participation, do not be afraid to be wrong. This is especially true in more subjective classes like art history or philosophy, where there often is really no wrong answer. Get up the nerve to contribute intelligently, and then do it. Do not be intimidated by the kid who always seems to know it all. The professor will at

least appreciate your interest and effort, and you might even surprise yourself.

As for papers, they can be brutal. Learn to begin working a few days before you have to turn it in, so you never get the sensation in the pit of your stomach that can only come at midnight, the night before a noon due date, when you have only half a page of your six-pager complete.

Finally, never hesitate to contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) in Dowling Hall. They have services, such as tutoring and time management counseling, available throughout the semester.

You greet friends with "Hey ... You!"

Being surrounded by strangers is exciting, but also exhausting. After a while, Mark from Houston could be Dave from Georgia, for all you can remember. Not only do you have no memory for names, but it's the second week of school, and you still feel like you have yet to find people with whom you could truly be close. Indeed, even your closest acquaintances from the first month of school may drift away. However, as you are introduced to more people and become involved in activities and clubs, you will eventually meet friends with whom you feel completely comfortable. If you come across someone who seems like a kindred spirit, make an effort to meet and get to know him or her. The dining hall at lunch is a perfect time for such bonding, as some people will be eating by themselves and could use some company. It can be as easy as going over and putting down your tray. As for Mark and Dave, when they tell you their name, repeat it a few times in the conversation (without being creepy), or picture them saying it—it really works.

Your money is burning a hole in your pocket.

Books and supplies, pizza at midnight, concerts ... cash goes fast at school. Despite this, it is possible to save and make money,

even though it may seem to be vanishing from your checking account. At Tufts and in Davis Square, there are plenty of student jobs. Through the student services website, you can search for an on- or off-campus job, and even apply to some online. Once you make some money, save it by taking advantage of free events around Tufts or in Boston. Also, figure out the meal plan early. Maybe even ask an upperclassman about double swiping, a covert way to eat twice. Some off-campus eateries will also let you use points from your meal plan after a certain hour, and deliver right to your dorm for optimal laziness on your part.

Your mom called your RA to make sure you're still alive.

You laugh, but this really happens. Being so busy and having so much fun, sometimes you just forget to call home. While trying to juggle new friends and work, your family and friends at home can fade into the background. Although your home friends are preoccupied with their own college lives, you will still feel like a trash heap of a friend if you forget a birthday or miss something really important. Fortunately, these days it is ridiculously easy to keep in touch, especially with borderline-stalker tools like Facebook and instant messenger. You will spend enough time procrastinating online in the next year anyway to at least

send a note to a friend every once in a while. If you are not a computer person, buy a little calendar and write birthdays on it. Getting an actual letter in your mailbox can make your day, especially as a freshman, so send something to a friend, even if it's not their birthday. As for family, do not make your mom stalk your RA. No matter how busy

that you now get winded putting on your backpack in the morning, small changes are key to staying healthy and keeping your favorite jeans.

Try walking to Davis instead of taking the shuttle, play some pick-up wiffleball on the quad, or do a few crunches before bed. If you find yourself sitting in your

College will be over before you know it. Enjoy the moment while you have it, be a sponge for knowledge and experience, stay laid back, and have a sense of humor ... it will all be O.K.!

you are, there is always enough time to make a quick call home, even if it's just every so often so your parents know you are alive.

You don't have any pants that fit.

Maybe you used to play sports in high school and have since stopped, maybe you just regularly sample every dessert in the dining hall, maybe you partied a little too hard. Whatever the reason, somehow you seem to have gained fifty pounds overnight. Before you panic and try some unhealthy method of dropping the extra weight, take a deep breath and relax. The legendary Freshman Fifteen (or Forty-Five) is not as disastrous as it is made out to be. Once you realize

room watching TV, try going for a brisk walk instead, and observe the campus on a fall night. In the dining hall, eat what you want, but pick one meal instead of five. Have dessert once a day instead of twice, and try cutting your four cookies down to two. Attempting crash diets or completely depriving yourself of food will not work in the long run, and is far from healthy. Choose moderation over extremes in eating and dieting.

Finally...

The single most important words of advice you can receive in your freshman year? Enjoy the moment. You might be

freaking out as you read these words, sitting alone in the corner of Dewick, procrastinating in the library before finishing a difficult chemistry problem set, or in your dorm room debating whether or not you should be calling home already. Please stop! Ask any senior: College will be over before you know it. Enjoy the moment while you have it, be a sponge for knowledge and experience, stay laid back, and have a sense of humor. You will find friends, you will you succeed with enough effort, and you are not pathetic if you miss home. It will all be O.K.! ☺



Going Beyond Bubbles

The Psychology of a More Creative College Application

BY MICHAEL SKOCAY

“What if civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks had given up her seat on the bus?” “Your roommate has the answer key to a test and has offered to share it with you. What do you do?” These philosophical queries are two of many possible questions that will appear as a supplement to the common application for admissions to Tufts, beginning this fall. In addition to traditional methods of assessing a student’s intellect, ingenuity, and leadership skills, which include the objective—standardized test scores and grade point averages—and the subjective—essays and letters of recommendation—this optional “pilot supplement” aims to paint a fuller picture of a student’s creative potential.

The force behind modifications to the admissions process is Robert Sternberg, Dean of Arts and Sciences. Sternberg arrived at the university last year, following a lengthy tenure as a professor of psychology at Yale University and Director of the PACE (Psychology of Abilities, Competencies, and

Expertise) Center. Sternberg describes the application supplement as an extension of the existing admissions policy: “The stated mission of Tufts is to select and develop ‘new leaders for a changing world.’ The optional additions to the application are part of a pilot that is intended to help us better select these new leaders of the future,” he explained. The application will remain largely the same in coming years, with the common application and a university supplement remaining the two central components of the admissions process. The new supplemental questions will be a secondary, experimental factor in selecting applicants. Responses to the pilot supplement will be evaluated for their originality or feasibility, considering a student’s ability to make good judgments.

Sternberg collaborated with Tufts Dean of Admissions Lee Coffin in creating the “pilot” supplement that will first appear in the Class of 2011 undergraduate application. The theory underlying the additional application questions is part of Sternberg’s theory of leadership, or WICS, which stands for “Wisdom-Intelligence-Creativity Synthesized.” As he explains

the theory, “The idea is that a leader needs creative skills and attitudes to generate fresh ideas, analytical skills and attitudes (academic intelligence), to evaluate the quality of these ideas, practical skills and attitudes (practical intelligence) to execute the ideas and to persuade others of their value, and wisdom-related skills and attitudes to ensure that the ideas are for the common good.”

Sternberg explains that the most difficult transition is practically applying a theory. He believes that “the Admissions office has done a fabulous job of putting some of these ideas into practice in this pilot program.” Coffin adds that while none of these essay questions were previously part of the application, “a candidate’s creativity, analytical skills, practical skills, and wisdom ... have always been valued by the admissions committee.”

Tufts President Lawrence Bacow is supportive of efforts in the admissions department to modify the current application. “I applaud Lee Coffin’s efforts to further refine our admissions process,” he said. “No individual can be reduced to a set of numbers alone. By incorporating the insights from recent scholarship on intelligences and

creativity, I think we can do a better job of predicting who will succeed at Tufts and beyond.”

While the pilot supplement is a new measure for assessing applicants at Tufts, the psychology behind the questions is

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supported by a wealth of empirical data printed in scholarly journals and in recent studies conducted by Sternberg himself. He explains, “We are not just shooting in the dark. Rather, what we are doing is based on solid and substantiated scientific research.” Before his arrival at Tufts, Sternberg was involved in the Rainbow Project, a research study sponsored by the College Board to examine the effectiveness of standardized test scores compared with assessments of creativity and practical skills in predicting the future success of high school students. The results were published in a January 2006 article in *Intelligence*: “The Rainbow Project: Enhancing the SAT through assessments of analytical, creative, and practical skills.” After analyzing the data from Phase I of the project, the study concluded that results “support the construct validity of the theory of successful intelligence and suggest its potential for use in college admissions as an enhancement of the SAT.” As an additional benefit, alternative methods of assessing a student’s abilities reduced ethnic differences and the study suggests “measures such as these potentially could increase diversity and equity in the admissions process.” In early 2005 Sternberg also published the article “With or Without Affirmative Action” in *Change*, a magazine of higher education.

Based on the encouraging results of this initial study and data on creative intelligence, Sternberg believes the “pilot supplement” will help to “identify students most likely to succeed in leadership roles.” However, the new measures are only a small piece of a larger puzzle: the challenge of understanding a student based on their

black and white, simplified responses to questions on an application. And objective figures will remain the primary criteria in admitting 1,300 students from an applicant pool of almost 16,000 for the near future. Sternberg explains that, “students who were

at the top of the applicant pool before will likely still be at the top of the pool and still be competitive candidates for admission. Similarly, the position of students whose academic credentials place them at the bottom of the pool will remain unchanged.” Those who will benefit most from being judged on their leadership potential and creativity are applicants in the middle of the field. “Where it is especially hard to distinguish students on the basis of their academic statistics alone, we are hoping that the new optional application essays will be particularly helpful in making decisions,” Sternberg said.

Interpreting the results of the optional supplement in this first experimental year is essential for modifying questions on subsequent applications. However, this will take some time. “In future years, our goal is to validate the measures by comparing performance of people who actually come to Tufts,” said Sternberg. He explains that Tufts has a set of “admissions bands”—stratifications of applicants based upon the quality of their application. “The goal is to take people within a given admissions band ... and to see how people who did better on our measures do compared with people who did not do as well on our measures. But that is for years beyond.” Dean of Admissions Coffin stresses that the experimental supplement is not a wholesale modification

of the application process. “The admissions pilot will offer additional information for the admissions committee to consider; it will not ‘liberalize’ the process nor will it render ineffective. Ideally, the new information will enhance Tufts’ decision making.” But while Sternberg and Coffin are both optimistic that the measures for assessing creativity and leadership abilities will lead to the acceptance of some brilliant, if not necessarily top-of-their-class students, they can only speculate as to the effectiveness of the supplement.

Some psychologists are less certain than Sternberg that a simple supplement of additional essay questions is enough to predict a candidate’s abilities and creativity, although they are no less eager to weigh these qualities in a student’s admissions decision. One such psychologist is Harvard professor Howard Gardner, famous for his theory of multiple intelligences that stresses individualized strengths (verbal intelligence, logical/mathematical intelligence, bodily/kinesthetic intelligence) and the importance of creativity. Gardner applauds “Sternberg’s efforts to broaden the bases on which admissions decisions are based” but he is less confident “that one can draw meaningful conclusions from one-shot ad hoc kinds of instruments.” Specifically, Gardner is critical of the claim that creativity can be measured as an “across the board phenomenon” with a single type of question, or with essay responses at all. “We want measures of anything—including creativity—to be as authentic as possible,” he said. “If I want to determine whether someone is creative, I’d like to see his (or her) work in a genre with which he is comfortable—a poem, painting, musical composition, historical essay, etc.”

Gardner believes that a project completed separately from the application process is a better indicator of a student’s creativity than his responses to a series of hypothetical questions answered solely with the intention of being admitted to a university. “They should be samples of work that the person is capable of

“The optional additions to the application are part of a pilot that is intended to help us better select these new leaders of the future.”

executing and has already executed (e.g. a series of articles or drawings for the school newspaper).” Gardner concedes that an admissions process that includes personal interviews, submitted materials, and a traditional application may not be feasible for smaller schools or those without sufficient funds. “Harvard is able to devote a lot of time to the evaluation of student s... of course, Harvard is also wealthy—I don’t know that Ohio State would have the same luxury,” he notes. “But Tufts certainly would, if it deems creativity to be a high value.”

The Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid at Harvard, William Fitzsimmons, is supportive of Tufts’ efforts to change its admissions process for the better. “The plan sounds quite interesting and we look forward to learning of the results ... We also have a number of optional items on our supplementary application,” said Fitzsimmons. For many years Harvard has encouraged applicants to include additional materials with their application, such as the results of science experiments and portfolios, which may tell more about a qualified student than facts and figures alone. Fitzsimmons stresses Harvard’s unconventional approach to admissions. “Like Howard Gardner, we believe that there are many human talents and intelligences ... our faculty is enthusiastic about evaluating both traditional and non-traditional work that might help predict success over the four

“If I want to determine whether someone is creative, I’d like to see his (or her) work in a genre with which he is comfortable—a poem, painting, musical composition, historical essay, etc.”

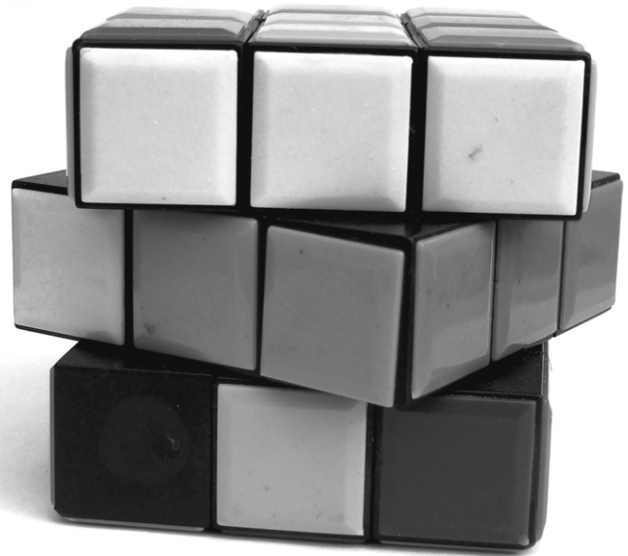
years of college and beyond.”

Proposed changes to Tufts’ application created a buzz in local higher education news when they were discussed at an admissions training seminar at Harvard this summer. According to the Boston Globe, “Deans at MIT and Stanford said they would be closely watching in the next few years to see if Tufts is successful.” Marilee Jones, Dean of Admissions at MIT, commented at the time that, “If [Sternberg] is able to document that his measurements supersede economic background, that would be wonderful.”

Admissions departments at other universities expressed a similar desire to find truly talented, unique students in stacks of polished applications and highly competent students.

The challenge that has always faced the admissions department at Tufts is to select extremely qualified students from a group of similarly eligible applicants. The supplemental measures proposed by Dean Sternberg and Dean Coffin are an additional method for choosing students based upon their leadership abilities, creativity, and originality. While the supplement will not restrict admission to those at the top of applicant pool and will do little to change the outlook for those at the bottom, a few students who might once have been overlooked because of mediocre test scores might now be accepted because of their distinct ability to elucidate, say, a vision for peace in the Middle East. The initial hope is that the process will select “a small group of students whose answers essentially won them admission” to Tufts. Those students

will be among the new freshman arriving on campus in fall 2007. Said Sternberg, “One of the reasons I am excited about Tufts is that this is an institution with a tradition of innovation that is not glued to the past. We have an extremely forward-looking president and provost who have a compelling vision for the university.” Dean Coffin is also optimistic about the future of admissions at Tufts. “Ideally, the new information will enhance Tufts’ decision making by introducing additional insights that mirror the qualities the university values.”



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www.howardgardner.com

www.yale.edu/pace

Hey Roomie, What Did You Get On Your SAT?

As a first-year student fresh from the hysteria of applications, you cannot help but wonder what your slouchy roommate and brilliant pre-med study buddy got on their SATs. There are fewer challenges more dreaded by college-bound students than the infamous test. Taken by over two million students each year, it can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection from a selective school like Tufts.

Bendetson Hall's admissions officers have acknowledged concerns about the SAT's decisive power and are trying to change it. In July, Dean of Arts and Sciences Robert Sternberg announced that he, in conjunction with Dean of Admissions Lee Coffin, would add a new, optional supplement to the admissions application, to be implemented on a trial basis this fall. The new, experimental approach is intended to help students who might not have had the best standardized test scores by looking more closely at the prospective student's creativity, leadership skills, good judgment, and practical abilities, as determined through a series of innovative essay questions. Possible questions include, "What might have

happened if civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks had given up her seat on the bus?" and "What would you do if your roommate offers to share the answer key to a test with you?"

Dean Sternberg bases the new essay questions heavily on his research at the Yale PACE Center, which he headed prior to fall 2005 and which he is in the process of moving to Tufts. The Center's primary goal is to develop new ways of measuring the intelligence of students. As its mission statement explains, the center is committed to "developing the concept that success in life depends on a number of factors and that traditional classrooms sometimes fail to recognize and develop some of the abilities that may allow people to be successful in other settings."

During an interview last fall with the *Observer*, Dean Sternberg revealed that he had similar goals for revamping the Tufts admissions system. "SATs and grades tell you something about students, but they don't tell you very much," he said, adding, "I'd like to work with the admissions office to have their system be the premier system of admissions in the United States for encouraging diversity." In redesigning the Tufts application form, the admissions office has taken an important step. Although the SAT was designed to be an equalizing factor in the college admissions process, critics claim its design results in racial and socioeconomic disparities in performance. SAT preparation resources, such as Princeton Review courses and private SAT tutors, are widely utilized by those who can afford them, but many students simply cannot pay for such luxuries, and their scores often suffer. When too much influence is put on the SAT, universities admit students with a false advantage and don't build socioeconomic diversity. Standardized exams also reveal nothing about the applicant's personality or creative abilities. Many high-achieving and imaginative people have difficulty taking exams, and in some cases, learning disabled students who are in need of un-timed SATs are not granted permission to take them in this way. The redesigned essay questions should give students a chance to express original thinking in their own voices.

Dean Sternberg's system is one that will further raise the national profile of Tufts. The university, despite surges in applications in recent years, still suffers from its reputation as "the Ivy reject school." With admissions officers at MIT and Stanford interested in Tufts' results, the university could become a model and leader in innovative applications. It is important that the school continue to develop innovative projects such as this in the future.

The new essay questions will be optional this fall, and a handful of students admitted on the strength of their answers will be tracked through their college careers to measure the questions' effectiveness at gauging academic potential. Tangible results might be a few years in coming, but Sternberg's philosophy is to be commended. We hope to see continued efforts at effective policy change, moving Tufts towards smarter, more scientific admissions decisions and away from the mania of test scores. ☺

Information and Policies

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The Craziest That Is Tufts

Columnist MIKE SNYDER reflects on the state of near-lunacy that is freshman year, and how to make the best of it.



This is it. You've set your alarm to 6:30 in the morning for years, slaved over a dozen SAT books, and spent more time doing calc homework than you have watching *The Real World*. Staying up late analyzing Twain and Thoreau, leading your team to the state championship, getting your artwork published—all of it, everything, part of the grand scheme to get you to where you are right now: Tufts. The process is almost fated. Virtually every event in your life has been geared to get you here; every accomplishment, every setback, designed to help you succeed here.

As a recent freshman and member of the class of 2009, may I personally welcome you to the next, experimental stage of your life. If you're not yet thrilled out of your mind, you will be.

I mean that literally. You will be thrilled *out of your mind*. Reading 300 pages a week for intro courses can sometimes make you go crazy. Getting three phone calls a day from your parents, writing 4:00 a.m. essays, and being stuck in an 11' by 14' closet can also contribute to frequent bouts of stress and insanity.

Don't worry—it's all part of the process. The truth is, the most intriguing moments of freshman life are spent in this state of near lunacy, this state where inhibi-

tions fail and boundaries recede. Times like these we turn to rebellion, adventure, risk. It's no coincidence that one of the biggest party weekends at Tufts occurs not long before finals. You might observe your shy and introverted roommate suddenly becoming a lot more outgoing as the big paper rolls around, perhaps trying alcohol or going in search of a good make-out session. In order to deal with the stress of college life, sometimes it helps to run away from it all—the parents, the papers, the roommate—and pursue the unknown.

That's what happened to me last year. It took only two weeks of General Chemistry before I became more mathematically frustrated than I had been in all my years of high school science. Concepts that I once mastered with ease became twice as difficult at the collegiate level. A couple problem sets later, and I could feel the madness gradually creeping over me—an

As far as I'm concerned, the only mistake you can make as a college freshman is to try to be the same person you were as a high school senior.

aura of thermodynamic and stoichiometric doom. I needed to escape. I needed to get sane.

So a few days later, I joined the Tufts Arabic Music Ensemble. A half-credit course offered by the music department, the ensemble met once a week for two hours. There I sang—more like squealed—Middle Eastern folk classics to the beat of drums and an oud, a guitar-like instrument. A week after that, I took the T into Boston's Chinatown, where I spent time volunteering at an inner-city high school. By November, I had participated in a political rally at Boston Common, cheering and chanting away as mounted police officers stood by.

One of the first things I learned about college is that adventure and rebellion come in many forms. Relieving stress and running away are a must, but as a

prospective student, the only way I thought to do that was to drink lots and lots of beer or watch really mindless TV shows (i.e. *The Real World*). After all, we rarely see images in popular culture of college students spending a Saturday singing a foreign language, or getting a kick out of community service. We are constantly bombarded by messages about the “right” way to have a good time, but top-tier liberal arts colleges like Tufts allow for more creative possibilities.

Don't take my word for it. This year, do something wild—something only a youthful, soul-searching college kid can get away with. Be a part of a culture club that you were too lazy to join, but always wanted to. Try out vegetarianism for a couple weeks and see if it fits your appetite. Explore remote parts of Boston, meet the community, and pick up an accent. If you suck at dancing, join Tufts Ballroom. If you have no pop culture sense, take History of Rock 'n' Roll. Learn Swahili, publish a poem,

take the bus to New York with the team, make friends with international students, listen to a famous lecturer, run the Boston marathon. With so many things to try, join, and explore, verbs like “study” and “drink” seem so ... *high school* in comparison.

Please, do not confuse college for a beefed-up version of high school; do not assume that the ideal college experience is one spent with a 4.0 GPA and an epic collection of used liquor bottles. As far as I'm concerned, the only mistake you can make as a college freshman is to try to be the same person you were as a high school senior.

So soak in the craziness that is Tufts—and channel that craziness appropriately—and I guarantee a pair of life changing semesters. The real world—and *The Real World*—can wait for a little while longer. ☺

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

Federal Budget Cuts Anticipate Broken Communities

BY MARA SACKS

If I have learned anything from my foray into the non-profit world, it is that the repercussions of stripping funds from social service providers will haunt our country for years to come. There is no foreseeable reduction of forces deployed to Iraq, mounting instability in the Middle East, and politicians' steadfast refusal to increase taxes. Where is the money feeding international involvement coming from? Although criticizing the president's decisions may be the media's focus, working within an organization dependent on federal funds to provide vital community services exposes the vast scope of damage underrepresented by the press. As Fiscal Year 2007 rears its socially-unconscious head, the likelihood that the 37 million Americans living in poverty will pull themselves up by their bootstraps becomes ever more remote.

The majority has kept its promise to decrease tax burdens for the wealthiest Americans, further swelling the federal deficit. Consequently, \$40 billion of

The cycle of
poverty, addiction, and violence
is extended with every budgetary cut.

budget cuts have been passed that affect Medicaid, welfare, and child support. Additionally, the Social Services Block Grant, which is designed to help children and adults overcome abuse, neglect and exploitation, is \$1.05 billion less than last year.

These budget cuts widen the gap between the rich and poor. Those who cannot afford private legal representation, counseling, and insurance depend on non-profit social services to attain safety and independence. Interning in a domestic violence center, I witnessed women struggling against abuse, trying to find freedom for themselves and their children. Why do the institutional barriers to safety

loom insurmountable? With only one domestic violence shelter per county, and an inadequate number of police officers to respond to crisis calls, every dollar re-allocated to international troubles prevents low-income Americans from securing a better life.

Aware of the impending budget cuts, social service organizations have had to reduce their already skeletal operations. This financial handicap is detrimental to the clients they serve. Navigating the system for support has never been easy, and soon a cutback in providers will result in thinned patience and time devoted to those seeking help. With fewer counselors, social workers, and shelter space, many struggling to flee violence will have no choice but to return to their abusive partners. Those individuals relying on government-subsidized education and training will find it even harder to gain economic independence.

At the outset of my internship, I was overwhelmed by the efficiency and competency of a staff of underpaid counselors and administrators. Somehow they coped with endless obstacles to providing quality

service without the pecuniary incentives available to those in the private sector. Regardless of the fact that they work hard to address the demands of the community, the organization is unable to unilaterally increase the supply of its services. Although they have been able to stay "in business" despite the severe reduction of funds, they were forced to freeze salaries and postpone filling a needed position. In addition, the relocation money reserved to help survivors of abuse leave their partners was reduced drastically. These changes limit the number of clients served and the ability to financially help them seek change, while straining the organization's

morale. Compared to other groups, they were lucky. Many in the area were forced to lay off employees or close down completely.

Although these cuts only exist for the Fiscal Year 2007, the long-term effects are ominous. With fewer individuals receiving medical, physical, emotional, and economic relief, many will resort to drugs, alcohol, and other illicit activities to cope with the pain they endure. The cycle of poverty, addiction, and violence is extended with every budgetary cut. The crumbling of communities anticipates sad futures for generations to come. This is the unfortunate and unseen America that is generated by the strangling of service providers.

As the Bush administration drains resources domestically to feed the war abroad, the quality of life for Americans deteriorates. Many can ignore that reality, as the effects are tangible primarily for those who are truly low-income. While many Americans contend that organizations such as domestic violence centers should not be reliant on federal funding, it is unrealistic to anticipate success with feeble contributions from corporate and private donors. When it comes to the abused, the elderly, the homeless, and the addicted, it is rare for those unaffected to extend empathy, let alone generosity.

The money targeting these groups should not be viewed as charity, however, as the benefits of reducing American poverty extends to every corner of our society. Each individual able to secure safety and independence is another contributor to the economy, character, and solidarity of the community. In conjunction with the reduction of family violence and economic dependence is the diminution of community violence, substance abuse, and neglectful households. It is for this reason that federal money must be restored to the non-profit sector. ☉

Mara Sacks, LA '08, is majoring in art history and psychology.

The Mall, or: Why All You Freshmen Have Something in Common

BY TIM NOETZEL

It's absolutely impossible for anybody to look good while in, at, or around the mall. I don't care what you think, who you are, or whether your clothes hail from Abercrombie (ready for any spontaneous game of rugby that comes your way) or Hot Topic (the zombies are coming! Run for your lives!). I also don't care where you're from, what your intended major is, or what freshman dorm you live in, but I digress. You, and I mean you dear reader, look like shit at the mall, and there's nothing you can do about it.

In order to understand just why it is that a pair of mating monkeys look better than you and your fab friends on a stroll through consumption lane, I think it might be helpful to take a mental walk together.

When were you last at the mall? If you're like most of your incoming freshmen cronies, and you're all the same, damn you, so this must apply to you—there's no safety in numbers when you can be arbitrarily singled out by a writer who hasn't even met

you, but that won't stop you from walking around with a horde of other freshmen for the next three months, now will it—you probably went to the mall a few weeks ago to buy clothes for the “Back to School Season,” also known as “Fall” for those laypeople in the audience.

Perhaps on the way to your store of choice, you entered through the Sears, passed the year-round Christmas store (I've

It's probably convenient to think of the mall as a sort of giant, live version of *The Breakfast Club*: shiny happy people uniting over the common bond of consumerism.

never seen a year-round Hanukkah store, but if you happen to find one, I have some housemates who'd love to know where it is), and went along your merry way. Strolling about the mall in search of the perfect garb, you may have noticed a few things, among them numerous “Back to School” signs at the likes of The Gap, American Eagle, and Jos. A. Bank's. Hey, nothing says “I'm ready to learn” like a well-fitting suit, right? You might also have noticed that military is back

in style—and I thought I was the only one who wanted to walk around looking like the Gestapo!

It's not the inanimate scenery we're looking for, however. Let's try to remember the people. Perhaps you can't recall specifics, but let me refresh your memory a bit. There are a few figures we'll find in every mall across the nation. If your mall is at all like the rest of them, you'll probably find

the Prep (popped collar obligatory, David Hasselhoff strut optional but encouraged), *that* girl (you know, the one whose thong-clad ass is hanging out of her three sizes too small jeans ... see the Observer archives if you really want to know what I think about that one), the awkward kid (hey engineers, I know you go to the mall, too ... there's a RadioShack there, and who can resist the Shack?), old folks trying to get exercise, and the punk/emo/rock-star-wannabe (you were at the concert, and you have the t-shirt to prove it, damnit!). In fact, it's probably convenient to think of the mall as a sort of giant, live version of *The Breakfast Club*: shiny happy people uniting over the common bond of consumerism, overcoming their differences, and sharing Grande Mocha Frappuccinos at the food court.

Please don't misunderstand me, reader. It's not your fault you look like a heaping pile of elephant droppings (the freshmen fact book informs me that we have at least twelve students from countries in which elephants are an indigenous species, so ask one of them for reference if you can't picture it in your head already) at the mall (although you're not helping your case much, are you?). Indeed, you may not even fit any of my trite banalities. It's just that everybody else at the mall does. ☹

Tim Noetzel, LA '08, is majoring in English.



FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/PIANOFORTE

The Mall of America, in Minneapolis, MN, is the most visited mall in the world, with more than 40 million visitors annually—about 8 times the population of Minnesota.

O TEMPORA! O MORES!:

Snakes on a Plane

BY RUDY HARTMANN

"O Tempora! O Mores!" is a weekly column on the perilous state of current television and film.

I am in love with these motherfrakking snakes! *Snakes on a Plane* is one of the most entertaining movies of the year, as well as one of the top symptoms of the Decline of Western Civilization. *Snakes on a Plane* has instantly become synonymous with "inmates running the asylum" in the movie-goer's lexicon. If you haven't seen it yet, do so, then force all of your friends to. It's that good.

The movie revolves around a gangster trying to kill an eye witness named Sean who saw him commit a murder. Escorting Sean from Hawaii to the trial in Los Angeles where he will testify is FBI agent Neville Flynn (Samuel "B.M.F." Jackson). To try to kill Sean while getting past airport security, the gangster's men sneak a time-release crate full of 500 poisonous snakes into the cargo hold of the 747 Sean and Flynn are taking to L.A. To make the snakes deadlier, they spray them with pheromones that drug the snakes into a vicious frenzy—"a plane full of snakes, and they're on crack?!" bemoans Flynn. For the next two hours, Flynn tries save the lives of Sean, himself, and an eclectic group of passengers, such as a germophobic hip-hop superstar named 3G, his video-gaming bodyguard (played by SNL golden boy Kenan Thompson,) a champion kickboxer, the remaining flight crew, some stranded kids, and a couple trying to join the "mile-high club."

That's it. That's the entire movie after that point: surviving the onslaught of the snakes. Like many of the better disaster movies of the 70's, the movie doesn't focus on boring, self-serving, and slow-moving character exposition scenes. Nor is it a ludicrous "Whack a snake! There's another one, hit that one too!" scenario playing itself out for an hour. *Snakes on a Plane* has a tight screenplay that allows its audience to think like a passenger on a plane full of snakes. You're faced with obstacles: the snakes are loose? Find things to assemble a



Rudy Hartmann is a senior majoring in biology, history, and classics.

barricade with. The snakes are still coming through? The characters hunt for objects in the plane to create improvised weapons with. Part of the plane is broken? The characters have to struggle to fix it. There is no pretentious "Day After Tomorrow" technobabble or intricate system of blinking lights that Jackson has to fix the plane with. The steps in the plot are straightforward and not complicated, but that's because the movie focuses on practicality; several of the blinder—smug—critics will dismiss *Snakes on a Plane* as utter stupidity, but don't let that turn you off from seeing this movie. It's really got a great "form follows function" storyline and is put together well.

Snakes on a Plane has an interesting production history: buzz about the project reached cult status on the internet long before the film's release. Consequently, New Line Cinema decided to retool the movie, incorporating a lot of fan humor. Principal photography actually wrapped last September, but in March five days of additional shooting were ordered, which resulted in about half an hour of what's in the finished movie. This new material pushed it from a PG-13 to an R rating.

The people that edited together *Snakes on a Plane* have to be commended. You

can kind of tell that the original version of *Snakes on a Plane* was reminiscent of the typical B-movie trash they run on SciFi Channel on Saturday nights, with empty emotional "exposition" scenes between characters which really don't provoke any emotionality from the audience. If *Snakes on a Plane* originally had such scenes, they've been almost completely removed. They were replaced with the pickup shoot material, which has more action and fun moments that the fans will cheer for, such as the infamous decision to incorporate an internet joke-line for Samuel L. Jackson into the actual movie: "I've had it with these motherfucking snakes on this motherfucking plane!"

The new material they put in is a plethora of violent scenes which will make you laugh out loud. I guess it's a sign of our desensitized, almost casual social outlook on violence today that these things come off not only as "hysterically funny", but "in the middle of the next derivative Ben Stiller movie I will stand up and shout "this is no *Snakes on a Plane!*" funny. These aren't just generic "Snake bites man. Man falls down. Repeat" deaths. These are some of the most creative on-screen death sequences I've seen on screen recently.

Yet there's no doubt that they're still scary, and not slapstick. WARNING, HERE THERE BE SPOILERS: Snakes attack people from inside of toilet bowls. People get bitten in their genitals. Repeatedly. Snakes bite people in the eyeball. A 22 foot boa constrictor eats a man alive. A cobra spits venom into a man's eyes and pus starts literally gushing uncontrollably out of them. A snake thrusts its head into a woman's throat and injects venom directly into her brain, making her head rapidly balloon to twice its size. The sheer ridiculous, over-the-top, how-could-this-possibly-be-real nature of it makes it sardonically comical (all of the snake attacks I just related occur in a blur of rapid carnage that lasted under 10 minutes). The winning formula in this movie is that it revels in its own absurdity, while still presenting it with a straight face, i.e. after the pilots are

killed, Kenan Thompson's character insists that he can fly the plane because he's spent untold hours playing flight simulator video games on Playstation 2, then confidently tells the LAX flight control tower to shut up when they try to get someone else to fly the plane...and then, he actually lands the plane.

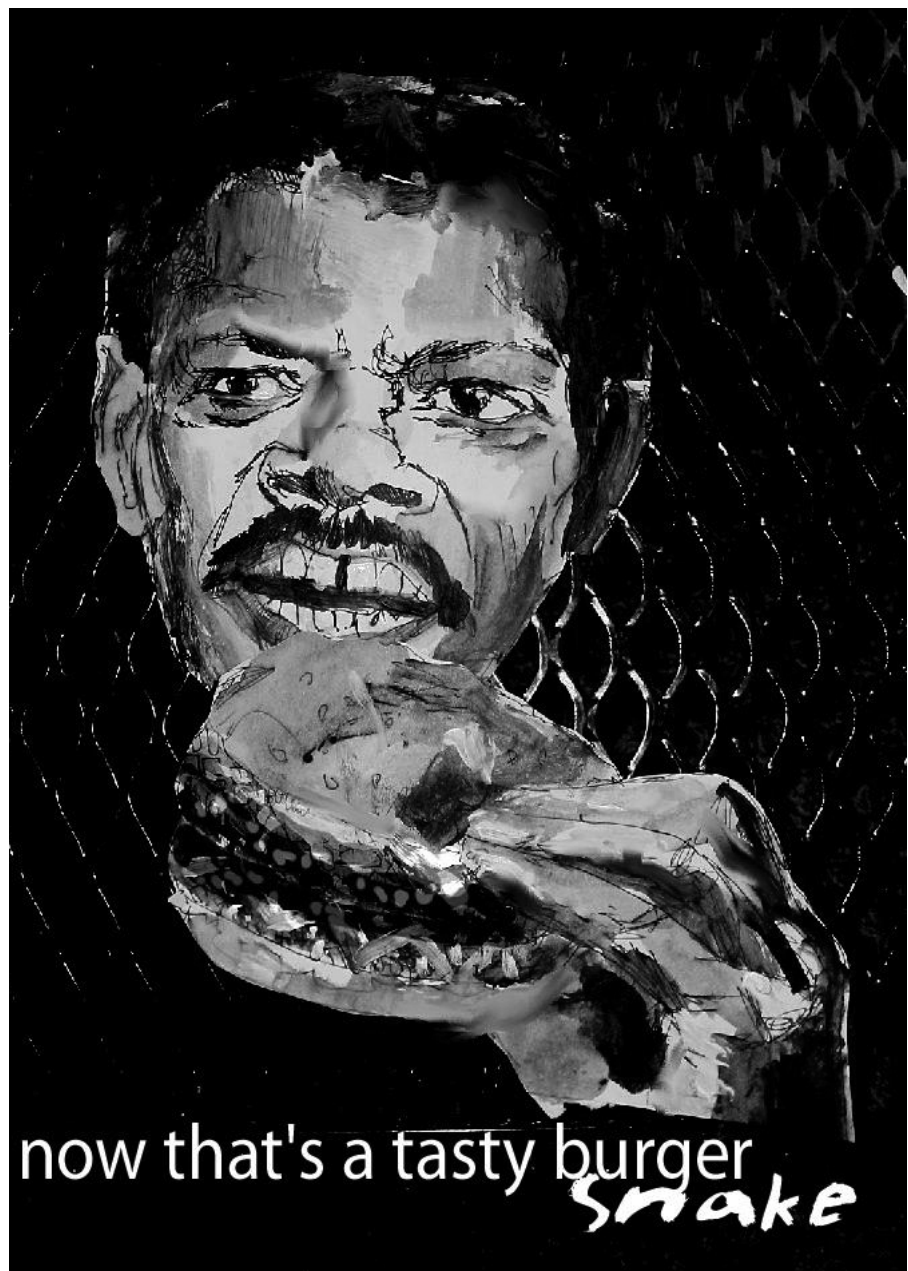
They also thought up witty, creative ways for the humans to take the carnage to the snakes. They don't have any actual weapons on the plane, other than Flynn's pistol which he doesn't really use because A) He doesn't have enough bullets to kill 500 snakes B) If he misses and shoots a window, the cabin will depressurize and kill everyone. Going back to the practically-based flow of the script, rather than say, turning the temperature down to make the snakes fall asleep, or some other Extremely Convenient Plot Devise [TM], the audience becomes engaged with the fates of the human characters as they struggle to come up with improvised ways of defending themselves (attacking them with knives from the kitchen is out, as post-9/11 they've got nothing but plastic sporks on board). Kenan Thompson fights his way through a snake-infested cabin by smacking them with his laptop. A kickboxer kills snakes with his bare hands. Luggage is used to make impromptu barricades. A snake is thrown alive into a microwave a la *Gremlins*. An aerosol can of hairspray; a cigarette lighter and some tape are used to make an improvised flamethrower (a plane full of snakes, on crack, on fire). My favorite was a broken bottle duct taped to a broom handle, which my friends have dubbed the "Snake Shiv."

That is what the meat and potatoes of the film are: the passengers trying to outthink the crisis, the snakes foiling their attempts, and then coming up with another plan. They never stop the action for character interludes of any kind; there is no insight into who the heck "FBI agent Neville Flynn" really is. After some brief exposition in the first half hour before the plane takes off, Flynn is just Samuel L. Jackson locked in battle to the death with poisonous snakes

in a confined space for an hour and a half, with no pauses. And that's actually what I paid to see. Rest assured *Snakes on a Plane* lives up to all of the hype.

Samuel L. Jackson has stated that he signed on to *Snakes on a Plane* based on the name alone and actually threatened to leave when they considered changing it to "Pacific Air Flight 121." At the 2006 MTV Movie awards, Samuel Jackson made

a personal guarantee that *Snakes on a Plane* will win the 2007 Best Picture. That was no wild boast: I think that when the dust settles and we look back on 2006 in movies, *Snakes on a Plane* will be right up there competing with the likes of "Pirates of the Caribbean 2," "V for Vendetta," and "Clerks II." *Snakes on a Plane* was a great movie, and I will be first in line for the sequel, *Snakes on a Train*. ☺



TREY KIRK

It's in the Subtext: Multiplex Politics

BY MATTHEW DIAMANTE

Ah, summer blockbuster films. For some, it's a time to experience glorious other worlds. For others, summer flicks are a time to bond with the celebrities they sort of think of as friends, and still others go merely to escape Tootsie-like outdoor temperatures. But when I head to my favorite multiplex each June, July and August, I'm often looking for something else: namely, just what sort of political statements are being transmitted to the American masses?

Don't laugh. As even amateur cinema historians know, the moving picture has long been known to have significant effects on the national psyche. D.W. Griffith's 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation* had the monstrous yet significant effect of reviving the Ku Klux Klan. Oliver Stone's 1991 film *JFK* prompted Congress to release previously classified documents pertaining to the Kennedy assassination. And the 1996 live-action version of *101 Dalmatians* galvanized a temporary surge in dalmatian adoptions. Granted, that last film may not have had *political* implications, per se, though I'm sure that PETA was pleased with the anti-fur-clothing theme.

So when the lights dim and the twelfth preview mercifully ends, I don't anticipate an exciting screening of *Terminator 4: The Reign of Steve Jobs* or *Indiana Jones and the Wheelchair of Destiny*. I look forward to exposing the throbbing pulse of the American mind.

First up on this summer's slate of potential paradigm shifters was *X-Men: The Last Stand*. Apart from taking a bold stance against numbers by refusing to follow up 2003's *X2* with the title *X3*, *The Last Stand's* plot involved a "cure" for mutants (which in *X2* was treated as an allegory for queerness). Wolverine, the franchise's most prominent character and primary voice of conscience, gives the treatment an implicit endorsement by urging a fellow mutant not to feel pressured into it by others. If we were take the mutant condition as a metaphor with gay undertones, the film would seem to suggest that taking some sort of heterosexuality serum would be acceptable if one truly wanted to, which seems a reasonable conclusion many Americans would be willing to accept.

The Last Stand, however, also presents a trickier and less-examined question: in what circumstances, if any, could this mutant "cure" be justifiably applied against

the subject's will? Both the US President (a different character than the one we met at the end of *X2*) and his newly appointed Cabinet-level Secretary of Mutant Affairs take for granted the notion that a large-scale and indiscriminate treatment would be reprehensible. (Seemingly forgotten is the incident of the previous film in which the nefarious Magneto nearly succeeds in killing every non-mutant on the planet. In today's post-9/11 world, such an attack would surely prevent such a course of action from being so easily dismissed.) But after Magneto breaks several dangerous mutants from a police convoy, a police officer fires a "cure"-tipped dart at a fugitive, rendering her normal. The outraged secretary resigns and rejoins his X-Men comrades, where he is rewarded with the glory enjoyed by good guys in such entertainment. While we see that the use of the dart gun was not one of self-defense, it seems reasonable under the circumstances that authorities transporting mutant felons should enjoy such protective armament. I'm inclined to agree with the film's president, who berates the Secretary's resignation as a petty and unproductive move.

Next came the J.J. Abrams-helmed Tom Cruise-fest *Mission: Impossible III*, also



The villains in Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest, writes Annalee Newitz in the San Francisco Bay Guardian, represent "ruthless corporate enterprise whose owners mow down human life in search of bigger profits." Captain Jack Sparrow's merry crew of relatively harmless pranksters, on the other hand, resembles nothing so much as a relatively enlightened worker's co-operative.

known by its aesthetically problematic abbreviation *M:i-III*. In IMF agent Ethan Hunt's latest cinematic outing, our hero is compelled to steal an object known only as "the rabbit's foot" for a mysterious black-market arms dealer, or his wife gets it. Oddly enough, Hunt seems to play his part fairly, and actually delivers the MacGuffin with no apparent double-crosses planned. We assume that once Hunt recovers his wife, he'll go after both the arms dealer and his ill-gotten bounty, but his actions nevertheless appear to be a case of appeasing a terrorist for personal gain (and at the possible expense of countless others). For his conduct, we learn that the president has a high-level position in mind for him. Worrisome—was this Paul Wolfowitz's idea? If nothing else, however, *M:i-III* confirms our society's willingness to poke fun at organized religion: in one scene, Anthony Lane writes in *The New Yorker*, "an explosive [is] disguised as a crucifix. I can think of other faiths whose followers would riot for less."

In true Gilbertian fashion, however, this summer paired the irresponsible authorities of *M:i-III* with noble outlaws in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*. When 2003's inaugural "PotC" film, *The Curse of the Black Pearl*, was released, I complained to the few who would listen that in addition to being a limp and unexciting affair, the movie actually glorified piracy while portraying the British Empire as an entity that was square at best and sinister at worst. To those who would counter that the film's admiration of the bandits was simple good fun, I could only reply that Disney would hardly have the same sense of humor in dealing with those caught pirating the movie.

Happily, no such faults are found in *Dead Man's Chest*. As Annalee Newitz pointed out in the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, the "supreme enemies" this time around are the British East India Company and a ship full of cursed seamen who eventually merge with the ghostly hull, their very



What Bryan Singer's Superman Returns lacked in box-office receipts, it bravely strove to make up for with one of the most trenchant indictments of real estate-dealing megalomaniacs ever put on a hard drive.

bodies appropriated by richer forces. Both villains, Newitz writes, are "ruthless corporate enterprise whose owners mow down human life in search of bigger profits. It's only in an overt fantasy like *Pirates*," she concludes, "that we get a story capable of capturing the full horror of uncontrolled corporate greed." Captain Jack Sparrow's merry crew of relatively harmless pranksters, on the other hand, resembles nothing so much as a relatively enlightened worker's co-operative. (In the first film, we learned that promised piratical booty was to be distributed evenly among the ship's crew—as close to an endorsement of communism that mainstream entertainment has offered up in some time.) Under such circumstances, who *wouldn't* root for the noble sailors of the Black Pearl?

The Man of Steel couldn't out-earn Johnny Depp's man of mascara, but what Bryan Singer's *Superman Returns* lacked in box-office receipts, it bravely strove to make up for with one of the most trenchant indictments of real estate-dealing megalomaniacs ever put on a hard drive. In this sequel to *Superman I* and *II*, we are reminded by Marlon Brando's Jor-El that

Clark Kent, née Kal-El, has been sent to Earth to be a "light" that will show us humans how to be a great people. But instead of discussing his political beliefs with Larry King or brokering peace in the Middle East, everyone's favorite solar-powered immigrant contents himself with wowing curiously mute spectators and foiling bank robberies.

The most interesting statement Singer's film makes is that Superman is no longer merely an American icon; rather, he is a global do-gooder who defuses crises around the world. "Does he still stand for Truth, Justice ... all that stuff?" the news editor asks. For at least that moment, *Returns* acknowledges that the nation has matured since Superman first appeared in 1938: Truth and Justice are no longer synonymous with, nor are they exclusive to, the American Way.

Due to the lack of space, I'm disappointed I couldn't further comment on more blockbusters. But there you have it, the mass-market socio-political statements event movies made in the summer of '06; the same kind of statment we'll see in next summer's big flicks. ☺

Fall Fashion Pulse '06

BY STEPH CHIN
AND JOSEPHINE CHOW

FOR HER

Guys are wearing shiny stuff? High collars? *Tight bottoms*? Who would have guessed *those* were coming back into style?

Yep. You better believe it. Fall Fashion around the globe is taking a turn for the wild side. From New York to Paris, Paris to Milan, haute couture's best are going adventurous.



1. Layer them on ... in plaid.

According to Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom and other high end retailers, this year, layering your clothes is just as hot as last season. And Marc Jacobs' fall collection is all about that. But instead of re-using the same somber colors, this New York designer's rocking the runway with a fiery revival of plaids. So touch up that black with a splash of bold print. Whether it's emerald on black, black on soft pink, or hot red on black, think plaid knitted full skirts, wraparound plaid leggings, plaid dresses, and of course, plaid minis.

2. Get leggy, ladies.

As we've seen from last spring, designers are huge fans of footless tights and leggings. And they have been and still are, the perfect compliment under every kind of jeans, cuff shorts, mini-skirts, or even alone. Donna Karan resurrects the classic little black dress—the 40's school girl frock—with leggings. The loose hemline of the dress is simply a stunning contrast to the skin tight leggings. But if you can't do tights, opt for the skinny look. Skinny jeans are monumental this fall—whether they're slim cropped, black, blue, slouched—all kinds of skinny jeans are most definitely in style. Try emphasizing the skinny in the jeans by pairing them with a loose trench or a medium length overcoat and short, slouchy leather boots to achieve the DKNY street chic.

3. It's all about vintage.

The empire waist is back this season, full throttle. While you might think the style a bit archaic, Paris' Givenchy is definitely pushing your grandmother's wardrobe, and with a renewed sophisticated polish too. Think those black high-waisted knee-length skirts and waist-belted empire dresses a little too monochromatic? Sass up your look with bright-colored sashes. Blood red on black, for example, is both confident and seductive.

Similarly, loose, flowing sleeves, whether they reach mid-arm or full arm lengths, are another ramification of the vintage dress. And Milan's Valentino has certainly revoked this quality through a rich palate of dark royal blues and purples.

4. The boyish-classy.

Additionally, knit dressing is also key. It not only looks good, but it's also practical for the fall weather. From Paris' Jean Paul Gaultier to Milan's Valentino, haute couture designers are bringing back the classic knit look of the 40's and the 50's. Knit jackets, dresses and especially herringbone shorts (those shorts that reach the knee with a loose, curved finish) should be the main ingredients in every fashionista's wardrobe. Oh, and you might also want to spice up your school boy look with berets, newsboy



Therese Kark

caps, and even suspenders.

In short, the overall theme for this fall is really quite conceptual. Haute couture is taking a turn for the dark, romantic side. (Think: Edgar Allen Poe and Tim Burton's lovechild). On the runway, we're seeing a lot of gothic imagery: short, black, poofy gowns and high collared shirts. Christian Dior's Fall Collection is showing a lot of scarlet and black draping on his gowns. Keeping in line with the dark imagery, Coco's line is using a lot of black lace and uneven skirt/dress lengths. Straying away from *Corpse Bride*, Paris in particular is prideful about fashion's new interest in "French dressing." This means a lot of tailored suits made of wool and linen. Models on the runway are complimenting these suits with leather elbow length gloves and wearing both traditional and avant-garde blazers. Lastly, *Elle* magazine reports that designers from all corners of the globe, from Louis Vuitton to Yohji Yamamoto are thinking big. Exaggerations of everyday gaucho pants are a featured item of many designers. Large jackets and jersey dresses we may have seen in the 80s are also making a comeback.

FOR HIM

1. The chic over casual, and vice versa.

Tailored jackets from DKNY don't necessarily have to look formal. This fall, mix it up. Go casual over chic by wearing dress shirts with hoodie sweat shirts, or chic over casual with subdued fall dress jackets over colorful T-shirts. Marc Jacobs is another advocate of this new style. The jean jacket over the dress shirt and tie is also a viable, hot pick. To soften the formal dress look, covering with a baggy trench also works well.

2. Work the prep.

To the men—fall 2006 trends aren't as eclectic as they are for the girls but for those of you who think you dress well hopefully it won't be too much of a disappointment. It may seem clownish but the "saloon" look is coming back into style. Givenchy returns with ultra tight shirts this season to give the disciplined, straightened-back, distinguished look. Similarly, Giorgio Armani's also working the vintage prep with its revival

of tweed suits. So imagine your favorite character from *Deadwood*, but just looking a lot cleaner. While pinstripe dress shirts and traditional dress pants and vests may make you a little overdressed, softening the look with short leather gloves is both sexy and polished.

3. Take off that suit.

If you hate *Deadwood*, you might opt for items from Marc by Marc Jacob's fall collection. This means going for a more grungy-skater boy look: wearing long-sleeve shirts under your t-shirts, for example. So if you're proud of your messy hair, fashion has you in mind too. Flannel is every guy's best friend this fall/winter season. It's practical because it's fashionable and keeps you warm. A tip from *men.style.com*: "Skip the ripped jeans with flannel shirts—you'll look *too* grungy."

In other words, if you don't want to venture into the Wild Wild West nor do you care much for J.Crew and its wannabe stores, then you can simply opt for the vintage spin. The runway, especially for menwear's guru, Jill Sander, is showing a lot of neatly pressed white shirts with cropped sleeves. You can wear turtlenecks and trousers without seeming over-the-top. If you're a little bolder, tuck your shirt in a pair of high-waist trousers and don't stray away from iridescent colors, as seen in Calvin Klein's fall collection. Finally, on dressier nights, you can be safe with a slim black suit, recycling what is fashion's biggest principle: some things, never go out of style.

THE ACCESSORIES

Ladies—what to wear on your feet? You might be disgusted at first but find a cute pair of animal print shoes. Both leopard print faux fur and snakeskin patterns are making a huge comeback. And when the leaves start changing color, it's time to break out the boots—and the good news is that you can go crazy this season. Wear your UGGs because in the world of fashion, they're here to stay. Change up your traditional stiletto boots with a slouched design or get a pair adorned with buckles. If you abhor heels, then you can't go wrong with a pair of motorcycle boots. Lastly, do remember to wear your pumps. Any kind

will do—peek-a-boo toe, pointy toe or round toe. Platforms might look tacky at first but they are proven to give your feet more support; making that 4-4/12 inch heel look and feel a little less deadly.

One last thing—who can forget handbags? The latest trends in handbags this season are chain bags. Classic lines such as Jimmy Choo to louder lines such



TREY KIRK

as Juicy Couture, chains are appearing in some way almost in every new handbag. Tote bags aren't going away—so if you had a canvas or leather (or patent leather, even better) tote bag, keep it and use it. Michael by Michael Kors and the designer's more upscale Kors line are both showing a lot of handbags with silver and gold studs (perfect to compliment your motorcycle boots). Clutches, although for busy college women are impractical, are also a hot item. Finally, if your handbag has to match your shoes, pay attention to all animal print handbags (no matter how... *interesting* they look); they are indeed in style this season. ☺

100 Ways to *Spice Up* Your Life at Tufts University

BY MELISSA FIORENZA AND
ADRIENNE ROMA

To the faithful readers who used to read our column, greetings from New York City! We are back for one last article, and while we hope your time at Tufts only gets spicier, this special edition is for those nervous, eager newcomers who just spent the morning unloading their parents' cars and unpacking their lives into their new rooms.

Freshmen, you're probably sitting there during the Matriculation ceremony, looking quizzically at this article, and wondering, "Who the hell are these girls?" Well, the minuscule legacy we left on campus as the "Spice (Up) Girls" need not matter right now. All you need to know is that we are two washed up alumnae who, on May 21st of this year, were forced to pinch the wonderful bubble we'd grown accustomed to for four years and step outside into the gritty game of life after college. Since we can no longer swipe our ID cards at Carmichael, lay out on the Rez Quad, walk down Professors Row on a Friday night, or pretty much get away with anything we used to be able to get away with, we ask that you do it all for us.

Below is a list of things we have come up with for making the most of your time at Tufts. Some are things we have done, some we wish we did, and some we never had the guts to do but would love to see someone else try ... So read on, little freshmen, and take some advice from two alums who consistently walk down the busy Manhattan streets in search of other Jumbos who miss and love college life as much as we do. And also, welcome to Tufts.

1. Paint the cannon.
2. Attend at least one Bubs concert.
3. Throw a party at Homecoming and/or Spring Fling ... start early.
4. Take an Ex-College class with a friend.
5. Kiss on the Tisch Roof.
6. Host a theme party.
7. Go to Fenway, if only for a hot dog.
8. Sing along at Jake Ivory's Piano Bar.
9. Stay in the library until "the voice" comes on the loudspeaker.
10. Make T-shirts with your friends—for every occasion you can think of. (Think: Labor Day, Columbus Day, Talk Like A Pirate Day...)
11. Go to one of the dining halls—after having a few drinks.
12. Take advantage of Late Night Cmikes during finals to study.
13. Take advantage of Late Night Cmikes during finals to bug your friends when you're all done with tests.
14. Party at other Boston schools, but leave out the BYOB MIT frat parties.
15. Stay in Boston for a summer.
16. Make Tuftslife.com your homepage.
17. Get to know everyone in your dorm, including the upperclassmen.
18. If you get a horrible grade on a paper or test, hang it up on the wall—it's not the end of the world.
19. Go on a road trip; we don't really care where. Drive to Canada, buy a beer, and drive back.
20. Dance on a table/stage/bar at a frat ... no inhibitions.
21. Take Drama 10 with friends.
22. Get to know the card-swipe ladies.
23. Take a class with Professor Edelman, Professor Norman, Professor Johnson, and Professor Miller.
24. Stay at the Tufts Loj.
25. Ditch the Taco Bell on Mass. Ave for the one in Everett (it's a full one, not that half-KFC/half-Taco Bell crap).
26. Share a scorpion bowl at Hong Kong in Harvard Square.
27. Go to a live showing of Jumbo Love Match.
28. Dress up on Halloween—everyone does.
29. Eat at Soundbites—the line is worth the wait. And check out breakfastarm.com.
30. Go to Trivia Night at PJ Ryan's.
31. Support Larry Bacow & Co. on Marathon Monday.
32. Go in every building at Tufts at least once.
33. Steal a tray from Dewick or Carmichael to use for sledding when it snows.
34. Put the tray back.



35. Fall in love ... if you're really ambitious, kiss under the Bowen Gate. (It means you'll wed.)
36. Get quoted in the *Daily*.
37. Go to Cabarete in the Dominican Republic for Spring Break. Twice.
38. Leave no crossword or Sudoku untouched.
39. Give yourself Fridays off for at least
60. Go to Walden Pond.
61. Play pool/video games in the campus center.
62. Get a chicken teriyaki pita from the Campus Commons for lunch.
63. Go to the Club Fairs and sign up for everything.
64. Attend graduation when you're not graduating.
82. Participate in a psychology experiment.
83. See one of the many plays at Tufts.
84. Buy at least one piece of atypical Tufts apparel from the bookstore.
85. Rate your professors on ratemyprofessors.com or tuftsreviews.com.
86. Have a Tuftslife day—go to everything listed on the Tuftslife schedule for the

12. Take advantage of Late Night Cmikes during finals to study.

13. Take advantage of Late Night Cmikes during finals to bug your friends when you're all done with tests.

- one semester.
40. Chalk, table, and poster for a good cause.
41. Speaking of good causes, attend the Relay for Life at Tufts.
42. Go to the drive-in theater in Menden, MA.
43. Rent a kayak on the Charles.
44. Take a Duck Tour.
45. Get your heart broken and get over him or her with the help of your friends.
46. Break hearts.
47. Read the *Observer* (woo woo!).
48. Attend a Jumbo sporting event.
49. Go to the Boston Aquarium.
50. Sunbathe on the Rez Quad.
51. Have a Wall of Shame in your room/apartment.
52. Learn the story of Jumbo—it's now your story, too.
53. Have lunch or dinner with a professor.
54. Go to the candlelight ceremony both as a freshman and a senior.
55. Protest something.
56. Study abroad.
57. Go to the Isaam Fares lectures.
58. Have a friend in every frat/sorority.
59. Live off-campus.
65. Go to Lucky Strike for a girls/boys night out.
66. Go to Fanueil on a Saturday night.
67. Go to a movie screening at Barnum Hall.
68. Get a picture with Jumbo on Tuftonia's Day.
69. Have a barbecue and outdoor Beirut for Spring Fling.
70. Order out from Rose's on Sunday nights.
71. Go to office hours, even if you just want to chat.
72. Attend the Medford "cahnaval." You'll be able to see the Ferris wheel from Wren when it's time.
73. Play sports on the quads.
74. Go swimming in the pool, and then hang in the sauna.
75. Order pizza at 3 a.m..
76. Dance the night away at Fall Ball.
77. Get a bucket of grapes and stomp on them with your roomies, *I Love Lucy*—style.
78. Always do it for the story.
79. Don't pay for anything on your 21st birthday.
80. See Blue Man Group.
81. Take the Miller Lite Challenge at Joshua Tree in Davis Square.
- day.
87. Go to a comedy show, and participate.
88. Take advantage of the Boston bus; the subway stops running at midnight.
89. Take a million pictures, and don't complain when other people take them of you ... you'll want them later.
90. Cram as many people as you can in your dorm room for an impromptu movie night.
91. Campusfood.com. Learn it, live it, love it.
92. Order wings several days in advance for a Super Bowl party.
93. Get to know the Communications and Media Studies ladies; do the CMS senior project.
94. Have a dinner party.
95. Date an engineer—they're not that bad.
96. Abbreviate everything for a day.
97. Go to Atomic Bowling at Town Line Lanes in Malden.
98. Be nice to Ann at Hillside's Liquors.
99. Get free samples at the Head of the Charles.
100. Look for us at Homecoming. You'll know us by our t-shirts: *Washed Up Alum ... and Proud of It.* ☺

New in Town? Here's What To Do.

BY ANNA FELDMAN

Being in a new area can be, quite frankly, frightening. Not knowing where to go or what to do can put quite a damper on one's freshman year. And to be honest, I would like to save my first-years from that.

Boston is an incredible city and I unfortunately didn't really discover or realize what it had to offer until my sophomore year. Sad, I know. Maybe it was because I was lazy or I didn't have that many outgoing friends (at the time). But I'd like to think it's because I really had no clue where to begin. For that reason, I am suggesting some essential locales for dining, entertaining, and visiting both close to Tufts and beyond. Exploring is part of the college experience and I am in no way attempting to impose on that right of passage. Consider these mere suggestions or starting points, if you will. After that, you're on your own. Happy hunting.

The MFA

The Museum of Fine Arts, located in central Boston (465 Huntington Ave.), is open seven days a week (W-Th, and F 10 am-9:45 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-4:45 pm) and offers free admission to Tufts students. Although in my mind, that is reason enough to visit this vast and well-stocked museum (over 450,000 objects), the MFA has so much to offer with both permanent and rotating exhibits, as well as concerts, films, artist lectures, and gallery talks. You'll find yourselves going back time and time again.

The ongoing exhibit "Americans in Paris: 1860-1900", making its U.S. debut at the MFA, showcases artists such as James McNeill Whistler, John Singer Sargent, Winslow Homer, and Mary Cassatt who were drawn to Paris's romance and vibrancy in the late nineteenth century and learned to meld the distinct French style of painting into their own (Open 10 AM-8 PM, \$23). It runs until September 24, located in the Gund Gallery.

The MFA's permanent collections include the Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa; the Art of Europe; the Art of the Americas;

and the Art of the Ancient World.

The recent addition of a Contemporary Art collection is definitely worth checking out, featuring many of the later twentieth century's major figures and prominent artists of today: Chuck Close, David Hockney, Gerhard Richter, Susan Rothenberg, Andy Warhol, Takashi Murakami, Anselm Kiefer, and Cindy Sherman.

Admission: members free, adults \$15, seniors and students 18 and older \$13, youths 7-17 \$6.50 (or free on weekdays after 3 p.m.), youths six and under free. For more information, call (617) 267-9300.

The Cow Parade

I just had to throw this in here. Unless setting aside an entire day of trekking across the city tracking down each and every colorful sculpture of a cow is your idea of fun, consider this merely something to look out for. Boston's parks, plazas and streets will be filled with life-size cows until September 5. The public display of over 100 life-size, painted cows is organized by and benefits The Jimmy Fund.

Places to spot the cows: Boston Common, Downtown Crossing, Faneuil Hall Market Place, the North End, City Hall Plaza, all along Boylston and Newbury Streets (from Hynes to Arlington T stops)

Red Sox Home Games

If you're not a baseball fan (like me) or you just don't like the Red Sox, don't worry. By the end of your time here, simply because of Tufts' proximity to Boston, you will, if not become a die-hard fan, at least heartily rejoice in their victories and sorrowfully lament their losses. It's a cult. It cannot be avoided (at least not easily). The Sox will be playing at Fenway September 1-6, most games at 7:05 PM. Call 877-REDSOX9 for more info.

The Boston Aquarium

I honestly haven't been to the aquarium yet (Can you blame me? There's a great one not far from where I live.) but from what I've heard, it's a great place to watch marine animals do whatever it is they do. Aquariums are fun. I can't really say much else.

Walking Around

For first timers, the Boston Commons, and the surrounding Theatre District and Downtown Crossing should be first on your list, as should be Harvard Square (the last two expressly for shopping). Don't forget Newbury Street, Faneuil Hall Market Place, and the North End.

Now Coolidge Corner (the name of the T stop), located in the historically rich district of Brookline, although perhaps a bit overlooked, is an equally great place to walk around. Harvard Street boasts three blocks jam-packed full of diverse historical landmarks, eclectic shops, and myriad restaurants.

Eating Around

Now to the good part. Eating out doesn't mean eating expensively (that sounds oh so good to the average college student's ear), although there are definitely many options to fit that bill. I always try to find the places where you absolutely get a bang for your buck. Here are some of my favorites for each meal of the day, in locales both close to Tufts, meaning within walking distance (Davis Square, Ball Square, Teele Square) and also further in to the center of Boston, accessible by T.

Breakfast

Close to Tufts: SoundBites (Ball Square), The Broken Yolk (Powder House rotary), Renée's Café (Teele Square)

A little further: Zaftig's New York style delicatessen (Coolidge Corner)

Lunch

Close to Tufts: True Grounds (Ball), Mike's (Davis), Blue Shirt Café (Davis)

A little further: The Upper Crust (Newbury Street), Bartley's Burger Cottage (Harvard Square).

Dinner

Close to Tufts: Antonio's, The Joshua Tree, RedBones, Johnny D's (all in Davis Square)

A little further: Border Café (Harvard Square), Thai Basil (Newbury St), Ristorante Villa Francesca (North End), Rustic Kitchen (Quincy Market). ☺

Boston's Forgotten Team

BY DANIEL SCHNEIDER

Welcome to the world of Boston Sports, and more notably, the Boston Fan base. Famous (or infamous depending on who you ask) across the country. They root for two of the highest profile teams in their respective leagues, the Red Sox of MLB and the Patriots of the NFL. Couple this with a notorious rivalry with the largest professional sports market in the country, New York, and the national recognition of Boston sports and its fan base is obvious. With this recognition and visibility as fans, come definitions, views, and stereotypes of just what type of people they are. Through the eyes of the national and local media, rivals and fellow fans alike, there are several key components to the stereotypical Boston Sports Fan's identity:

Faithful and Loyal: They perpetually root for the heartbreaking (save 2004) Red Sox.

Dedicated: Patriots fans pack Gillette Stadium in sub-zero weather to give the three-time Super Champion Patriots the ultimate home-field advantage. The Red Sox became only the fourth team in baseball history to sellout an entire season.

Forgiving: They continue packing Fenway Park for decades until a team defined by futility broke the curse. They stood firm through the Superbowl XX humiliation and the "Patsie" era to root for a modern dynasty (read: Free Agency).

The final piece of the Boston Sports Fan's identity, however, is their lack of sensibility. No, I am not talking about every other baseball fan (not just Yankee fans) calling Red Sox fans crazy, rabid, and belligerent people that expect the team to win every game, every series, every year, at all costs—while at the same time quite literally destroying the Bronx Bombers. I am talking about the typical Boston Fan's mistreatment of the decorated franchise that comprises the fourth member of the Boston Sports "big four": the Boston Celtics.

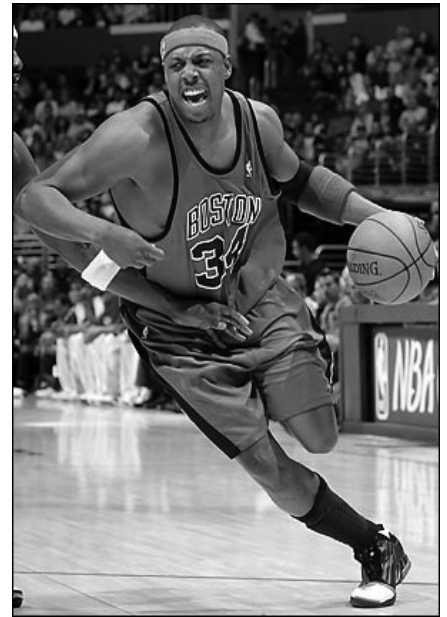
The rich history of the Celtics argu-

ably outshines the three other members of Boston's big four combined. There are the 16 World Titles, the most in NBA History. There are 29 former Celtic Players enshrined in the NBA Hall of Fame, while 13 of former Celtics Players can be found on the NBA's 50 Greatest Players of All Time team. The tradition of winning stretched consistently from the 1950s into the 1990s. Then the hard times struck. The dominant Celtic core of the 1980s got old, and injured, and ultimately faded into the Garden rafters. So too, it seemed, went the legions of die-hard Celtics fans who wore funny 80s Celtics hats and nothing but green and white. Gone was the loudest, toughest place to play an away game in the league. Gone was the Celtic Pride that had unified the Boston Fan base for decades.

And for what, a period of hardship? Some tough, losing seasons? Did the spoiled-rotten generations of Celtics Fans who knew nothing but hall of fame caliber talent and countless wins and titles feel they were above rooting for an average, .500 team? Sounds eerily similar to a group of sports fans that receive quite a bit of hate from their Boston counterparts

Admittedly, Celtic fans have not had much to cheer about the last 15 years. Larry Bird succumbed to his chronically ailing back, a string of bad coaches highlighted by the disaster that was Rick Pitino steered the team further and further into oblivion, the hallowed Boston Garden was torn down, and the false hope of a trip to the eastern conference finals in 2002 all made for a rough time to be a Celtics fan. To the rabid Boston Fan, the outlook appears bleak, the team unable to draw the interest of sexier, more desirable Red Sox and Patriots. This, many fans have decided, is reason enough to go against their otherwise reputation of loyal, dedicated, and well informed. If you are a fan of Boston Sports and you are not rooting for the 2006-2007 Boston Celtics, you are not well informed to say the very least.

There is a healthy collection of reasons to root for the Green and White in what promises to be an exciting season. Here are the top five reasons why:



NOAH GRAHAM/NBAE

Paul Pierce is preparing to lead a developing Celtics team to the top of the league.

1. Paul Pierce.

He is a perennial All-Star even without a legitimate supporting cast. Watching him play and control a game is watching a potential future hall-of-famer in his prime. He is the captain and the heart and soul of the team. He has embraced his role of not only captain, but as the all-knowing shepherd of his young teammates. Last year was his best statistical year, 26.8ppg, 6.7rpg, 4.7apg, 1.35spg, all while playing most of the season with an elbow injury that would require off-season surgery. The man plays hurt, and he always plays hard. With a ring or two the comparisons as one of the top 5 Celtics of all is a legitimate debate. He understands the Celtic tradition, and is proud to be a Celtic. His recent contract extension affirms his publicly stated desire to remain a Celtic for life.

2. Youth.

This team is full of potential, with future gems possibly in the making all over the roster. The average age is only 24.3, and the future star power any number of these young Celtics may enjoy is limitless. Every time nearly each member of this roster is inserted into the lineup, we are watching

history in the making, the development of a future all-star, Hall-of-Famer even. The mere thought of seeing history live and in living color is reason enough to tune into Fox Sports Net New England each game day.

3. The ability to run.

As an extension of the youth comes the Celtics clear ability to run with and without the basketball. The athletic ability

The mere thought of seeing history live and in living color is reason enough to tune into Fox Sports Net New England each game day.

of players like Tony Allen, Gerald Green, Rajon Rondo, and Sebastian Telfair allow for a cushion against otherwise costly mistakes on defense. On the offensive side of the ball, Danny Ainge showed his commitment to the run with the addition of the aforementioned Telfair at the point. The team possesses the ability to run the floor and finish with players such as Paul Pierce, Tony Allen, and even "Big Al" Jefferson. Look for Sebastian Telfair and/or Rajon Rondo to lead the break and dish to sharpshooting Wally Szczerbiak and smooth stroking Delonte West for wide-open treys. These Celtics will have no trouble scoring points

4. Danny Ainge is calling the shots.

The aforementioned Ainge is the Celtics Head of Basketball Operations. This is someone who has enjoyed both Celtics joy and agony as a deeply entrenched member of the Celtics family. Being a former player of his caliber, Ainge is in-tune with his players. He understands how to assess talent and his past 3 drafts have yielded several steals including Al Jefferson at #15 in the 2004 Draft, Gerald Green at #18 in the 2005 Draft, and Ryan Gomes at #50 in the 2005 Draft as well. These three, along with Ainge draftees Delonte West and Tony Allen have all shown flashes of brilliance that coach Doc Rivers and the entire Celtics coaching staff is trying to harness and mold into true stardom. While Ainge has been criticized for his repeated shuffling of the roster, he has dealt players

like Jiri Welch and Ricky Davis for their highest possible value, and he has also unloaded the burdensome contracts of Mark Blount and Raef LaFrentz. His ability to make deals happen has also netted the Celtics the highly touted but yet to bloom talent of Sebastian Telfair, a player with franchise point guard potential. He has amassed the young, desirable talent teams covet in big trades, as well as the salary matches (Szczerbiak, Theo Ratliff) to make

a blockbuster happen. With Ainge calling the shots, a deal with Billy King for Allen Iverson or his close friend Kevin McHale for Kevin Garnett can never be ruled out. There is nothing like an excitement of a potential blockbuster trade involving your hometown team.

5. The Celtics play in the Eastern Conference.

In recent history, the Western Conference's superiority has been well documented. Despite recent titles by Eastern Conference teams the Detroit Pistons and the Miami Heat, the Western Conference remains a much deeper and stronger

division top to bottom. Outside of the preseason favorites in the east and their respective conferences, the Miami Heat, the Detroit Pistons, the Cleveland Cavaliers, and the New Jersey Nets, the conference looks to be wide open and full of many flawed teams. The Celtics benefit further by playing in the Eastern Conference's weakest division, the Atlantic Division. The Green and White are in fact only a year removed from a Division title in the 2004–2005 campaign. Many fans are numb to this fact, but this will soon change. The blend of talented veterans and gifted young guns gives the Celtics Organization and its fans a tremendous amount to look forward to on their quest to claim banner number 17.

The recent scorn of the Celtics by both the Boston Media (when is the last time the Celtics made the front page or had a blog following like the Boston Dirt Dogs site?) and the Boston fans must be corrected to push the team over the top. It is up to the fans to recreate Celtics Fever, to make the TD Banknorth Garden the Garden again. The Celtics boast the pieces to resurrect the tradition of winning, of true Celtic Glory. It is up to the Boston Fans to shake off stereotypes and become sensible and well informed once again. Bleed Green, Celtic Pride. ☺



JIM DAVIS/BOSTON GLOBE

Young Boston Celtic fans pour their hearts out at the TD Banknorth Garden. However, they are outnumbered by Red Sox and Patriots fanatics.



August 31, 2005: In Dowling Hall, upperclassmen volunteers begin their day before dawn, inflating the balloons that will adorn campus on Matriculation. Photos by Aaron Schutzengel.

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