

The
Stony
Brook

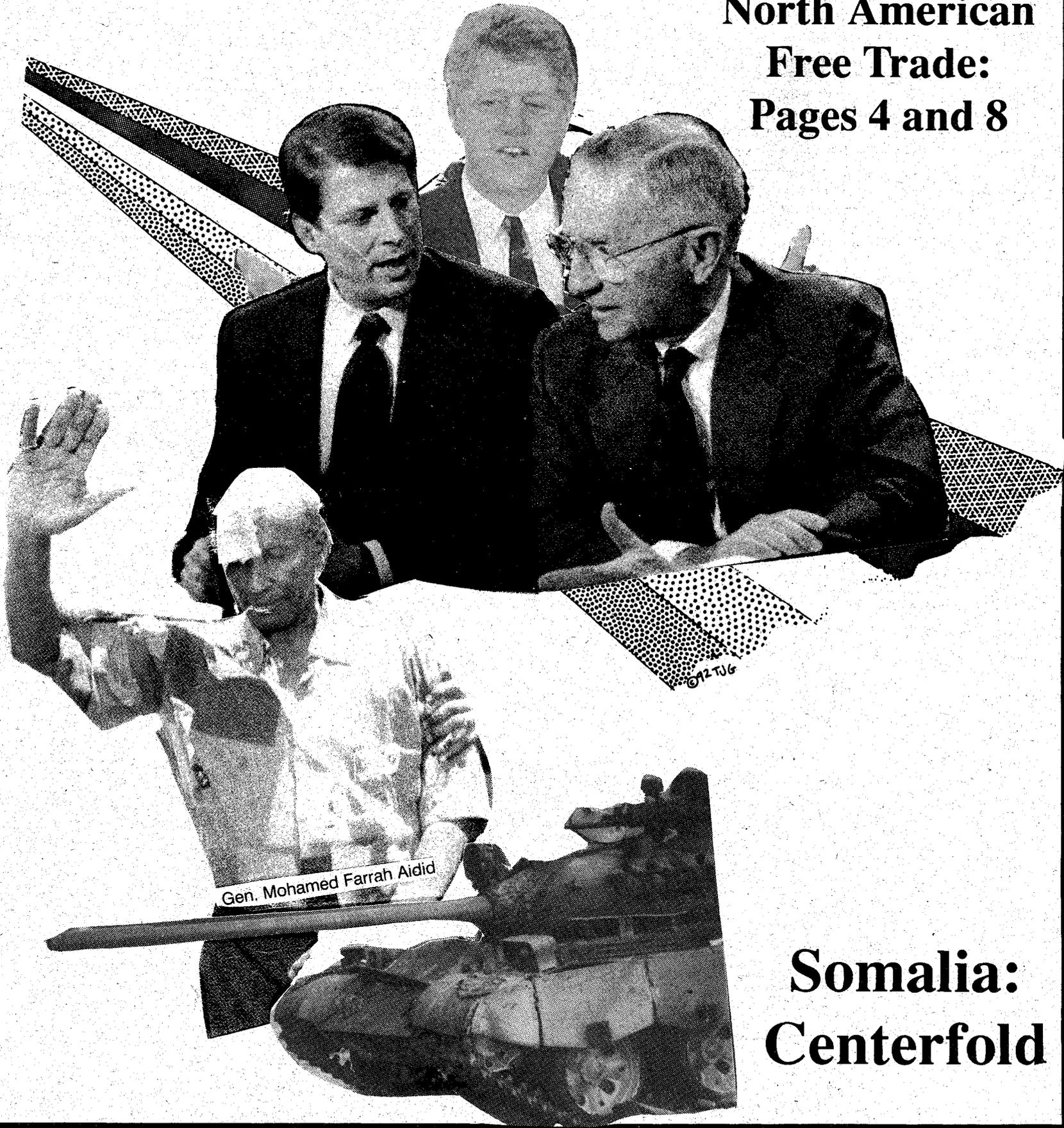
PRESS

Vol. XV, No. VI

The University Community's Feature Paper

November 23, 1993

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Career Development

By John Schneider

College is divided between those who go to have a good time, those who have no idea what they're doing, and those who wish to get a job. For those who opt for furthering their careers, there are opportunities aplenty since they seem to compromise a minority. If you like politics, a little effort and eighty or so good friends can give you a title, or even neat perks such as, office space, a stipend, and a sense of authority not obtainable in the real world. Such is the world of Polity.

One of the most important functions of an organization such as Polity is to have committees and boards—the kind of stuff that looks good on a resume. With little over a month left in this semester many positions are already filled. Internal Affairs will soon be meeting to make sure proper procedures are being followed by the Senate, Executive Board, and Judiciary (apparently no one has been watching over these groups). The Judiciary is just two members short of filling its ten member quota, and is already meeting.

The Judiciary Board has quite a job ahead of itself, since, in the interest of getting things done, the

Senate has passed legislation and left to the Judiciary the odious task of deciding whether anything violates the constitution. This procedure is creating a backlog which will finally be sorted through. According to Jim Coffey, the recently-passed attendance bylaw was not constitutional since it was not given a week's rest before passing. The bylaw states that members of the Senate, Executive Council and Judiciary Board must not be absent more than twice from meetings without notification 24 hours in advance, or having a good reason for being absent. Before deciding the constitutionality of this bylaw, though, the Judiciary will have to decide whether Coffey's legislation that Executive Council members must abstain from voting to appoint the Judiciary members they recommend, which was passed several weeks ago.

But there are still openings left for Senators. The Steering Committee is selecting members to revamp the constitution, and the Environmental Committee is still open, as well as various class committees (Freshman, Sophomore, etc.). One of the more interesting projects to put on your resume is the replacement for the Rainy Night Cafe, Colours. Since Colours has been given the nod of the Union

Advisory Board (which is not involved financially with the proposal), the projected costs of renovating the area have skyrocketed. The original proposal's estimate of \$18,000 has been replaced with estimates of double and triple that figure. Tapping the some \$50,000 obtained from the referendum passed last spring allocating funds for student cooperatives. The question still remains as to whether Polity wants to shoot their whole wad in this fashion. The rising estimates have caused some to compare the student-run proposal to the former SCOOP, which ran the Rainy Night House. To distance itself from the former Polity mishap, the Colours proposal will be aided by staff members and the Union Advisory Board in the new enterprise to prevent mismanagement.

Speaking of Polity embarrassments and food, Polity recently allocated funds to provide pizza for students protesting the FSA proposal to move Basix from the basement to the Union Bilevel. This Pavlovian form of student activism begs the question of whether Polity is in touch with students' concerns, or whether students are just as apathetic as we always expected. At any rate, the FSA withdrew its proposal and the Bilevel can remain free for whatever it is we need the bilevel for.

Those Were the Days...

By Germ Blankson

With NAFTA passing both House and Senate, many opponents predict a dark future. How bad could it be? This bad:

November 1996.

Ross Perot is elected in a presidential race marked by chaos and confusion. The overwhelming economic nightmare has resulted in a catastrophe of biblical proportions. Three years of open trade have crippled the U.S. economy. Bill Clinton does not seek the reelection, nor does his wife Hillary. Ross Perot is aided by his competent running mate Elvis Presley who resurfaces in this time of need as prophesied. His faked death is explained by opponents as a shrewd political move to target the votes of sappy over-sentimental housewives. Upon hearing the news of the victory, Elvis breaks into an impromptu version of "I'm all shook up"; to a standing ovation.

January 1996

Ambassador Rico Suave gives shocking evidence in a Senate hearing of close ties between Clinton administration and Mexican fast food chain Taco Bell. Boycotts ensue when it is learned that the fast food giant was part of a conspiracy to brainwash the youth of America and to eventually make Spanish the official language of the United States.

March 1996

Rush Limbaugh dies, apparently from choking on a cheeseburger. Conservatives across the country vow to crack down on restaurants which do not post instructions for the Heimlich maneuver. At the funeral, former president Ronald Reagan reminisces about the good old days and babbles on to reveal his dominant role in the Iran-Contra arms for hostages deals. Unfortunately no one really bothers to listen.

July 1996

In a "Town Fourth of July Picnic" Ross Perot suffers first and second degree burns when a graph depicting his plan to dismantle NAFTA catches fire from a barbecue. Despite a thorough investigation, the president insists that his efforts are being sabotaged by "banditos" and stocks up on Lomotil, the prescription drug prescribed in cases of Montezuma's Revenge.

August 1996

The long silent Vice President Presley reveals his tough anti-crime bill to the tune of "Jailhouse Rock". The N.R.A. fires back in a music video aired on MTV.

September 1996

In a bizarre case of mistaken identity, President Perot is "winged" by a crazed advocate of animal rights. Warren H. Bellows is charged in the shooting but claims in his defense that he mistook the president for "defiler of chickens" Frank Perdue.

February 1997

The presidents plan to dismantle NAFTA passes both the house and the senate. In an unexpected move, the world reels as Canada declares war on the U.S. Two days later Mexico declares war also. Canadian bacon sales plummet.

March 1997

Once again the world is shaken as Sweden declares itself no longer a member of the E.E.C. and invades Finland. In response, the U.N. administers economic sanctions against the sale of Volvo's and Saabs. At home the Vice President is admitted to the Betty Ford clinic for addiction to Benzedrine. Apparently the world's situation has triggered flashbacks of his military years. In a heated press conference the president, at a loss for a pleasant aphorism, tells reporters to "Go fuck yourselves."

September 1997

Vice President Elvis Presley is assassinated by a disgruntled postal worker. The amateur philatelist explained his actions were instigated by the fact that Presley was in violation of the Postal Services dictate that only deceased persons be portrayed on commemorative stamps. At the trial, attorney Eric Naiburg defends the assassin, arguing that the late Vice President had already been declared dead. In a precedent-setting decision, the killer is released.

November 1997

Fighting continues. Thousands of lives are lost. Indiana secedes from the Union and forms its own monarchy under dictator-for-life Dan Quayle. The hula hoop makes a comeback in popularity for unexplained reasons.

January 1998

Republican Majority Whip Arnold

Schwarzenegger addresses the House, calling for the use of tactical nuclear weapons to quickly end the war. Henry Kissinger giggles with glee.

February 1998

"Victory is no longer attainable," says president Perot, and as he addresses the public, declares surrender to the Canadian and Mexican forces. Washington is in turmoil. Moments later, the dollar collapses.

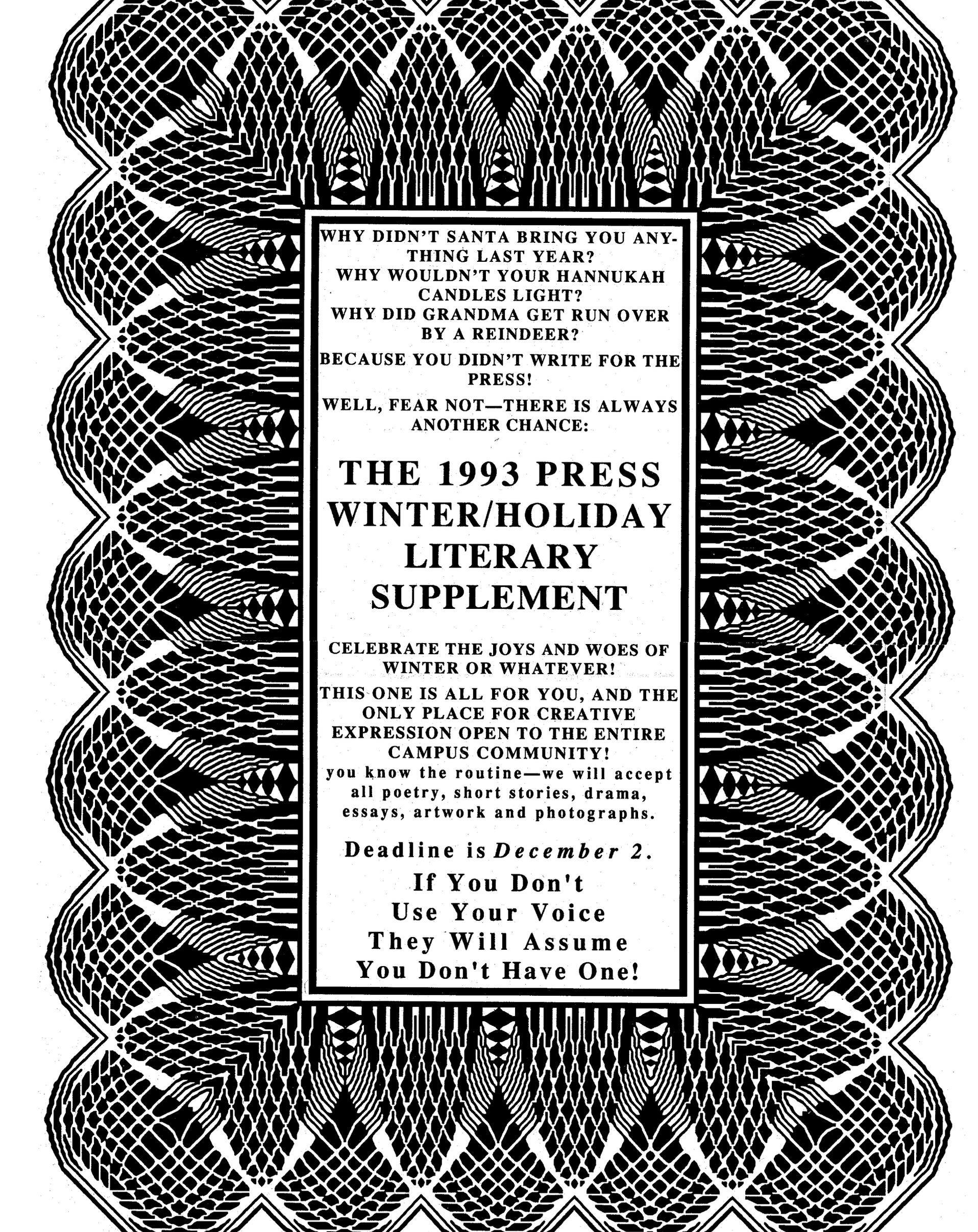
March 1998

Somalian peace keeping forces enter Washington to quell fighting between rival corporate sponsored fighting forces and distribute food to local inhabitants. Mexico begins occupation of Texas and New Mexico under treaty terms.

August 1998

A leftist coupe takes control of Washington led by a fiesty Yoko Ono under the slogan "Give peace a chance." Millions watch on Larry King as Ono presents a five year plan to rebuild the U.S. complete with Perotesque charts and graphs.





WHY DIDN'T SANTA BRING YOU ANY-
THING LAST YEAR?
WHY WOULDN'T YOUR HANNUKAH
CANDLES LIGHT?
WHY DID GRANDMA GET RUN OVER
BY A REINDEER?
BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WRITE FOR THE
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**If You Don't
Use Your Voice
They Will Assume
You Don't Have One!**

The Morning Afta

Owing to Clinton's political gymnastics, his willingness to cross party lines, and (hopefully) the good sense of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives, the North American Free Trade Act was passed. Hopefully, this is just the first step on the road to global free trade. Though the vitriol and fearmongering of Ross Perot and the rest of the anti-NAFTA mob was bracing, and to some extent, convincing, it just didn't hold water in the world economy. While some U.S. companies are driven to send jobs to Mexico, where labor costs are cheaper, that is immensely preferable to their going bankrupt and reducing further the pool of American capital. Should these businesses' increase their profit margins by doing so, this money will benefit all of us through taxation and possible domestic investment.

The biggest misrepresentation in the debate was made, however, by the proponents of the pact. Their justification was that, though we would lose jobs to the cheaper labor market of Mexico, we would gain many more new jobs by the effective lowering of the prices of our exports to Mexico and Canada. While this may or may not be true, it is not the real reason that NAFTA is important to the future of the nation.

The economy of all industrial nations and most of the developing world is now indisputably global. What this means is that it is no longer possible for a country to arbitrarily set the value of its currency or its products. Their value is in the hands of the world market, according

to the simple principles of supply and demand. It would be an enormous task to get around this brute fact because so much of our economic activities are tied up in multinational corporations or in companies that trade with other nations. We depend upon the Middle East for oil, Canada for timber and paper, and other countries for other things not sufficiently in abundance here. We also depend upon other countries for things that are prohibitively expensive to make in the U.S. Were we a self-sufficient and completely isolated nation, it would make no difference whether or not items we needed were less expensive in other countries. But, since the values of all goods are fixed on the world market, this is not the case.

The thing to remember here is that prices set on the world market, and not exports in themselves, are the reason that freer trade is the right direction for the country. Whatever amount of our goods are sold abroad, their value will be determined through an international consensus. Any artificial raising of prices through duties and tariffs is money being taken out of the hands of U.S. businesses and consumers. For example, let's take an imaginary product X made more cheaply by Japan than the U.S. If we buy from Japan, then the domestic company goes under. So we raise the tariff upon the foreign Xs until they are slightly more expensive than ours. Instead of one company going bankrupt, everyone in the country who purchases one wastes the price of the tariff.

We have to assume that other countries are going to avail

themselves of the cheapest goods and services whenever possible. If we refuse to do the same, then we will slowly and surely lose our standard of living. In effect, through protectionist levies we place a tariff upon foreign labor, causing us to waste the difference in labor costs upon everything we buy. While it is true that most of the new jobs being created in this country do not feature the pension plans, medical coverage, and high wages that non- or semi-skilled workers had been accustomed to in the past, this is not a good reason to artificially subsidize the ones we still have. We claim our high standard of living as a right: everyone should have a car and a house, but few comprehend that there is something beyond being a resident of the United States that results in one's material wealth. In this era of budget deficits and layoffs, it is not acceptable for our government to embrace policies that contribute to the inefficiencies of our economy. If we do not adapt to the conditions that actually prevail in the world economy, we will have no one to blame but ourselves when we fail to perform in it.

This became a rich country because the things we produced were better, cheaper, and more innovative than those produced elsewhere. If we wish to maintain or expand our wealth, we'll have to get back to the basics of business. Adam Smith's famous division of labor is now taking place on an international scale. The choice is ours whether or not we will produce poorly-paid unskilled labor or scientists and engineers.

Letters

Dear Editor:

I read with some difficulty Michelle Bussé's article on her brief experience as a student at an Oxford college ("A World Apart," September 14, 1993). The purpose of the article alluded me and I was left, instead, with a self-serving statement full of the pretensions of which Ms. Bussé so eagerly accuses her fellow students.

I am more alarmed that a student of English can unwittingly corrupt the English language to such an extent that the meaning of a statement is often completely lost on the reader. I would love to know, for instance, how someone is meant to employ "efficient techniques in acquiring secondary information." If it's secondary sources she is looking for, the Bodleian library is indeed an excellent repository; that it is a non-lending library is not because most books are "original editions."

I am glad that Ms. Bussé feels that she has exceeded her potential at Stony

Brook. But, might I suggest that those "chosen to participate" in the future be better equipped to express themselves in writing? These students, I am sure, will be able to gain much more from their brief stay in Oxford and to appreciate the scholarly ideas of a centuries-old place of learning.

Yours sincerely,

Orhan Memed
Paris, France

To the Editor:

Why is it that Polity must be notified three weeks in advance by any organization having a surprise demonstration? Why don't students bother to speak out against this? Maybe students are more focused on getting out of Stony Brook in four years. Or maybe many students have gotten so fed up with any form of government that the despair and the sense of hopelessness has turned into reality? I've spoken to so many students who agree that little by little we are los-

ing the rights that our forefathers painfully died for. I find it very ironic that Political Science 102: Introduction to American Government makes use of a book that contains the Constitution. In this Constitution, the Bill of Rights exist as the first ten amendments (ratified on December 25, 1791) The first amendment states:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof: or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press: or the right of the people peaceable to assemble, and to petition the Government for redress of grievances."

If Congress can't make any law "respecting... the right of the people peaceable to assemble," then Polity is in violation of the Constitution of the United States. Mind you, Polity IS a corporation. More importantly, polity, a corporation can NOT impose any penalties on an organization or group of stu-

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MOONWALK NAKED

dents for failing to notify them three weeks in advance. If Polity imposes any form of penalty on an organization, then they are liable to being sued. That is why Polity, a corporation, has lawyers to represent them in court. We all know that if an organization went to court against Polity, they run the risk of losing funding or a reduced referendum. Nevertheless, money is not the issue here. We as a student body, and United States Citizens should come to realize that Polity can not exist any more if they continue to deny us our constitutional rights. Perhaps there are a select group of students who feel that the time is right to exercise and defend their constitutional rights. They will be penalized by Polity or Public Safety and then the decision will be made to sue Polity, a corporation, for violation of a basic constitutional right. I sincerely wish them the best of luck.

I have spoken to students who feel
(Continued on pg. 7)

Along the Color Line: Why Dinkins Lost

By Manning Marable

Part One of a two-part series.

To much of America, New York City is identified as a bastion of liberal politics, multiculturalism, and social permissiveness. Registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by a five-to-one margin. Conventional wisdom declared that the probability of a Reagan Republican being elected mayor of New York was something like Fidel Castro's chances of being elected mayor of Miami.

Yet political appearances are deceiving. The defeat of incumbent Democratic mayor David Dinkins of New York by former Reagan Administration Associate Attorney General Rudolph Giuliani should have been a major shock. But the sad truth is that David Dinkins was the first, and probably will be the last, African-American Mayor for at least a decade.

Dinkins had spent a lifetime preparing for the job, progressing quietly from Harlem assemblyman to City Clerk to Manhattan Borough President and, finally, mayor in 1989. Always well-attired, he carefully cultivated an image of cautious optimism. He advanced coalition politics rather than confrontations, and developed strong ties to the city's large Jewish community. His style as a conciliator represented a sharp departure from the provocative manner of his demagogic predecessor as mayor, Ed Koch.

But Dinkins never lived up to most white voters' expectations. True, there were some positive initiatives by his administration, such as the establishment of thirteen walk-in health care centers for the poor. His low-income housing rehabilitation program was the nation's largest, with 17,000 units which became available in the

past year. But in only four years, the city lost more than 300,000 jobs, and the mayor was the logical public figure to blame.

Critics began to point to one thousand and one examples of New York's social disintegration and escalating violence: the alarming fact that there were 5,761 violent incidents in New York's schools last year, and that one out of every five high school students now regularly carry weapons in the classroom; that between January through October, 1993, 362 black people under the age of 21 were murdered by other blacks in the city; that 125,000 New York residents are estimated to be infected with HIV, and more than 50,000 diagnosed with AIDS to date, creating a massive public health crisis, that 5700 homeless families in the city are in shelters, an increase of 1700 since Dinkins assumed the mayor's office; and that the city's immediate budget deficit was between \$250 to \$750 million.

Eventually, people blamed Dinkins for the problems of daily life for which the mayor had little or no responsibility or control. On the eve of the election, a *New York Times*/WCBS-TV study declared that 59 percent of all New Yorkers interviewed "thought life in the city got worse during the Dinkins years." Another thirty percent judged the quality of life to be "the same," with only 8 percent claiming that things had improved.

Dinkins' reputation as a racial healer soured with the Crown Heights disturbances, with the failure of the mayor to act decisively. But in the end, what really destroyed Dinkins' chances for reelection was the omnipresent specter of race. When President Clinton came to town last month and said what was obviously true—that many white Americans have difficulty voting

for people who are racially different from themselves—the critics went ballistic. *New York Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal blustered that Clinton and Dinkins "ought to spare us piety about voting across color lines." But as noted political scientist Andrew Hacker explained: "[Giuliani] stands for turning the city back to white New Yorkers. He doesn't even have to say it. When he talks about crime and the like, white people know what he means."

In effect, Giuliani's goal was to construct a white unified front, with sufficient numbers of Hispanics and others to create an electoral majority. He succeeded. Exit polls show that Giuliani won 75 percent of the white vote citywide. He won 85 percent of the white Catholic voters, 62 percent of all voters who earn \$100,000 or more annually, and two-thirds of all voters over age sixty. Significantly, sixty percent of all voters who had been victims of crime voted for Giuliani.

With the loss of Dinkins, African-Americans have been defeated or removed as mayor of four of the five largest cities in the nation. Whites in large numbers are refusing to vote for black politicians who genuinely try to empower their communities. And those blacks who win election are frequently "postblack" or deracialized politicians, such as Norm Rice in Seattle or Michael White of Cleveland, who don't challenge the status quo. The question blacks are now asking themselves is whether "coalition politics" remains viable.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of History and Political Science, and Director of the African-American Studies Institute, Columbia University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 250 publications and 75 radio stations throughout the U.S. and internationally.

No Tolls on the Superhighway!

By David Yaseen

The information age is here! Finally! After several years of proclaiming that computers, fax machines, and telecommunication have revolutionized the way America does business, government and industry have finally colluded upon a project that will mean something to the average schmoe: interactive TV. Since the advent of cable television, there have been predictions that the time when everyone in the country was "plugged in" to some form of "information superhighway" was not far away. They were right. Now, the phone and cable companies, the entertainment companies and television networks are scrambling to obtain each other and position themselves to take advantage of a market estimated to be worth anywhere from \$25-\$200 billion annually.

Wow, some market...hey, wait a minute. Does this mean that we're going to be forking over truckloads of cash for these "services" upon which we'll be forced to view (and now *participate in*) countless hours of advertising? Does this mean that the rates we'll be paying will double or triple, as the industry unilaterally moves away from conventional telephones to audio/visual (olfactory?) hookups? Does it mean our cable rates will go through the roof? Yep, shore does.

Even today, we are witness to the long-distance companies falling all over themselves to get a slice of our business to further bloat their ridiculously high profit margins. I'm probably not the only one who thinks that the prices they charge for the use of their cables, which could be justifiably termed a "utility," are a bit higher than necessary for their repair and maintenance, and merely another product of the avariciousness of big business. Imagine what they will do to our wallets when they can boast five or six major "services." Boy, won't we be thankful.

This is not to say that such advances in technology, convenience, and entertainment should not proceed apace, but simply that they should be inexpensive. There was a time in this country when both the government and citizens saw the need for a better transportation and communication infrastructure. So we built a network of good roads, and, aside from the taxes required for their construction and maintenance, did not charge for their use. Had there been a fee for the use of the nation's highways, the poor would have remained isolated and subject to the conditions in which they lived. The advancement of industry and commerce would have ground to a standstill.

One has to look only at the railroad industry of the last century, that featured only a few major companies, awash in revenue and corrupt as hell, and at the state of the nation's railroads today, which are the laughing-stock of the industrialized world, to understand what happens when the national well-being is subjected to corporate interests. Now that more and more production and consumption is in the form of information, the same philosophy should guide our steps: private companies should be stripped of the right to make a profit upon a service so important to the functioning of the country, in terms of the hardware of the information superhighway. In terms of the actual services provided through this hardware, the companies involved should be allowed no more than one means of gaining revenue. For example, cable networks would not be allowed both to charge the public for access to their channels and run commercials.

Even though much of the increased connectivity will be used for people's personal purposes, it should nonetheless be available to them at cost—any profits taken upon such use by communications companies do not add to the nation's economy, but rather draw away from it. Besides, a more integrated nation is more con-

ducive to the success and adaptivity of business, the promotion of education (not bloody likely, but...), and the ability of increasingly homebound Americans both to contribute in the electronic marketplace and be included in the national dialogue. The wildly successful and amazingly inexpensive INTERNET should serve as a beacon and example for our future. For a minimal fee, its subscribers have access to millions of other people, free information services, and electronic publications. In the age that is dawning, it is far better to make these services and capabilities as cheap and inclusive as possible, both in the service of competitiveness and in the interest of equality of opportunity.

The Press welcomes your viewpoints and letters. They should be no longer than 800 and 500 words, respectively. Handwritten letters will be used to start Fire! Fire! Fire! Huh, Huh, Mm, Huh. (I said "longer.")

Somalia and the Cynical

Somalia: The Cynical Manipulation of Hunger, Part 2
By Mitchel Cohen
Red Balloon Collective

"[To pull out of Somalia would be] devastating to our hopes for the New World Order..."

— General Colin Powell, September 1993

"To give food aid to a country just because they are starving is a pretty weak reason."

— Henry Kissinger, 1974

On September 9, U.S. helicopter gunships and tanks opened fire in Somalia on an unarmed crowd that had gathered to maintain a roadblock. More than 100 Somali people were massacred.

Three months earlier, in one of the military actions that first prompted people to begin building roadblocks, Pakistani troops under U.N. command opened fire on a crowd of 3,000 to 5,000 demonstrators. Witnesses said the "troops opened fire without being provoked" when the crowd was still a block away from the Pakistanis. "The Pakistani soldiers shot not only at the crowd, which immediately dispersed, but also at a vehicle in front of their compound where some people sought cover. A bullet tore off the top half of a boy's head as he hid behind a tree. Several women were killed as well. At a nearby hospital, wounded people lay in the hallways as doctors tore pieces of cardboard and slipped them under patients' heads for operations performed on the floor." (1)

A few days later, an artillery and missile attack on Digfer hospital killed at least 9 patients.

British media now estimate that since last December at least 3,000 Somalis—mostly civilians—have been killed by the U.S./U.N. forces supposedly there to feed them.

Jamie McGoldrick, of the Save the Children Fund, says "the relief work is dead. This has become a purely military operation." (2) One U.S. soldier said: "It's not like I saw on TV, we didn't deliver any food, it was mostly patrolling, searching houses and burning stuff." (3)

Of the \$1.5 billion earmarked by the United Nations for Somalia this year, only ten percent of that amount is allocated for "humanitarian" work. (4) More than 28,000 troops continue to occupy Somalia, and more are on the way. The U.S./U.N. deployment includes over 100 tanks and armored vehicles, attack helicopters, airborne gunships and an aircraft carrier. Gen. Colin Powell approvingly called Operation Restore hope "a paid political advertisement" for maintaining the Bush/Clinton \$1.4 trillion 4-year military budget. (5) Secretary of Defense Les Aspin has followed in step, urging the allocation of billions of dollars for revamping overall military strategy so that the U.S. will be prepared to fight two or more wars at the same time in different parts of the globe. At the end of August, he approved sending an additional elite Army Ranger unit, basically a 400-person SWAT team, to Mogadishu, Somalia's capital. Its none-too-secret task is to kidnap or assassinate Somali Gen. Mohammed Farah Aidid, who, for the time being, opposes U.N./U.S. military intervention.

Even Southern Air Transport, exposed during the mid-1980s as a shadowy CIA operation running cocaine and death squads between Central America and the southern U.S. (using, among others, a base in Arkansas while Clinton governed there), has resurfaced in Somalia, contracted by the U.N. (at \$25,000 per day) to transport water from Israel, beer from Germany, and, undoubtedly, CIA personnel from the U.S. to Italian and German troops stationed in the town of Belet Uen, Somalia. (6)

Oily to Bed and Oily to Rise

The "oil connection" slid right past Jesse Jackson. In fact, aside from one brilliant story in the *L.A. Times*, it

was not printed anywhere. And yet, Conoco officials in Houston admit their culpability. They describe the company's arrangement with the invasion of Somalia as "a business relationship." They say that the U.S. government was "paying rental for its use of the compound" in Mogadishu. (7)

"John Geybauer, spokesman (sic) for Conoco Oil in Houston, said the company was acting as 'a good corporate citizen and neighbor' in granting the U.S. government's request to be allowed to rent the compound. The U.S. embassy and most other buildings and residential compounds here in the capital were rendered unusable by vandalism and fierce artillery duels during the clan wars..."

"In its in-house magazine last month, Conoco reprinted excerpts from a letter of commendation for [Raymond] Marchland (Conoco's Somalia-based general manager) written by U.S. Marine Brig. Gen. Frank Libutti, who has been acting as military aide to U.S. envoy Robert B. Oakley. In the letter, Libutti praised the oil official for his role in the initial operation to land Marines on Mogadishu's beaches in December, and the general concluded, 'Without Raymond's courageous contributions and selfless service, the operation would have failed.'"

"But the close relationship between Conoco and the U.S. intervention force has left many Somalis and foreign development experts deeply troubled by the blurry line between the U.S. government and the large oil company, leading many to liken the Somalia operation to a miniature version of Operation Desert Storm, the U.S.-led military effort in January, 1991, to drive Iraq from Kuwait, and, more broadly, safeguard the world's largest oil reserves.

"They sent all the wrong signals when Oakley moved into the Conoco compound," said one expert on Somalia who worked with one of the four major oil companies as they intensified their exploration efforts in the country in the late 1980s. "It's left everyone thinking the big question here isn't famine relief but oil—whether the oil concessions granted under [deposed dictator Siad Barre will be transferred if and when peace is restored," the expert said. "It's potentially worth billions of dollars, and, believe me, that's what the whole game is starting to look like."

But a Conoco executive tried to play down the connection between the Marine invasion of Somalia and the oil interests: "With America, there is a genuine humanitarian streak in us...that most other countries and cultures cannot understand," he said. (8)

How Many Liberals Can Dance on the Tip of a Warhead?

"Without superior air power America is a bound and throttled giant, impotent, and easy prey for any yellow dwarf with a pocketknife"

—Lyndon Baines Johnson, "humanitarian streaker"

One can't understand what's happening in Somalia unless one starts from the premise that the U.S. is an imperialist world power and that international capital—through multinational corporations, the IMF/World Bank/USAID and United Nations—always seeks to expand its domain, desperately needs to do so to survive, and will stop at nothing (short of loss of profits) to realize its ends—and that the U.S. government acts to serve the overall long-range interests of capital. Since liberals, even well-meaning ones, never start from that premise, they're always caught chasing the Marines around the globe, blood-soaked mops in hand, scrubbing for a "cleaner" imperialism. They wring out their mops without end, wailing "How could this have possibly happened?" and "Who can we blame?" They learn nothing because they need to assume that capital—and its government—wants to do the right thing. Thus, they set it up to happen over and over again.

Those political pundits and media moguls who thought the invasion of Somalia had anything at all to do with feeding starving people—or that the coming U.S. intervention in Haiti has anything at all to do with protecting President Aristede—are at best hopelessly naive, and more probably, are conniving lackeys of the ruling class.

Here's what the former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, Major General Smedley Butler, had to say about the role of the U.S. military in testimony before Congress in 1938:

"I spent thirty three years and four months in active service as a member of our country's most agile military force—the Marine Corps. I served in all the commissioned ranks from second lieutenant to major general. And during that period I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism.

"I suspected I was just part of a racket at the time. Now I am sure of it. Like all members of the military profession I never had an original thought until I left the service. My mental faculties remained in suspended animation while I obeyed the orders of the higher-ups. This is typical of everyone in military service.

"Thus, I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for the American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall street.

"The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras "right" for American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927, I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.

"During those years I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. I was rewarded with honors, medals, promotion. Looking back on it, I feel I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was operate his racket in three city districts. We Marines operated on three continents."

One of Butler's successors, General David Shoup, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps (1960-63) and winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, expressed similar thoughts:

"I believe that if we...would keep our dirty, bloody, dollar-soaked fingers out of the business of these nations so full of depressed, exploited people, they will arrive at a solution of their own...And if unfortunately their revolution must be of the violent type because the "haves" refuse to share with the "have-nots" by any peaceful method, at least what they get will be their own, and not the American style, which they don't want and above all don't want crammed down their throats by Americans."

The reality of U.S. imperialism, not "mistaken" policies, must be our starting point. Once we realize that the U.S. government entered Somalia not to feed people but to launch the recolonization of Africa, the veil of lies begins to lift and we can begin to see clearly what is at stake in Somalia, and why the U.S. cannot afford to "just get out."

You Provide the Collateral, We'll Provide the Damage

The Bush administration piled up lie after lie after lie about its "mission" in Somalia in order to rationalize its military and economic intervention. Clinton is following suit. These included:

1) *Somalia was at the peak of famine and only U.S. troops could save it.* Actually, the peak had passed months before, and the country was on the road to recovery—without the U.S. or its puppet despot Siad Barre, who was overthrown.

Manipulation of Hunger

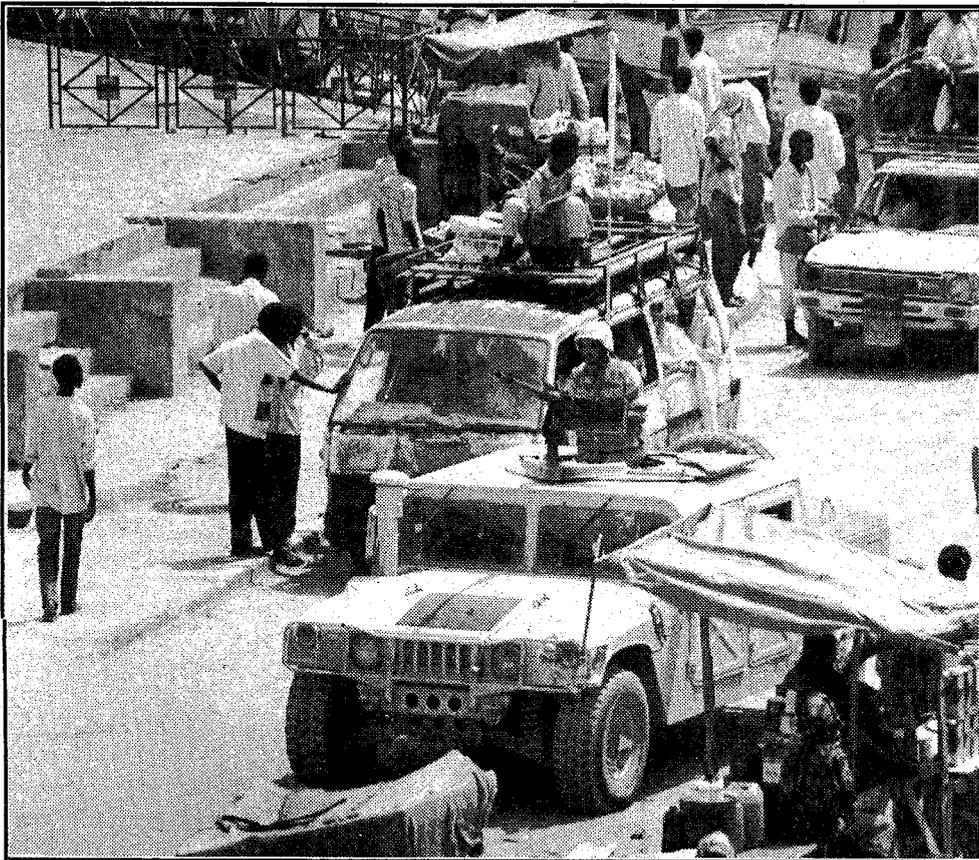
2) Starvation was everywhere, due to widespread chaos, random anarchy and lack of a central governmental authority. Actually, famine was limited to those areas where the IMF, World Bank, and USAID had been able to impose their problems most forcefully—precisely those areas where strong central government had overthrown the agrarian clan communities and was consolidating its power, just the opposite of what we were being told.

Somalia as a whole was *not* wracked by generalized mass-starvation, chaos and random violence. "In fact," explains Rutgers professor Said Samatar, who is himself from Somalia, "these horrors are occurring only in a limited portion of Somalia, nobably in the...southwest between Mogadishu, the capital (where all the press are clustered), and the regions surrounding Baidoa and Kismayu. The rest of the country is relatively peaceful

4) Without a strong central government, there will only be chaos and anarchy. Neither chaos nor famine is accidental. A USAID representative in the 1980s, who quit the Agency and became a journalist, writes: In 1981, "I was working for the U.S. Agency for International Development. I was one of many aid workers warning that food aid pouring into Somalia was unnecessary and destroying the country, upsetting the balance of clan power by enriching friends and family of the dictator Mohammed Siad Barre, who were stealing much of the food. In addition to Barre and his pals, the main beneficiaries of the food aid were relief organizations who received funding for delivering the food, and the American and European governments who were able to dump surplus food while calling it foreign aid."(13)

Dumping food onto local markets under the guise of

aid is a recurrent tactic used by USAID, among others, to undermine local agriculture while forcing the development of export crops. This destroys local self-sufficiency and dispossesses small-plot farmers, who are unable to compete with the low (or free) prices, driving them out of the market and off their lands, and concentrating the ownership of the land in fewer and fewer hands. As these lands are taken over by international agribusiness con-



and well-governed by an alliance of traditional elders and local leaders that has re-emerged in the wake of the collapse of the central authority."(9)

3) The U.S. claimed that up to 80 percent of the food supplied by charities was being confiscated by "warlords," who had to be met with a more impressive display of force. But Rakiya Omaar, the former director of Africa Watch, cited relief organizations such as Save the Children and the International Committee of the Red Cross as enduring a loss rate of only 5 to 10 percent, a fairly constant figure in all famine relief. Before the U.S. troops landed last December, Mogadishu—which was in the most desperate situation of all the Somali cities—was "totally flooded with food" and "anybody can buy rice' it's very cheap."(10) The mortality rate, Omaar says, had dropped and the overall situation had been improving before the troops were sent.

Many relief workers in Somalia went even further, complaining that their efforts were being *hindered* by the U.S. military intervention: "We can't get to people we used to, and they are dying," said James Fennell of CARE.(11) Before the troops hit the beaches, relief agencies had hired guards "to ride shotgun on trucks, losing some supplies to looters—but also reaching many thousands of people who were too weak to seek help in feeding centers. [But] the Marines first move in Baidoa was to disarm the airport security force, tough ex-soldiers CARE had hired as escorts...Tibebu Haile Selassie, deputy director of UNICEF in Mogadishu...said, 'the situation is worse than it was before.'"(12)

glomerates, more and more cash crops are produced for export, increasing the dependency of previously self-sufficient people on staples from abroad.

But in Africa, colonialism has not yet succeeded (as it has in much of Central and South America) in breaking the back of the village structures. That failure has cut deeply into world capital's potential profits from that continent. Thus, when elite U.S. forces blew up a building last summer, claiming it was the headquarters of the much-villified Mohammed Farah Aidid, the bodies that had been blown to smithereens were not Aidid's lieutenants (as reported) but actually communal village and clan elders from around the country who were meeting to create an alternative to the central government authority the U.S. is so keen to install. This information was reported in the Italian press, but not in the U.S.

The U.S./U.N. intervention in Somalia exemplifies the new strategy for imperialism in the era of the New World Order, begun in Panama and continued in the war against Iraq. First, build up the local dictator (Noriega, Hussein, Barre) with weapons. Have them do your bidding against forces in the region hostile to U.S. capital. Then, force them into IMF/World Bank/USAID "structural adjustment" programs which impoverish the country and produce famine. If they balk, or if popular resistance to the policies becomes so overwhelming that they can no longer effectively serve the puppet-masters, demonize the "enemy" in the all-pervasive media here at home, and sell the mission by inventing a humanitarian-sounding goal to rally liber-

als and undercut potential opposition.

Meanwhile, the death toll mounts. Two weeks before the 28,000 U.S. troops arrived in Somalia, "well-armed" and "generously funded Islamic fundamentalists were reported trying to "establish a stronghold for militant Islam," with the strongest group, Ittihad, making "significant inroads" in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya.(14) Yet another facet of the New World Order's crusade is the beating back of Moslem fundamentalism, which serves as a base for opposition to capital's expansion much the same way that the Black church in the U.S. served as a popular vehicle for resisting slavery.

Ironically, as resistance to U.S./U.N. troops in Somalia grows stronger, the country is becoming unified—not around a common central government working at the behest of the New World Order, but against a common oppressor who had been welcomed once upon a time not so long ago, with open arms in expectation of food and friendship, but who brought mostly bullets and intensified grief. And in Haiti as well, they will soon be drawing those same lessons.

Notes:

1. *New York Times*, June 14, 1993
2. Leslie Crawford, *Financial Times* (London), June 12, 1993.
3. "Why are U.S. Soldiers in Somalia?," International Action Center, New York
4. Alexander Cockburn, in the *Los Angeles Times*, July 13, 1993
5. *Washington Post Weekly*, Dec. 14, 1992.
6. Michael Maren, "The Somalia Experiment: How Will the U.S. Disarm the Clients of the Cold War," *Village Voice*, Sept. 28, 1993.
7. Mark Fineman, "The Oil Stakes Factor in Somalia," *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 1993.
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*
10. Doug Ireland, *Village Voice*, Dec. 15, 1992
11. Alexander Cockburn, *The Nation*, Dec. 21, 1992.
12. *The Burlington Free Press*, Dec. 19, 1992.
13. *ibid.*
14. Maren, *op cit.*
15. *The Washington Post* (in the *Manchester Guardian*, Nov 22, 1992).

(Letters continued from pg. 4)

Polity should be dissolved and barred from exercising any policies set on campus. Most of them have been on campus for two years or more. They are disappointed because a corporation by the name of Polity has abused the constitutional rights of individuals and organizations. They believe that the organizations shouldn't have to depend on Polity for funding based on any political stand or a belief that concerns the students on campus. Their dream is a government run by students who address the issues of student concern. their dream is my dream.

Let's say that 200 people or even the whole campus agreed with me that now is the time for improving the quality of life on campus. Who would we go to for help? Would we go to Polity? I think not. Maybe students should go to each other. After all, we have all had that time where we just start talking to our friends about constantly getting ripped off on a campus lacking a sense of community. At a party, on the phone, or in your suite, or even on the way to class, you may have discussed anxiety about your meal plan or how useless it is to cast a vote for any Polity official since Polity is a mess. If this is the case, then always remember that every student has the right to peaceably assemble—regardless of the corporate rules of Polity.

—Charles Hennebeul

NAFTA, Free Trade, and Class Conflict

By Robert V. Gilheany

NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, is an opportunity for big business to run down wages and obliterate environmental regulation that activists fought for over the past 25 years.

This agreement ties the economies and regulations of the United States and Mexico, bring down the standards in the U.S.

The wages in Mexico are seven times lower than in the U.S. Victories of the labor movement in the U.S. from the 1920s on have brought conditions of the U.S. working class up, though not up to the level of other industrial nations such as Germany. The international bourgeoisie have been collaborating to lower wages and deregulate because profit margins have shrunk.

With Nafta going into effect, competitive pressures will drive manufacturing jobs to Mexico and over 500,000 Americans will lose their jobs as a result. The Canadian government's support of NAFTA resulted in the ruling Conservative Party getting crushed in the national elections. The Liberals now have a clear majority, the second leading party being the Quebec Nationalists. The Conservatives now have only two seats in the Canadian Parliament.

Working class people, in the face of NAFTA, have to put aside racism and work to protect their interests and the environment.

Al Gore destroyed Ross Perot in a NAFTA debate, moderated by Larry King. In fact, Gore did as good a job defending NAFTA as he did debating against it during the '92 campaign. Al Gore debated President Bush's Labor Secretary Lynn Martin on NAFTA.

The '92 election was an anti-NAFTA election, with

Gore debating against it, Perot was against it, Bill Clinton was wishy-washy about it (like he was on most issues). The pushing of NAFTA was a betrayal of working-class people by the administration.

Environmental regulations may be looked upon as trade barriers under NAFTA, and "trade experts," bureaucrats who are not accountable to anyone, can strike down environmental laws as barriers to trade that violate the trade agreement. This aspect of the agreement violates local community standards and control over the environment and public health.

Ralph Nader, probably the country's most notable consumer and environmental advocate, warned the people that meat coming in from Mexico in the future may not be subject to the same standards as currently in the U.S. This agreement plays the victories of the environmental and labor movements in the U.S. against the situation in Mexico, where there are few environmental regulations, and the laws that are on the books are not enforced.

A couple of dozen families in Mexico control the majority of the land and wealth in the country. Gore said that the NAFTA Agreement will act as leverage to be used against Mexico to clean up their environmental problem and their exploitive labor practices, because with NAFTA the U.S. will be dealing with Mexico more closely. This is the same argument advanced by former President Ronald Reagan, the pig, when he was opposing sanctions against the Apartheid regime in South Africa.

Don't trust politicians who say they are environmentalists and also support NAFTA. Gore has a reputation for being an environmentalist, but what are his credentials? His state, Tennessee, where he was a Senator, is the home of the Tennessee Valley Authority, that runs a number of nuclear power plants. Where is

Gore's opposition to nuclear power and support for solar energy if he is such an environmentalist?

NAFTA is a bad deal for people who don't want to see wages run down. It is also a bad deal for the environment. Though some environmental groups support the agreement, those groups are funded by corporations. People in the U.S. and Mexico need to form alliances along class lines to stand up to corporate exploitation and also fight back against the destruction of the environment, and support alternative political parties in both countries. Defend the environment by any means necessary, support direct actions pulled off by Earth First and make it costly for corporations to pollute and destroy the earth.

Clinton is meeting with Asian trading partners as of the writing of this piece. Japanese businessmen have been setting up shop in Mexico to manufacture their products down there and import them duty-free into the U.S. They may even move the auto plants in the U.S. down there, but this is speculation.

The hope is that more manufacturing in Mexico will develop a Mexican middle class. Right now, there is a small middle class, but most workers there make approximately five dollars a day.

The U.S. would be happy politically with the development of a Mexican middle class, as this is an inherently reactionary class. The Reagan administration was frustrated with the Mexican government over its opposition to contra aid. No Mexican government, because of who they are as Latin Americans and the shared political and social experience of dealing with foreign imperialism. The development of a Mexican middle class that aspires to Bourgeois ideology may in the future make reactionary policies in Washington more practicable in Latin America.

Beware of the motives of the people who pushed NAFTA through Congress: the future is coming, be prepared.

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Expand Your Vocabulary.
Join The Press

Why I Can't Believe

By Lauri McKain

There is no God. I almost feel guilty writing that, but since there isn't, why should I? And I really believe it, too. No, I haven't always thought this, it is a somewhat recent realization, but one that I think will last. Yet I consider myself spiritual. Mainly for the true sense of the word. I look at people's spirits and souls rather than their material being. That's the principle meaning of spiritual, and that's the one I am.

I grew up Catholic; that is, if going to church or holidays and going to my neighbor's house one night a week to learn my Beatitudes is Catholic. My parents didn't know any better. They thought they were doing me a favor by instilling a strong belief at a young age. Once I was old enough I did some Bible study on my own. I've read it in its entirety and studied many sections and concepts closely. I can go back and forth and win almost any argument by backing it up with scripture. But in order to truly win, by challenger must believe that the Bible is the Inspired Word of God, and that my friends is the whopper. Can we prove it? I t says it is, but I can say God inspired me to write this and wouldn't mean the same thing?

I've done my homework too. At age 23, I can easily say I've been to at least 20 denominations. Willing friends accompanied me on these excursions. Roman Catholic—Church of God—Church of Christ—Temple—Buddhist—Jewish—Muslim—Mormon—The Non-denominational-We-Love Everyone—Neighborhood Chapel and so on. I refused to enter the Chapel of Metaphysical Being and Healing—too

trendy—too 90's—too 60's—too scary!

One would call all of this research, but in actuality it was just curiosity. I've never been a cynic and being a realist is something new I've adopted, so I guess my curiosity stemmed from optimism. Was I hoping to find something? Peace? Love? Happiness?

One thing all of these churches have in common is Faith. Bland yet present, Zealous, blind, whatever, it was there. All believe something, and I guess that's why I never lasted long in any of these congregations. I expressed my search to one of my uncles once. He's a horrid product of the 60's. "Look to find God within," he told me. "I pray, I meditate." (Induced chemically I believe). "I spend time with God. I feel His presence in the rustling of leaves on a beautiful Fall day," (He lives in San Diego—so what leaves he means, I don't know). "...or even at the end of a long day, I feel Him in the sensuous sweetness of a perfect red wine...That's how I worship." Yeah, I'll bet!

Ever since that day there has been something about me that must elicit a need for others to talk about religion with me. Frequently, at least monthly, I meet people who ask me if I believe in God. And, as I told you before, since God's non-existence is a fairly recent discovery of mine, my November discussion was the first time I actually answered "No."

As soon as it came out of my mouth I was surprised and felt like a need to justify my response. Sure, I'd been anti-organized religion for some time, but isn't everyone these days? All of a sudden I just no longer believe at all? Then I'm remembering sitting on a barstool some three weeks prior (October's God discus-

sion) with a close friend. We'd been discussing men and death came up (crazy as that seems). She asked me what I thought would happen to us all and I guess that's the night I realized I no longer believed. I told her: "We live. We have our chance. We die. The end." Why are humans any different from anything else? I truly believe that God is an invention of Man. No one likes absoluteness, and no one wants total control. We can control our lives but very few of us even do that. It's so easy to say, "God's in control. If it's meant to be, He'll destine it." Thus leaving all of our responsibility behind; who wants to face that there's ever an end to us. Does heaven/God grant us our eternalness or do we do that for ourselves by ensuring that we do something memorable?

Years ago an article like this would get me kicked out of school—society for that matter. What does it do for me now? Am I banned? Have I written my ticket to Hell?

If there is a God, He knows what the world has become; He knows what church/religion is up against, representing the number one cause of war, Davidianesque societal seclusions, rigidity, racial division, fights over "moral" and "naturalness" issues, the banning of people for sexual preferences, the jailing of so-called religious leaders, suppressed sexuality, the hackneyed use of such biblical stories as Sodom and Gomorra to prove secular arguments, shall I go on?

If He is ubiquitous, He Knows. And if He is as they say, could He blame me for opting to not believe in Him?

The Drive To Drink

By Sally Albright

Now I understand. After 23 years of wondering why, I think I've finally figured it all out. Here I was, just living my life, when suddenly it came up and smacked me in the face.

I come from a family of alcoholics, and out of five daughters, I'm the only one that never got addicted to the bottle. My father drank himself to death at the ripe-old age of 42; I was 15. I like to think that I was the one that learned from his death...but what I didn't learn was the Why. Why did he drink, why did my grandmother drink before him, and Why do my sisters drink now? And that, my friends, is the major discovery I made this weekend.

This is how it all started.

I've always had this recurring insomnia. It comes whenever I'm nervous, excited or stressed. I usually toss and turn until about three of four a.m. and then finally fall asleep, only to awaken again at the crack of dawn. Well, about two weeks ago, I met a man, and as my tendency is to get a little too excited a little too soon, (and I maintain my position that there is absolutely nothing wrong with that) I began to believe that he was The One.

I started to have trouble sleeping because I would think about when I would see him again. I ran into him around campus (accidentally of course) almost daily, until finally, he asked me for my number. He said he would call Sunday, because he was going away that weekend. All weekend I imagined what our first telephone conversation would be like. I excited; he never called.

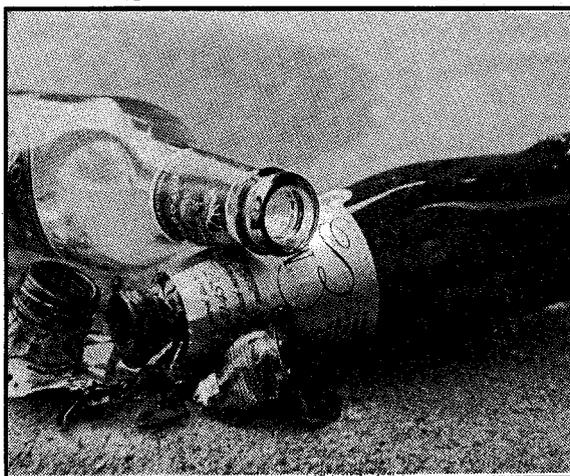
Monday I ran into him three times! It was Fate. He never mentioned not calling so neither did I, and we decided to get together That Night. So we did - and when I tell your - it was wonderful! We talked, we laughed and we kissed. OK, first date, maybe it wasn't

a smart move, but it went no further - at all - and it was nice. As I watched him walk to his car later that night, and I'm not bragging, just stating the facts, I swear there was a skip in his step!

So, where's the major discovery? I'm getting to it...

I saw him Wednesday, and he said he would call Saturday and we would go to the movies. Still I could not sleep. I had so much to look forward to, venturing on a "Relationship." Well Saturday came and he never called. Never called. He Never Called!!! Why? Who the hell knows!

Around 6 p.m. I threw some rice and veggies into the



steamer; I resigned myself to a night of pigging out in front of HBO and Saturday Night Live. I sat with my remote and flipped between Hero (which I'd seen but I love Andy Garcia) and Mommie Dearest. Around 8 p.m. I opened the bottle of wine that I had planned to drink with my ex-The One. I had two glasses over about two hours: not heavy drinking by any standard. But the point is, I got through Rosie O'Donnell's speech and conked out. It was the best sleep I'd had in weeks.

So what am I supposed to do? Have a couple of drinks every time I want to get a good night's sleep? Can I blame him? There was no excuse for him to not call, and I vow to find out why, but that's not why I'm writing this. I want to make a plea to the hearts of all of you reading this.

It all began somewhere with disappointment - at a man, a woman, society in general... We've all heard the studies that alcoholism is genetic, but where did it all begin? Maybe my great-great-great grandfather told my great-great-great grandmother that he'd send for her once he got to the New World, but never did. Maybe she said she'd send a letter and he waited by the pier every morning, but it never came. Why are we so cruel to one another? I'm guilty, too; I've blown off people as often as I've been blown off by others. Is it so hard to pick up a phone and have the guts to tell someone, "look, I can't make it," or "Sorry, but thing just won't work out for us." We can only mend the world by correcting our ways. Sound cliché? Who gives a shit! There is a reason why so much of this is cliché; people have been trying to tell us for years. Reach into your hearts and expose what's inside. We have to talk to one another. So much time, life and love is wasted because we're all too scared to put our neck's on the line and tell people what we're really feeling, whether it's good news or bad news.

Today I was driving in my car with a friend and I was still upset about The One. A really sad song came on the radio, and she looked at me and said: "I which there was a drug... well, not a really drug, just something that would make us forget the heartache. To make it all disappear for a while."

I looked over at her, with a tear in my eye and a sad realization in my heart and responded, "There is... for many it's called alcohol."

So please! Cut the lies and the bullshit. Make a change... So we can all sleep easy tonight!

From the darkest reaches
of the infernal abyss,
The Stony Brook Press
presents...

Arcane Answers

(an advice column of diabolic origin)

Dear Azazel,

I live in a house off-campus with several other people. There's a guy on campus who I have a crush on, and I want to tell him so. Also, a woman I have a crush on moved into my house recently. The problem is that I think they know each other. What should I do?

—Sexually Perplexed

Dear Perplexed,

I guess it's pointless to tell you to get your priorities straight ("straight," get it?), so I won't. This is a problem common to many of the denizens of the nether reaches, being that many of us are genitally ambiguous and hormonally hampered. What you need to understand is that it doesn't matter what you get off on, so long as you get off. That is the purpose of your puny existence (sorry if you're a guy); sex is in your nature. What always perplexed me about you humans is your pickiness—in Hell, when the mood strikes, it is the custom to copulate furiously with the nearest biped.



Distinctions based upon attractiveness and personality are nonexistent.

Your perplexity seems to be a result of sexual frustration. If you were less concerned with what these people thought of you and

more concerned with getting your ya-ya's out, you'd see what I mean. Think of yourself as a screen door, once you get banged a few times, you'll loosen up a bit. So they know each other. There's no reason you can't all just get together and work things out in a prurient manner.

Remember that as much as desire has been a focus of mankind, the real point is the release that comes when you've slaked your appetite. So put away all your petty worries that your love interests will think you're a horny toad. Seize the opportunity to be a man or woman and come up grinning. If things don't work out, maybe you could come down and see me sometime...

-Azazel

Please send any and all correspondence to:
The Stony Brook Press
Room 060
Student Union

Big Brother is Watching You or, Why We're Becoming a Nation of Idiots

By Lee Gundel

Television, it seems, is the basis of much what we would call "culture" in America. It has become a part of all of our lives, and it provides us with a kind of common ground that we, as individuals, can use both to understand and to relate to other members of society. We can clearly see that the medium does work to bring us together as a society — it is even somewhat doubtful that American society, as we know it today, could exist *without* it.

Television's profound effect as mass medium does have its dark side, though. It has become our society's primary means of acculturation — i.e., it is the primary means through which many Americans develop their sense both of who they are, and of how they understand their role in society. That it has usurped much of the role of the family, the school, and of religion in our society is something that is not only insidious, but frightening as well.

The main purpose behind the television medium, after all, is *not* to instruct us, but to entertain us, with the goal of making as much money as possible. The bottom line of the industry is *profit*, which is understandable since it *is* an industry. But how the television medium affects our society is something that the people who run this industry rarely consider, because acting upon such concerns would lessen the industry's profit a great deal. That public television can't get the same kind of ratings as Letterman is something that is emblematic of the difference in mission between PBS and the networks — public TV strives to create programming that will enlighten and inform its viewers; the networks go for

entertainment "value," and try to rake in the bucks. And the bottom line of this is that the networks (and cable too!) are really not interested in enlightening or informing the public, if that aim interferes at all with their making a profit.

What we need at this point is an example of a show whose content will serve to damn the networks and the cable companies for not having any interests in mind but the almighty dollar. *Married With Children* would have done very nicely, since the main point of the show seems to be to show just what kind of degenerates make up the average American family (oh, we can only hope that not too many people take the Bundys for role models!) — but even this show has some slight redeeming value. Sometimes. But if we want to dredge up some of the worst of the worst in TV, I think that we can safely pick *Beavis and Butthead* as being one show with no redeeming value whatsoever.

The premise of *Beavis and Butthead* is simple: there are these two teenage burnout/juvenile delinquents who sit around half the day watching rock videos on TV and making stupid comments about them. The rest of the day they are either gawking at/hitting on girls at the local Seven Eleven or making some stupid jokes about bodily functions. They have really sickly-sounding laughs, and about half of the dialogue on the show consists of both the expressions "That's cool." and "That sucks". Beavis and Butthead are, basically, what you'd get if you took Wayne and Garth from the *Movie Wayne's World* and subtracted about one hundred points away from each of their I.Q.'s. So why, you might wonder, is it so popular?

I couldn't tell you. I guess it's a taps into some

vein of how our culture works, and as strange as it may sound some people probably see it as being an accurate (though exaggerated!) portrayal of the way that the teenage psyche works. But everyone on the show is either degenerates (like Beavis and Butthead are), or AUTHORITY FIGURES who stand in the way of everybody else having a good time. But there are no authority figures who care about the larger community, and though the show works to justify the Beavis/Buttheadian lifestyle, such a model of behavior (i.e., being a teenage waste-case) is clearly something that is not in society's best interest.

In conclusion, then, the danger that is posed by television is that it provides people with bad models for the way that society works. People subsequently internalize these faulty (and often quite warped) models for the way the world works, and then start to alter their patterns of behavior in accordance with these models. The result is that we become conditioned to think in terms of the fictional models that we see in our "favorite" shows. This is a thing that is not highly publicized, for obvious reasons. The myth that TV is a passive medium which anyone can watch without any direct consequences upon their character formation is a myth, that commercial TV needs us to believe in order to maintain its viewership. But that does not change the fact that the effect it wields upon us is very profound, indeed.

Next Installment: The solution to the problem: Or 5 more than adequate reasons why you should chuck your TV out your window before it's too late!!

Dysfunctional Fables

THE LEMMING AND THE ELEPHANT SHREW

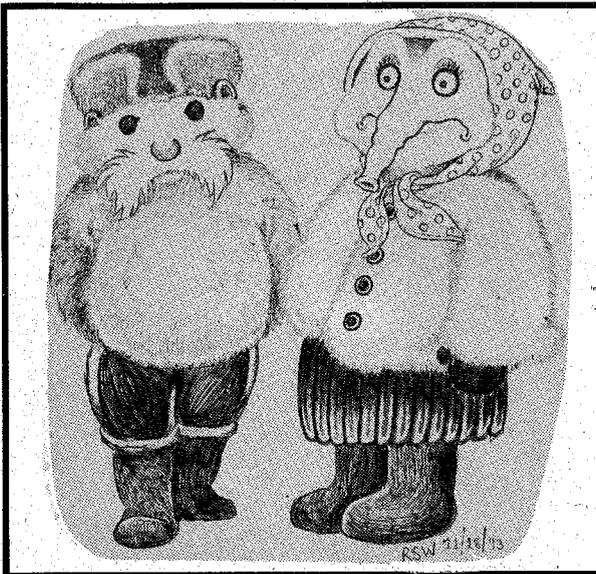
by Rachel S. Wexelbaum
to the women who would use PMS to justify murder

In the arctic regions of the Earth, the land is dominated by little animals. They can survive well in the cold because their small, compact bodies efficiently conserve heat. To generate this warmth, however, one must have food rich in fat and carbohydrates at all times. If one is on a low-cholesterol diet it poses a problem, for the other alternative is to eat constantly in order to stay alive.

The wonder of Arctic survival is the elephant shrew. Two can fit in the palm of your hand, but they have the noses and appetites of elephants. If they have nothing to eat for twelve hours they will starve to death, for they have extremely high metabolic rates. Perhaps this is the reason for their irritability and general bad temper.

In northwestern Siberia a lemming shared his burrow with an elephant shrew. She helped him with the rent and the housecleaning, and in return he had to provide a constant supply of food. You realize that this was no easy task, running back and forth across the tundra with sacks and crates of food stolen from freight cars on the Trans-Siberian Railroad in the dead of night. Yet the lemming never complained, for he loved her.

The elephant shrew had no patience to watch anything on television except commercials, and she marvelled at the slim beauties who drank diet soda and wore tight vinyl pants. She hated her stumpy figure and tried to do something about it by starving herself. When the lemming came home from work he would find her lying on the floor rasping for air, and he would rush to the kitchen to cook scrumptious meals for her. Fortunately the smell would encourage her to eat, but as



soon as the lemming's back was turned she would clean out the entire pantry and scream for more—so off he went. As soon as he left the elephant shrew would feel sick and guilty for being a pig, so she would stick her finger down her throat and vomit, then set to work cleaning the house to hide her shame.

Lemming knew about the elephant shrew's problem, and he was convinced that it was his fault. You see, Lemming was an artist and he once told the elephant shrew his opinion that slender, graceful forms in sculpture were the most beautiful of all. He never forgot the screaming fit he received after that comment, and he never forgave himself for insulting the one who meant everything to him. Sometimes he got so depressed under the bleak gray sky, he just wanted to jump off a cliff like his predecessors.

One dark morning the elephant shrew woke up hungrier than ever. It was Lemming's day off from work, and all he wanted to do was sleep. However, the elephant shrew smacked him awake and shrilly demanded her breakfast. This time she had a specific request.

"Go get me an all-American breakfast," she snapped. 'Bacon, eggs, toast, waffles, and Wheaties—breakfast of champions!'"

Lemming's eyes nearly popped out of his head. Was she out of her mind? He would be lucky to find a single egg this time of year! Nevertheless, he bowed politely and went into the cold so his love would not starve.

The wind grew stronger, and the elephant shrew grew more and more impatient. Her little eyes glowed red in the dark burrow and she gnawed on a wooden spoon till the splinters pierced her tongue. She howled in rage and threw the useless spoon against Lemming's thin woman sculpture, shattering it into a thousand pieces, but that did not make Lemming arrive any faster.

You see, Lemming could not fulfill his quest.

MORAL: One cannot ask for the impossible when one has not found all other possibilities.

MORE IMPORTANTLY:

If misery loves company, then keep it clothed and quiet.

SUICIDE DOES NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM—THE ONLY THING THAT WILL DISAPPEAR IS YOU!

Wynton Marsalis at Staller

By Dennis O. Palmore

On Friday November 12, Stony Brook's Staller Center was treated to the music of one of this country's most prominent contemporary jazz artists. The Wynton Marsalis septet played a mixture of jazz and blues to a sold-out crowd at the Staller Center. Wynton Marsalis, who basically grew up around musicians and then later on playing jazz with his father, Ellis. The influence upon Wynton by many jazz and blues artist's shows up in his playing with his band. Their infusion of both jazz and blues, which has won him some of music's highest honors is both entertaining and provocative.

The performance that was given at the Staller Center showcased the talent that has earned him the admiration and respect of jazz and music fans alike. The lighting on the main stage was a nice touch to set the different moods of the music that the band played; the cool blues and deep reds really put the audience in the right frame of mind. The band, which included Eric Reed on piano, drummer Herlin Riley, bassist Reginald Veal, Wessell

Anderson on alto saxophone, Todd Williams on tenor and soprano saxophones, and Wycliffe Gordon on trombone, together collaborated to add originality and innovation to Wynton's musical performance. Trombonist Wycliffe Gordon played a

musicians with great enthusiasm.

Throughout the performance, each bandmember gave a stunning solo which allowed the musicians to spotlight their unique styles and virtuosity on his chosen instrument. "It goes like that Sometimes," a complex and fast-paced piece combining the talents of the whole band, but especially focusing on Wynton's trumpet and the saxophones of Wessell Anderson and Todd Williams was proof that this group of musicians is a tremendous asset to the jazz world. His musical ability is equally matched by his down-to-earth persona. After the show, everyone who wanted to was invited into the greenroom for refreshments and a chance to meet the band.

Upon meeting Wynton I was surprised to discover that both he and his entire band were very warm and receptive to the crowd of people who attended. They freely gave autographs, posed for pictures, and offered advice to aspiring young musicians. On the whole, Wynton

and his entire band proved to be genuinely dedicated musicians, as well as courteous to those who admire their talent on and off the stage.



solo called "Danny Boy" which really showcased this talented musician's artistic ability, and the audience made its presence felt by responding to the

Double Take:

Technological and Sexual Revolution in *My Twentieth Century*

By Rachel S. Wexelbaum

In 1880, Edison's electric light bulb was revered around the world as one of the greatest inventions of all time. Its birth was celebrated in Menlo Park with pomp and circumstance—marching bands with glowing lights on each helmet illuminated the dark city. The people stood in awe of the light bulb like little kids watching a laser show, reveling in its magical quality. Hungarian film director Ildeko Enyedi's film, *My Twentieth Century*, begins here in the age of new ideas and romanticized visions of the past.

The invention of the light bulb caught the whole world's attention, but Enyedi brings our attention to the stars—an eternal source of radiance in the night. What makes this so important, the stars ask, when something even more amazing is about to happen in Hungary? There the fairy tale begins—once upon a time in Budapest a woman bore identical twin girls, whom she named Lili and Dora. Something happens to the mother, and the two little girls must fend for themselves as street orphans. On New Year's Eve they fall asleep in the snow and have a dream vision where a donkey (bringer of holiday gifts and symbol of wisdom in Hungarian culture) takes them back to their mother. In real life, unfortunately, two mysterious men find Lili and Dora and they are spirited away in opposite directions.

Dora becomes a hustling, hedonistic jewel thief who uses men to her advantage while Lili is a poor, idealistic political agitator. Both are beautiful women (played by Dorothea Segeda) who wish to improve their lives as they try to survive in an irrational male-dominated twentieth century Europe.

There is freedom, if one is brave enough to steal it. In the twentieth century many try to escape from a rigidly

controlled, structured life ruled by a higher authority. To bring across this message, Enyedi has a scene where a dog with wires in his head runs away from a laboratory to enjoy unrestrained freedom. He tears through open fields and sand dunes, swims through the ocean and finally comes to a railroad. A train comes chugging



down the tracks, but the dog sits in front of it and everything stops, which elicits a canine smile. Technology cannot rule us; we rule it and cannot let it interfere with our natural rights.

In this film, men symbolize science, technology, and its evils. Men sometimes use "scientific research" to justify their bogus theories about male superiority over

women. However, sometimes in their illogical state the theories make men and women more alike. The scene which illustrates this is one with a man about to speak to a lecture hall full of women. He looks pale, uptight and frigid as he shares his theory about how women's lives are dominated by sex and their irrationality stems from that. As he continues his lecture, the man begins to have a nervous breakdown (hysteria?) as he speaks in graphic detail about male and female genitalia and how women are either mothers or whores. Imagine, all this trouble just to keep women from obtaining suffrage!

And yet our curiosity and acceptance of the new can lead to danger as well. This was illustrated in another anthropomorphic animal scene where Dora and a mysterious man (who also loves her sister Lili) are at the zoo watching a chimpanzee in a cage. He tells them the story of how he ended up so far from home because he wanted to learn how to make funny faces from the man with a rope. "Look where it got me," he sighed as he shook his head.

The cycle ends when the donkey returns to lead the mysterious man into a room full of mirrors, where he learns that Lili and Dora are two different people. The evening stars who lend a narrating voice to the film ask the man whom shall he pick, and he leaves screaming in terror. The symbol of rationality meets the unexplainable via romantic notions and fairy tales which can never be completely shattered.

In *My Twentieth Century* Enyedi shows that the forces of rationality and the fantastic work together to create our individual impressions of the real world. She also proves that the deeper we delve into science, the more myths and magic we create—especially when it comes to women and light.

Geeks With Guns=*Love Jones*

By Catherine Krupski

Finally! A CD you can get for your friends without directly insulting them—*Here's To The Losers* by Love Jones.

There are 15 songs on this CD. This is quite impressive since Love Jones wrote all but one by themselves. However, some of the lyrics seemed to be desperate words thrown together to go with the music. The many musical introductions seemed to resemble an introduction to any song by *America*. It did change to jazz and blues, but there is always that underlying guitar part somewhere else in songs reminiscent of *America*.

Each band member can sing, which is great, and all of the songs feature at least three of them at one time in tune. I do love the sound, but it got to be redundant and boring very quickly.

The first song, "Here's to the Losers" was good. I liked the lyrics in "Central Avenue"—"Spring nights, knife fights, Central Avenue/Big hair, everywhere..."

Their diversity in music was demonstrated once in "Paid for Loving" because they begin with heavy rock, but switch half-way through the song to the same old stuff; even the lyrics are so overly redundant in this one song that you just immediately go to the next.

"Custom Van:" "Custom van. We made love in the back of my custom van..." OK, the lyrics in this song made me laugh hysterically and clued me into the main concepts of this CD; they sound a lot

like *America* and they really need creativity to write real lyrics (Not necessarily Grammy lyrics, but come on!).

"Warming Trend" was good, but sappy. Then came the song *Matter of Fact* and I am assuming that these guys aren't photogenic and they really are studly

anyway, don't suit the guys I saw on the back of the CD. "But let me tell you woman, I'm the best you'll ever have. It's a matter of opinion, as a matter of fact that if I ever left you, you'd surely take me back... I can't believe a sweet little thing like you is in love with me." Yeah, neither can I.

"Fragile" was like hearing what a virgin male in love for the first time (does that exist?) is saying to his girlfriend. Ironically, "I say let's wait a while. You say, 'How about now?'" are the words he utters to her. I found this so hard to believe.

"Li'l Black Book" is about a guy trying to get a girl into his life and little black book. He would actually give this girl a *whole* page in it if she went out with him. I have a funny feeling his black book is the size of the NYNEX Yellow Pages... One of the last songs on the CD is "I Like Young Girls." Enough said.

Overall, I think that instead of 15 songs that sound the same, they could have done 10 (I'm thinking quality instead of quantity). Besides, the last four songs aren't that great anyway. I also didn't like the arrangement of the songs either. They alternated falling in love and the young virgin boy songs with the arrogant, studpuppy songs. While they do include various musical genres in their work, it doesn't seem like enough to make much of a difference between their songs; the first song, *Here's to the Losers*, is great, but it's a descending plane or, downhill, if you will, after that.

