

THE STONY BROOK PRESS

Vol. XXI No. 15

"Put On My Raving Shoes — I'm Raving, I'm Raving!"

July 13, 2000

The Inside Scoop On
Being a Freshman

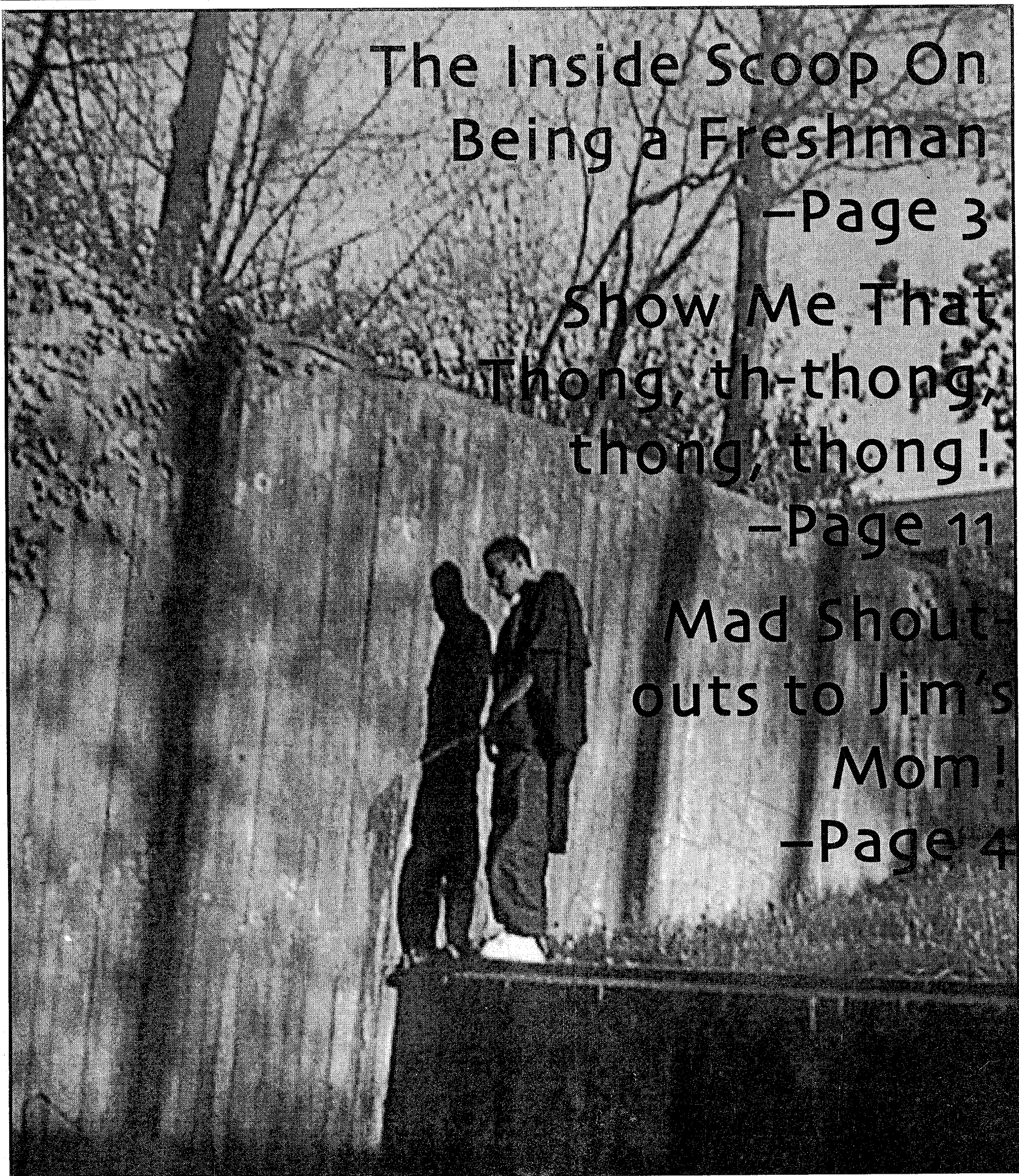
—Page 3

Show Me That
Thong, th-thong,
thong, thong!

—Page 11

Mad Shout-
outs to Jim's
Mom!

—Page 4



Bare-brained in the Park

By F.L. Livingston

At first all the usual New York reactions set in. Blame the police. Blame the commissioner. Blame the mayor. Blame the city. And, oh yeah, maybe blame the culprits? You know, in reference to the recent assault on women on Central Park.

The Blame Game: Some of the charges against those not immediately involved may be well-deserved. I think it's unconscionable, for example, that some policemen refused to veer from their parade duty long enough to respond to a possible crime. What if there had been a murder in progress?

Would these same officers say, "Sorry. Got parade duty. If the guy dies, report it to a cop?"

But as Lieutenant Eric Adams, a police officer and co-founder of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement pointed out, it isn't fair to smear the entire NYPD because of the poor judgment of a few. "The few officers who didn't do their job should be punished accordingly," he conceded, but cautioned against throwing the guilt back on the whole department. (Virasomi, Bryan and White, Nicola, "Sorting Out Future at the Park." *Newsday*, June 19, 2000. P. A6)

No doubt, it's just as bigoted to generalize about people by the color of their uniform as by the color of their skin. Still, I can't help but ask a few questions regarding this poor response. Was there, as some suggest, an order "from the top" to ease up on law enforcement for the day?

Commissioner Howard Safir categorically denies it. Yet, several spectators have reported seeing open, unchecked use of pot and alcohol. So, perhaps, unbridled mayhem seemed acceptable, as well? (And, of course, if any serious abuse of weed and liquor took place, it may have contributed to the bedlam.)

If you'll forgive a brief tangent: I recently observed a similarly poor reaction on the part of a policeman. In this case, a man fell to the sidewalk (fainting spell? heart attack?), and a number of people, including myself, began to scream for the cop who had just passed by. Although I'm certain that he heard us, he just kept walking.

Ordinarily, I would be willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. But when one of the men in the crowd had the presence of mind to run after and catch up with him, the officer's response still fell short of the acceptable.

Even when he turned around and started back toward the stricken party, this able-bodied young policeman moved deliberately slow (something like a defiant kid whose mother had just yelled, "Hurry!").

Fortunately, another man was quick enough to whip out his cell phone and dial 911. Soon an ambulance arrived, etc.

But what was up with the reluctant response of the original policeman? Is there, by chance, a new "unwritten" rule to ignore all unexpected occurrences and just stick to routine? Is it, as my husband suggested, a "new" way to "lower" the crime statistics? (You know, like if you overlook a possible crime, you don't have to report it. Sure, some of them will end up being document-

ed, anyway; but others won't.)

If this is so, could it be a "whispered" decision among the rank and file policemen, themselves? A Safir tactic? A Giuliani one? Just wondering.

Maybe what I saw was just an isolated incident, with no connection to what happened in the park. And, perhaps, neither occurrence is related to any more general picture. I imagine that the campus conservatives are already compiling a list of reasons why this could not possibly be the policy, but the question bears asking.

The Main Blame: Even so, I'm glad to see that an increasing

amount of people are beginning to put the blame where it truly belongs—squarely on the shoulders of the young male perpetrators. If society doesn't take them to task (legally and socially), the alleged abuse will go unpunished and a number of copycat incidents may occur.

Also, Hispanic leaders are especially

concerned that the public will associate such actions with Puerto Rican people and celebrations. They fear that this will damage the image of Puerto Ricans, however unfairly, and discourage Puerto Rican women from involvement in community life.

Besides, as the Reverend Al Sharpton so aptly put it, "We need to really deal with the fact that some men think that what happened was appropriate and fun." (Virasomi and White, A6)

The Fun-in-the Sun Defense: But wait a minute. Why would these young men think that such an attack was "fun?" True, many young people (even young adults) enjoy a "good water fight," especially on a hot day. But this fiasco hardly qualifies as a "water fight" because, for one matter, only one side had the water, and, for another, the so-called "fun" went beyond mere splashing and spraying.

Of course, some young people also take "innocent" pleasure in stripping each other as part of a "friendly prank." But this incident does not merit the term "friendly" if only because it took place, not among friends, but strangers.

It also reaches way beyond the boundaries of the word "prank." For many of the female victims, this was an experience of sheer terror! It involved molestation and, in some cases, robbery. Nor did the women have any way of knowing that this was not a prelude to gang rape. "Fun?" I don't think so.

Still, maybe this terrible debacle was merely a result of varying definitions of "entertainment," after all. But I suspect that it goes deeper than that.

The Problem behind the Problem: With all due concern for the fears of the Puerto Rican leaders, these were not the first group of young men in recent American history to put a "positive" (in their eyes) spin on the dehumanizing of women. Let's not forget the Spur Posse, a group of white, middle class teenage boys who had sex "for points," regarding their partners merely as instruments with which to achieve those points.

And how often in the aftermath of gang rape is there one young man who claims, "I didn't want to do it, but they said I'd be a 'weenie' if I didn't." Or "I tried to stop them, but they were like 'Don't be such a wuss.'"

Unhappily, there are several pockets of young men today who labor under a distorted system of values. Not many young men, perhaps. Certainly not most. But enough to render this problem a significant national issue.

It's a way of thinking that confuses strength with cruelty and "guts" (or "balls") with bad behavior. An attempt to assert one's manhood by degrading and humiliating the female sex. **

The findings of DG Consulting, a company that studies generational behavior, tend to confirm this idea. Pete Levine, president of the firm explains, "There's a trend toward reclaiming our guyhood in all its baseness." (Whitehouse, Beth, "Guys 2000." *Newsday*, June 20, 2000. p. B7)

More conservative thinkers may argue, to the contrary, that this brainless activity is simply a result of the liberal sexual mores of our times. But, if so, then "distortion" may be a factor here, too. Such overly aggressive young males have likely misinterpreted "sexual freedom for all" as "sexual license for men."

The Solution? These youths need to understand that a "real man" uses his strength in a positive way rather than a negative one. He uses his physical force to help a woman, not to hurt her. And his emotional stamina to support her as she faces the challenges of modern womanhood—not to fight against his own conscience! (Okay, yes, I agree. She should also use her emotional strength to give him support as he confronts the demands of modern manhood, but I'm focusing on the guys here.) They must be made to see that courage is about standing up for what one thinks is right; it's not about doing wrong and laughing over it. And that the bravest person is the one who resists the pressure to commit unkind acts, no matter how painful such resistance might be; the "wimpiest," the one who caves and goes along with really heinous behavior just to avoid what? Name-calling?

They also must learn that "sexual freedom" implies that both genders are at liberty to say "Ye," or "No" to any form of sexual contact. They need to comprehend that just because girls today can engage more freely in sexual conduct does not mean that they have to.

Yeah, they need to learn these things. But who's going to teach them? Their families? Schools? Places of worship? Social organizations and protests? Male marches? All of the above?

And how is anyone going to do it without sounding "too preachy" or "old-fashioned." (It was hard enough for me to try to write this without coming off as "hopelessly outdated," and I'm not sure I have.) How do you get these values across to kids without "turning them off?"

I don't know. But I believe that these are questions our society needs to settle asap.

Meanwhile, be careful in the Park - especially, if you're female.

*This may have already happened. On the Monday immediately following the parade, a similar attack allegedly took place at JHS 180 in New York City. Seven sixth-grade boys supposedly assaulted a twelve-year-old girl, all the while chanting, "The Puerto Rican Day Parade! The Puerto Rican Day Parade!"

** Returning to the role of the police for a moment. Is it possible that even some male officers have fallen prey to this mentality? (I hope not.)

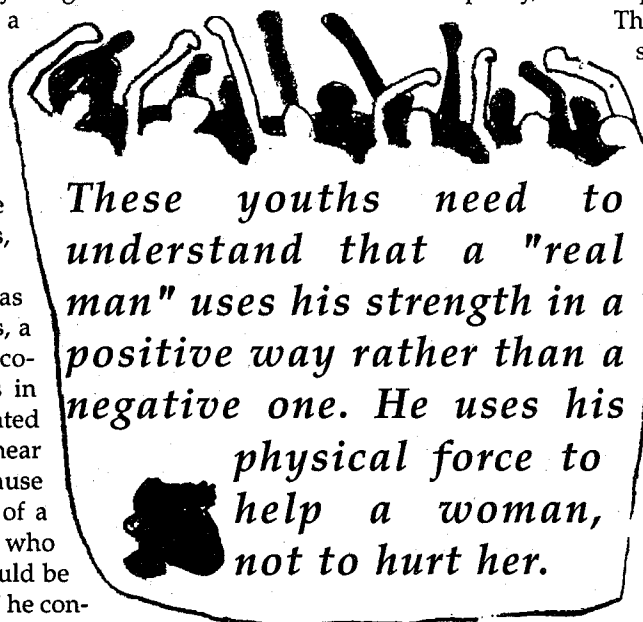


Illustration by Deb Sticher

Orientation at Stony Brook

By Ellen Yau

Over 150 parents and prospective freshmen gathered inside the lobby of the Student Activities Center early Thursday morning to indulge themselves in a morning treat of munchies, which was followed by a series of lectures and exams.

The check-in for freshmen orientation started at 8 a.m. The orientation committee had prepared a few tables of breakfast snacks – which consisted of coffee, juice, bagels, and pastries – for both the parents and students. Faculty and volunteers provided each student, as they checked-in, a brown packet and an array of papers that outlined the events for the day.

During the hour wait, students examined the contents of their brown packet. Their parents attempted to dissect the random papers and flyers they had retrieved in midst of their boredom.

At about 9 a.m., the orientation committee relocated the parents upstairs while the orientation leaders introduced themselves to their groups. According to Alletta Hall, a second-year orientation leader and a matriculated junior of the university, the orientation committee arranged the groups, which ranged from 13 to 60 people, in accordance to the incoming students' "major," "interest," "whether they were accepted into honors" and "whether they intended to join the learning community."

Hall, in reference to her experience during her two-year service, indicated that the orientation team is committed to the students. "We always try to rectify the things that seem to be missing from last year." The committee modifies the routine annually to accommodate the incoming students' demands.

After the introduction, the leaders guided their cluster to take the math and writing placement exam in the Student Union. Students are permitted to retake the math placement and request re-evaluation of the writing placement if they are not satisfied with the results.

The degree of difficulty for the placements varied from student to student. Proper preparation was advised.

Marcela Lemus, a bubbly girl from Sewanhaka High School in Elmont Long Island, believed that she did not exhibit her full potential. "The placements were kind of hard because I didn't study," said Lemus in expression of her discontent.

Lemus decided to attend the university because of the size and proximity to her home. Her boyfriend, Sean Leisen, is unaccustomed to the size of the campus. "I would probably get lost every five minutes," he joked.

However, despite her regret, Lemus indicated that she was happy with the variety in her schedule. The courses she registered for are diverse: Humanities, Anthropology, USB 101, Biology and Math.

Yet, for others, proper preparation for placements is not always necessary.

"It was easy enough," said Ankit Vakharia, 17, who is registered for 19 credits, and is currently contemplating to petition for the maximum 21 credits for the Fall. Well, no wonder, Vakharia, an extremely bright kid who had been on Carnegie Mellon University's waiting list, is also an intended

computer science major. He said that he does not have too many fears about college. Vakharia graduated from Baldwin High School, which won first place in the Physics Olympics Competition; the competition was held in the university.

Jia Liang Zhao, 20, did not find the placements as easy as Vakharia. He indicated that he "was a little afraid of the writing placement" although he found the "math placement okay." Zhao had just begun studying in America two years ago. Formally, he had been studying in China, which would account for his better talent; he scored an eight on the math placement.

The topic that students argued for Thursday's writing placement was whether the university should mandate students to bring their own computers. One student indicated that he was puzzled by the theme because he was a bit worried that it might reflect the university's interest.

Finally, around 5 p.m., the incoming freshmen, exhausted from the long day's process, begun to emerge from the SAC with their schedule for the upcoming term. The only stress that remains for these high school graduates, as we once were, is the anticipation of individual responsibility, a life away from home, and the transition from high school to college.

Remember the moment when you swaddled into the green glass structure, amid the fountains, willows, and fields, and wondered whether the building that everyone pronounced as 'sack,' which was really a three-letter alias 'SAC,' was the Student Activities Center where the orientation leaders were waiting for you and your family to arrive?

For most of the current undergrads, pre-college memories are faint. The size of the campus, the abbreviations, and the independence no longer baffles us.

But for prospective students like Fahad Ahmed, 17, college life remains to be an enigma.

"I'm curious about how it's going to be like on the weekend," said Ahmed... "I hear that nobody is around because people pack their bags and go home."

"I'm curious about how it's going to be like on the weekend," said Ahmed, as he glanced around the room of the SAC lounge, perhaps half-expectant to find his parents, "I hear that nobody is around because people pack their bags and go home."

Ahmed, who is from Newburgh, shares the fear of many other incoming freshmen. He indicated his impression of the university remains ambivalent because he does not share the privilege of city kids who can routinely return home by hopping onto the LIRR. Newburgh is part of upstate New York and over two hours in driving distance. Ahmed regrets that he will have to accommodate to the weekend life on campus.

Ahmed applied for the university because it is one of the few SUNYs with a dental program. He joined the learning community, a program that enables a more personal environment between the professors and the students due to its smaller class sizes; he said that "it seemed like the best way to start."

Perhaps Ahmed would like to take upon the

routine of many summer students: Thursday night in Dublin, Friday night strolling along Main Street in Port Jeff, Saturday sunbathing on the pebbly West Meadow Beach, and Sunday shopping in the Smith Haven Mall.

Yet, the appeal of freedom overcomes the fear of being "a little homesick," as suggested by Vlad Shalmiyev and Richard Wong, both prospective students for the fall.

"College is a chance to get away from home," said Shalmiyev, a recent graduate of Murrow High School in Brooklyn. Shalmiyev said

he is not worried about his never-met-before roommate. Rather, he is looking forward to the dormitory life in college. He is confident of his achievements. Shalmiyev is enrolled in 'Group F,' the highest level in relation to the learning community, for the fall term.

Wong, who hopes to "grow up a little more" in college, decided to grab a head start. He is enrolled to take two summer courses, an art and a math, during Summer II. Although he admitted that he would miss his mother and 'Tony,' his beloved golden Pomeranian, he is looking forward to spending more time

both with his friend, who is also registered to take classes during the summer, and with his favorite cousin, a matriculated junior of the university.

His mother, Kim Wong, is saddened by her son's impending departure. Wong is her eldest child, "I feel like I'm losing half of my body," stated Wong's mother. But she also indicated that she does acknowledge that her son "is a big boy now."

Wong's mother recounts the events of the nights before her son's impending departure for Summer II. She said that her son "seemed a bit nervous" and "couldn't sleep well." She is worried but also wants him to "grow up," the same words her son used later in his interview.

Perhaps her son, Wong, would like to jade the notorious zebra path, and splatter some paint, green and red, as somebody once did.

The Christmas colors are gone; some man touched it up. I guess we still have to admire the university's perseverance in their attempts to preserve their spotted landmark, which I personally think should be more than just periodically touched up...

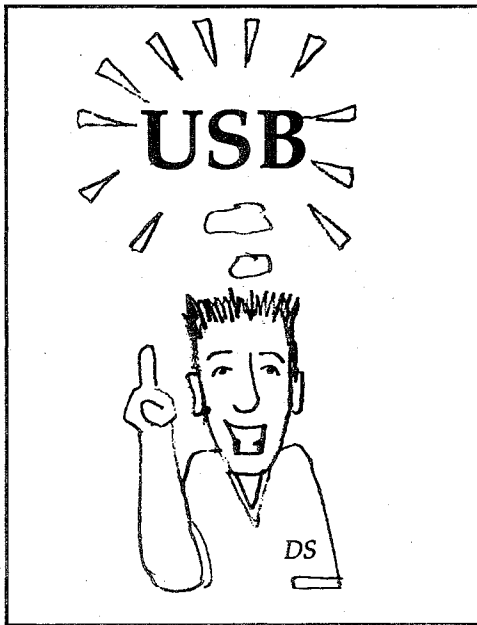
For Barbara and Neil Cohen, the parting of their daughter, who is "looking into nursing," is less of a shock. Although both parents adore their daughter, they are not worried because they already had an elder child who left for college.

As they waited on the wooden benches, the Cohens continued to describe their "apprehensive daughter." Both parents seemed understandably open to college and dormitory life. "I think she would like to study hard but also play hard," joked Mrs. Cohen.

And as the tangy orange sun sets from the sapphire tint in the horizon, the parents, bored and anxious, with dim hearts, waited at the Union, as their child, bored and anxious, waited, with their dark hearts, at the SAC lobby.

Time will transcend itself, when the sun will rise again, and another assembly of knowledge seekers, will trek into the footsteps of Thursday's freshmen, in a cool summer day, as they had trekked into my footprints, but mine was on a sizzling summer day...

And perhaps next year, there will be parents, like the Wongs and the Cohens, smiling with their hearts, in friendly affection.



COMMENTARY

CONFESSIONS OF A CONFLICTED FEMINIST

By Cheryl Edelman

As the presidential elections begin to grow, and the candidates poke their little heads out, I find myself horribly conflicted over whom to vote for. Sadly, two corrupt parties — Democrats and Republicans, dominate American politics. Our problem rests in the idea that voting for third parties "takes away from Democrats;" this fear of Republicans that scares progressive folks from voting Green. It saddens me to see so many individuals under the illusion that Democrats are any better than Republicans are.

In reality, the only issue they differ on is choice. The right to control our bodies and our futures is under attack once again. I was completely content with voting for Ralph Nader, until the recent Nebraska case. Roe vs. Wade was protected by a 5-4 margin. This terrifies me. The time is coming to appoint a new Supreme Court Justice, and if we elect Mr. Bush we can count on him appointing an ultra-conservative just waiting to take away my freedom. I can't imagine a world without choice, I can't imagine days when hangers will once again be our alternative to motherhood. No. That's not true. I can imagine it, and it becomes clearer every time a clinic is bombed or a law is passed. The world as I know it will cease to exist if Bush is elected, if abortion is illegal. I can't and won't live in a world like that.

Though as a feminist, as a woman, as a person who simply exists on this world, I am torn between protecting choice and reshaping American politics. How much longer can we live in a world run by money-driven politicians? Democrats are just as disgusting as Republicans are. We live with a government that upholds sanctions against Iraq that supports the WTO that forbids gays and lesbians to marry, and so on. Tell me again why I should vote for a Democrat?

Realistically though, if elected, Gore has limited power over the next appointed Supreme Court Justice because of the Republican Senate. For the past eight years, under a Democratic president we have seen enormous economic growth and an increase in child poverty and healthcare rates. The differences between Democrats and Republicans are slim, with the exception of choice; both parties have a remarkably conservative agenda.

There are several reasons why I ultimately see myself voting for Nader. First, I am thinking in terms of long term goals, not short term gains. If progressives continuously vote for Democrats because of a "Republican knife to our throats," then we will never successfully reshape politics. I believe that in voting Green, I am beginning to build a strong third party. Third parties are certainly beginning to step up and be seen. Ralph Nader is beginning to burst into mainstream media. Although he is still not able to partake in presidential debates, he is being interviewed on CNN; for the first time the American public is beginning to hear possible presidential candidates speak out against the WTO and call for reforms in political funding.

Though reproductive rights are incredibly important to me, the future of American politics is something I can not overlook this election year. I would be lying if I said that I do not fear the possibility of Republicans gaining higher office this year. I fear that in the near future the right to a safe abortion will be long forgotten that the government will further control the lives of women. However I fear for our world if our political system continues to be run by politicians who are the puppets of exploitative corporations. I have one certain belief — if Bush is elected and he succeeds in his horrible quest to eliminate legal abortions, this will completely revolutionize the people. The greatest change will occur during our most critical time.

LOOK EVERYONE!!!! WE'RE GONNA HAVE CONCERTS!!!

Stony Brook Concerts can use some help in the upcoming year.

If you are enrolled for the upcoming academic year AND will be around for Summer Session II AND have a passion for new or upcoming or popular or vital or fun bands/artists AND are interested in helping out in any of the facets of planning a major event on campus (contracts / budgets / hospitality / booking / advertising / promoting) then PLEASE come by the Polity Suite, room 202 of the Student Activities Center, and either fill out an application or speak with the 2000-2001 Concerts Chair, David Klein.

MAD SHOUT OUTS TO JIM'S MOM!

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A Tribute to Citizen Thomas Paine

By Angelos K. Hannides

Washington, D.C. is adorned with the statues of persons, colonial and foreign, who fought for the Revolution. None of them is Thomas Paine's. There are a total of five statues of his in the entire world, three of them in the U.S. He is not commemorated in any major celebrations or anniversaries, and frankly no one appears to care. The real father of the American Revolution who placed the issues at hand in crystal-clear simple language, diffused ill-begotten reservations, and provided for the intellectual foundation and mental fuel of the Revolutionaries remains unknown to the American citizens of today. The sad aspect of this phenomenon is that this was and remains an intentional government policy from the first years of the Republic.

The names of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Franklin and others are widely dispersed in this huge country, but his name is not. And that is a direct insult to the American people, without whom the Revolution would not succeed and persevere. Their determination, self-denial, and persistence were all maintained by his words read to their armies before the battles. His proclamations in "Crisis in America" were directly responsible for the victory.

The consistent pattern that emerges from Paine's writings is of a global and not local sense of citizenship. And this sense becomes our societies in a very timely fashion, due to the inhumane and cruel face globalization is assuming. I would like to focus on some of his articles in the periodic press of Philadelphia the first few months after his arrival to the colonies. In particular, I would like to concentrate on his views on women, slavery, the periodic press, and globalization.

Fountains of our felicity

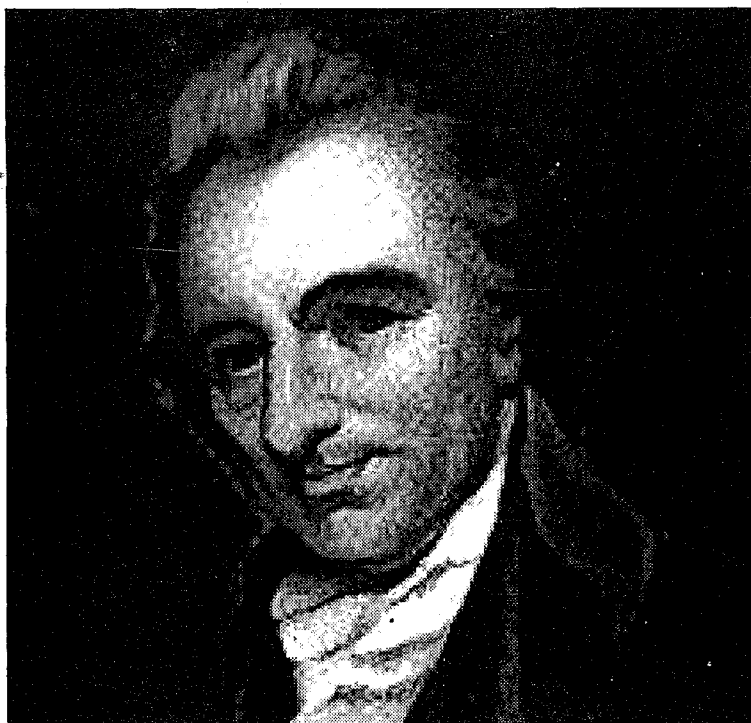
Paine with difficulty restrained himself, while referring only to the women of "barbarous nations." He drew extensively on examples from such cases to depict their state. However, in the end he would address the issue on behalf of all the women of the world. It is evident from his writings that he realized that at the bottom of the issue lied not legislation or official recognition (although he acknowledges their importance) but the actual social conditions in which women are immersed.

And specifically women's treatment by men. Despite the abolition of "severe legislation" which has been keeping women in "a state of dependence", despite the relatively (extremely relatively) more liberal participation in "business and amusement"; they are still the "slaves of opinion" and the victims of the "violent and terrible tyranny of jealousy." We men still behave as masters, insensitive and oppressive. We still give women reason to equally fear indifference (because then they are nothing) and love (because then they are tormented by our pride, jealousy and physical domination).

Paine encourages us to reconsider the vital role of women in the development of both individuals and social institutions such as families and communities. Women are at the core of

families. They appease barbarism and destructive tendencies. He does commit, in my opinion, an error in gently stressing, the supposed feebleness of women. This is surprising coming from him because he does acknowledge that women deal with significant duties, which they stand up to admirably well. I personally believe that it is one of the major false preconceptions, which we have to uproot immediately. It is ludicrous to think of individuals of the gender who bears children and on average lives longest to be feebler than men.

If one sits and contemplates the qualities which women bring to our lives, especially the emotional and intellectual ones, one would realize that they on average are closer to human self-



Thomas Paine, a man with common sense.

actualization than men. Human identity (meaning a higher intellectual state) should be everyone's goal, and Paine was much closer than any of us to realizing that the path to such a goal is more "feminine" than "masculine."

The sentiments of justice and humanity

It took the U.S. government almost one hundred years to heed the calls of the first slavery abolitionists, such as Paine. Even then, the Lincoln administration proceeded with it for such an additional number of reasons, so that the moral arguments for its abolition were overshadowed. What was Paine's contribution?

Not only was his one of the most influential and progressive voices for abolition, not only did his writings lead to the first anti-slavery society being founded in Philadelphia where he was being published. He effectively considered the

"sins" of adultery and incest, but by separating families of enslaved people, would force them to inhumane consequences and moral degradation. This lack of consistency burns today in the heart of the "success" of "developed" countries, which attain overabundance at the expense of the "third" world.

The Press—an Impolitic Vanity?

What has been able to evade silence and the dust of time is the fact that Thomas Paine realized and proved the effectiveness of the Press in awakening within the people the character of the citizen: the building unit of the city-state, the active individual concerned for the common good. He was convinced that the Press is the most influential element on the manners and morals of people; and, in his own words, "of all publications, none are more calculated to improve or infect than a periodic one." That is the reason why he, among other things, criticized the Press for being "a retailer of tale and nonsense."

Allowing "voluptuousness" and self-indulgence to litter the Press is not only useless but dangerous. It contributes to the citizens losing trust in their inventive and creative abilities by "unbracing their nerves", and thus constitutes them submissive. An amateur (that is, lover) of arts and sciences, he was discouraged to see the Press support "Venus against the Muses."

However, as was pointed out by Jon Katz in an insightful article, Paine did not exclude the entertaining or the amusing from the Press: "I consider a magazine as a kind of bee-hive, which both allures the swarm, and provides room to store their sweets." The freedom for everyone to express their opinion freely, to receive and transmit responses, and remain silent, are principles defended vehemently by the users of cyberspace. The freedom of thought and speech is the ultimate feature of a true human being. It is undeniable and non-negotiable. Thomas Paine nourished it and was nourished by it.

Vices Begotten

How does the present government of the United States spit into the face of the intellectual basis of reason responsible for its existence? It is more than obvious. Here are some examples of the global treason of the American Revolution. They sustain relatively strict environmental laws in this country, and that depends on them making certain that corporations can loot the tropics of Africa, South America and Polynesia. They demand and inspect labor justice here, while they subject the populations of South-East Asia to a generous slavery. And they selectively grant (according to their interests) what brought them about, anywhere in the world: self-determination and the right to Freedom.

All of these, Citizen Paine would gaze with abomination and sit at his desk once again to show us the why and the how. His texts remain lamentably contemporary. That is the reason why his legacy and his memory are not officially recognized. These people know very well the impact of his words on every thinking person. These people know what kind of a human Citizen Paine was: uncommon in all sense.

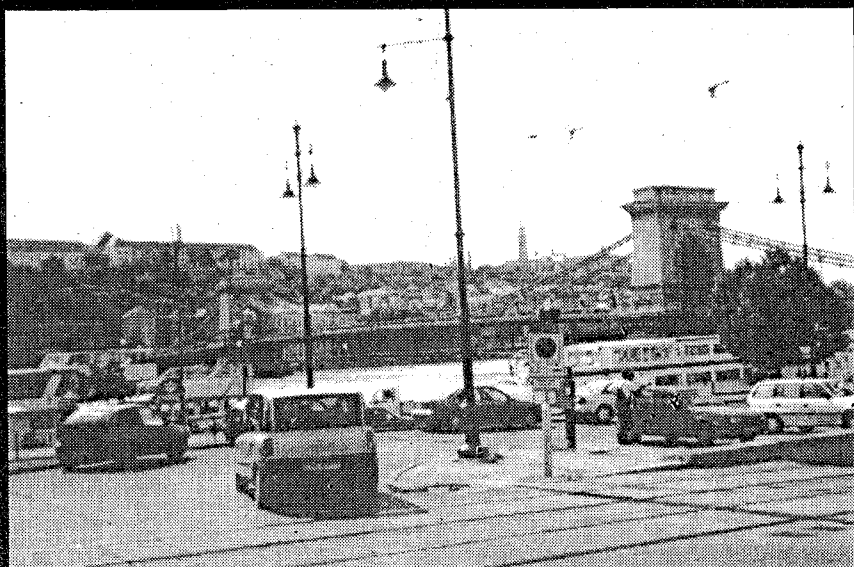
...Paine was much closer than anyone of us to realizing that the path to [human identity] is more "feminine" than "masculine."

practical implications of regional and international abolition of slavery, and made recommendations for reparations to those presently enslaved, their welfare and resources in freedom, the unification of separated families etc.

He also did not hesitate one moment to highlight the inconsistency surrounding those Americans who cried for freedom and self-determination but simultaneously kept other human beings enslaved. Those same people, he would note, would viciously attack within their societies

My Summer Vacation In Europe

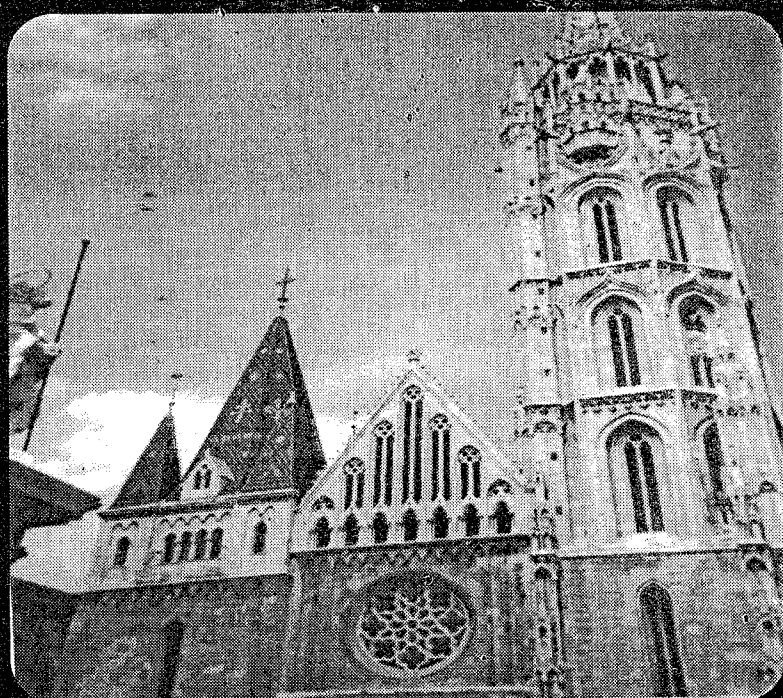
By Jill Baron



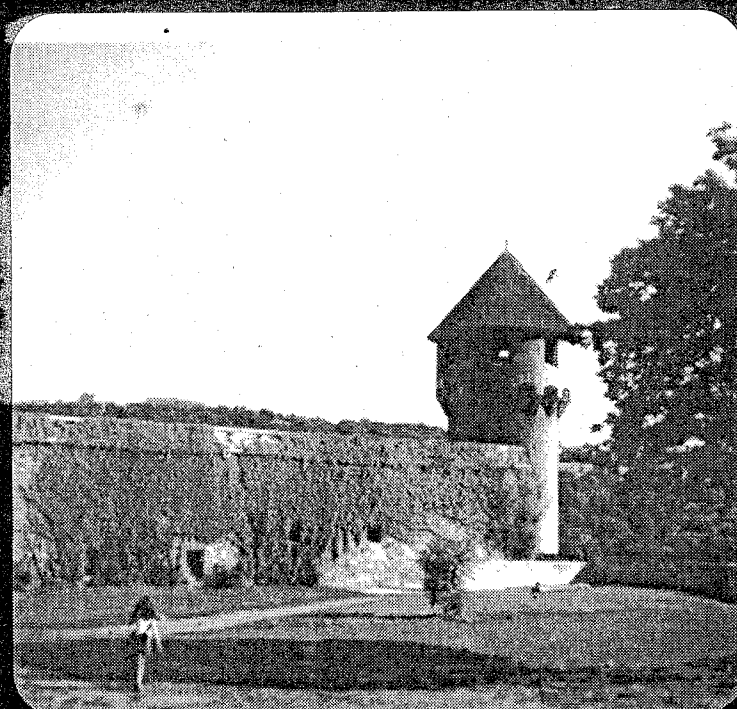
Budapest, overlooking the Danube River.



Budapest street scene



Snazzy church in Prague



Castle-y thing in Budapest



Random dudes chilling in Prague



Prague's equivalent of Times Square

These are my *p i k t u r e s*.

I went to Budapest and Prague. It was fun.
Yay.



The view of Prague from a really tall building



Mean graffiti in Prague



The view of Prague from another tall building



THOUGH, EVEN CATCHING UP ON THE LATEST GOSSIP CAN BE A LITTLE BIT OF A-

okay - so the tally's in - twenty-six girls from our high school have officially had or are having kids.



I heard this, too...

-BUGGOUT.



I'm telling you, it's like lemmings off a cliff...

Yeah, man - Donna Smith, Katy Simmons, Becky Ziller, Trisha Jella-



They were all friends with each other, you know - one of 'em had a kid and everyone's like aw, how cute and the next thing you know...

Wow, I'm twenty, and I'm still not ready for kids...

Oh, what was her name?

Oh yeah, Jill Clark.

What was she fourteen?



Dude, I used to hang out with these girls - can you

IMAGINE?



Actually, you used to hang out with the first one...



Actually, I guess at our age, it's almost like legitimately starting a family!!!

I COULDN'T TAKE THE CACOPHONY OF JUDGEMENT ANY MORE...

If they think they're ready for kids, then I guess they're ready for kids - they have to be!!



WE WERE ONLY 14 WHEN JILL LEANED OVER AND WHISPERED:

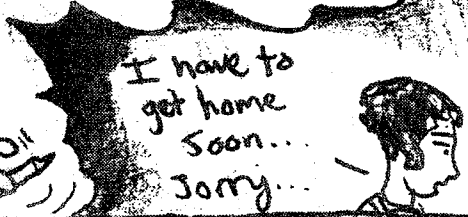
I'm SCARED...



HER DAD HAD THROWN HER DOWN THE STAIRS THAT WEEK, FOR TELLING HIM SHE WAS PREGNANT.

SHE DIDN'T THINK SHE COULD GO HOME AGAIN.

I have to get home soon... Sorry...



ALL ANYBODY WANTS IS A NICE PLACE TO GO HOME TO...



Hey little doggie... It's nice to see you too...

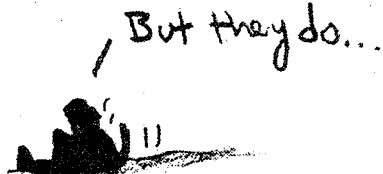
...IF A NICE HOME DOESN'T EXIST, PEOPLE SCRAMBLE TO CREATE ONE...



Oh doggie, kids shouldn't have kids...

- WOOF.

AND THE EFFORT, HOWEVER SEEMINGLY MISGUIDED, NEEDS TO ALWAYS BE HONORED.



But they do...

A Democrat and a Republican "Go Out" (Uh-Oh)

By F.L. Livingston

Coming of age in a staunchly Democratic household, I was surrounded with people who could hardly bare the thought of supporting a Republican candidate. (No offense intended in this article to members of either of these two parties or any other group.) My father often said, straight out, "I just can't vote for a Republican." My uncle once admired a particular Republican and planned to vote for him. But, as he explained later, when he got in the election booth, he just "could not press the Republican lever." Raised by Jewish immigrant fathers who had become deeply committed to the Democrats, they felt it almost a matter of conscience to opt for candidates from that party.

My mother, in fact, was convinced that being a Democrat was "part of" being Jewish. (An otherwise highly intelligent, articulate, soft-spoken human being, she was totally loud and irrational on certain subjects. This was one of them.) If any Jewish friend or relative admitted to becoming or voting for a member of the GOP, she had no compunctions about objecting, vociferously. Hands on hips, she would glare at the poor, unsuspecting "offender" and exclaim, "How could you?!"

"Mom," I finally objected in my teens, "people are allowed to vote for whomever they choose. That's why it's a secret ballot!"

"Oh, that's only for the Gentiles," my mother replied without missing a beat. "A Jew is supposed to vote Democrat!"

Eventually, I persuaded my mother that Jews could vote for or belong to any party they wanted, whether Democrat, Republican, Liberal, Conservative or whatever. But she still took her politics as seriously as she did her religion — maybe more so. "When I was young," she would explain to my brothers and me, "my parents didn't let me date out of the faith, and I respected their wishes. But, frankly, I always thought the really hard thing for me would be to go out with a Republican!" Whatever! During those growing-up years, I was also privy to a lot of "axioms" that Democrats tend to say among themselves: "FDR saved the country."

"John Kennedy was so charismatic, but he never got a chance to show what he could do. (Actually, I think he did a lot during his brief term as president, but no matter.)

"The Democrats are for the little man and the middle man."

As a child, I believed such tenets utterly. I assumed "everybody" did, even the Republicans. By my teens, I knew better, but I still suspected that even Republicans subscribed to these ideas to some degree. After all, they were well and "true," weren't they?

As I got older, I came to understand, among many other things, that people could have widely divergent viewpoints on any given subject. And that some issues tend to be bi-partisan. I was still a very strong Democrat and "knew" that I always would be. But I no longer thought of Republicans as beings from another planet. And I was aware that Democrats and Republicans did date, marry, and even sometimes managed to continue to vote differently without destroying their love.

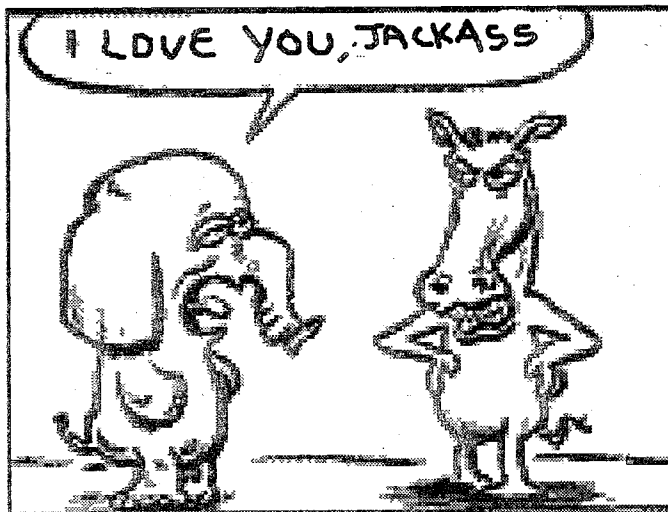
This is the point at which my teenage daughter would roll her eyes and ask (if she hadn't already) "Will this story be over soon?"

So, moving right along, at about age 25, I began to date "Ted." A tall, good-looking chemical engineer, Ted had grown up in a household that was as strictly Republican as mine was Democratic. Jewish Republicans, they had, contrary to what my mom would have thought, belonged to the GOP for a couple of generations. At least, his mother's family had. Settling in a Protestant Republican town in Connecticut, her parents had quickly managed to

assimilate into the community. If they were not part of the dominant faith of the area, then they would "fit in" by joining the prevalent political party. So they were liberal in their religion (having brought their Reform Jewish faith here with them from Germany) but conservative in their politics.

His father, on the other hand, had been raised in a family that was, like my grandparents, traditional in its religion (Orthodox Judaism) but liberal in its politics (Democrats). Like my parents, he became more liberal in his faith as he got older. But, unlike my parents, he also became more conservative in his politics. By the time he met Ted's mother, he was well on his way to joining the Republican Party. It only took a little nudge.

Ted's mom had as strong a "religious conviction" about politics as mine did, I discovered as we discussed our respective backgrounds. "Frankly," she was fond of explaining, "I can understand marrying out of your religion a lot more than out of your political party. I mean, disagreeing on theology is one thing. But opposite ideas about how to run the country? And what's worse — how could you stand each others' friends?"



Whatever, Ted also loved to talk politics. And when he did, he often threw out statements in such an off-hand way that I knew that these must be some of the "axioms" that Republicans say among themselves. "FDR almost ruined the country." "Kennedy was a highly accomplished liar. By the time you figured out one lie, he was onto the next." (Actually, I had never heard this one before, nor have I heard it since. So maybe it was just a maxim among his particular group of family and friends. But he offered it up so casually that I felt that he assumed it was "understood.")

"The Democrats think they can solve every problem by throwing money at it."

Needless to say, these pronouncements astounded me at first, "one more than the other." But I quickly realized that Ted must have heard these statements repeated over and over for years, just as I had heard the Democratic ones. As a kid, he probably believed these tenets utterly. No doubt, he assumed "everybody" did, even the Democrats. Even in his teens, I could understand if he had suspected that we Democrats subscribed to them a little bit. After all, he most likely concluded, they were well and "true," "weren't they?"

And as he got older—he must have still thought so because he tossed them out quite facetiously even though he knew that I was a Democrat from a family of staunch Democrats. Or maybe he just trusted in the power of these ideas so much that he thought I would be easily "converted."

This did not make for a very compatible relationship. In fact, in our case, it seemed to be merely a symptom of two vastly different approaches to life. (We broke up after about six months.) But it did guarantee some interesting "date" conversation.

This is the point where my adult daughter would say (if she hadn't already), "No offense, Mom,

but where is this going?"

Straight to "Election 2000." Would that our political candidates today had such clear convictions as Ted and I did then. I find it difficult, for example, to comprehend how Rick Lazio's presentation of himself as a "moderate Republican" matches up with his earlier support of the far right policies of Newt Gingrich.

As Maurice Carroll, a spokesperson for The Quinnipiac College poll put it, "[Lazio] has to let more people know where he stands (Riley, John, "Poll: Lazio and Clinton Tied." *Newsday*, June 8, 2000. P. A8)". And, I would add, he needs to explain how his present positions can be reconciled with his more right-wing stand of the past.

The Democrats do not get off the hook on this one either. Many political commentators, such as E.J. Dionne, Jr. maintain that Al Gore's campaign has been "reinvented" several times ("Yes, Bush and Gore Differ on Social Security." *Newsday*, June 31, 2000. P. A37). And, perhaps his image, as well.

A number of people, journalists, politicians, and voters-at-large, complain that there is little real difference between the competing candidates. This is said whether in reference to those trying for the New York State Senate seat (Rick Lazio and Hillary Clinton) or those seeking the Oval Office (George W. Bush and Al Gore).

But former Democratic mayor and savvy political analyst, Ed Koch disagrees. He asserts that all this confusion can be swept away by looking at the traditional party differences that lie underneath. "The [Republicans]," he elaborates, "believe that the government is the enemy, and 'If I can make it on my own, you can, too.' The Democrats believe that 'we often need the government to step in to 'level the playing field' and 'provide a helping hand,' ensuring greater liberty and equality for all. It is for this reason, according to Koch, that, say, Lazio feels able to call himself 'pro-choice' yet vote against Medicaid funding for abortions ("Clinton and Lazio Divide on Party Lines." *Newsday* June 9, 2000. p. A51). This also may elucidate, I contend, why HRC might assume that she could help the average family in any state, whether she is a native or not. In this view, it's more about one's stand on government involvement, in general, than on any other issue, in particular.

On this point, Dionne actually concurs. Consider his comparison of Bush and Gore's respective plans for Social Security. Despite similarities between the two, the columnist points out that a crucial difference exists. "Gore gives larger benefits to those at the bottom of the income structure than to those at the top," he informs us. In Dionne's eyes, Bush's policies seem to reflect the conventional Republican "trickle-down" theory, while Gore's bring out the Democrat's "percolate-up" idea (Dionne, Jr. p. A37).

So, I guess this means that if, like Ted, you think that "FDR Almost ruined the country" with his social programs, then you should cast Your ballot for Lazio in the senate race and Bush in the presidential one. But if, like me, you still believe that "FDR saved the country" with his reforms, then you should give your votes to Clinton and Gore.

I'm not sure if it's that simple though. My husband, a registered Democrat, so far, intends to vote for Lazio, largely because of the "outsider" or "carpet-bagger" issue. And one of my neighbors who usually "just votes Row B" intends to press the lever for Hillary. As my neighbor explains, "I know more about her than Lazio. Who's Rick Lazio?" etc.

So—Koch and Dionne notwithstanding, political attitudes are not as clear today as they once were. (Well, they weren't always then either.) But maybe that renders the elections more intriguing. It certainly must make for some interesting "date" conversation.

Socially Acceptable Homoeroticism

By Tim Connors

If a friend of the same sex asked you to fight in the mud and then take a shower together, would that strike you as being a homoerotic activity? Well I think it is, and some groups on campus are doing this on a regular basis. They dress up in matching clothes and roughhouse with each other and then take showers together. They are not the lesbian gay transgender alliance, rather they are our sports teams.

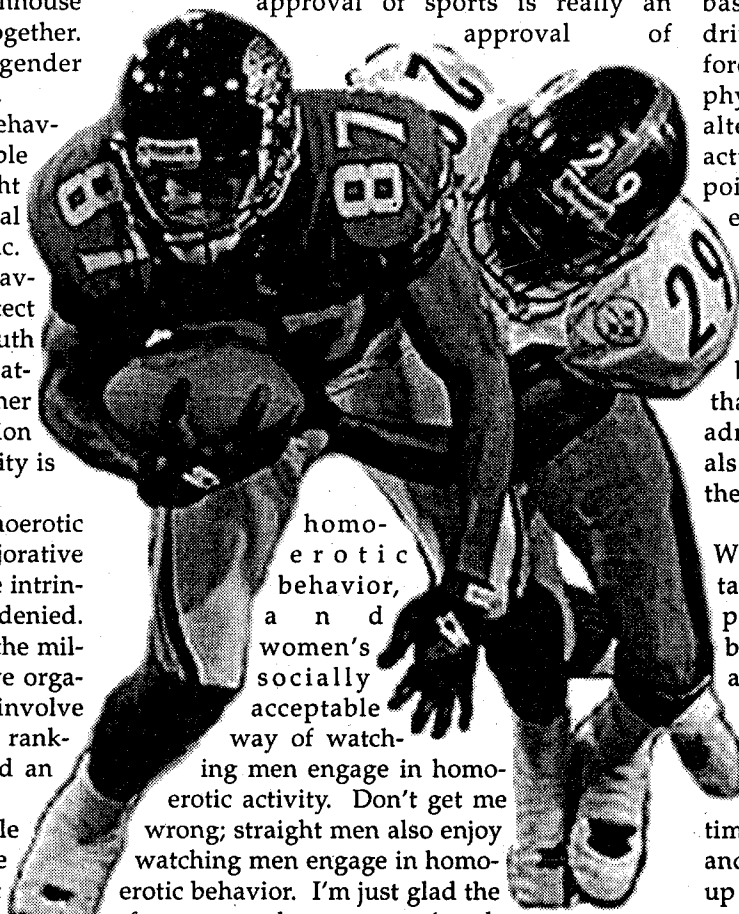
This may be socially acceptable behavior, however it is still homoerotic. People who participate in these activities might deny that these activities have homosexual overtones, and often are quite homophobic. That is just a rationalization of their behavior, which is a defense mechanism to protect their fragile egos from the self-evident truth that fighting, taking showers together, patting each other on the butt, eating together (excluding woman), jockeying for a position of male dominance as a sign of masculinity is homoerotic behavior.

Our society is filled with homoerotic organizations, that ironically convey a pejorative message about homosexuality, so that the intrinsic homoeroticism of the activity can be denied. Several examples come to mind such as the military, the Boy Scouts and other aggressive organizations. All of these organizations involve wearing matching clothing, a patriarchal ranking of authority, showering together and an intolerance of homosexuality.

Now, let's look at the woman's role in all of this, which is only fair since I've just questioned the sexuality of most men. Most men like to see lesbian sex, however, most women will deny liking the sight of gay men having sex. This is a generalization, and the usual problems of individuality arise

when generalizations are used. So just take a deep breath and let it go if you totally disagree with the last statement.

Yet there's an old saying about women loving a man in uniform, and queers generally don't like sports and feel that televised sports are really just for straight women. Women's approval of sports is really an approval of



homoerotic behavior, and women's socially acceptable way of watching men engage in homoerotic activity. Don't get me wrong; straight men also enjoy watching men engage in homoerotic behavior. I'm just glad the after game showers aren't televised, even though they would get higher ratings than the games do.

This may seem harmless enough, but

homosexual bonding ritual is the basis of our armed services. Nations couldn't go to war without men's desire for and women's approval of homoerotic behaviors. The boot camp process is based upon breaking previously established behaviors and replacing those with the desired traits. One of the most basic psychological motivators is our sex drive. Keeping men away from women and forcing them to bond with each other through physical, social and latent homosexual activity alters psychological motivators. However actual sex is discouraged since that would point out the obvious rituals that soldiers engage in.

At this point you probably expect me to question whether there should be gays in the military. But I think that would be obvious, and it has already been covered by other people who actually care about that. I question why the military is afraid of admitting that they engage in homoerotic rituals in order to break men's spirits and teach them to kill on command.

The question you should ask is why? Why do we need homoerotic sports and military? The need for sports is to distract the population from concentrating on issues besides their immediate well being and sexual entertainment. And sports also serve as a training ground for military service by engaging youths in homoerotic activities.

There's nothing wrong in engaging in homoerotic activities, some of the best times I had in my teenage years were in sports and the Boy Scouts. It was kind of fun to dress up like a pansy and engage in pretend military activities like competition, thus achieving higher ranks. The problem I see with it is the denial of the character of these activities by those organizations.

Robert Wadlowe Can Bend Way The Fuck Over And Kiss My Ass

By Russell Heller

I have it on good authority, that all world records are tracked, no matter how insignificant. At least some of these are publicized yearly in the popular Guinness book:

athletic records, tallest person ever, the boring stuff. Well, I am hereby vowing that I will hold at least one world record by the end of the next academic year, and you'd better believe it's gonna be for something weird.

I've been talking a lot of shit about this for the last few years. Most recently I recall saying that I wanted to be declared the person least likely to ever see *The Runaway Bride*. Although I think I've got that one in the bag, I'd really like to start racking up the records.

Quite honestly, I wouldn't mind a world record in Tetris. You scoff, but believe it or not, there is no better chick magnet than a t-shirt advertising your unusually high score in a video game. In terms of attracting los sexo oppositto, an astronomical high-score is second only to being charming, attractive and rich.

A company called Twin Galaxies

(www.twingalaxies.com) publishes a book of video game and pinball records; the pages of which my name might very well be gracing in the near future. Apparently last year, someone scored the first-ever perfect game of arcade Pac-man. He actually had the gall to compare himself to Neil Armstrong.

"No matter how many people accomplish the feat afterwards, it will always be Armstrong who will be remembered for doing it first. And, best of all, it was an American."

I'm also considering setting records for doing things that are just so stupid that no one could possibly have done them. Take for example the case of a

Mr. Lin Yin Cai, the (and I quote) "First Ever Rare Person Who Nibbles Glass Cups."

This guy has the world record for eating the most glass. They've got pictures (<http://www.linyc.com/linyc/lyce.htm>) and everything of him. Not only that, but the page is horribly translated from Chinese, so the descriptions of this process are hilarious. An excerpt from the page:

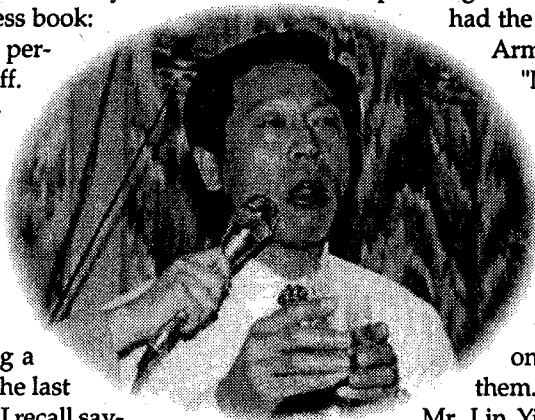
"Lin's performance surprised everyone. Lin bit the glass cup like sweet apple, and chewed the glass into pieces like roasted bean. The waiters and waitresses were all amazed to see the glass cups were eaten one by one, and some waitresses

were so frightened to see. Lin told them with smile after swallowed the bits of glass: "Don't be afraid, the glass is just like food in my mouth." Once, he performed his unusual skill in a restaurant, startling a waitress. She went to tell the general manager that a madman was eating glass cup there, and he would die soon. Then came so many people to watch. Lin not only swallowed the glass in mouth, but also picked up the bits of broken glass on the ground and chewed them down like a gluttonous child. Now, Lin eats several glasses every month. He eats more and more fast, and become more and more strong. Lin never needs to wear sweater in winter, and only needs to sleep for 4-5 hours a day. The reports from hospitals in Beijing, ChengDu and NingBo indicate that all the glass he ate has been digested and there isn't a piece of glass excreted in his stool."

Yikes. As if this wasn't enough, he wants to have his teeth insured, individually, at the highest premium in history. Eat your heart out, Jennifer Lopez.

As I see it, breaking (or better yet, setting) a world record gives you the uncontested right to act like your shit doesn't stink. Cai might as well be pissing lemonade. HE IS INSURING HIS TEETH!

Now imagine what a prima donna I'm gonna be with SEVERAL records, worthless or otherwise, notched into my belt. Tell ya what, if you're all extra nice to me and give me a dollar, maybe I'll let you touch me.



Destruction — All Hell Breaks Loose
(Nuclear Blast Records)

Holy hell! One of the premier '80s thrash metal bands has reunited their most successful lineup to record this opus of mayhem. German born, Destruction were among the crop of early 80s thrash bands that later gave rise to bands such as Metallica, Slayer and Anthrax. Following a recent trend that sees many of these bands releasing reunion albums (Exciter, Metal Church, Venom, etc...) Destruction one-ups the competition by turning out a record that is as vital in the year 2000 as it would have been in 1982.

With *All Hell Breaks Loose*, Destruction have taken the prototype formula for thrash metal and added strength to their sound that makes this record stand out from other retro metal releases. The album shares the intensity of classic period Destruction, Sodom or Slayer records while adding elements in production value reminiscent of many modern black and death metal bands. Having Peter Tagtren, the current premier European producer of all things metal, at the recording helm did nothing but help Destruction reach a creative utopia. Destruction has succeeded in upping the retro movement a few notches.

There are plenty of excellent tracks, from the opener, "The Final Curtain" to the remake of one of their well known classics "Total Disaster." An added treat is a hidden cover of Metallica's "Whiplash," where Chuck Schmier and co. nearly eclipse the original and even take lyrical shot or two at Metallica. See if you can spot it.

With the current rise in the mainstream of "loud rock" and "nu-metal," a record like this is wonderful to own. Offering a taste of yesteryear as well as a sign of how it should be done, *All Hell Breaks Loose* is a must own for lovers of metal worldwide.

Big-ups to Liz C. at Nuclear Blast for being the coolest P.R. personage I have ever come across!

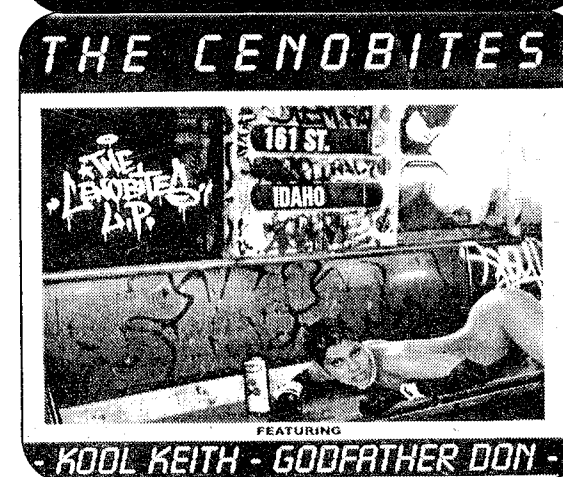
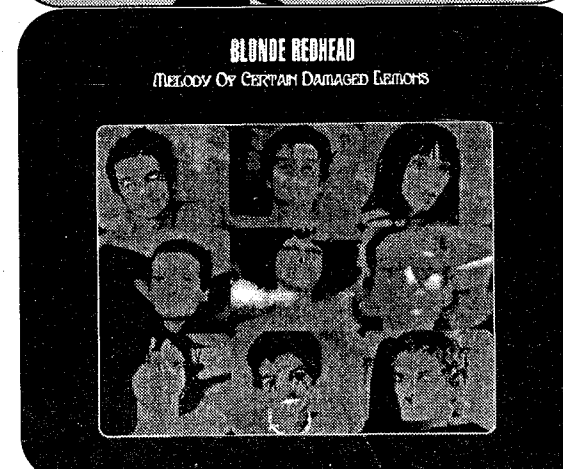
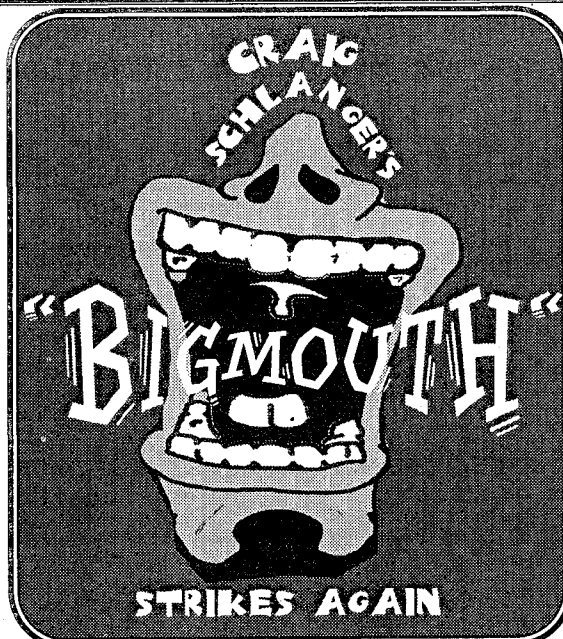
Sunny Day Real Estate — The Rising Tide
(Time Bomb Recordings)

With their fourth proper full length, SDRE have come full circle as a supreme rock machine. Ultimately the band has surpassed the "emo" tag that they helped create in the early '90s while providing an interesting soundtrack for summer.

Few of the songs on *The Rising Tide* are quite as tear jerking as the material on previous releases. Eh... there are plenty of potentially tear-jerking moments for all you emo-cats out there, but with this LP SDRE has written more rock anthems than I thought possible for such a typically miserable band (I mean that in the kindest sense). Never falling prey to the mistakes of 1998's reunion LP, *How it Feels to Be Something* (i.e.—starting the LP with their most powerful song yet and following up with nothing they've never done before), this is definitely the record to solidify the band's influential status.

Opening with the powerful "Killed by an Angel," and continuing with such upbeat rockers as "One," and "Snibe," frontman Jeremy Enck seems poised to position himself among rock's elite. His Christian beliefs still very evident in his lyrics (ok, I'll excuse this), Enck is definitely en route to being the next potential Morrissey (at least in having a similar cult fan base).

There are some definite sleeper moments on the disc, but they manage to hold my attention for the great majority of the eleven tracks, while also never once making me run for the tissues, as most SDRE records have. Sunny Day songs that I can sing along to and smile with at the same time? I like those odds...



Blonde Redhead — Melody of Certain Damaged Lemons
(Touch & Go Records)

Blonde Redhead and I have had an odd relationship for the past few years. Typically, I get a record from them, give it a first listen, and find myself bored silly. Then a day or so later I throw it on again, and tend to totally fall in love with it. *Melody of Certain Damaged Lemons* is no exception. I remember hating it as soon as I threw it on, even contemplating returning it. About 3 or so days later I gave it a second spin and found myself humming along to all of their infectious damaged melodies.

This disc is definitely a career high point from the band. Not as aggressive or disjointed as 1997's *Fake Can be Just As Good*, and a little better executed than 1998's excellent still *An Expression of the Inexpressible*. Also gone are the obvious Sonic Youth influences that filled out their first two Smells Like Records issued LPs.

Blonde Redhead has matured into one of the most notable rock bands in the scene today. This is nearly a perfect record, as I find myself not even once being drawn to skip tracks. "Love Despite of Great Faults" has easily become my anthem of summer time blues, with "This is Not" and "In Particular" not too far behind.

This is a unique record from a unique band who know how to take the typical indie rock song structure and carve it up into a formula no other band would think of. With unique vocals, keyboard sounds, percussion and unorthodox guitar melody, the Redheads have consistently outdone themselves, and do so once again.

The Cenobites (feat. Kool Keith and Godfather Don) — s/t
(Fondle 'Em Records)

I don't think I have to point out that anything Kool Keith lays vocals to is bound to be classic. Add the talents of Godfather Don, a more than capable MC who has been ripping up mics and production in NY for over a decade and you are left with one gem of a release. This record was actually released on vinyl a few years ago, but was just repressed on CD for mass public consumption by Bobbito Garcia for his Fondle 'Em label.

Starting with "Lex Luger," Keith and Don drop more than enough professional wrestling references to make me smile, while dishing out their truth to wack MC's. Moving forward is "You're Late" with a guest appearance from underground mic killer Percee-P. I think I went on quoting this song for a good month before friends tried to slap me (other than for usual reasons). Don, Keith and P rock a very energetic beat and dish lyrics about...well... it wouldn't be a Kool Keith project if you really knew what he was talking about, now would it?

The intros for "Rhymes I Sniff" (with enough drug references to make Daryl Strawberry salivate) and "How the Fuck you Get a Deal?" are hysterical and totally classic. Other standout tracks include "Kick a Dope Verse" and "Mommy." Frankly the Keith and Don just never let up.

The packaging is very minimal, so I haven't the slightest clue as to who handled any of the production on this record. But whoever did should be rewarded with providing a classic sonic backdrop for two of the most interesting rappers ever to grace the M-I-C. Best lyric: "Oh you cut your hairball...uh yeah yeah yeah." from *You're Late*.