

Pine Press



~~~~~ A Publication of the Members of the Student Housing Cooperative, Inc. ~~~~~

## Getting To Know Our System

Mara Wolke – Atlantis

It's been a long time since I've visited 317 Student Services. It seems members of my house are there 24/7, which I guess is about right considering my roommate in our double is Tara, the Member Services Coordinator, and my other housemate Chris, is the Vice-President of Education. So I get the news from them and never bother to come in for myself and 'see what's up.' Ok, to be fair, I never really came in much before they were so involved, mostly to pay my rent or to harass whoever was here and steal more handfuls of co-op pins. Not coming in and consequently getting my information second-hand from them or through the rumor mill, I've decided, are very bad habits. With all the rumors flying around within the system and all the different opinions that are thrown at me, I finally realized what I needed to do was switch into journalist mode. Hell, I'm a journalism senior, I should've learned something by now, right? So I came in today to have a look at the records and to just observe for myself what goes on in the office. So what exactly are Tara's and Joan's jobs? For the first time in over a year of living in the co-ops, and I am ashamed to admit this, I finally looked at the code for myself. I've read our house constitution; as an education officer I updated it and picked through it with a fine-toothed comb. I'm convinced certain members of my house read the code every morning before breakfast like saying the Pledge of Allegiance, but I've never actually looked at it.

So, here's what the big bad code has to say about our employees. Joan's official listed title is Executive Director. Generally, her job is to carry out the policies we set through the Board of Directors and as are stated in the code. Officially, "The Executive Director is the corporate in house accountant, the chief financial officer, and provides guidance and advice to the members making up the Executive Committee and Board of Directors" (Title 5 02.01 MSU-SHC Code of Operations). Yes, it also says that Joan is a non-voting member of the committee and cannot officially represent any house or committee specifically. But it does also say that we

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## These Are the Tempests

*About here, she thought, dabbling her fingers in the water, a ship had sunk, and she murmured, dreamily half asleep, how we perished, each alone.*

—Virginia Woolf, from *To the Lighthouse*

Since I have had to start becoming satisfied with myself again, to sift through the rubble for anything that has a slight glinting even through the grey shrouds, I have opened books as if they were the New Bible, holding remedy for my shaking. They frustrate me, never being answers but only elaborations on blustering doubt. They have not been rocks, and I am a barnacle. They are, too.

Perhaps I thought that if enough barnacles clung together and died before now, they could become a giant fossil and rest anchored to the floor. But their wounds are savage and perplexed as so many words spun outward lost like their first night in the barren drifts. They have looked, like me, on it all:  
    These are the tempests.  
And all, like me, have shaken.

Because with the marriage of our minds, there have been only ripples, overlapping remotely in a passing drop. Because like wandering bark of slighted ships we're now porous enough to float; starless, hanging on. Because our Time has measured us in this unending middle, made fools of us all. Because we, a school of barnacles, have walked the edge of doom in one, inextricable heartbeat. We have erred again and again. These are the tempests, but seem to arrive soft as a Lighthouse. And now I stir the ancient grey and kiss the feet of the darkening water in hopes to be blessed. I am another elaboration, and where are you. These are the tempests. I am shaking.

Charlie Crimando—Raft Hill

## A Poem From Hedrick

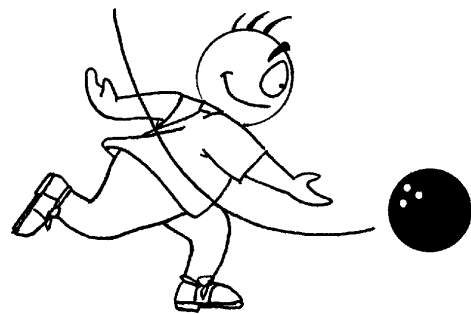
How delightful it is when one is in love. When all wonders and horrors which we have experienced seem to make sense as reasoning for our existence. Our existence is explained by the existence of another; one who is perfectly complementary in every seed of his being. Happiness is then accomplished, truly, when love clarifies life

Julie Christine Hoffman—Hedrick

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
the wonderfully sexy  
Max Miller (from Atlantis)  
will be stripping for  
your...ahem, enjoyment?

Amateur Night at Deja Vu

## Another Co-op Bowling Night



Marvel Lanes – Thursday,  
November, 6 – 8:00 – Bring friends



## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

The MSU-SHC Community Service Project with the MSU chapter of Habitat for Humanity is finally here. On Sunday, November 9, the Habitat for Humanity volunteers will meet outside the Student Services Building (the side facing Blockbuster) at either 9:00 AM or 12:30 PM and go to the house they are working on in Lansing. For more information on that project, visit the projects link on the MSU Habitat for Humanity web page at [www.msuhabitat.org](http://www.msuhabitat.org). Please e-mail Chris Profeta at [coop@msu.edu](mailto:coop@msu.edu) if you are planning on attending so I can get an idea of how many people to expect and at which time. Hope to see you all there. It should be a lot of fun.

Helping people help themselves





## Maintenance Journal: *Cutting Costs on Maintenance is Easy*

Greg Slade – Raft Hill

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### Squirrels in walls:

Residents reported hearing squirrels in the walls. I got bids from three different exterminators but they **sounded too expensive**. Instead, I raked all the walnuts from the lawn into the street and waited for the squirrels to go after them. Once they were in the street, they were relatively easy to run over with an automobile. (Thanks to Jim McGaw who sent in this suggestion.) I figure that if they're dead, they can't get into the wall. I am still waiting for the vultures to come clean up the mess.

### Leaking Pipe:

The water main sprung a leak in the basement. A plumber told me he would need to replace the pipe, reconnect it, seal it, all that jazz. That **sounded too expensive**, so I placed a bucket under the leak and used a pump connected to a garden hose to route the leaking water to nearby plants. The plants have grown approximately 10".

### Doorbell broken:

The doorbell was broken, and a new transformer **sounded too expensive**, so I decided it would be cheaper just to put the key in the lock and attach it to a string (so it can't go anywhere else). This way, guests and pizza delivery

professionals can let themselves in. Doorbell no longer needed.

### Washer motor burned out:

One of our housemates disregarded the warning not to overload the washer and before we knew it, the whole house stunk of burning electronics. I thought about calling Sears to inquire about a new motor, but that **sounded too expensive**. Fortunately, we never need to mow our lawn, so I was able to permanently hook up the lawn mower engine to the washer by using a string of rubber bands tied together.

### Toilet won't flush:

A new chain was needed to connect the flusher handle to the flap in the tank, but that **sounded too expensive**. In order to cut costs, I made a sign designating that toilet for #1 only. My aunt Bertha used to say, "If it's yellow it's mellow, if it's brown, flush it down". Thank you aunt Bertha. A penny saved is a penny earned.

**HAVE A  
MAINTENANCE  
QUESTION?**

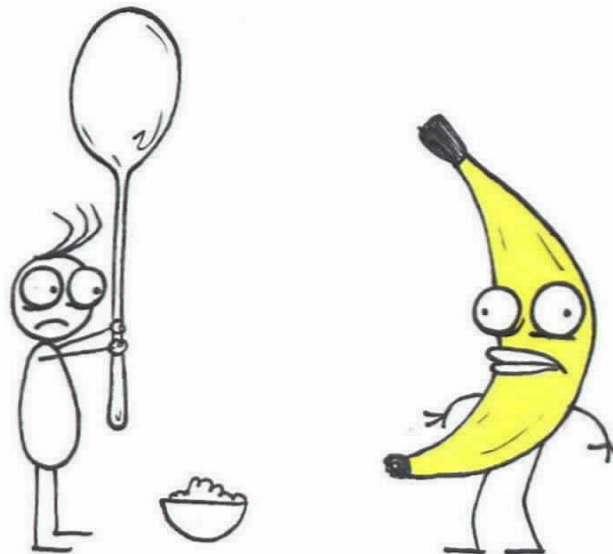
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Email your EVP:  
**tarquin4@msu.edu**

Instant Message your EVP: **SHC EVP** (AIM only)

**OH, SO YOU HATE CLASS?**

**THERE'S A SUPPORT GROUP FOR THAT:  
IT'S CALLED *EVERYBODY*, AND THEY  
MEET AT THE PEANUT BARREL**



**COME TO CO-OP NIGHT EVERY MONDAY  
EVENING**



*System*, continued from p. 1.

hired her to give us advice. Whether the board takes that advice or not is up to them.

Tara's job as the Member Services Coordinator is more technical. Her job is to "work under the immediate direction and supervision of the MSU-SHC Executive Director" (Title 5 03.01). She "coordinates daily operations of the SHC office," provides support for the E.C., and provide "bookkeeping assistance" (Title 5 03.02) She is supposed to help publicize upcoming events, provide written reports as needed to Joan, and attend the board meetings as a non-voting member (Title 5 03.03 i-iv). She also "performs any action that improves the communication between the houses and between the SHC office and the houses" (Title 5 03.03 vi) and "performs any other action that improves the education and involvement of SHC members" (Title 5 03.03 vii). So besides performing paperwork jobs and general clerical duties, Tara helps keep the communication lines open between houses, something that is critical in the system. Incidentally, it is also in her job description that she must "enforce the anti-discriminatory and anti-harassment policy" (Title 5 03.04 h) as outlined in Title 1.16 f.

But any journalist knows observation and the documents aren't always enough. You've gotta talk to the people. And here's what Tara Armbruster had to say in her own environment about her job here, working for you, for all of us, in the SHC office:

"We're here to help you in the office. We're here to work for you, not to dictate policy. As the Member Service Coordinator (MSC) my job is to coordinate daily operations of the SHC office; I take care of people who come into the office and want to know what a co-op is all about and I support the SHC officers and do things they don't have time to do. I am responsible for taking rent checks, but that doesn't make me your landlord. Joan and I organize and provide bookkeeping for you so that you have time to run the actual co-ops. We're employees of the system, which means you hired me and you can fire me or Joan if you don't feel we're doing any of these things. But just because we're employees, that doesn't mean we're not part of the system too and don't have opinions about what goes on. Joan's been with the system for over seven years, so she's seen a lot and genuinely cares about the co-op principles. And she does have weight in the system. That's what she was hired for. But really, we're mostly here to serve as central figures, a foundation for all the house policies circling around SHC, to keep track."

So while I know that's nowhere close to being it in a nutshell, it's a start. There are so many aspects of SHC and office life that I'm not sure I could fully grasp even if I was here 24/7. But it is a start. As for me, I plan to sit down and really look at the SHC code and I encourage everyone to do the same. I remember being amazed at the things I found out about my own house that I'd been living in for two semesters when I finally actually read our house constitution. Call me a dork, but it was actually kind of exciting, and I think the code could be too. After all, living in a co-op *doesn't* just mean we want a cheap place to live. I believe cooperatives *are* a movement, an alternative to selfishness and money worshipping, and this is critical to understand in order to live in the system. We are meant to live together and work together, to expand and to take care of each other and our system that we all signed into. Otherwise, why not just live in an apartment or a house in the "student ghetto?" And part of being a co-oper is understanding exactly what we did sign into. So, as for me, I'm going to take my co-op pins and go, but I'm going to try to read the code and even stop in to the office more than once a semester. I hope you will too; hey, did I mention they have free co-op pins?

# W. S. Penn

W.S. Penn is a professor of English here at MSU.

**NOTED, AWARD-WINNING, NATIVE AMERICAN AUTHOR**  
to read, discuss, and sign his works, including his latest, *Hazing: a Novel in Seven Satires*.

**Tuesday, November 4**  
**7:00 p.m.**

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[www.elpl.org](http://www.elpl.org)

Admission is FREE  
ALL ARE WELCOME

Phone reservations recommended  
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November is NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

# Glass: Reflections on Sophia Coppola's *Lost in Translation*

Charlie Crimando – Raft Hill

Bob, a character played by Bill Murray in Sophia Coppola's film *Lost in Translation*, is an actor. Acting is the way he has made his living, and now he is heading to Japan to appear in some commercials for a Japanese whiskey. He has no idea how to speak Japanese, so communication is stifled immediately.

During his stint in Japan, he meets a young Yale graduate named Charlotte, played by Scarlett Johansson, and a certain, unspoken connection is made between the two, who are both disillusioned with their married and professional lives. Something is missing for them both; they seem listless and tired—merely acting through their lives. Yet, something striking occurs between them, and a genuine human connection is formed. The two are only able to be in Japan for a week, but this connection is more lively than the ones with which they exist daily.

The two are at very different ages, but share the same estrangement, feeling as if they are not completely present in their lives that they have built. When a connection like theirs is formed, though, it often goes unacknowledged. Communication, throughout the film, is hindered, and even in such a sincere bond as Charlotte and Bob's, social protocol is followed, perhaps in order to ensure safety. In the film, the media determines what is acceptable or unacceptable to say, and it carries over into the very core of people's lives. Even if Bob were in America speaking English, it might be as if he were in a foreign country, never truly allowing himself to shed the mask he wears for those around him, and always speaking a different language than his own. It would seem that his wife and children should see the person that Bob really is, but survival and security have become more important aspects to his family life, and what he and his wife mainly speak about on the phone is "What color should the rug in your study be?"

Charlotte, at one point, admits to not really knowing the man she married two years ago. It seems that where people go to find the most genuine of connections becomes a microcosm of how communication is hindered so greatly in this world. The magnetism between the two is very obvious to the audience, and we would like greatly to hear them



Scarlett Johansson

Bill Murray

express themselves and break the agonizing glass by which they're surrounded.

This all made me think: we're *all* in these glass encasements that we make, and in them we're safe. We can reach our hands out to press them against the glass, and perhaps someone will return the same gesture towards us, but we'll not really touch. This way, we're safe from the pains that real communication might cause, and the compromises it brings. We are encased, yet this comes with a price. This can make us so painfully alone.

Communication doesn't have to be like this. We can talk. When someone asks us how we are, we can respond truthfully. When we notice something that we like very much about someone else, we can tell them. We can break the glass around us, and show others how to throw stones. We can have honest, genuine connections with people, as we're all likely experiencing something very similar. Certainly, being encased in our glass is safe. But it's also very lonely. Bob and Charlotte have lived their lives in their glass encasements, but for a week, it seemed like they could be broken. They had a few nights in which they could revel in being alive and warm in such a cold, impersonal time. Even then, though, their communication was stymied, and the looks on their faces were all they had to know what was being said. So let us now talk, let us listen, and let us breach the glass.

*We here at The Pine Press love it when co-ops write their reactions to various movies, CD's, concerts, television shows, books, paintings, operas, advertising slogans, bumper stickers, political endorsements, notable news events, wars, or reality shows. Send them to [pinepress@yahoo.com](mailto:pinepress@yahoo.com). That's what you do.*



## YOUR SHC STAFF

JOAN BULMER—EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR—355-8313  
TARA ARMBRUSTER—MEMBER SERVICES COORDINATOR  
STU HOLMES—MAINTENANCE COORDINATOR—281-6717  
CALL THEM, THEY ARE THERE TO HELP YOU

**IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW, OR JUST REALIZED, YOUR HOUSE LOVES YOU, AND YOU SHOULD SHOW YOUR LOVE FOR YOUR HOUSE BY REPRESENTING IT IN THE PINE PRESS. THIS SYSTEM IS FOUNDED ON THE NOTION THAT ALL MEMBERS CAN BE REPRESENTED. YOUR HOUSE AND YOUR SYSTEM REALLY DO ACTUALLY LOVE YOU, AND WHAT IS WORSE THAN UNREQUITED LOVE? SEND YOUR ARTICLES TO [PINEPRESS@YAHOO.COM](mailto:PINEPRESS@YAHOO.COM) BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14.**

