Letter To The Editor: Alumnus angered by Baraka

I am a 1974 journalism graduate of Rider. I am also Jewish. I am angry and very disappointed because of the event that was held at Rider on Friday, Dec. 8. The so-called "poet-laureate" of New Jersey was giving a forum at Rider to spout out his anti-Semitism and hate speech.

I watched New Jersey Nerve Network (NJN) news that night. I saw the absurd appearance of Amiri Baraka on Rider's campus. This is the same poet that Governor Mckeeveyy has been trying to dismiss from the job.

I am shocked that my alma mater provided a forum for this so-called poet, who is nothing more than an anti-semit and hate-monger. He has been spreading lies and rumors about the tragedy that befell the nation on Sept. 11. I am surprised that President Luecke and the Rider Board of Trustees would allow this obvious travesty to take place at Rider.

I have been a proud Rider gradu- ate for 28 years. But after the event in December, I am ashamed to be associated with Rider University. The administration has lost its way. You have hosted this outrageus display of lies and slander in a so-called poem. As a result, you have helped to spread anti-Semitism and hatred.

Rider owes the Jewish students, alumni and the Jewish employees a big apology.

Darrell Rice
Class of 74

Letter To The Editor: Real Life Superheroes: Sky-bound

Since the dawn of man, people have looked up into the vast wonder that is the sky with a sense of curiosity, a sense of awe and a sense of adventure.

During the Cold War, when we were finally able to create explosions powerful enough to propel ourselves into the heavens, we achieved an impos- sible dream of breaking the boundaries of our planet and letting the gods know that we would no longer be bound by the confines of our atmosphere.

Milestones like the moon-walking and the remote exploration of Mars showed our determination as a species to defy reason and expand into the in- finite realm of space.

However, as time went on, progress seemed to slow down, and our once determined society lost interest in the space program. What is often left out of this failed scenario is the incredible accomplishments of NASA and the astronauts who worked all their lives to be there.

All this changed, however, when a publicity voyage was to see a school teacher become the first civilian in space. The mission failed.

In a televised event, America watched as the Challenger shuttle blew up in front of the world in 1986. The tragic event destroyed America's faith in NASA, and another mission to the skies was not executed for several years.

Since then, although many have had an active interest in pursuing a trip to Mars, all other ventures have been met with indifference by the American people, including the missions of the shuttle Columbia.

On Saturday, Feb. 1, perhaps the greatest tragedy since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 fell upon our country as the space shuttle Columbia exploded upon re-entry and rained fiery pieces across the state of Texas.

The shuttle, to which many people un- til that day had never paid much attention, played an important role in the advance of astronomical research. As far back as 1999, Columbia successfully carried the Chandra X-Ray Observatory, one of NASA's Great Observatories, into orbit and performed a servicing mission on the Hubble Space Telescope in March of 2002.

But while the exploits of the NASA program may not always be on the forefront of people's attention, the seven astronauts, two women and five men, who gave their lives that day in the name of science must forever be remembered.

Their deaths do not represent the result of a mishap, or a freak anomaly, but rather the fulfillment of an incred- ible dream.

The crew of the ship traveled an unbelievable six million miles across the sky leaving behind the limits of Earth's gravity to look down on our planet and die one step closer to Heaven itself. As the families of the victims mourn the loss of their loved ones they may, hopefully, find comfort in knowing that the crew of the shuttle Columbia accomplished was truly heroic.

Each of the seven brave souls who danced miles above even the tip of Mount Everest died on their way home from a mission that would ensure that we, as a human race, would have the chance to take another "giant leap" toward our goals.

This time, there won't be a several year gap between the next time we send a mission into space, because these heroes have reminded us of our aspira- tions, and in the words of President Bush, "America's space program will go on."

Vincent Civitillo
Senior

Letter To The Editor: A publicity stunt?

It’s bad enough that the theater company at Rider sees fit to put on The Vagina Monologues, a so-called "feminist" play. But its intentions are completely invalidated by the show’s ill-conceived title and the disrespectful. What’s worse—not to mention utterly disheart- ening—is the promotional “vagina lollipop” stunt that was not only tasteless and distasteful, but also the hallmark of a truly abysmal script.

What’s worse—not to mention utterly dishheart- ening—is the promotion of "vagina lollipops" that is truly a feminist play—does mak- ing “vagina lollipops” qualify as even un- believable poor taste. Did anyone involved in this project stop to think for a second that maybe—not maybe—“vagina lollipops” was not the most tasteful of ideas? This was a brilliant idea, and I wish the students involved might have exercised just a bit more judgment.

Secondly, how exactly—if you believe that The Vagina Monologues is truly a feminist play—does mak- ing "vagina lollipops" support the ideas of the play? How does making "vagina lollipops" qualify as even being a slightly feminist gesture? If anything, this was a blatantly anti-feminist gesture, and I question the assertion of anyone who has no issues with the mak- ing of "vagina lollipops" that they are a true feminist. "Vagina lollipops" are not "feminist," they are horribly disrespectful.

Jeff Fielder
Senior

Letter To The Editor: The myth of BHP

I couldn't pronounce the name of it when I first was invited to join it—the Baccalaureate Honors Program (BHP). It has an air of mystery about it: the average student likely has never heard of it.

The BHP program is Rider's attempt to make the good great, and the great better. It will "enrich the educa- tion—is the promotional "vagina lollipop" stunt that was not only tasteless and dis- respectful. What’s worse—not to mention utterly disheart- ening—is the promotion of "vagina lollipops" that is truly a feminist play—does mak- ing “vagina lollipops” qualify as even un- believable poor taste. Did anyone involved in this project stop to think for a second that maybe—not maybe—“vagina lollipops” was not the most tasteful of ideas? This was a brilliant idea, and I wish the students involved might have exercised just a bit more judgment.

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Jeff Fielder
Senior

Letter To The Editor: The myth of BHP

I wondered why my personal contact with faculty is limited to office hours that take place while I have other class- work. Sometimes, I wonder why I chose to become a Baccalaureate Honors Student.

Don't get me wrong; it didn't all start out this way. Way back in my first year here, Great Ideas 1 and II propelled me into a stratosphere of intellectual thought and stimulating conversation, while proving to me that being a BHP student would result in a worthwhile experi- ence.

But as time moved on, the distinction made between "us" (the honors stu- dents) and "them" (the average students) blurred. The classes offered meant to set us apart started to appear just as any other class—and worse. Through an obvious lack of preparation, commu- nication, and seeming disinterest, pro- fessors confuse the best aspects of their disciplines for their worst, and present them half-heartedly.

I once overheard staff wondering why more students do not graduate with an honors degree when so many initially enroll in the program. They seemed baffled while the answer stood not more than a few feet away.

Me. I am the answer just as every BHP student is the answer. Rider facul- ty needs to ask the question. If you ask me why my honors class fails to extend my ability to think "critically, coherently and systematically" Or if you ask me why so many BHP students fall by the wayside, I would tell you it is because the requirements set forth by the program do not arouse a higher realm of thinking but drudgery of fur- ther mediocrity.

Challenge us; we are up for it.

Debate with us; we have much to say. Guide us; we look to your experience to help us shape our own. But don't try to fool us with the smoke and mirrors of curricula that do not live up to your pledge of enrichment.

Faculty, BHP students are truly intelligent thinkers and with this intel- ligence comes the danger of recognition. We recognize when a program full of the promise of challenge and provoca- tion falls short of its goals and leaves us asking why it is this label that is given to us to mark us as unique.

To clear the myth: I am an Honors student by inherent nature, unfortu- nately not by current practice.

Alexandra Alacao
Junior