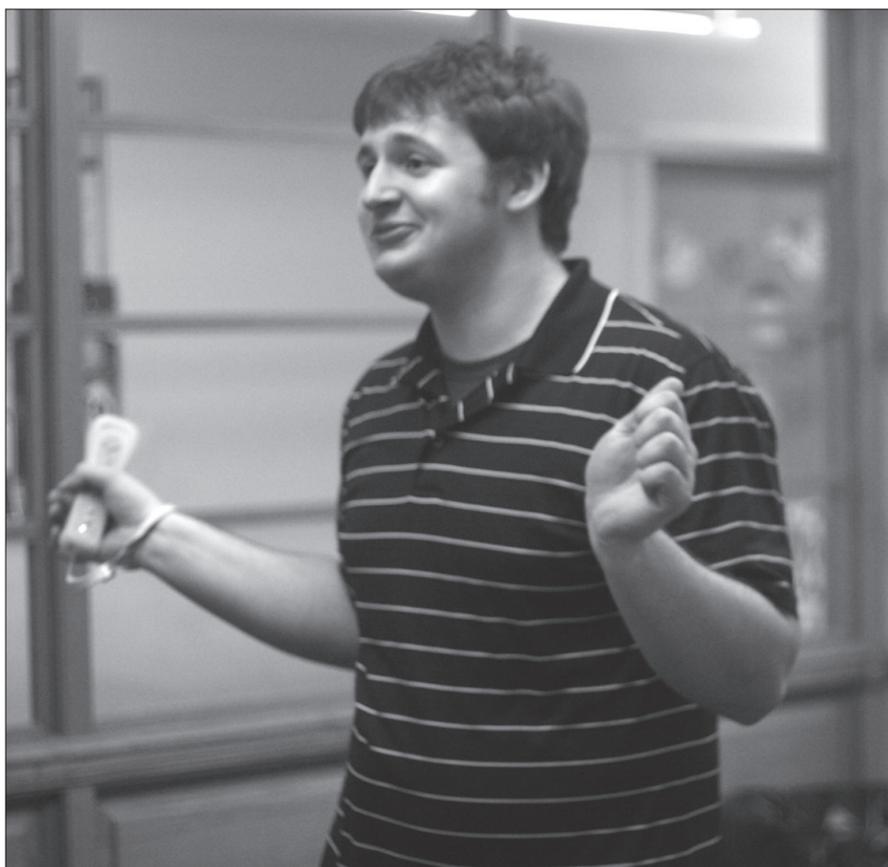


## Students 'Just Dance'



Jessie Poole/Index

Above, freshman Katherine Maxwell plays Just Dance 3 in the fourth floor Centennial Hall lounge Monday night. Right, junior Chris Buerke tries out his moves during Paxton House's game night.



# Drama creates discomfort

BY KEN DUSOLD  
Assistant Editor

National tragedies do not make for the best film subjects. Filmmakers must be careful to bring respect and truth to their story's characters without abusing the material in a manner that would upset or insult audiences. Sadly, "Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close" threatens to do just that with its depiction of a boy coping with the death of his father who died during the terrorist attacks Sept. 11, 2001.

In fairness to director Stephen Daldry and screenwriter Eric Roth, the novel of the same name by author Jonathan Safran Foer would be an immense challenge for even the finest in their business. And their work is not without strengths. But unfortunately, the film feels too manipulative in the way it plays on viewers' emotions.

Oskar Schell (Thomas Horn) is a socially awkward child suffering from multiple phobias and possibly Asperger's syndrome — Oskar states he was tested for the disorder, but the results were inconclusive. His father, Thomas (Tom Hanks), has tried repeatedly to draw Oskar from his anti-social cocoon. He seems to be making significant progress thanks to a scavenger hunt intended to

broaden Oskar's interactions with others ... until "the worst day."

Devastated by his father's death and haunted by a series of phone messages left by Thomas on the family's answering machine during the final hour and a half before the World Trade Center towers collapsed, Oskar distances himself from the world. His mother (Sandra Bullock) tries, but ultimately is unable to connect with him.

Sifting through his father's closet, Oskar stumbles upon a lone key in an envelope with the name "Black" on it. Certain they represent clues to one last scavenger hunt, Oskar begins a journey that requires him to have the courage to seek out and question 472 New Yorkers with the surname "Black." Although it is an interesting, bittersweet concept, Oskar's adventure feels unrealistic and, at times, melodramatic.

The scavenger hunt serves as the stage for a slew of humorous, sorrowful and visibly complex individuals to make

relatively little impact on the story or its main character. Indeed, the most important and interesting encounter Oskar has isn't with one of the people he meets while searching for the key's purpose. The Renter (Max von Sydow), an elderly man staying with Oskar's grandmother (Zoe Caldwell), hasn't spoken but a few

words in more than 70 years, and yet, he and Oskar understand one another better than two people possibly could. Von Sydow provides a dignity to the film that otherwise is lacking. Through a subtle smirk or a weary long face, the veteran actor conveys the natural emotion absent

in scenes wherein images of the World Trade Center towers billowing smoke are imposed into the New York City skyline.

Shots with superimposed footage are an unnecessary reminder of what happened that September morning. It's in moments when the film tries to move the audience back in time to the period in which we all lived in the shadow of the

attacks that "Extremely Loud" loses its already precarious footing. What Oskar continually refers to as "the worst day" is permanently etched in the minds of Americans. Seeing the towers on fire and collapsing removes a viewer from the film altogether — transporting a person to the moment they first saw the same images. Such thoughts weigh so heavily on one's heart and mind that it becomes almost impossible to set those aside for the sake of Oskar and his mysterious key.

Yes, tears are unavoidable when hearing Oskar describe his father's last words on the answering machine. But crying also feels uncomfortable — even cheap. What comes to mind for many is most likely the countless stories of real messages left on answering machines throughout Manhattan that day. To have one's grief for real people channeled into sorrow for fictional characters who are not fully developed seems disrespectful.

It's an arduous task to want to like "Extremely Loud." Considering the plot and the familiar actors, it's easy to see why audiences might want to embrace it. Perhaps everyone should try — it might be cathartic in a strange way for some viewers. And yet, there remains a nagging discomfort in being cued to weep for a real tragedy in our lives as if it were just any other sad plot point.

"Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close"



## Eating well with a college budget



BY JOHN O'BRIEN  
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Food: it is the greatest gift God gave mankind.

If you disagree, you are wrong. End of story.

But really, think about it. When you are happy, who is there for you? Food. When you are sad, who is there for you? Food. When you are bored? You guessed it — food.

Don't get me wrong: excessive eating is dangerous and binge eating out of boredom is not healthy.

Now that I've covered my tail, it is safe to say that binge eating out of boredom is my favorite thing to do. In fact, my bottomless pit of a stomach makes me feel like eating in excess is not only acceptable, but necessary.

Recently I've discovered a problem that has interfered with my favorite pastime: college. Remember when you heard all those stories from TV, movies and family about broke college kids living off cheap food in their cheap apartment and you thought, "That's got to be an exaggeration. I'll never live like that"? Unfortunately, those stories are true.

My actual diet in college: peanuts, peanut butter crackers and water.

Not cool.

As a food fanatic and broke college kid, I've learned to adjust to my circumstances. And as a public service, I recently have incorporated "how to survive and eat in excess" into my

campus tours for prospective students. (I'm a student ambassador.) I've decided to share my secrets of success with you. I bring you "The Cheap College Student's Secret to Food."

1. The most obvious: The dining halls are all-you-can-eat. Take advantage of that while you can. The employees won't stop you. And if you don't have a meal plan and are an upperclassman, the underclassmen are the perfect source for free swipes. If you are forward enough to ask, they might feel too awkward to say no.

2. In the dining halls, they put tiny bowls next to the ice cream. The maximum amount of ice cream that can fit in there is one healthy scoop. The trick is to hit up the salad bar and grab the big bowls. The maximum amount of ice cream that can fit in those bad boys — one healthy mountain of ice cream.

3. When the weather is nice, make frequent loops around The Quad. More often than not, an organization is there trying to win your approval and support with free food.

4. Leave your dignity at the door and hop in the local dumpster. The dumpsters behind grocery stores and restaurants are destined for success.

5. There is nothing better for smuggling goods out of the dining halls than your handy, dandy Sodexo mug. Your options are limitless! Pizza in a cup has never been more appetizing.

6. Want to eat like a king? Go Greek ... for one week. Greek organizations will wine and dine you like royalty during Rush Week in attempt to win your approval.

7. Become friends with secretaries. They always have hard candy on their desks and you can live off mints for weeks. Plus, you'll have the best breath at school.

8. Find God. By that I mean any religious organization in town will be happy to feed you. They easily are the most pleasant diner company you can find.

There you have it, folks. Ramen is not the only answer.

Eat and be merry.

## Rediscovering the art of forgiveness



BY KATHLEEN BARBOSA  
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Like the practice of calligraphy and writing thank you cards, the art of forgiveness seems to have disappeared.

I'm not sure when or even why, but somewhere along the way, it seems we have replaced forgiveness with the terrifying ability to hold onto a grudge.

Maybe it's our ever-expanding world of virtual friends that makes it far too easy to click "de-friend" and toss away our relationships when we get offended. If someone posts something we don't like or makes a joke that rubs us the wrong way, we can just walk away. This disregard for human value and the meaning of companionship is horrifying, but also common.

Everyone has the friend they no longer speak to from middle school because of a mean rumor or the kid from high school who stole our high school dream boat. In the moment, it seemed like the end of the world, and if we let our emotions get the better of us, we might hold that grudge for years. Eventually, we should be able to calm down, and realize it wasn't the end of the world, and maybe we won't even remember why we were mad. But forgetting is far too simple to be mistaken for forgiveness.

If forgiveness isn't the path we choose, then we are forced to find a

new friend, roommate or significant other each time we are offended or wronged. This is complicated, time-consuming and too silly to practice. Many of these situations can be remedied by a simple act of forgiveness, but now very few of us know how to do this.

It's not like forgiveness is a foreign concept. We've been taught how to say, "I'm sorry" from an early age and we all know the scripted response that's expected of us — "It's OK."

These few simple words would seem so easy to say, but if you are anything like me, it's difficult to mean them. Instead, we hold a grudge, become resentful or just let people slowly slip out of our lives.

If resentment is poison for relationships, then forgiveness is the remedy. This means more than the surface "I forgive you for not remembering my favorite Ryan Gosling movie," and instead means forgiving for failing to meet expectations.

I'm not saying you should let someone take advantage of you. Trust me, I am for standing up for yourself, but it infinitely would be better to mend a relationship than trash it.

Beyond friendships and romantic relationships, forgiveness still is necessary. Just imagine how much better work would be if everyone could have a little understanding after a conflict between coworkers.

Forgiveness is admitting someone is human and they make mistakes. If you stay in someone's life for long enough you'll have some fiascoes, and if you're still friends after, that friendship will be that much stronger. True friendship or even true love won't last without a heavy dosing of forgiveness every once in a while.

It's time to pull out the old etiquette books and begin the search for the age-old art of forgiveness.