

The Stony Brook

1979-2004

PRESS

25th Anniversary

The Community News & Features Paper

Vol. XXVI, Issue 7

"Ohhh, sprechen zie sexy!"

December 14, 2004



The Stony Brook Press proudly presents the Fall 2004 Literary Supplement
sponsored by
Creative Minds: SBU Journal of the Arts

Chaos at the Crossroads

By Natalie Schultz

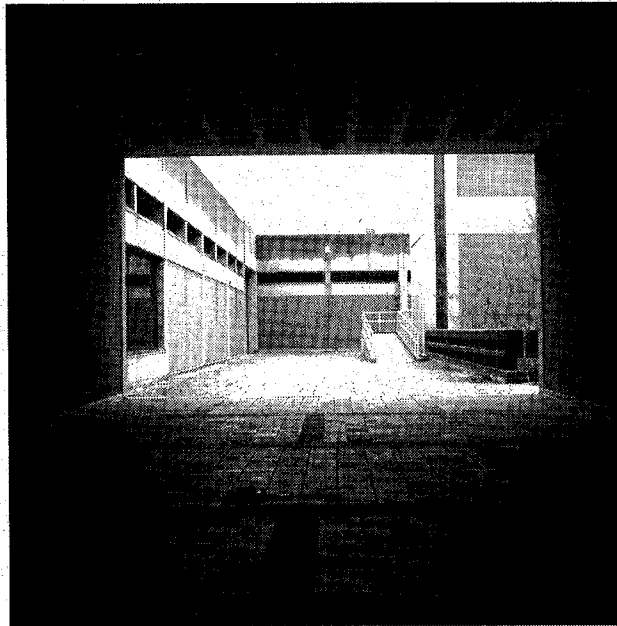
The turbulent shifting of national borders throughout the history of Northeastern Europe, and the unresolved identity crisis that now hinders the stability necessary to evolve into modern, politically autonomous nations, has come to fruition in the Ukraine. Pulled from the east, pulled from the west, the modern-day countries of Lithuania, Belarus and the Ukraine have more to overcome than simply the recent past of life under the USSR.

Today the complications are great. These countries must choose to side with either the more "liberal" European Union, or the far more "conservative" Russia. There are obvious pros and cons to each side, but it is understandable that such a decision is not easy to make. To embrace the positive aspects of the west, such as free trade and friendly relations with wealthy countries sounds great. But there is a high cost—the cost of accepting enforced multiculturalism. To side with Russia is to turn one's back on free trade and liberal dealings with the west, but the advantage is that cultural solidarity is embraced.

The puzzle pieces that are now at the crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe need the time to develop their own sense of identity. They have not yet fully healed from the totalitarian oppression of the Soviet state. They have not yet been able to anneal their individual cultural identities. Such a process is necessary for a state to be able to stand strong on its own. Alliances are only positive when all the various states have room to be unique, without fearing the repercussions of the politically correct ideals currently embraced in the west. One must be able to honestly answer the question "who am I?" before one can accept all the differences of the "others" in the world. Forced integration only leads to confusion and eventually rebellion and revolution.

The danger of embracing the ideals of the EU is the inevitable destruction of a national identity and pride. For the past 90 years, these countries were prevented from celebrating their unique cultures and religious beliefs; they were forced to give up everything to communism. Now they want to be free, free to be themselves, whatever that may be. The propaganda imposed on us in the USA and Western Europe would have us believe that these Eastern

European countries would be most free as part of the European Union. But this is not true. The EU forces all of its members to meld into one identity and to embrace multiculturalism. How can a young country grow and embrace its own identity when an amalgamated identity is forced upon it?



A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL OF CHAOS?
Courtesy of Matt Willemain

To side with the Russians is essentially to embrace protectionism, to protect and preserve an Eastern identity. But this itself causes a dilemma; these countries have, for the past century, been defined through the lens of the USSR or Russia. Striving to resurrect their unique identity, these countries are now faced with choosing sides, either to embrace the EU and all of its restrictions on individual national pride and identity, or to re-align with Russia and its sense of national pride. Either way, these countries lose; they lose their autonomy and self-identity and the chance to nurture their own lost cultures, and to forge a new independent national identity.

Problems abound in many of the countries in the European Union, but political correctness covers up the tensions, thereby creating a boiling pot that is about to explode. The

murder of Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands is a recent example. Van Gogh was brutally murdered for making a film about the repression of Muslim women. The Dutch people reacted by going to church, essentially trying to re-embrace their own religious culture and past. This resulted in the arson of many churches there. The Dutch people are freaking out, and they are mad; they don't want to give up their national/religious identity as they have been doing ever since WWII (as has all of the Western world). But of course, to fight back is politically incorrect and "evil."

But truthfully, what is wrong with embracing one's traditional background and religion? NOTHING! The fact is, Europe is a Christian continent, and trying to force it into secular acceptance just will not work peacefully in the long run. France has now outlawed religious garments in public schools in reaction to Islamic extremism. Many people—citizens, Europeans, are very disturbed by what is happening in their countries. But their leaders don't care; they base all of their decisions on the political correctness that the world at large expects them to. But this will only lead to chaos and eventually many civil wars.

Germans are constantly losing their jobs to Turks, yet Gerhard Schroeder wants Turkey to join the EU. Turkey isn't even in Europe! Only a small part of it is—the part they stole from us during the Crusades. They took from us the Hagia Sophia, the heart of Byzantium. Constantinople was a great part of Europe and European culture; but Istanbul is not.

In the Netherlands, there are more people now under the age of 14 that are not Dutch, than there are Dutch children. Yet the world, via the propaganda of pro-globalization, prevents the Dutch from closing their borders. Politically correct globalization is annihilating the Dutch. And other European countries are not all that far away from extinction either.

Now why would a country like the Ukraine want to enter into such a union? A union of self-destruction; that is what the European Union will become if it does not start to see the light and start doing what it should: preserve the culture and history of this great and varied continent, by saving its people.

Publications Board

By Michael Nevradakis

Stony Brook University is home to over 200 vibrant student clubs and organizations. Among the most active and most vibrant of these groups are the student media organizations, including the *Press*, *Statesman*, WUSB 90.1 FM, SBU-TV, *Blackworld*, the *Asian American E-Zine*, *Shelanu*, *Specula*, *En Acción*, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) and *The Graduate*. Together, these groups combine to produce a variety of print, online and broadcast media that reaches the university and surrounding communities.

However, many of these groups face challenges. Some challenges, such as recruiting new members, and generating publicity on campus, are nothing new, and are shared by most other clubs and organizations on campus. Other challenges are particular to specific media groups. WUSB manages to broadcast original, non-commercial radio programming 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from a very cramped studio, using equipment so old that replacement parts for them are no longer even manufactured. *The Press* fought a year-long battle with the USG in order to restore its funding, which had been arbitrarily cut by 75% last fall. SBU-TV, which

in the past three years has been reassigned from channel 3, to channel 30, to channel 20, manages to produce its own original programming and cover campus events with a very small staff and even smaller studio space. Publications such as *Blackworld*, *Shelanu* and *En Acción* have been on-again, off-again, based on student interest, available funding and space for those organizations to function.

Nevertheless, most student media groups make the best of what they have, and often come together for collaborative efforts that benefit student media and the university as a whole. Such events, including the Stony Brook Digital Video Festival, the "Debunking Myths" program held annually with the Inter Fraternity-Sorority Council, and career and resume writing workshops held by SPJ, as well as student media participation in the regional and national SPJ conventions, the recent Associate Collegiate Press National College Media Conference which was held in Nashville last month (which I was lucky enough to attend on behalf of WUSB), and WUSB's annual hosting of the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System National Conference, are a testament to the

effort that members of the student media put forth every day, and also a testament to the value of collaboration and working together.

In the spirit of working together, a proposal has recently been put forth in front of the USG Senate, proposing the creation of a new "Publications Board," which would be an autonomous agency that oversees funding for student media groups. This will allow the USG to allocate the Board an annual lump sum, which the Publications Board would then budget among the various student media groups. This Board would be composed of representatives from each of the media organizations, and would be overseen by Norm Prusslin, who is advisor to the student media groups.

Such a Board would allow student media groups to make decisions that best benefit the groups as a whole, and to avoid conflicts such as the one seen last year between *The Press* and USG. It will allow for a much fairer allocation of funds to media groups based on need and not tradition, and would help foster an even deeper sense of camaraderie and mutual collaboration

Continued on next page

Be Excellent To Each Other

By Mike Billings

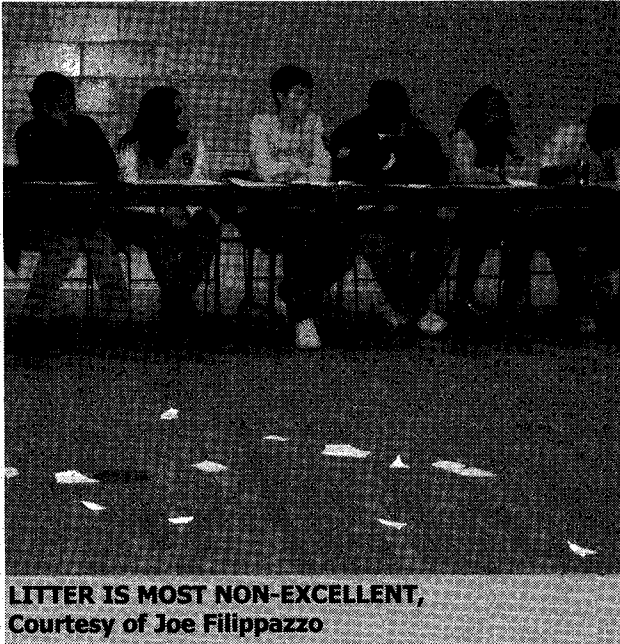
The Undergraduate Student Government has encountered problems as of late; the most visible of which involve the calls to impeach about a dozen people involved in the government. Over the past two weeks, Vlad Frants, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Jared Wong, USG President, and the entire Executive branch of the government, with the exception of Treasurer Raj Gupta, have been mentioned in impeachment talks. So far, the calls for impeachment have failed, but this is only the most prominent symptom of a larger issue: a large proportion of students in USG are immature jerks.

Essentially about 90% of every dispute within the organization can be traced back mud-slinging and the airing of personal vendettas. Every week, tension comes to a head at the USG Senate, the branch of government that is supposed to be the direct voice of the students. Unfortunately, several members of USG and the student body have usurped the meetings to use as a cudgel with which they thoughtlessly bash their enemies. The painfully sad fact of the matter is that not one of the numerous factions that have developed within the government are innocent.

Taken to its routes, the bitterness seems to start with President Wong and the Executive Council. Last spring, President Wong was narrowly elected to office in a runoff election against incumbent Sandy Curtis. Although you know that Sandy deserved to lose if you read *The Press* last year, many of her friends stayed on or joined the Executive Council this year. Logically, the Sandy loyalists don't like Jared very much, and have, according to Wong, shot down most of his ideas this semester. The outcome of all this is that President Wong and much of the Executive Council simply can't work together at this point; especially after Jared accused them of having "secret meetings" where they tried to plot his impeachment.

This animosity has spilled over to the

Senate and the Judiciary, as well. The majority of senators have allied themselves with Wong while acting as a verbal firing squad for the rest of the Executive Council who sits in on Senate meetings. While certain members of the Council have a penchant for making ridiculous statements, several senators seem to take professional comments too personally. At one meeting,



Freshman Representative Romual Jean-Baptiste contended that the Senate didn't get anything done. Not only is this statement insulting; it's wrong; over the semester, the Senate has addressed a number of issues and has passed some viable bills. On the other hand, however, the Senate has absolutely not lived up to its potential. In response to this comment, however, Senator Andrew Thompson decided to stand on ceremony and demand an apology from Jean-Baptiste; a demand that only served to exacerbate the tension between the two branches. At this point, USG members are one insult away

from challenging each other to a duel.

Of course, this isn't where the anger ends. President Wong and Chief Justice Frants have both the most public and the most spiteful rivalry going. By all accounts, this started when, according to Vlad, President Wong failed to fill several empty seats in the Judiciary. According to Jared, this job was delegated to ex-Executive Vice-President Esam al-Shareffi, who resigned before he finished the job. In response to what he sees as negligence on the part of President Wong, Vlad planned to call for Jared's impeachment at a Senate meeting two weeks ago. Instead, in response to what he viewed as an attempt to filibuster on Jared's part, Vlad stormed the podium and gave his speech despite being subsequently removed from the meeting. As we reported on last issue, the police were called in and the meeting then devolved into chaos. Because of this, Jared is now reacting to Vlad's charges against him by calling for the impeachment of Chief Justice Frants. At this point, the President and the Chief Justice are attacking each other via an e-mail list that includes members of USG and various media organizations.

The bottom line here is that people need to grow up. As members of government, people need to get used to criticism and disagreement. If someone has a different view than someone else, the proper response is to figure out why, not resort to flinging serious charges at each other or peppering every statement with ridiculous insults. Sadly, all of the bickering has drowned out the voice of the students, as Senate meetings are now a forum for a pathetic game of inter-branch one-upsmanship rather than the legislative body of the students. Once people can get past their petty, unimportant personal rivalries, real issues can be discussed and this government can become a viable entity.

Publications Board

By Michael Nevradakis

Continued from previous page

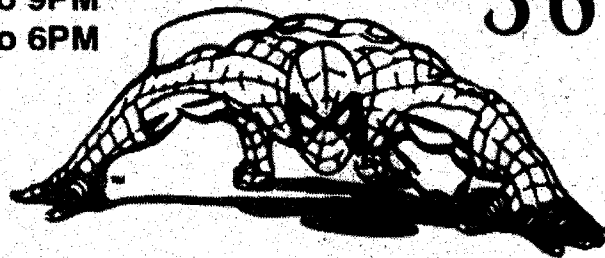
among the groups, which could lead to anything from sharing resources to more joint projects such as the Digital Video Festival.

Unfortunately, despite all that student media does on campus, its achievements are often overlooked (unless, seemingly, those achievements come from the *Statesman*). Televisions in the SAC lounge and dining hall and the Bleacher Club in the Union are tuned to Fox News and MTV-U, respectively, instead of SBU-TV. Radios across campus are tuned to local commercial radio stations instead of WUSB. Newspaper theft is an increasingly common occurrence on campus, and media groups are still battling to get additional rack space on campus, as well as press ID cards and parking permits.

Hopefully, the creation and recognition of a new Publications Board would be the first step towards recognizing all the work put forth by the media organizations and the student involved therein.

HOURS:
Every Day 10AM to 9PM
Sunday 10AM to 6PM

366-4440



FOURTH WORLD COMICS

33 Route 111, Smithtown, NY 11787
(Hillside Shopping Center)

NEW AND BACK ISSUES

STAR TREK • DR WHO • TOYS • STAR WARS
SCIENCE FICTION • POSTERS • T-SHIRTS
JAPANIMATION • VIDEOTAPES • MODEL KITS
MAGIC: THE GATHERING

10% DISCOUNT W/VALID
STONY BROOK ID CARD

Editorial Board

sub Commandante
 Joe Filippazzo

Managing Editor
 Mike Billings

Associate Editor
 Amberly Timperio

Business Manager
 Michael Prazak

News Editors
 Brittany Brockner
 David K. Ginn

Features Editor
 Melanie Donovan

Arts Editor
 Meri Wayne

Photo Editor
 Jowy Romano

Copy Editors
 Matthew Willemain
 Marcel Votlucka
 Nicole L. Barry

Production Manager
 Rob Pearsall

Webmaster
 Adam Hunter

Ombudsman
 Dustin Herlich

Staff

James Blonde	Jamie Mignone
Philip Camacho	Ali Nazir
Sarah Cassone	Mike Nevradakis
Willy Cibinskas	Jason Ng
Tom Clark	Andrew Pernick
Juliet DiFrenza	Laura Positano
Mike "Bublz" Fabbri	Matt Rammelkamp
Vincent Festa	Rachel Eagle Reiter
Rob Gilheany	Ian Rice
Sam Goldman	Joe Rios
Tara Lynn Groth	Joey Safdia
Jackie Hayes	Erik Salomon
Steph Hayes	Tom Senkus
Russ Heller	Keith C. Smith
Dan Hofer	Christine Tanaka
Adam Kearney	Andrew Thompson
Rob Kruper	Claudia Toloza
The Count LeComte	Morgan Wilding
Joan Leong	Chris Williams
Bill Lewis	Brian Wong
Antony Lin	Jessica Worthington
John Mascher	Eddie Zadorozny

Stony Brook University was at one time, and may still be considered number five in the nation in mechanical engineering. It would be safe to assume that all of the school's engineering programs would be of similar caliber. Stony Brook's Geology department houses experts in their fields on par with none other. Some of the professors in geosciences have been here since the inception of the university, and very well may have been around for the inception of the universe itself. There are no better experts on the geology of this area, and combined with our engineering departments, you would think that we would be able to do something like build new apartments on campus without destroying the local environment and putting thousand at risk. You would also think they could figure out a way to keep Roth Pond filled.

We should have known better. The administration of this school is famous for ignoring internal resources and instead handing out contracts, etc., to outside sources. I mean, how else can people get their due kickbacks these days? To start off, let's examine the fiasco with the drainage problem on north campus created by the new apartments. It's really simple. The buildings are not being built correctly, and because of almost purposeful-looking oversights, EXTRA construction is now needed to build these HUGE drainage ponds on north campus. In a previous editorial it was mentioned that these ponds were nearly overflowing, and so now a massive piping system had to be installed, along with a major project to further destroy campus greenery and build not mere drainage ponds, but full sized drainage lakes. These lakes are easily a hundred feet deep, and close to three hundred feet long, and almost as wide (if not bigger then that). All of this is because campus construction engineers ignored (some speculate simply never bothered to acquire) an environmental impact study. The pipe system is still completely blocking off any semblance of handicapped access to the university from the train station. Is that

not bad enough to elicit SOME response from admin? Disabled Student Services? Anyone?

The new drainage pools are now finally deep enough to puncture the clay cap that is in this area. The clay otherwise prevents water from seeping down into the aquifers and recharging them. There are places where there are breaks in this cap, which allow the aquifer to recharge slowly and naturally, but an artificial break in the clay, with no soil layers above it to help filter the water coming in poses a new threat. We drink the water under our feet. On Long Island we have some of the best, cleanest water in the world, and it comes from a fresh water aquifer under the island. The only source of water for this aquifer is rain that falls on Long Island. There are no underground connections with Connecticut, etc, etc. Runoff water is dirty, and often full of pollutants like heavy metals, motor oils, etc. By having a giant lake that drains completely and directly into the aquifer, you bypass the important steps of filtration that the natural soil layers provide. Thank you Stony Brook for poisoning the water.

For the record, Roth Pond is not a natural formation in any way shape or form, but based on how much the oh-so-brilliant marketing gurus employed by the university tout the pond to incoming freshmen, you'd think it would be better taken care of. Filling the pond constantly, as is done now, just wastes water. Instead of filling it all the time, how about we spend the money to repair the lining of the pond, so we don't have to fill it at all?

The university is supposed to have an environmental committee. Do they actually do ANYTHING? We here at *The Press* actually like Roth Pond and would like to see it kept on campus, but we'd like to see it kept properly and managed correctly. Maybe those in charge should save money and move that giant pipe from north campus all the way through the academic mall and have it refill Roth Pond instead of the sump between Nichols Road and the university.



Courtesy of Jowy Romano

The *Stony Brook Press* is published fortnightly during the academic year and twice during summer session by *The Stony Brook Press*, a student run non-profit organization funded by the Student Activity Fee.

The opinions expressed in letters, articles and viewpoints do not necessarily reflect those of *The Stony Brook Press* as a whole.

Advertising policy does not necessarily reflect editorial policy.

For more information on advertising and deadlines call (631)632-6451.

Staff meetings are held Wednesdays at 1:00 pm.

First copy free. For additional copies contact the Business Manager.

The Stony Brook Press
 Suites 060 & 061
 Student Union
 SUNY at Stony Brook
 Stony Brook, NY 11794-3200

(631) 632-6451 Voice

(631) 632-4137 Fax

Wanna Know Where You Can Stick Your Opinions?

(Hint: It rhymes with "Stained-Glasshole")

sbpress@ic.sunysb.edu

or website-it-up big time at

www.thepress.info



Front and Back cover graphics courtesy of Chris Williams



Let the Truth Be Told

By Andrew Thompson

Originally, I wasn't certain whether or not a USG Senator should write for the Press about their position. After I read what Rustum Nyquist had written, I wondered why not publish under my own name, instead of the alias 'Silence DoGood,' which I used to explain recent goings-on in USG regarding Esam's ill-intentioned actions. Rehashing that entire article is not what I'm going to do; rather I'd like to go over some of Sam Goldman's featured editorial "Come One, Come All to the USG Circus" which he was not brave enough to put his own name on.

There are a number of rules that he violated in that article, rules that the Press usually (but not always) follows. The Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics helps to instill proper reporting procedures. Rules like these are the "forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy" according to their website: <http://www.spj.org/ethics/code.asp>.

Number one on this list is to receive information from everyone and avoid mistakes or errors in reporting. Sam violated this basic rule of journalism, which is so easily seen in the misspelling of Irfan Syed's name. Mentioned in Sam's article also is how publishing the two articles: "USG Has Greatly Upset This Individual" and "Racism at Stony Brook" were deemed to be a mistake on their part. Well, I do know that when I handed in my article Sam approved of it and approved of the "Racism At Stony Brook" article. Yet now, they consider it a mistake that one should try telling the truth! Why the sudden turnaround Sam? Who told you it was a bad article Sam, because when I spoke to you that night you heartily approved of it. Personally, I am interested in what sources you used for that article, because I believe the public has a right to know. The Society of Professional Journalists even says on the link that, "The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability."

So Mr. Goldman, please tell us, who helped you with the information found in your editorial? I can tell you where I got my information for my article. Sitting in Senate, I could clearly see the lack of control Esam had over Senate meetings. Our new Chair actually allows our gallery to speak, while during the presentation of CORE, Esam admonished me from handing the microphone to members of the gallery. If you would like evidence of this, watch the tape of the event.

Who fed you your "information," Sam?

I find it rather strange that Sam changed his position regarding these articles so quickly, in the span of only a few short weeks. Another interesting thing I recently have discovered is that Sam Goldman is not a student at Stony Brook, so why is he writing an editorial that represents the opinions of the Stony Brook Press staff (who mostly are students). He states, "we haven't heard a peep about it." Well, here I am asking the question: If you are not a student, why do you write "editorials" that supposedly represent the interests of students? Please, a lot of people would greatly appreciate an answer to that question.

Nothing in my article "USG Has Greatly Upset This Individual" is false. I witnessed all of those events firsthand, including the illegal

Grievance Board, which I do have problems with, Esam's poor conduct of meetings, or anything else I wrote firsthand about. If Sam had any questions regarding my article, he could have asked me. The Press has my email address and could have emailed me with any concerns they had, instead of deciding to discredit its publication.

Another part of his editorial demeans my bill, called PALS, where he says, "they sure like their acronyms." I wrote that legislation, and it passed in a vote of 15 to 2. He sides with the Council, saying, "both Bills can be amended to reflect the Council's concerns." This part just bothers me, PALS does not affect any meeting of the Executive Council, but just Senate and Judiciary. Not one member of Executive Council has ever brought forth any problem they have with PALS, so I see no reason as to why it needs to be amended. If someone from Judiciary, Executive Council, or Senate has any difficulties with it, I will be more than happy to go over it with them and listen to any concerns one might have.

PALS was intended to allow students greater ability to attend more meetings, because the Council's argument that "if a student has an issue of importance, they will make the effort to stay for that day" honestly is very insensitive towards many students who go home during the holidays (they're called residents, they make up half this campus' population). I have always supported having transparency in government and in clubs in general.

That is, everyone should be able to go to any meeting that is open. Having said that, I find disturbing the implication of Mr. Goldman's editorial that Mr. Syed having attended a NYPIRG meeting is somehow evidence of a great conspiracy against NYPIRG? Honestly, Sam, you said it yourself that "this is Stony Brook University, not Soviet Russia" regarding alleged attacks against Chris Williams. Why the double standard?

Let me say as an active student that NYPIRG welcomes all who attend their many meetings, working against tuition hikes and other great programs. Eric Bruzaitis tries to get as many students as possible involved in the NYPIRG organization. I attend NYPIRG meetings to learn more about all they offer for students. An internship through NYPIRG is helpful to any Political Science major, and having the help of such a caring organization is comforting. With this in mind, I admonish anyone who insults NYPIRG and the people who work for it. For further proof about NYPIRG's role as a student advocacy group, read Juliet Di Frenza's article "NYPIRG: Building Student Power" which is far clearer and better written than Sam's confused and muddled journalism. Those working for NYPIRG realize the truth; I wonder whether Sam Goldman's thought process is anywhere as clear.

Sam's article insults me and the writer of the "Racism At Stony Brook University" article. He discounts the very real and deplorable actions of the former Executive Vice President of USG, Esam Al-Shareffi, and also ignores the racism that many Asians on campus experience each and every day. I used to hold Sam in high regard, as a journalist of integrity. His article

from last issue actually mentioned who he talked to about USG (Sandy Curtis) but now he has taken the wrong path, away from honesty and more towards rumors. He did not mention a single person from whom he received his "information" (other than speaking about Jackie Bachman's information regarding who had signed the stipend declaration).

One day, I hope I'll see a retraction or apology for what Sam Goldman called an editorial. I know that he is capable of much better, since he is a good writer, but sadly confused and misguided.

INDEX

Featured Commentary	Pages 6 & 7
The Festival of Lights	Pages 8 & 9
What's Journalism?	Page 13
Red Sox to the Rescue!	Pages 19 - 21
The Living Tribunal	Page 24
Ask Amberly Jane	Page 25
Anthropomorphic US Constitution	Page 26
And lots more!	

Personal Attacks? Wild Accusations? Laughable ignorance?
 You don't think *The Press* will let Andrew get away with this do you?
 Read Executive Editor Joe Filippazzo's response on the next page! Huzzah!

My Dearest Andrew,

You are an idiot. This article of yours is unfit to print as an article seeing as how there is at least one mistake in every paragraph.

Paragraph 1: The way editorial policy works is that the entire board decides the topic of the editorial and then one or two people actually write it. He or she then submits the draft to the board who then looks it over and makes sure that it reflects the views of a majority of the e-board. As policy (check SPJ) you do not put a name to an editorial. And by the way, you're a true hero to the students by leaving your name off of the propaganda you call an article submission.

Paragraph 2: The misspelling was a mistake and our apology was extended personally to Irfan. And by the way, we'd really appreciate it if you didn't tell us how to run a newspaper. We've been doing this for 25 years. Thanks.

Paragraph 3: We didn't say that printing the article itself was a mistake. We felt that allowing you to hide behind an uninspired pseudonym was a mistake. Don't think that you're redeeming yourself by "revealing" your true identity when you mistakenly feel you have valid things to say. And by the way, the sources for the article are Joe Filippazzo and Mike Billings, the Executive and Managing Editors, respectively, who have been to every Senate Meeting in question.

Paragraph 4: The reason Sam is writing an editorial...is that he is an editor. The e-board reserves the right to appoint an Editor Emeritus and seeing how Sam was our Managing Editor all last year, we feel that he's more than qualified. Even so, Sam Goldman, as a former student, is working more in the interests of the community by writing that editorial than the obstructionist, Orwellian faction you currently associate with.

Paragraph 5: The editorial never accused the article in question of being false. In fact, the editorial states clearly that the bills "have merit." If we felt that it was false, we would contact you for corrections, as I am doing so right now.

Paragraph 6: I see that you consulted the Society of Professional Journalists for your retort. By the way, former Executive Editor Dustin Herlich is currently the President of Stony Brook's SPJ chapter. Actually pick up some literature instead of doing a Google search for a quotable excerpt you could distort so it would reinforce your argument. You might learn that editorials are the opinion of the paper. Even if the whole of USG is fucking charmed by "your" legislation, we still have an opinion: "your" legislation is greatly flawed.

Paragraph 7: In regard to the NYPIRG statement? Mr. Syed has vocalized to me personally (and I WILL sign an affidavit, Irfan) on numerous occasions of the "dis-information" that NYPIRG members have been "spreading" in the office of *The Press*. All of a sudden he wants to help NYPIRG with student advocacy? What a nice guy! By the way, StonyBrookSucks.com stores IP addresses. These tactics are not very well thought out.

Paragraph 8: I know you are actually interested in NYPIRG, Andrew. We spoke about it in depth. But if you care for NYPIRG so much, do as *The Press* does and stand up for them. Don't allow a group of bitter, uninformed students with their own agenda to trample all over the good name of NYPIRG. By the way, you are in direct violation of the guidelines put forth by the Society of Professional Journalists by spelling Jacquie Bachman's name wrong in your article. Honestly, Andrew, why the double standard?

Paragraph 9: It is an editorial; not "Sam's article." I personally was one of his sources. Racism is terrible but it was not mentioned because it was not pertinent. *The Press* also thinks that the lack of live jazz venues on Long Island is a travesty but that too would not be relevant in the editorial in question.

Paragraph 10: If you want an apology, here it is...

The Stony Brook Press is deeply, deeply sorry to the students of Stony Brook University for allowing this disgusting political trench warfare with no apparent goal, rhyme or reason to continue for so long. We will not apologize for anything we have printed. Instead we are sorry for all the things we *did not* say. Our silence while we not only had knowledge of, but were invited to secret "pre-Senate" meetings was a mistake. Our delayed response to the forums for unfounded personal attacks was a mistake. Our inaction while Mr. Syed practically conducted his Senators (including you) from the gallery was a mistake. And our underestimation of the conniving, despicable, and unintelligent group of people you associate with to be anything more than a veritable cancer to student life and productivity was a mistake. We can only hope that the students accept our apology and see these people for what they are. You (and you know who you are) are not advocates of the students. You are petty, sneaky and embarrassing individuals who should not be involved in student politics. And Andrew: stick to writing underwhelming music reviews.

Sincerely,
Joe Filippazzo
Executive Editor,
The Stony Brook Press

Featured Commentary

When Checks and Balances Fail, Everyone Suffers

By Jeff Licitra

As the fall semester comes to end, each and every one of us as students find ourselves evaluated by the people who hold us accountable: our professors. They evaluate us for our dedication as students and the work we've put into their class (or lack thereof). Likewise, the end of the fall semester is a good time for the Undergraduate Student Government to be evaluated by the people who hold them accountable: the student body.

The Senate

There is no better place to start in evaluating USG than the Senate. While "business as usual" may happen on the 2nd floor of the SAC, the Senate has become a forum where everyone, no matter what their affiliation with the USG, seems to convene. This has resulted in Senate meetings being run more by members of the Gallery who wish to pursue their own agendas rather than the Senators, or even the Senate Chair himself. The recent appointment of Jeff Kruszyna to run the Senate should have been a fresh start for a group that so badly needed one. However, that hasn't been the case.

There are two ways to correct this.

The first, is that the parliamentary procedures need to be enforced and applied to everyone equally. This means that the new Executive Vice President and Senate Chair Jeff Kruszyna can not selectively enforce the two minute speaking rule. Any one who watches the tape of the November 30th Senate meeting will easily see that the time allotted to anyone who was speaking in support of the impeachment of the Executive Council seemed to run as long as the speaker needed to finish. This was well over the two-minute limit every time. While, anyone else, myself included, was hushed up promptly.

This selective enforcement of the rules is a violation of the 1st Amendment. *In a public meeting of the student legislature, no one opinion should ever trump any other by discriminately receiving more time.* We all have to play by the rules, and no one person or point of view should ever be held above them.

The second way to correct this is contingent on the first: if the rules are applied equally and fairly to everyone, then what has become a silent one-third of the Senators who seldom speak if at all during the meetings will be able to become more vocal. In an environment where dissenting opinions are treated like second-class citizens it is no wonder that Senators seem reluctant to stand up to the Gallery contingent. Anyone who stands up and expresses an opinion that is contrary to those members of the Gallery who run the floor, seem to find themselves embattled by personal attacks from the podium.

I for one can speak as someone who has been made an example of. At the November 30th meeting, directly after speaking against the impeachment of the Executive Council, I was accused of making a "borderline racist remark" by Mr. Irfan Syed. The accusation is absurd not so much because of its inaccuracy, but because the remarks Mr. Syed were referring to were made two weeks ago and had absolutely nothing to do with the motion being debated.

I told Mr. Syed in a one on one conversation two weeks prior that I fervently disagreed with his motion, the ends of which were to remove all Equal Opportunity Program members from the USG, that it was "economic discrimination, and that it could even be construed as being against affirmative action." Whether I misspoke by saying affirmative action or not - I was speaking against discrimination of all kinds - and that in no way warranted Mr. Syed calling me a racist.

What is most alarming though is that Mr. Syed's remarks were in no way relevant or "germane" to the

When Checks and Balances Fail Continued...

By Jeff Licitra

motion at hand. His remarks served no further purpose than to try and eliminate my credibility through the use of slander. They should have never been said because Mr. Kruszyna should have never allowed them to be said. This is because they had absolutely nothing to do with the motion at hand (which was the impeachment of the Executive Council).

Thus, the situation becomes clear. *Speech is only free and democratic when all forms of speech are treated equally and those who speak are not subject to harassment. Without free and democratic speech we cannot expect to have a Senate with real debate about the issues that affect the Stony Brook undergraduate community.* These are the relevant issues (food costs, campus life etc.) that have the 13,000+ students of Stony Brook University writing the Princeton Review that they're the second unhappiest in the nation. (Administrators, if you're reading this, I have a tape of that Senate meeting on hand to give you.)

President Jared Wong

Much like Mr. Wong, I wish I could take the time in this editorial to highlight all that he has accomplished. However, I cannot because he has not shown the leadership deserving of such a compliment. While he has been incredibly supportive of the Student Activities Board, made the office of the USG President increasingly open to students (all of which he rightfully deserves credit for), his achievements are far overshadowed by his negligence.

Case and point: At the November 30th Senate meeting he wrongfully accused those members of the Executive Council that had signed a formal document requesting his veto of two bills as being the "forces at work" that seek to undermine the student government." He cited a secret meeting yet there was no secret meeting that had anything to do with that document. Frankly, for the sake of argument, I don't care if those two bills were the best two bills to ever happen to USG (they weren't): no one should respond to a formal and professional request in writing by tearing it into 8 pieces at the feet of the Executive Council during a public meeting.

Furthermore, Mr. Wong, in his accusation of the letter being signed at a secret meeting, went far enough to say that the point of the meeting was to impeach him. It was these false accusations which served as a basis for Senator Vincent Rasulo to motion to impeach the Council. However, no secret meeting in connection with the letter ever happened and the letter did not mention anything remotely related to Mr. Wong's accusations. The November 30th meeting was wasted on a fraudulent motion with its ongoing instances of personal attacks. Mr. Wong took behaving unprofessionally to a new level when he declared in response to former Vice President Esam Al-Shareffi's statement of his resignation: "Wow, Esam, what a tear jerker."

Mr. Wong, making false accusations of your Executive Council, deriding former members of your Council with sarcastic remarks - all in public meetings - constitutes "a wrongful act of substance." Mr. Wong owes an apology to the Executive Council, The Senate, and the members of the student body who are under the impression that his accusations were true. It's important to point out that, most of the time, rumors in politics are more plentiful in the air than oxygen, so don't inhale too much political air. Rumors are not a basis for impeachment and have no place in a "state of the University address" at a Senate meeting.

And as for the Spring 2005 semester, please, no more brutish displays of personality. What can possibly be accomplished by the impeachment of the entire Executive Council? The government would be effectively crippled without the Council, so the motion wasn't in the best interest of the students. Mr. Wong said on the campaign trail last semester that he was embarrassed by the affairs of the Undergraduate Student Government and how the former President conducted herself. Mr. Wong, I think it's safe to say on behalf of the student body and the administration: we're embarrassed.

The Judiciary and Vlad Frants

When Vlad Frants first stood up at the Senate meeting on November 30th he made a valid point: there are three branches of government - and because much of what is dysfunctional with USG right now is arguably related to the fact that it operates in direct violation of its Constitution - the problems at hand could be settled in the Judiciary.

For example, Mr. Frants rightly pointed out that Mr. Wong failed to appoint the justices necessary to fulfill vacancies in the Judiciary in the first 30 days while school is in session. Thus, placing Mr. Wong in direct violation of the bylaws for the Judiciary and a negligence of Presidential responsibilities as outlined in the Constitution.

Beyond the bylaws though, Mr. Frants is pursuing a larger debate which every member of the Senate, student body, and administration should pay attention to. This debate focuses on what happens when there is a failure of checks and balances in the government. In his emails he has cited the Bar of New York that "grounds for impeachment extend to acts that undermine the degree of public confidence in the probity of executive officers that is essential to the effectiveness of government in a free society."

A perfect example of this failure unfolded in front of all our eyes on the meeting of November 30th. A Vice President ran the meeting who was appointed without the consult of the Executive Council; the President made comments that were a "wrongful act of substance" towards his Executive Council; a Senator motioned to impeach that Executive Council

based on 100% false accusations without ever giving the Council a chance to defend itself; and finally a Senate Chair ran the meeting with no respect to parliamentary procedure and the 1st Amendment. Now, read the quote above from the Bar of New York again and ask yourself if Mr. Frants' basis for impeachment was correct?

So, now you might ask, where does Mr. Frants' disruption of the meeting fit into all this? I'm glad you asked. It fits perfectly into the picture of dysfunction described above. Mr. Wong and Mr. Kruszyna were aware of Mr. Frants' attention to impeach. What more of an effective filibuster than to allow for the impeachment of the Executive Council to proceed on a false basis and to keep the Gallery comments flowing with personal attacks.

Here's where I come in again: I handed the microphone to Mr. Frants, ceding whatever remaining seconds I had to him because the Chair repeatedly refused to recognize him. (For any of you who are curious, ceding time is against the rules, however on the tapes members of the Commuter Student Association do this with one another constantly. I had no reason to think it was against the rules and neither did Mr. Frants).

Now, I'll support what Mr. Frants had to say but I will be equally critical of how he said it. Disrupting the meeting accomplished nothing except to ruin his credibility. In all fairness though, Mr. Frants was next to speak on the list and should have been recognized. His reading was perfectly civil for the first two minutes or so. However, take a look at that tape again. Members of the Gallery Irfan Syed and John Lawson started yelling over Mr. Frants. Mr. Lawson even jumps in front of the camera, speaking directly into it at one point. The Chair lost control of the meeting to members of the Gallery who may have been indirectly running it anyway and total pandemonium ensued.

One can too easily argue that this is solely the fault of Mr. Frants who was at the center of all this. The Senate already motioned and attempted to impeach him last week (but failed without 16 Senators) citing "wrongful act of substance."

Yet, this colossal breakdown in order that was restored only when the University Police arrived is what happens when checks and balances break down, when Senate meetings are not conducted constitutionally, and free speech rules enforced selectively. The rules and the Constitution are there for a reason: they exist as a contract with the State University of New York that gives our government legitimacy. Elected student leaders should abide by it and lead by example. If they don't - just like our professors at the end of this semester - the undergraduate students must have a means to hold them accountable.

STONY BROOK RECYCLES!

PAPER

- NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, CATALOGUES
- WHITE/COLOR PAPER
- NO GLOSSY OR WAXY PAPER!

PLASTIC

- BOTTLES & JUGS (MUST BE EMPTY AND CRUSHED)
- NO STYROFOAM, FOOD CONTAINERS

STONY BROOK RECYCLES!

PAPER RECEPTACLES

ARE ON MAIN CAMPUS AND SOME DORMS

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB ENCOURAGES YOU TO RECYCLE!

Hanukah Mubarak!

By Chris Williams

The night started with a chorus of sonorous voices. The crowd shuffled to get candles and encircled rows of chairs. They lit their candles and shared flames in procession. Then, with an uneven hush, they were quiet.

The Festival of Lights 2004 coincided with World AIDS Day (December 1, 2004). In honor of those that lived with AIDS, the ceremony commenced with a moment of silence in the lobby of the Student Activities Center.

The evening started with the sharing of stories about the day's event. For example, there were comments about the presentation of Rory Kennedy, human rights advocate and filmmaker. Also, there was a story about a schoolteacher, a Stony Brook University alumnus. The telling of his story ended with a request: That is, AIDS should be treated as a condition, not a stigma. People with this illness should not hide from treatment. A fear of help is a promise of a lonely, silent death.

Rabbi Joseph Topek of the Interfaith Center and Daniel Tuite of the Catholic Campus Ministry hosted the evening's festivities. They alternated in introducing each group.

The themes of the evening were diversity, community, interactivity, and, well, lights. The extinguishing of the symbolic flames led to a speech by Dean of Students Jerry Stein. He urged people to promote differences and listen to other cultures. Shortly afterward, the impassioned speech of Mujeeb Khan urged people to fast from themselves. Representing the Muslim Student Association, he explained that Ramadan was not just about abstinence from food, drink and sex during the daylight hours. Ramadan is also a time of "opening up the lights of yourself," Mujeeb said. Ramadan is a time of change, and my experience with Ramadan shows that personal changes occur when one works for them.

To celebrate this period of continuing change, Sister Sanaa Nadim of the Islamic Society of North America discussed the blessing of Eid-ul-Fitr, "The Day of Breaking Fasting." She mentioned that there is a blessing in fasting.

Noah Aronin led the students of Hillel in discussing the explanation of Hanukah. In a humble voice, he explained the miracle of the oil, as students lit the nine candles of the menorah, a nine-prong candlestick holder. What is the miracle? A vial with a day's worth of oil lasted for eight days! How did it happen? Well, it's a miracle.

Three songs by the Hillel choir followed the explanation of Hanukah. The trio ended with a lively chorus, where they playfully tossed melodies at each other.

For the Catholic Campus Ministry, Daniel Tuite and Ali Mehrabian discussed the

meaning of candles for Christmas. They said that the candles represent the light of God entering the world. Then, an acoustic guitar played in a hushed room. A female duet sang. As their voices climbed each note, the noise melted. Angelic sounds filled the room as the song reached a luminous crescendo. The audience fell into a reverent silence. They were mesmerized, and the trance ended with appreciative cheers and respectful applause.

"Assorted donuts aren't exactly cultural, but I can be wrong."

Yanique Forrest and Brother Clark Berge of the Protestant Campus Ministry discussed the value of respecting education within their faith. Similarly, the holiday of Kwanzaa also values faith. Although Kwanzaa is not a religious observance, Imani, one of the seven principles of the "Nguzo Saba," represents faith.

Tiffani Franklin, Cecile Gibson and Kamar Plunkett of the UNITI Cultural Center described each principle and the significance of Kwanzaa. They said that Kwanzaa is a time of familial gathering and collective celebration of African heritage. In observance of Kwanzaa, the red, black, and green candles of the kinara were lit. Each of the seven candles represented each of the seven principles of Nguzo Saba. The harmonious performance of the Stony Brook Gospel choir concluded their explanations and drew applause from the crowd.

Dr. Meena Sridhar joked about how the story of the Ramayana "takes two years to tell." The Ramayana is an ancient Indian epic that is about as long as the Christian Bible. One individual also wrote it. This epic describes the basis for the festival of Diwali, "A string of lights."

The Ramayana recounts the many adventures of Prince Rama, an avatar of Krishna (an incarnation of God). Diwali celebrates Rama's defeat of the demon Ravana and his victorious return to his capital in India. Simply put, Diwali celebrates the classic story of good versus evil, and the good guys throw an awesome party! In celebration, desserts are eaten, such as "laddus." Laddus is a round dessert that consists of chick-pea flour, butter, and sugar with raisins, almonds, pistachios, and cashew nuts.

Dr. Sridhar further described how earthen clay lamps are lit. Every town and vil-

lage throughout India is covered in lights for Diwali. She remarked that Diwali is a non-lethal way of stemming the insect problem in India.

Dr. Sridhar's joke flowed into the Hindu dance that was led by Mira Kinariwala. The dance was delayed by repeated attempts to start the music. With joyful faces, the six dancers waited for their cue. When the music started, they emerged in different positions. A slow start grew into rapid movement. The subtle colors of their costumes whipped and flew, as they glided and hopped. The performance ended with the dancers extending their arms. Their hands held lights. As seen from the front, the first dancer appeared to have 12 arms with 24 glowing hands. The amazement of the crowd burst into applause.

The description of the Winter Solstice started with me running to DJ James Blonde, the underground cartoonist and a fellow Press staff member. Toward the end of the Hindu dance, my Press digital camera encouraged me to change its battery. Apparently, the battery was dying from its multiple uses that day. To capture the rest of the festival, I ran behind the stage to get my digital camera. As I fumbled through my pockets for the camera I heard one of the hosts say the following words, "The winter solstice...Chris Williams for SOCIA..."

My head shot up. I reached into my pocket for the camera, and I looked at DJ Blonde. I ran alongside half the seated crowd to meet him. In seconds, I gave him a primer on how to use my camera.

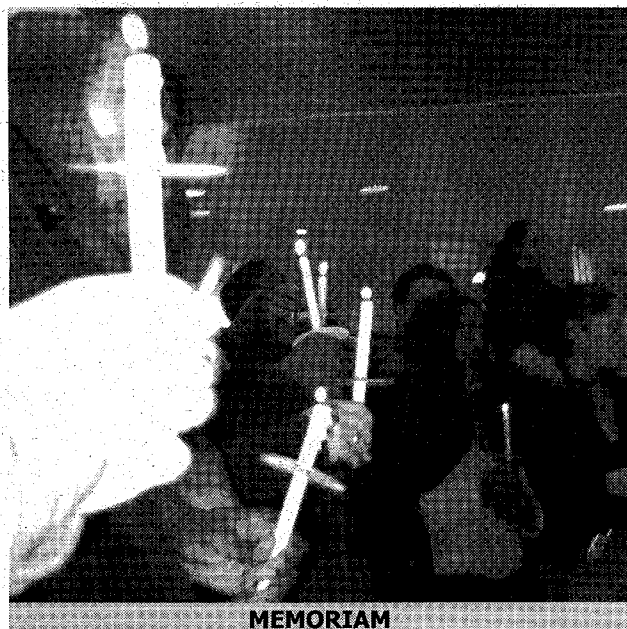
"Press the silver button," I said, showing him the correct one.

I snatched my speech from the floor at DJ Blonde's feet (I saw the speech for the first time about five minutes before the festival started). Then, I ran alongside half the crowd to reach the stage.

I put the speech on the podium and leaned into the microphone. What to say? "It's just my luck to follow the Hindu dancers," I remarked. There was laughter.

In an even voice, I started to talk. I started to describe how the winter solstice, or Soyal, showed the birth of a new solar year (this aspect is in contrast to Ramadan, which is in accordance to a lunar calendar). I explained what Soyal meant to pre-historic people. The sun was a precious source of life to them. To the Hopi and Zuni Native Americans, the winter solstice ushered the visit of kachinas. It is believed that these supernatural guardian spirits left their world in the mountains to stay among their respective Native American communities for six months. The kachinas would leave by the summer solstice.

The key ceremony of Soyal is



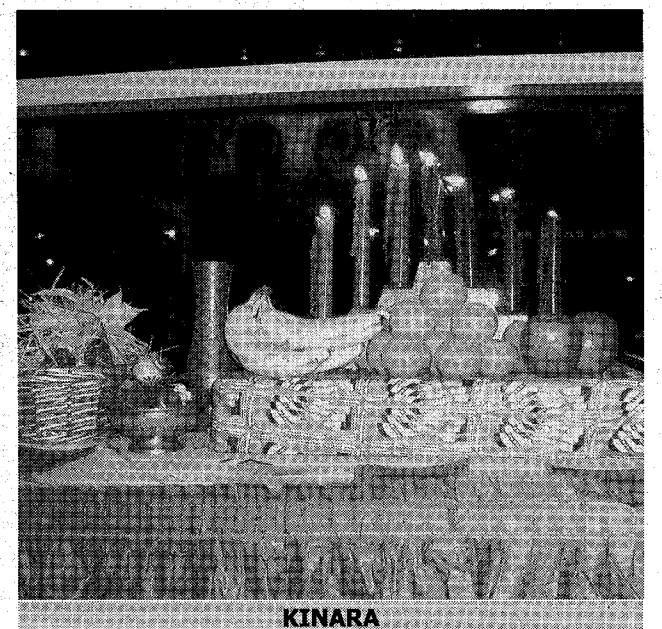
MEMORIAM



GOSPEL CHOIR

All photos from the Festival of Lights, December 1, 2004

Courtesy of Chris Williams



KINARA

Hanukah Mubarak!

By Chris Williams

Soyalangwul, or "Establishing Life Anew for All the World." This ceremony assisted the sun in returning to its summer path and initiating the life plan of the year. I started to tremble, but I continued to explain.

For Soyalangwul, activities occur in a kiva, a ceremonial structure that is often round and partly underground. The activities include reverent silence, fasting, humility and eating sacred food to achieve spiritual focus. Also, prayer sticks are made and planted. Each prayer stick is called after an ancestor or deity. I trembled more as I poured my energy into my words.

Individuals can create their own Soyal in many ways. First, one can be respectful of the earth. One can also communicate with those that are close to one's past, present and future. A review of one's past behavior can reveal where self-improvements can be made. Developing a plan for the upcoming year can be helpful. Last, an understanding of how each aspect of our world and universe works in the "Great Play" helps to put ourselves in perspective. We all have a responsibility to ourselves and to others. Soyal is a time of respecting others, as Native American Elders taught.

Last, Cheryl Chambers of the Dean of Students Office spoke. She asked that people reach out to others, and with that the festival concluded.

Then, the audience migrated into the auditorium for food. I briefly saw the display of food because I went on the line. I mostly saw plenty of hungry people at the reception. Each of the groups was supposed to have food that was representative of the group's observance. For example, there were donuts for Hanukah and laddus for Diwali. The tray filled with Indian desserts dwindled down to one lone cube. Then it disappeared, when I ate it.

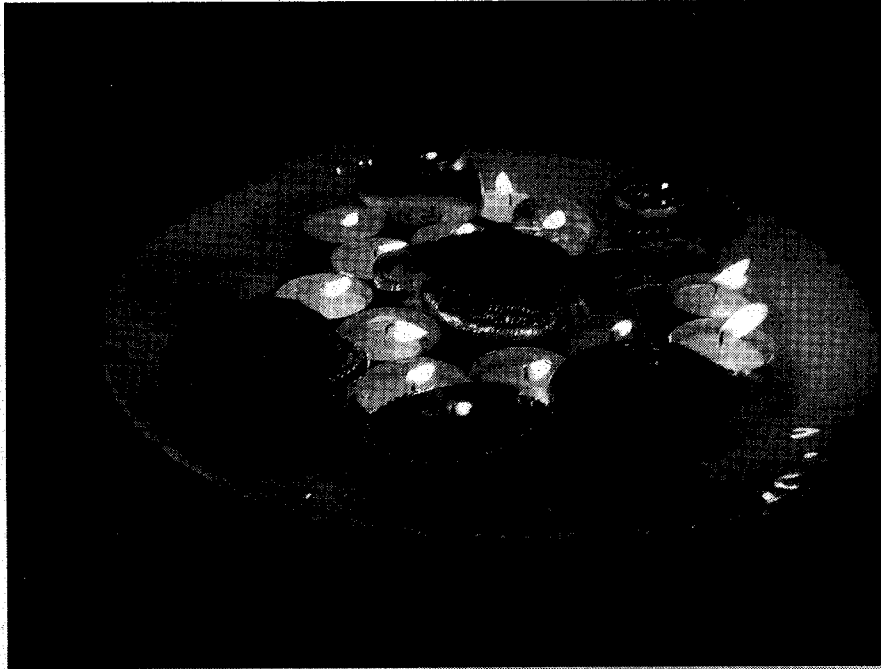
The dessert was a little dry. It was also incredibly sweet and exotic. I could understand why the four long trays of Indian desserts vanished so quickly; the sole remnant of the desserts was their honey sauce. I only had one. Ah, such is life...

People sat at tables, ate, and talked to Diversity Fellows. The Diversity Fellows are faculty and staff that tried to promote intercultural discourse. I stood to the side and watched while eating some food with DJ Blonde.

I admit that reaching to others can be difficult. In interacting with individuals of many on-campus groups, I have seen how people are often afraid of what is different. Cheryl

Chambers paraphrased Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "People don't get along because they are afraid to communicate with each other."

At times, I have felt hesitant to interact with others. However, I do not focus on the groups, I focus on the individuals of the groups; I try to focus on the person. A person is not the group that he or she attends. A person is just a member of that group. That's the way I approach it.



DIWALI CANDLES,
Courtesy of Chris Williams

Often, people confine themselves within pre-conceived notions of how others are. More reflective and embracing ideas are dominated by more restrictive ideas. Conventions are called traditions. However, the purpose of the traditions is not questioned. Complacency continues to maintain the status quo.

Some people preach community, but they do not adhere to the idea. Some people do not use the opportunities to foster community. However, some people do recognize these chances. At the reception of the festival, Sister Sanaa told me, "Differences aren't barriers. They're bridges."

The Festival of Lights is an attempt at promoting community. As a member of the Festival of Lights committee and a student, I believe that there could have been more student involvement. The students of each of the groups can rally together to develop their own collective festival. That is more democratic.

The current Festival of Lights is a good way to start a semi-formal interaction of different cultures. It is a start. I have learned that

there is much to be learned from each of the represented groups. I have learned because of my interactions. I know at least one or two members of the groups, and I talk to these people regularly.

I have listened to Mujeeb describe the meanings and beauty of Ramadan. I have spoken to Noah and Rabbi Topek about Judaism. I have spoken with Dr. Meena Sridhar about the Ramayana in her office. As a matter-of-fact, I have spoken with her husband about the Ramayana in his office, too.

A complete understanding of a culture and, more intimately, a person does not come from a five-minute interaction. Understanding takes time, patience, and effort. At the Festival of Lights, I saw the people that I care about try their best to allow others to understand their perspectives. In attending the Festival of Lights, I presented. I was a spectator and a participant. I was a teacher and a student. I had different roles because I choose to play different roles.

The Festival of Lights is not enough. The benefits of Ramadan can never truly be explained. They are experienced; they are felt. When one makes the effort to understand another, the benefits can be felt. Rabbi Joe said about the Festival of Lights, "It's not like sitting in your friend's living room... It's great to see students share their holiday with others." I agree. Student and Hillel choir member Jennifer Eng said, "The program shows

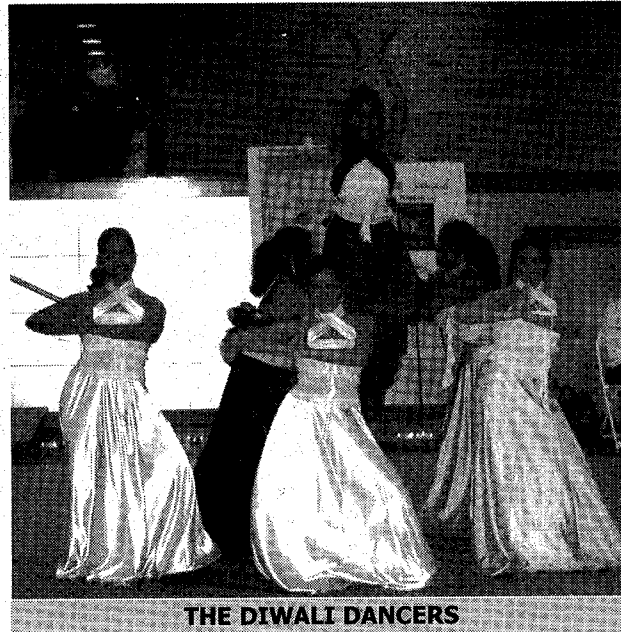
the diversity of the university—one of the better aspects of the school. There are great opportunities to learn about other cultures." I agree. However, opportunities must be used in order to be effective. Mina Kinariwala said, "Assorted donuts aren't exactly cultural, but I can be wrong." Perhaps. However, they are a tasty start.

Rohatsu was mentioned at the Festival of Lights. However, it did not have a presentation. The program revealed information about it. Rohatsu commemorates the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama, The Buddha. It is the main holiday of the Zen Buddhist of Japan. Buddhist's teachings show that people can realize their own inherent potential to become as enlightened as the Buddha.

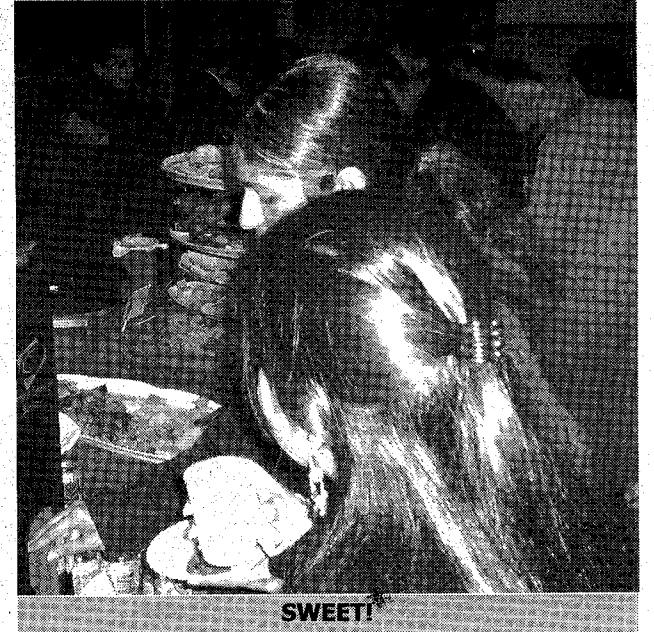
Cheryl Chambers said that the Festival of Lights is a "glimpse of what the world is like if people share and cared for each other." It is a glimpse, a very brief glimpse. However, a little light is what a person needs to move toward something different.



Y'ALL MAKE SOME NOISE!



THE DIWALI DANCERS



SWEET!

Bush Has No Morals

By Joe Safdia

As you read the title, you probably thought to yourself, "Duh," "Obviously," or "Brain dead monkeys could have figured that out so stop wasting my time." And yet, in a stunning display of irony, President George W. Bush was reelected in the 2004 Presidential Election for having "morals." Many people looked at Bush and saw a church-going Christian who read his Bible every night, believed that killing an unborn fetus is murder, and believed in the sanctity of a marriage between a man and a woman. They conclude from these viewpoints that Bush is a man with good, solid morals who values our lives above all else. Unfortunately, in trying to be respectful of those who do not share my viewpoints, all I can say is that his views on these issues, especially on gay marriages and abortion, are the most ridiculous things I have ever heard. His reasons for his viewpoints, such as the sanctity of marriage, are absolute bullshit. Whether or not he is a liar or he truly believes the religious propaganda he spews doesn't matter. It's not gays and lesbians, women who abort their fetuses, or us in the blue states who are immoral. It's our president.

Don't believe me that Bush isn't as morally superior as the red states seem to think he is? Let's look at the issue of gay marriage. He wants to propose a CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, yeah that's right, a CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT to ban gay marriages. Already that should make everyone cringe, even people who are one hundred percent straight (I'm one of those people, by the way). Amendments to the Constitution are supposed to move us forward in Civil Rights, not backwards. Heck, the first ten are even called the Bill of RIGHTS. How can someone even propose an amendment to take away someone's rights just because of their sexual preference?

Why would someone want to propose such a backwards law? Bush's excuse was that gay and lesbian marriages violated the sanctity of marriage, that marriage is a holy institution recognizing the union between a man and woman. Now please, Mr. Bush, I know you're very busy committing genocide overseas, but you could have at least taken the time to think up a better excuse. When was there ever "sanctity" when it came to marriage? Many people believe that marriage was always a union in the eyes of God between a man and a woman who love each other and want to start a family. But it is only very recently in human history that love and marriage even began to, as the song says, "go together like a horse and carriage". Even today, in many countries, tens of thousands of marriages are arranged by parents in order to make strategic alliances with other families. The bride and groom barely know each other, let alone love each other. And even today, even at the exact moment that the words "sanctity of marriage" rolled off Dubya's black tongue, the majority of marriages today are POLYGYMOUS. That means one person with many partners. How beautiful.

But let's talk about marriages in our own country, too. We are no more holy than the rest of the world. In the United States, a whopping 50% of all marriages end in divorce! Many mar-

riages don't even take place in a church, temple, mosque, or any other alleged house of God, but in Las Vegas. And the priest is Elvis. And the bride and groom wake up the next morning with a hangover, look at each other, and wonder who the other is. And after all this, we're supposed to believe that it's the gays and lesbians that are desecrating this supposedly holy and sacred union? Bullshit! It was never sacred in the first place.



nyuk, nyuk, nyuk,
Courtesy of about.com

And just the fact that the sanctity of anything has even been mentioned, the fact that something is being outlawed because it's not "sacred" and "holy," is basically a spit in the face of those who fought and died to form this country. The First Amendment, yes the FIRST Amendment that we ever even thought up, the Amendment which defines what this country was founded on, bestows upon us the separation of church and state as well as the freedom of religion. This means that it is unconstitutional for a President to make laws based on religious beliefs and to impose his beliefs onto us. And since we have the freedom to choose in regards to religion, maybe some of us don't want to live in his archaic, Christianized version of the world. He knows perfectly well and good that his argument is the one of the stupidest things he has ever said since the bastardization of the word "nuclear," but it doesn't matter because his only goal here is to Americanize and Christianize the world. And banning gay marriages is Step #1.

Now on to Step #2! Eliminating abortions! Bush is pro-life. That means he does not support abortion unless the mother was raped or is being threatened to abort the fetus. The argument here is that whether or not the fetus has been born yet, it is a living human being. Killing it, Bush and many other anti-abortionists argue, is murder. It is infanticide. Many people feel this way, and I respect that. But when Bush says it, the argument suddenly becomes less credible—ridiculous, actually. I'm actually amazed by the overwhelming

hypocrisy. Although it was on the topic of stem cell research (another hot topic due to the fact that human embryos, or fetuses, die as a result) a friend of mine said that she supports Bush and not Kerry (this was coming up on election day) because Kerry supports stem cell research and that he is killing embryos. I responded, "But Bush kills countries." Whether the issue is abortion or stem cell research, it's all the same. How can some rich guy in a suit tell a woman here in New York, or any other part of the country for that matter, that she can't terminate an unwanted pregnancy, claiming it to be infanticide, when he has already committed genocide and showed it on television? Roughly 100,000 Iraqi civilians have died in his war for oil, and that is genocide. It seems that Bush isn't the one with the morals here.

Even without his blatant hypocrisy, it is still not right to deny a woman the choice to do what she wants with her own body. Yes, that is what Bush wants to do. He wants to overturn Roe v. Wade and deny a woman the RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHAT SHE WANTS TO DO WITH HER OWN BODY!!!! What the fuck!? What's next? The death penalty for masturbating? It is her body and her choice. I understand that people feel the need to protect the fetus, I actually commend this feeling, but not at the expense of the rights of the mother. What if the woman in question is an underage girl from a broken home and the baby's father ran away? Bush basically gives such people the middle finger. What about the number of women who will attempt to perform the abortion themselves, as a result, and end up instead destroying their uterus in the process? What about the number of women who will do drastic things such as abandon their baby, or leave them in a dumpster? Or the number of children who will grow up as orphans? No child deserves that. A woman's ability to choose whether or not to have an abortion can and will have a positive affect on the number of loving households as well as decrease the number of broken homes and orphans in the world. But why would he want such nice things like that? The Christian Church frowns on abortion and, therefore, so does the law. And so must you. Otherwise you're a terrorist. So says Reverend, I mean President Bush.

And as a note to all those religious hicks in the South who say people who are pro choice are murderers, to be pro choice is not the same as supporting abortion. It's supporting a woman's right to choose what to do with her own body. Just to clear that up. Anyone reading this might think this is obvious, but some people don't seem to know this.

President Bush has been reelected because people believe that he was a man of good morals, which has me wondering where these people have been for the last four years. Not following the news, apparently. Everything Bush has told us to sound like he was literally the better man to run for office has been contradicted by every action he has taken since he first took office. And now, armed with his "morals," he will dig us deeper into the hole of poverty, pollution, and war. And it will be a hole too deep to climb out of.



Super Secret Plan to Thwart Catholicism By Way of Strategically Placed Italics

The farce has gone on for too long. The Catholics must be stopped. Over the last 2000 years, they have used empty promises of pearly gates and life after death to funnel the money of millions of poor people into this multi-billion dollar industry of lies and deceit. You know what's after death? *More death!* That's why I have put theses plans to smite the Catholics into motion - but I can't do it alone. Follow my simple 16 step plan and together we can put the twisted ideals of that charlatan, Jesus of Nazareth to rest.

- Joe Filippazzo

Mr. Bush Gorges To Washington

By Josh Stern

President Bush shocked the nation today when he announced that he has spent the last four years on a "fairly serious binge." The news set an unusual precedent and offered a unique set of challenges for lawmakers and members of both political parties, as many of the president's signatures and agreements are legally invalid due to his state of perpetual intoxication. Fears have arisen amongst many Republicans that this shock may scare off long-time supporters and foster further anti-American sentiment around the globe.

The president made the announcement during the daily White House press conference shortly after approaching Press Secretary Scott McClellan and quietly whispering what reporters believe to be an explanation of the situation in his ear. It is reported that shortly after receiving the information, McClellan mouthed an expletive and dejectedly left the podium. When later asked for a response, the Press Secretary asked reporters if they were "fucking kidding" him, after which he ran his hands through his hair, quietly repeated the question, shook his head and walked away. He was spotted shortly thereafter at a local liquor store.

The press conference set a variety of precedents. The President, notorious for avoiding virtually all face time with reporters, agreed to answer any questions they posed. The reporters then set a precedent themselves when they responded to the offer with what has been characterized as a "deafening silence." ABC's White House correspondent Ann Compton later reflected on the event by saying, "I know reporters are supposed to pry, and ask the questions that no one else will, but there was nothing to ask. All of a sudden, everything made sense."

The President began his announcement by noting that while the "binge ended yesterday" (Nov. 9th), he had decided it best to wait 24 hours before making the news public, to ensure he had enough time to collect his thoughts and drink Pepto-Bismol. The President then noted that he had a "wicked hangover" and that the American public should expect him to "take some time off drinking," and that he means it this time. Mr. Bush then looked to the right of the stage and apparently told a Secret Service guard "My dad's going to be piping hot pissed."

The extended bout of intoxication apparently began shortly after the final day of the 2000 Republican National Convention. Mr. Bush, excited about his presidential nomination, received a congratulatory call from his brother Jeb, Governor of Florida. Mr. Bush visited his brother in Florida's Governors Mansion the following day, a visit he professed was defined by intoxicating substances, the least of which were alcohol.

"So I stop by Jeb's place, and he busts out his new piece (marijuana pipe) and throws on this old Dr. Israel record, I think it was *Inna City Pressure*. Anyway, we got pretty ripped." The President then let out a sigh followed by a slight nod of his head. "Pretty fucking ripped," he quietly noted. Mr. Bush then went on to

explain that while he understands the consumption of marijuana and its active ingredient THC is illegal in the United States, he didn't think it would become a "big deal."

"Things were pretty chill until Jeb's buddy Mark stops by. Mark just got back from Paris and brought back some Absinthe, and I'm not talking about the well-regulated British brand either. This was some serious stuff." Then President then reportedly "took his drink like a man" and proceeded to "black out."

"The next thing I remember is driving around in Jeb's Range Rover, chugging Absinthe, blasting G.G. Allen, and smashing mailboxes." Mr. Bush assured reporters he did not take part in any property destruction that evening as he was driving, claiming, "drunk driving gets easier each time you do it." He then explained that beyond a faint memory of "doing some blow with Noelle" referring to Jeb Bush's only daughter, he has little recollection of the rest of the evening, and that the next four years follow suit. "I get trashed and wake up in the White House," Mr. Bush explained, "I mean, I know you guys are a little surprised, but man, I was freaking out."

Many liberal advocates, such as talk radio host Al Franken, have expressed their shock and outrage by calling for the immediate resignation of George Bush. On his daily radio show, Mr. Franken wondered aloud as to whether or not the past two Presidential elections were legally valid. Republican legal aides have reassured the American public that the President's job is not in jeopardy as he showed full intent and understanding of the contract he would be entering before the 2000 RNC. Republican Majority Leader, Tom DeLay, was cited as saying "There is no evidence that the President was intoxicated at the time of his inauguration. This is just another case of the Democratic party trying to divide this country with partisan politics."

The Democratic response has been fairly mild given the severity of the situation. Former Democratic Presidential nominee John Kerry declined to comment, but insisted that his "spiteful smirk aimed at the Republican Party" be noted.

Senator Edward Kennedy, long time combatant of the administration's conservative initiatives, was unable to comment on the situation due to his sprained wrist and neck, a condition that has left him temporarily hospitalized. It is reported that Senator Kennedy attempted a cartwheel upon receiving the news and subsequently collapsed under his own weight.

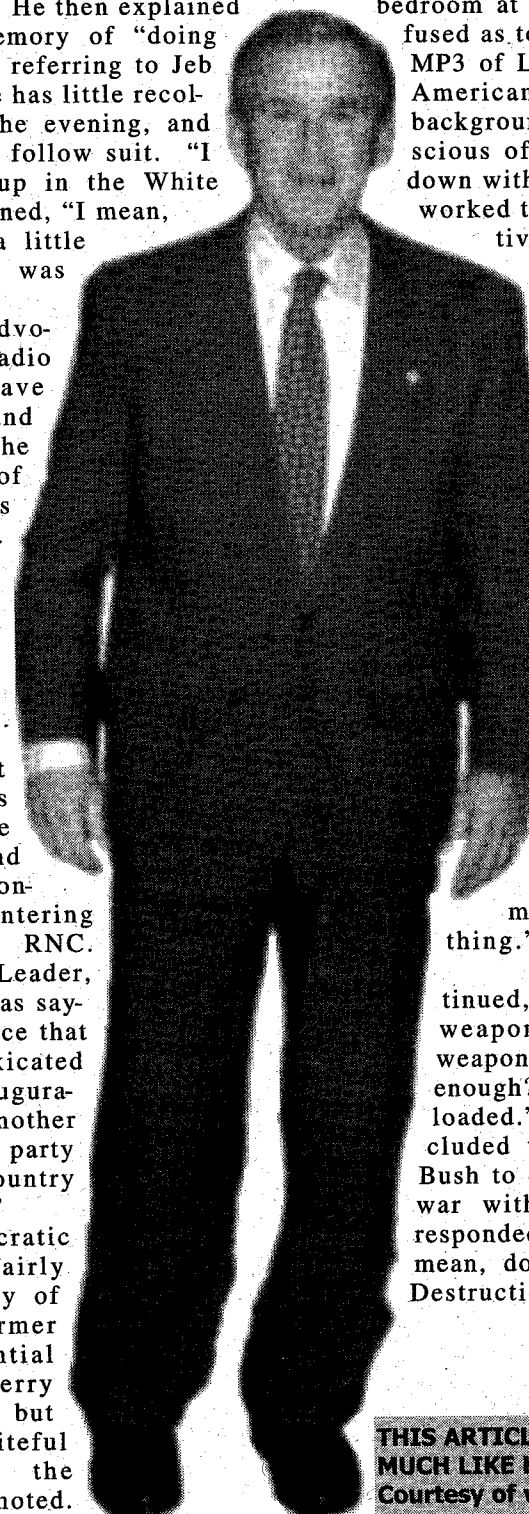
Many Administration officials declined to comment. However one close aide, who chose to maintain the mask of anonymity, said, "I can only hope the American people can forgive us of the grave injustice committed against this great country. May the Republican party repent for this error and work on mending our broken relationship with the public."

The President reportedly awoke in his bedroom at 9:00 am on November 9th, confused as to where he was and why a looped MP3 of Lee Greenwood's "Proud to be an American" was softly playing in the background. Once collected and conscious of the situation, the President sat down with top political aide Karl Rove and worked through the various policy initiatives he had passed over the past

four years. This list was used to conclude the President's press conference today as he glossed over many points of political contention in Washington.

"Man, how'd you guys *not* know I was drunk?" the President reportedly asked. "I mean, why would anyone vote against stem cell research? It's not like they're going to kill babies solely for that purpose. And wanting to overturn Roe V. Wade? Are you kidding me? You know how many times that decision got my ass out trouble when I was in college?" The President then briefly endorsed a change of tone, leaned past the microphones, and told reporters "That's between you and me, I mean, don't tell Laura or anything."

"But seriously," Mr. Bush continued, "You guys think I want assault weapons on the streets? Assault weapons? Like cops don't have it hard enough? Man, I must have been so loaded." The press conference then concluded when an AP reporter asked Mr. Bush to comment on his decision to go to war with Iraq, to which the President responded, "Sounded like a good idea, I mean, don't they have Weapons of Mass Destruction or something?"



THIS ARTICLE IS CLEARLY SATIRE...
MUCH LIKE HIS TENURE! OOOHHH!
Courtesy of www.blurrypresidents.com



Super Secret Plan to Thwart Catholicism By Way of Strategically Placed Italics Step Ten

Leave a piece of sinfully tasty cheese under a box with a "Y" shaped stick propping one end up then hide in the bushes and wait for Jesus. When he goes under the box to get the cheese, pull the stick out, thus trapping the King of Kings in your Trap of Traps.

Excuse Me, Benny?

By Joe Safdia

The other night, I found myself once again sitting on my bed reading another great issue of *The Stony Brook Press* (not a shameless plug, I swear) when I came across the third article by the now infamous Ben Bravmann. Bravmann, whose previous articles, "Gay A** F*****" and "Gay Equals Sexism, Period," pissed off homosexual and heterosexual readers alike with his warped and frankly ridiculous ideology about the workings of the gay mind. In his newest article, "The Hard Line," which appeared in the December 3 issue of *The Press*, Bravmann began a new smear campaign, one against abortions. Now before I continue, I must make something clear. Although I am pro-choice, I fully respect the viewpoints and beliefs of those who are pro-life even though I disagree with them. I respect that they value the life of one who is not even born and admire their feelings towards the sanctity of life.

With that said, Bravmann's views are fucked up. I tried to be nice, I tried to think of a nice way to express my discontent for what he wrote, but "fucked up" is seriously the nicest thing I can say about what he wrote. Even from Bravmann, I couldn't believe what I was reading. It's not even the article as a whole that I have something to say about, but rather one little paragraph that stands out amongst anything he's ever written. One that even George W. Bush would be appalled by. One little paragraph about abortions and rape.

Bravmann writes in his fanatical tirade, "If you get raped, I can understand how it would seem all right to get an abortion, i.e., the day-after pill kind. I mean, it's still murder, but it's all about you, right? You and your freedom. Of course one human life is not more important than nine months of emotional stress for you (and a lifetime of wondering what happened to the baby you put up for adoption), or is it?"

Excuse me, Benny? Are you saying that a woman who gets an abortion, even if they are pregnant because they were raped, is a murderer? He implies throughout "The Hard Line" that any woman who aborts her unborn fetus is a murderer and rape victims are no exception. He tells us, "Abortion is murder and you will meet those you have murdered in the afterlife. Try explaining to them that you were raped... I doubt the spirits who were never given a chance at life are likely to offer much forgiveness." Oh, I think they would.

Try telling this to a pregnant rape victim and seeing what her reaction will be. She won't be likely to offer much forgiveness, I can tell you that much. He seems cruelly apathetic to the nine months of emotional stress that he himself pointed out, but he also forgot the overwhelming pain of childbirth as well as having to raise a child for years to come, and the financial issues that will definitely arise. No, of course Bravmann would never think of something like that. I don't know what type of utopian society he comes from, but here on the planet Earth not everyone is ready to have a baby. What? Don't believe me, Mr. Bravmann? Are you telling me that having and raising a baby is a wonderful experience no matter the circumstances? All right then, let me set the scene for you.

Imagine a girl, about 14, 15, or 16, one day gets raped. Besides the physical injuries and psychological trauma, there is one other horrible (yeah, I said horrible, Bravmann. Sue me) side effect: pregnancy! She comes from a broken home and her family is very poor. Upon hearing that she was turned away for an abortion (it takes place in the future after Bush overturned *Roe v. Wade*), her father kicks her out of the house, as he is neither able nor willing to care for yet another child. With no money, this poor girl drops out of school and works at jobs such as McDonald's just to make ends meet for her. After nine months of emotional trauma, financial instability, and natural pregnancy-induced sicknesses, this young, unwed, penniless teenage girl finally gives birth to a baby. You may say that this is a bit extreme of a case, and you would be right, but unfortunately it *does* happen. You should, as you simply love to say in your articles, "accept these as facts." Now it may just be me, Bravmann, but you seem to believe that that's the end of it and from there it would be all peaches and cream. Well no, Bravmann, the fun doesn't end there. That's where it *begins*.

"He implies throughout 'The Hard Line' that any woman who aborts her unborn fetus is a murderer and rape victims are no exception."

Bravmann implies in his article that a woman who is raped and impregnated should just have the baby and then give it up for adoption and everything would be all right. What he doesn't understand is that it is *childbirth*, she can't just pop the baby out of her as if she were a vending machine. It is an experience that is so painful, frankly, it makes me thankful that I am a guy. Although I obviously couldn't tell from personal experience, take the most intense pain you've ever felt, quadruple it six or seven times, and drag that out for days. That, Benny, is childbirth. And childbirth also leaves permanent effects other than a child. Birth scars that can never go away, gained weight that can never be lost, and did you know that a very small percentage of women actually *die* during labor? I don't think you did, otherwise you would never say the types of things you did in "The Hard Line." That's only a few of the negative side effects of childbirth, but definitely not the worst.

Bravmann thinks that having a child is the most wonderful miracle in the world. And yes, I do agree that it is a wonderful miracle, perhaps the greatest thing anyone can ever do. But if a woman gets raped and has a baby against her will, then having that baby (and I know there's a whole world of Catholics out there that are going to hate me for this, but I really don't

give a damn) can *ruin* a person's life. Yeah, that's right, Bravmann. These women that you claim are murderers avoided something that would have *ruined* their lives. This "wonderful miracle" would have been the worst thing that could have happened to them other than death, although many of these women would have *preferred* death, and nobody deserves that, especially after being *raped*. You either don't know what rape means, don't think it can possibly be that bad, or just don't care. I really hope it's not the latter, because it's people like that who go around raping women in the first place.

I'm also more than a little disgruntled at your sarcastic tone of voice. It's as if you are saying that everything in your articles is the social norm, and people like me who care about the vessel for the new life just as much as the new life itself are, as I said earlier in this article, fucked up. Well may I remind you, Mr. Bravmann, that *my* articles don't have disclaimers on them. When even *The Stony Brook Press*, a paper whose logo is the middle finger, is putting disclaimers on your articles, that should clue you in that your views have gone beyond extreme.

Ben Bravmann is trying to convince us that if a woman gets raped and as a result becomes pregnant, then aborts the unwanted fetus, she is a murderer. No, Bravmann, maybe she just doesn't want to be reminded of being raped every time she looks into her baby's eyes. Maybe, she doesn't want to endure the harsh pain of childbearing, and the harsher pain of child-raising. Raising a child can, at times, be grueling even if it is in a loving home, so one could imagine how hellish it would be for a victim to live with a baby produced by an act of violence. It is a full-time and thankless job, it's not a Tamagachi.

Maybe she doesn't want to work at two or three jobs to put her kid through college, but rather stay in school and go to college herself so that she can look back when she is old and say it was a life well lived rather than a life wasted. Maybe she wants to enjoy all the freedoms she can't experience when burdened by a child. I'm not trying to say that having a baby is horrible, but against someone's will it is the worst possible thing that can happen to a person. Actually, I take it back. It's the worst possible thing that can happen to *two* people, because that unloved baby, growing up with no father and with the mother often not making enough to support them both, will grow up to commit robberies and violent acts because that will be the only way he/she will be able to survive.

You dare to call yourself pro-choice and yet still say that women who have abortions are murderers? Does that mean that you are really pro-life and don't want your girlfriend to know, or does it mean that we should all be free to choose whether or not to go on murderous rampages? After all, you said they were the same thing. You can't follow your views halfway. To end my tirade against your tirade, when you say "I mean, it's still murder, but it's all about you, right?" Um, yeah, it is.



Super Secret Plan to Thwart Catholicism By Way of Strategically Placed Italics Step Eleven

Finish college and join the *seminary*. After five years of being a priest at a local church, advance to *monsignor*. Quickly become arch-bishop and *then* bishop, but don't get comfortable! After serving as a cardinal for 20 years, fix the *pope* election! Finally, as Pope Peter Paul Luke John III at the ripe old age of 83, reveal your *homosexuality*!

Ben, We Need To Talk...

By Joe Rios

Dear Mr. Bravmann,

I have seen that you have written three articles for the Stony Brook Press this semester, and while I, as a member of the staff, appreciate your contribution to the paper, there are a few things we need to discuss. Please take note that this is not a personal attack on you, but rather, a commentary on your writing.

Your first article, entitled "Gay A** F****," was the beginning of what some are calling "Hate Speech." This doesn't seem to make itself present until later in the article, but I should have seen it coming when you referred to a woman giving you anal pleasure, when you said "I have no doubt had she continued I'd either be preferring men over women or getting ass fucked by some bitch with a strap on." While it is perfectly within your rights to call women "bitches" you might have a hard time keeping a girlfriend if you call her that. That aside, I continued down your article to find the point where things get real spicy. "Accept gaydom and bisexual as a disease of the mind succumbing to the pleasures of the body." Ben, if such is the case, then the bigotry of that line is perhaps more of a disease than homosexuality! ("Gay A** F****": *The Press* Vol.26, Iss. 3)

With regards to the rest of the article, my friends and family read your article, in some cases REPEATEDLY, trying to comprehend what you are trying to say in your article. What we came up with was a great big "What the fuck?" At best, the writing in your first article was about self-hatred and confusion.

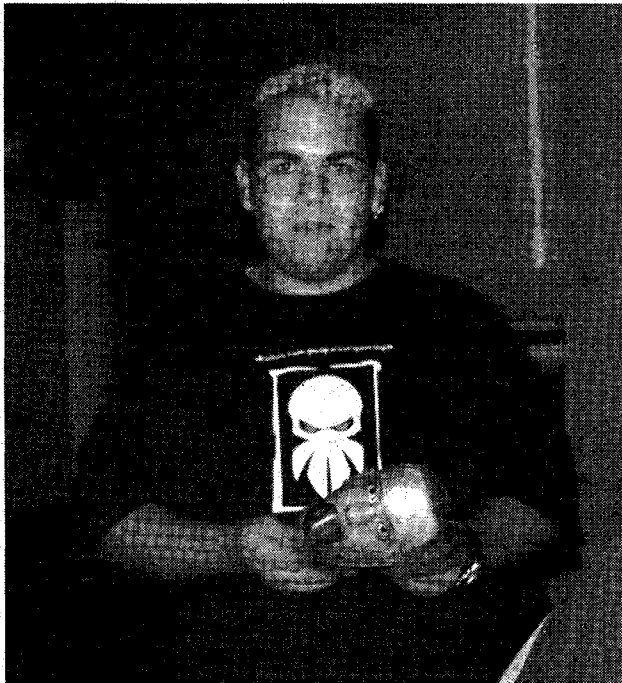
Diving back into my pile of issues of *The Press* from this year, we come across article number two, "Gay Equals Sexism, Period." Let's begin with the opening paragraph, shall we? It starts off with you thanking people for their responses to your first article. I wouldn't be thanking people for articles like "Please Put Down the Airplane Glue, Mr. Bravmann," but I guess that's a good way to handle criticism. In addition, you state that the following article is what an article would have looked like if the editors of *The Press* hadn't published your first "rough draft." Don't shift the blame, just get to the point!

In your article, you attack gay men, claiming sexism. The article continues on praising the menstrual cycle in all of its beauty, claiming that if that is the reason that gay men do not like women, that they have issues, resolving them by sticking their penis into someone else's colon. Not my personal preference in sex, but this is irrelevant to the point of gayness equaling sexism.

The article proceeds to go on, with you implying that gay men who engage in "sodomy," as you like to call it, have psychological issues and need psychological help. With that said, let's fast forward to the last paragraph of the article where you "declare the term Gay (referring to gay men) as invalid. You should simply refer to yourselves as sexist, narcissistic men who cannot accept an anatomy that does not match your own." The article was making SOME sense, until you proceeded to state the following, "Please come out of the woman hating clos-

et, and accept your identity as a bisexual, and replace the gay pride parade with a human sexuality jubilee." This confused me greatly, because there is a line in article number one, as mentioned before where you tell Gays to "accept gaydom and bisexual as a disease of the mind succumbing to the body." While you may view the first article as a rough draft, the concepts are entirely different, and utterly contradictory. ("Gay Equals Sexism, Period." *The Press*: Vol.26, Iss. 5)

The third article that you contributed to *The Press* this semester, your most recent, was a nice departure from your previous topic of homosexuality. Personally, I think it was about time you shifted gears for a bit. However, the hateful content of your most recent article was enough to almost drive me to a state of physical rage. You should be proud of that one, few manage to do so. At first, I wasn't sure how to



HOLY SHIT, THIS IS CREEPY...YET FEASIBLE.
Courtesy of Jowy Romano

approach this article. Eventually I decide that I would have to take it one hate-filled paragraph at a time. Your opening lines read "Abortion is murder. Doctors who perform abortions are murderers. Women who go to these doctors are willing accomplices." If that's how you feel, so be it, but last I heard, that was the viewpoint of people who are pro-life. Yet in the last paragraph, after your rant about women and abortions, you say "You should know I'm pro-choice. I don't think it's right to force a woman to have a baby." This completely contradicts the opening of your article. However, if I wrote about just your contradictions, I would never finish, so let's move forward, shall we?

In your second paragraph you write about how women should treat their ability to become pregnant with respect, and that if they can't do that then they should, as you put it "...get fixed or at the very least be on birth control..." While I am a supporter of birth control, I feel that since it takes TWO people to create a child, why don't you address the men in the

article? Hey Ben, last time I checked, humans don't reproduce asexually. It takes two to tango buddy.

Paragraph number three brings with it a slew of new things to ponder. You referred to "day after" pill style abortions in the case of girls who are raped, stating "It's still murder, but it's all about you, right? You and your freedom." Exactly! It is all about us. I'm not too familiar with your religious affiliations Ben, but the last time I read a Bible, I remember distinctly that God gave humans the freedom to choose. Of course, you can choose not to believe that, but that's the nature of free will, you have a choice! Going on, you state that a human life is not worth the inconvenience of having a child. Have you the slightest concept of what childbirth involves? There can be serious emotional, mental, and physical repercussions from having childbirth. Believe me when I say, I give massive respect for those who have children the natural way, but I'm sure you wouldn't want a large grapefruit coming out of your ass (sorry if I cannot come up with a better description, but being a man, I lack the physical attributes to even comprehend the massive undertaking that is childbirth).

Paragraph number five starts with, "What would be better is putting women back on the pedestal where they belong." I am not even going to start but to say that you are going to have a hard time with women, having a viewpoint like that. The paragraph proceeds to go on with you commenting again on the issue of rape, "When you are raped, you only perpetuate the violence by robbing the innocent life within of its chance in this world." You are entitled to feel this way, but have you considered how it would feel to be carrying the child of the man who forced himself upon you, and violated you? That child would be a never ending reminder of how you were victimized. I normally don't wish bad things upon people, but I'm hoping for a Christmas miracle, and it involves you getting pregnant by some shady means, and having to carry it to term. Let's see how you feel then. ("The Hard Line" *The Press*: Vol.26, Iss. 6)

This article was never meant to be an attack on you Ben. I've met you, and you are a nice person. You are polite, kind to others around you, and with the exception of my previous "Christmas wish" (which is more of a joke than of an ill wish), I wish you the best, but your writing is for lack of a better term, HATEFUL. I have noticed that the editors have put disclaimers on your articles, which might imply something about the content. I give you credit for having such strong beliefs, but as a writer I believe that it might be considered foolish to press them upon others. Your writing is self-contradictory and, at some times, downright confusing. Just something to consider before you submit another article.

Sincerely,

Joseph Rios



Super Secret Plan to Thwart Catholicism By Way of Strategically Placed Italics Step Twelve

Dress up as *God* and visit the Pope. Tell him that it's his time. Since no one has ever *seen* God, no one knows what he *looks* like; not even Captain Catholic John Paul himself! Take his hand and *say* you are taking him to the promised land, but then just push him out the window.

Ask GANDALF Anything



Dear Gandalf,

My family wants to move away to Florida, and I don't want to move. We've been living here in Colorado for nine years and suddenly they've decided they want warm sunlight and margarita beaches. I don't want to go, and I think they're being selfish. What should I do?

-Moving in Colorado

Dear Moving,

Death is just another path, one that we all must take. Do not weep, young child, for not all things end in sorrow. There could be a light, and then, the warm shade of trees and cool sand of open beaches will welcome you. Now that doesn't sound so bad, does it? Weep not, my friend, for paradise awaits you.

Dear Gandalf,

I just met this great girl named Katie, and I really, really like her. As a matter of fact I think we're in love. We've been seeing each other for three weeks now but there's a problem. She doesn't want to introduce me to her parents because I'm not a Catholic. This really upsets me. I don't understand how her parents could be so ignorant and I don't understand why, if she truly does want to be with me, she doesn't introduce us anyway. What are they going to do, anyway? Ground her? She's twenty-two years old. What should I do?

-Motionless in Iowa

Dear Motionless,

Death is just another path, one that we all must take. Do not grieve, little one, for in the darkest of tunnels there is still a light, and the grey-rain curtain of this world will wash away forever. Behold the bright light of the Valar, as passed down to the Firstborn of Middle-earth. Magic will not fade, my friend. Hold on to your strength.

Dear Gandalf,

What do you do when your friend gives you a Christmas or a birthday gift that you really don't want, yet they expect you to use it? Is there any polite way of dealing with this?

- Unsure in Indiana

Dear Unsure,

Death is just another path, one that we all must take. Your tears, in the end, will not have been in vein. I believe that somewhere there are forces of good working, and if that does not rest your troubled spirit then I'm not sure what will. Be still, my young friend, for there will be light for you.

Dear Gandalf,

Hey! I just wanted to say that I love your column! I read it first thing every day, and it always gets better. My co-workers and I simply love it. Keep up the good work!

-Fan in Michigan

Dear Fan,

Death is just another path, one that we all must take. Do not weep, young one, for the shades of the mortal world will soon be lifted, and beyond that- green fields under an orange sun. The will of good protects us all, so let these wounds heal under the nourishment of time. Darkness will not last, my young friend. Let your tears wash away like a passing tide, and then you will see that the fate of Middle-earth lies in the hands of those who walk about. Fear not, my troubled friend, for light is coming.

Gandalf



Super Secret Plan to Thwart Catholicism By Way of Strategically Placed Italics Step Thirteen

Crucify *yourself* to show everyone how it's not a big deal.

I'm Down With Jesus

By David K. Ginn

Somebody asked me a while ago if I accepted Christ as my savior. And I'm like, "Whoa, wait a minute. I'm all about Jesus, dude. Don't be asking me if Christ is my savior. I'm totally down with all of that, man."

So I might not go to church all the time. So I might not have gone to church in three years. And when I went three years ago it was for the bake sale. So what? Big deal, right? Why is everyone else so concerned with me going to church? I don't care, but then these people walk around trying to talk me into going with them, using their "messenger from God" mission as an excuse to annoy the shit out of me.

And they're acting like I'm not down with Jesus. What the hell? Jesus is the shit. That dude walked all around the desert, fed the hungry, turned water into wine and rose people from the dead. How could you not be down with that? I have nothing against Christ at all. It's these self-righteous purebreds carrying around a book and the answer to salvation that really get on my nerves.

But I guess it ain't too bad. They're just doing what their church tells them to. It ain't a giant inconvenience for the human race. But do you know who I do like? The Gideons. Think about it: A bunch of playas who serve no other

purpose but to put a Bible in every hotel room. That's gangsta.

And I always read that Bible. There's some good shit in there. I'll be sitting in my hotel room, lounging out in my bathrobe watching Maury, and I'll be like, I want to find out if God scares the shit out of the Pharaoh in the book of Exodus. Man, have you ever checked that part out? It's mad gangsta! God's all like, "yo, Pharaoh, let my people go, mofo," and Pharaoh's all like, "a'ight, that's cool," and then Pharaoh's all like, "fuck that nigga," and then God's all like, "here's some blood in your water, beyatch," and the shit goes on and on until God's hittin' the Pharaoh with locusts and motherfuckin' frogs. That's the ultimate, yo. Let my people go or I'll fuck you up with frogs. Ain't nobody that gangsta anymore. Shit, God don't give a shit; he'll fuck up the Pharaoh in a second. Hey, you guys got children? Not anymore, beyatch, 'cause I'm tearin' up each of y'all's first born. Word. That nigga knew how to roll. It's a much better storyline than who slept with who's mother during spring break on a tropical island. I'd rather hear about poisoned waters and frogs falling out of the sky. That's some hardcore shit.

And it dawned on me recently that the Christian religion has got something going for it that most other religions don't have: The Devil.

I mean, think about it. It's the one major religion in our country where you get to blame everything on somebody else. With Hinduism it's all about you taking responsibility for every fucked up thing that happens to you, and then coming back a little happier if you deal with it right. But Christianity takes a much different approach. Christianity says that no matter what happens, it's all this playa's fault (points to archaic rendering of Satan). Modern Christianity fits right on with the typical American bullshit: blame your bad day on society, blame your bad life on your parents, and blame the bad world on Satan. It fits like a Ritz, mofo! By combining politics, psychology, and Christianity, we can together form a society where nothing is ever your fault! Just blame it on the red man. He fucked us up from the beginning.

So the devil was the one thing that saved that religion. Now there's a lot of people hiding behind forced contrition. People who aren't penitent in the least before the Lord, but before Satan they cower away and look up to God for salvation. Them niggas'd be killed in the streets, yo. The Christians had a fool-proof plan when they invented all of this. It's okay if you don't want to join us, but just to let you know, you're gonna burn in Hell.

But like I said I'm down with Jesus all the way. That cat is one crazy mofo. I'm all about the Jesus-man. I really dig it, and that's no doubt. I mean, the man did some crazy shit in his time. I'd totally follow him if it weren't such a damned cliché.



JAMIROQUAI IS A FALSE GOD!!!
Courtesy of Matt Willemain

Another Note on Christmas and the European Union

By Natalie Schultz

Ok, so here I am, writing yet another article for the Press, when I should be focusing on my upcoming finals. But, I just cannot resist. I just walked into my den where Bill O'Reilly was on the TV talking about the whole anti-Christmas crusade. Ok, I know, Bill is an evil brainwashing menace. But he did bring up a very good point that I failed to mention in my article "Long Live Christmas!" That point was Barbara Streisand and how she has made millions of dollars by releasing Christmas albums on which she sings Christmas songs. Now, it is a widely known fact that Barbara Streisand is Jewish, and a very liberal person to boot. So, I am not going to get into the argument about how Christmas has become nothing more than a boon to the consumer industry. Rather, I am simply going to make the point that if a Jew can profit from the joy of celebrating Christmas, that non-Christians cannot therefore claim that Christmas is an affront to all the non-Christians in the USA.

As for the European Union and its attempt to become a secular continent, I do respect the fact the Europe still thrives during the Christmas season. Every single European country has tons of Christmas markets. Today I saw a picture of the hospital in Vienna where Ukrainian presidential hopeful Viktor Yushchenko was admitted to test for poisoning; the hospital there was decked-out with Christmas lights. So, unlike in America, where Christmas has become a symbol of repression according to secularist liberals, the European Union has managed to become a liberal secular union, and at the same time celebrate its religious and cultural past full-throttle.

This is a very important point to note,

for many of the liberals here in the USA often look to the liberal leanings of the government and people of Europe and hope that we will become more like them here. So, I propose this situation:

What if all the non-Christian immigrants in Europe suddenly tried to outlaw saying "Merry Christmas!" in the English-speaking countries, or "Nollaig Shona Dhuit" in Ireland, or "Nadolig Llawen" in Wales, or "Froehliche Weihnachten!" in the German-speaking countries, or "Joyeux Noel!" in the French-speaking countries, or "Bono Natale!" in Italy, or "Kala Christouyenna!" in Greece, or "Feliz Navidad!" in Spain, or "Vrolijk kerstfeest!" in the Netherlands, or "Glaedelig Jul!" in Denmark, or "Gledelig Jul!" in Norway, or "Gleileg Jól!" in Iceland,

or "God Jul!" in Sweden, or "Hauskaa Joulua!" in Finland, or "Boas Festas!" in Portugal, or "Hristos Razdajetsja!" in Russia, or "Srozhdestvom Kristovym!" in the Ukraine, or "Boze Narodzenie!" in Poland, or "Linksmu Kaledu!" in Lithuania, or "Priecigus Ziemas Svetkus un Laimigu Jauno Gadu!" in Latvia, or "Ruumsaid juuluphi!" in Estonia, or "Vesele Vanocel!" in the Czech Republic, or "Hristos se rodi!" in Serbia, or "Veseli Bozic!" in Slovenia, or "Sretan Bozic!" in Croatia, or "Tchestita Koleda!" in Bulgaria, or "Sarbatori vesele!" in Romania, or "Kellemes Karácsonyi unnepeket!" in Hungary?

I can tell you right now, that as opposed to the USA, which is a country made up of immigrants from various countries with varying religious beliefs, that in Europe, the Europeans would never stand for the destruction of a reli-

gious culture inherent to their very history. No, I can tell you right now, that if the non-Christians living in Europe ever tried to secularize Christmas or Easter, that a political war would immediately erupt because even the most liberal Europeans know that it is their very right, as freedom loving descendants of the Enlightenment, to celebrate their history in all of its glory.

I don't care what you say or what you believe, but the fact remains, that no matter what our early American settler ancestors have done to others here, the truth of the matter is that all of the good and all of the freedoms we have here, we have because the Christian immigrants from Europe brought these ideals with them. And with the ideals that gave us our Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights also came the celebrations of Christmas and Easter. And that, no matter how hard anyone tries, will never be erased from our history.

So, a note of warning to all you secular liberals, try as you might, as long as you keep attacking Christianity and all of its celebrations, you are only preparing for a war that you cannot win. As it stands, the majority of Christians are actually quite open-minded, even if you persuade yourselves to believe otherwise. But one can only take so many incessant attacks on their own history and culture before they break down and have no choice but to fight back. And by then, the open-mindedness will lead to a war between us and them; and I don't know very many Christians, even non-practicing Christians, that would choose to fight against their own people. So, is it really worth going to war just so that you can avoid seeing Christmas trees, hearing Christmas carols and seeing Nativity scenes for one month of the year?

A Bit of Helpful Feedback

By David K. Ginn

Note to the Reader. This is an actual response I filled out to the Webshots company upon my deletion of the program. I was perfectly content to simply rid myself of the thing and continue on with my nightly tasks, but they surprised me with a tiny window:

We're sorry that you've chosen to uninstall our program. Would you like to give a brief response telling us why you've chosen to remove Webshots from your computer?

Well, you know what? Now that you mention it, I think I would.

Here was my feedback:

Your program launches itself automatically every damn time I log on to Windows, and, despite extensive efforts to change this (because it slows my computer down when fifteen things try to launch at the same time) there is no immediate answer. And, seeing as if there is a solution it is cleverly hidden, I would wager a guess that you deliberately hid that option from your consumers in the hopes that more and more people would have Webshots launching automatically and informing them about how great the program is so that way it spreads like the flu and everyone falls in love with

Webshots. A logical plan, and though I do not wish to offend your expertise in trick marketing I must say that it is pretty low, not to mention lame and uninspired.

"There was a great picture of a little fairy and a unicorn, but then along comes Webshots and *poof* no more fairy, no more unicorn"

Furthermore, your program tries too hard to grab the consumer. It's like a French restaurant owner trying to pull people in off the streets. It's just too much. If I had any advice for you it would be to tone down the image a little. And I know that statistics will prove me wrong here; there is simply no better way to discount the observations of consumers than drawing charts. If you guys are in a low, then I've told you a few good possible reasons. If you guys are kicking ass in the marketplace, you're doing it all wrong.

Lastly, I should tell you, (and I do believe that if I were able to format this text it would be more organized and therefore I would

explain myself more fully) that your program screws with my desktop every time I open it. My desktop was all happy, minding its own business. There was a great picture of a little fairy and a unicorn, but then along comes Webshots, and *poof* no more fairy, no more unicorn. Just a bland, generic wallpaper that reminds me of an office birthday party except without the dead-tone singing and chocolate cake. And so what did I do to fix this? I configured things back to normal. No problemo, mi amigo. And then, today, after months of having to wait to click on Minesweeper until Webshots was done loading itself up, I dive in on a last ditch effort to remove Webshots from my notification icons.

By the way, toggling "Launch Webshots Splash Screen with Windows" from the General Preferences menu is a load of horseshit as far as this goes. I know that it's explicit in its definition but come on guys, I nearly thought there was a way to end my misery. So, what happens to me tonight? It gives the fairy and unicorn the boot again. So, with no other options left, I stuck my foot up Webshots' ass and kicked it the hell off my computer. If there were a better solution, I would have chosen it. Unfortunately, Webshots had to get the leather boot. These are the reasons I am choosing to remove Webshots from my computer. Thanks!

Stolen Laptop

By Bradley Marks

My name is Brad Marks. I am a transfer student from the California school system to here at Stony Brook University.

The other day someone who appears to know me did something so heartbreaking and so painful. He or she stole my laptop. Maybe to them it is just a computer, but to me, it had all my notes inside it, not backed on disk. The person copied some files onto a disk, which he or she put under the door of the room from which they stole the computer. Maybe the heart this person drew on it was meant to make this person feel better. But it is important for he or she to know how they have destroyed my scholastic and family life.

I was ill for several weeks because of chicken pox, requiring me to keep additional notes from classes I could not attend due to being quarantined. All those are gone. I am struggling to replace as best as I can the information that is gone but the time I am putting into reconstructing papers, notes and my life—my future in that laptop—is time I cannot use to study. My illness contributed to my being a borderline student. Now it looks like I will have to take an incomplete on the classes to avoid failing them. And it looks like I might have to drop out of college.

But there is more you have done that is devastating. If you recall a New Yorker was murdered by terrorists on a bus in Jerusalem, Israel in January of this year. That is my uncle. I had worked during the school year and summer to pay for my trip to go to Israel in January to be with my cousins for the anniversary ending our family's year of mourning his brutal

murder. Now I cannot go. The money I had saved towards paying for the trip has to go towards paying for a new computer.

I want you to go to the memorial website a friend of my uncle built to fundraise for my seven cousins left orphaned. They are two, five, eight, ten, thirteen, fifteen, and seventeen years old respectively. The website link is www.goldbergmemorial.org. I want you to go to these photos and click and look at my family you are destroying. The last time I could afford to see them was a year before my uncle, their dad was murdered.

What you have done is destructive, cruel and shameful. And I believe there is a God who knows who you are just as you know who you are. I want to go mourn with my family. I want to pass my classes. I want to believe that what you did was for a reason; maybe one day you will figure out what it is and find forgiveness. But to hurt a stranger to this school and to think a heart on a disk will make things better... No.

There is no excuse for what you did but you now have a chance to know how destructive your deed is. I can only promise for me, if you return my computer, intact, complete with all its information as you took it on it, I will talk to the police. And I will forgive you.

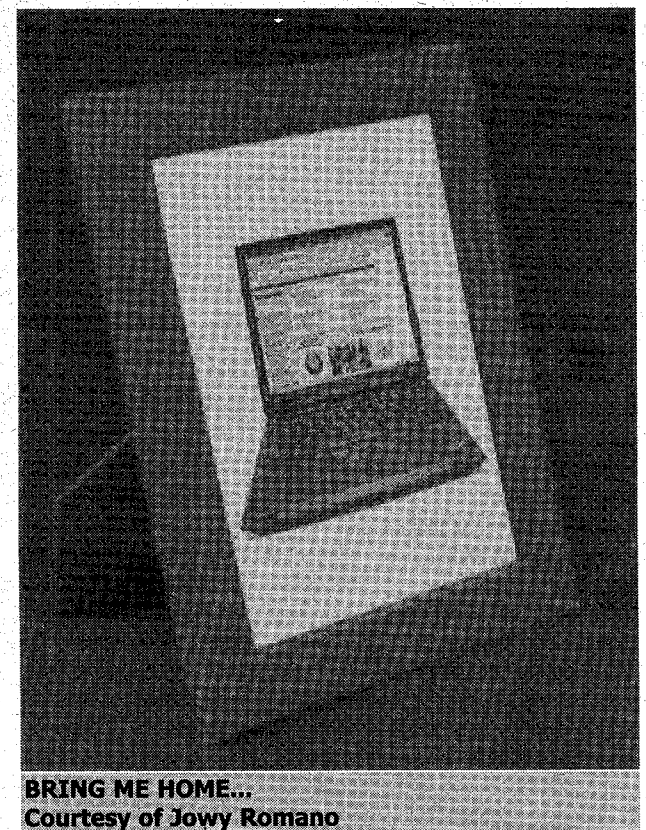
And when I see my nieces, Chanah, Esther and Shoshanah and nephews Yitzchak, Eliezer, Yaakov Moshe and Tzvi Yehoshua, I will tell them they can believe in people again. As I will be able to explain how I could afford visiting them as I planned. And will be able to give them money I've set aside for them, as our family is responsible now for supporting them

since their dad was murdered.

If you don't return what you have stolen, I repeat, that is then between you and God...and my uncle.

Sincerest Regards,

Bradley Marks



Super Secret Plan to Thwart Catholicism By Way of Strategically Placed Italics Step Fourteen

Put so many Jesus Fish on the back of your car that everyone else who has one on their car will just feel absolutely ridiculous.

Taxi Cab Professions

By Tom Senkus

Somehow, in September, I drifted into the commission livery business. I am a taxi driver. It gives me a unique perspective on people and human nature. Each issue, I'll try to find some of the *normal* things that go on.

"All Hallow's Woman"

"Oooooo, he's a cute one!" says a plump, drunk mestizo woman, "I'm taking him home!" She's plump, alright, and reminds me of the Halloween decorations littering every lawn. Thoughts of impoverished children violently pouring out of huts and devouring oozing jack-o-lanterns splice my vision.

"Home?" I ask.

"Centereach, my boyfriend's..." I reverse out of Parsnip's parking lot, then into drive. The lady grabs the back of my scalp, and rubs it for a bit. Maybe she senses that I don't like strange, albeit ugly, women stroking me while I drive them home. She stops as only a drunk woman can. Small talk ensues, then eschewed. Five minutes into the drive and already the lady's blabbing about marital problems. That's a new World Record. "I want another baby, but he doesn't trust me."

"Why?"

STAGE DIRECTIONS: Enter sob story for spoiled, lazy American. The man she describes works hard, stays monogamous (she's sure of it, she says), takes care of the kids. *Kids?* So why am I picking her up alone at a club known for easy, middle-aged pussy? "I haven't worked for eight years, and I think, I think that, that I wouldn't have to cheat if he'd marry me? I kissed a few guys tonight, but I wouldn't do this if he'd marry me." Her voice quivered on the word *marry*. Any empathy for yet another woman beaten down by "a man's world" goes out the window.

"Why don't you just go down to the courthouse and get a certificate?" That was my reasonable answer.

"That's what he said!", she burst out,

disagreeably. "I want a party. Bridesmaids. Flowers." Thoughts of pouty young girls hungering for attention like impoverished children eating pumpkins flash on, flash off.

"He just doesn't li—stop!"

We stop. "Over there," and she points to a church with untethered pumpkins in the yard. "Let's get some for my kids," she giggles. One very long minute passes and we are now carrying three pumpkins in a Crown Victoria. No longer floating toward Mongoloid Moon, but hurtling towards Bizarro World.

Arriving at "her" house, she pays me (\$18 + \$2 tip), and I unload the pumpkins a few yards in front of her, on "her" stoop. She's floating on drunk sunshine towards me, all deuce, deuce-and-a-half of her. "Oh no!" I thought. She's a missile locked-on, in Kiss Mode. I guess that would make me number six, but at the last minute, evasive action; I turn my cheek. Not this time.

"Couldyoupleasetalkslower?"

"Pick-up Coed's, Tom," says Mike the Dispatcher.

I arrive in the parking lot, and immediately I notice a man walking too fast. He must be my passenger. Awkwardly, he hops in the back and shakes my hand, very hard and very brief. "Wowavan," he says. Yes, I'm driving a van, and yes, he talks way too fast. Is it schizophrenia or drugs? Schizo or druggie?

Drugs.

"Ohdawgyourockthanksforpickingmeup. Igottagohome.Youshouldhaveenthepussytonight!FinegirlslcameuptooneandlsaidheybabyIdloveto lickyouupanddownbutshewasalltiredfromfuckingbeinginthebarandIwaslikeletmeloveyou! Butnexttimeohman!" I'm barely hanging onto this conversation. In fact, the conversation is so distracting, I can't even drive right. We almost crash into a car at a light because I just want this guy out of my car. "Ohdawgyouwereallupinhisfaceandshowedhimh

owtodrive!Lotsofrespectlotsofrespectyouruleda wg." The man is not aware of his bodily functions. Perspiration on his body. Even his handshake before was dripping.

Ironically, we arrive at his destination: Pleasure Street. "Youknowwhatwe'regonnado?! Let'sdoalinerighthereandfuckingyealet'sdoitan dI'mnottakingnoforananswerdawg!"

"Oh shit!", I thought. Think fast, think fast. Don't want to do coke, and certainly don't want to end up in the dark alley this guy's coming from. "Ummmm....I'd like toooo," I say, drawing out my words to contrast his, "but I have a heart murmurrrr." In actuality, I have no known heart condition, but he would not take "no" for an answer.

"OHMANNODISRESPECTDAWG!", he repeated, as a guru repeats a mantra. He paid me, and exited the car, apparently having the time of his life. "Have a nice day." That's my mantra. Ohm.



THIS CAB SMELLS LIKE A FRESH CABBUGAUL!
Courtesy of this funny little googatz!

Café Bar and Venue

UniversityCafe

Student Union • Stony Brook University • Stony Brook, NY 11794

Venue 631.632.6027 Office 631.632.1463 Fax 631.632.1013

gpalaia@universitycafe.org • universitycafe.org

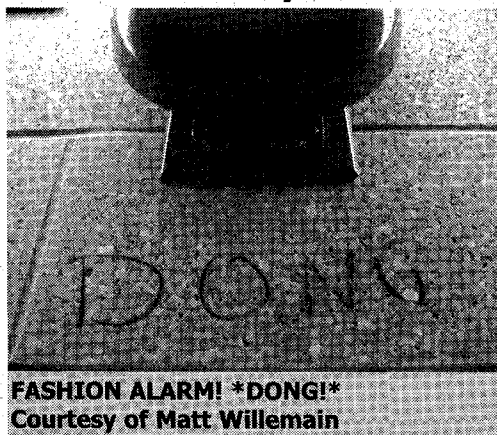


Super Secret Plan to Thwart Catholicism By Way of Strategically Placed Italics Step Fifteen

After 2000 years, finally put *women* in positions of authority.

Tom's Fashion Column, Volume II

By Tom Senkus



FASHION ALARM! *DONG!*
Courtesy of Matt Willemain

"You can't look trashy unless 'ya spend a whole lot of money" - Billy Joel

A special aired on NPR featuring the life of late radio journalist Robert L. Murrow. Bob, a man of gentility and most proper dress, described modern British folk as he looked down

on a crowd as "a people who now dress like plumbers." In laymans, he meant to say that it has become accepted to dress down, wearing dungarees/jeans in public as a hip choice. Out with the suits, in with the boots.

While media savants stumble over such idiotic items as butt-cleavage and I-tried-hard-to-make-this-hairstyle-unpremeditated look, I think we can chase fashion by watching not BET, MTV, Cosmo, Vogue, GQ, but Washington Square Park. That's right. You heard me: Washington Square Park.

Observe the bum life. They exude a charisma and irreverence that would make runway models cringe with envy. No model will ever ask "can you help a brother out," bacteria-encrusted leathery palm outward, and therein lies her problem.

Sure, lying in your own urine stains may look bad now, but once this hits the mainstream, I can only imagine what kind of marketing campaigns will chomp at the bit for a taste of piss. Take, for instance, R.Kelly. He may be known as one of hip-hop's soft spoken proponents for water sports and so, a media pariah. Give it time; we will think of him as...fashion visionary! Taking a piss will be dubbed *freshin'* it, and Jay-Z will come out of retirement for a chance to spit rhymes in his new, soon to be platinum album, "Fresh Face". Like Adam Sandler said, "peeing your pants is cool!"

Drying ourselves from the golden showers, oversized items like white t-shirts that extend to the knees are definitely Jesus. Jesus?! Who said that? (looks around) Ah ha! (points to figure in corner) Get that zealot outta here! (zealot is dragged out to the dumpster) I'm sorry folks, I don't know what's happening to my column, but another Catholic is trying to make Jesus take credit for yet another thing. Lordy!

As I was saying (BAM! ←gunshot in the distance...) because the denizens of the street do not care about the thoughts of others, they already have attained the first attribute of *fabulousness*. Turn (yes, turn, like in a newspaper) in next issue for more words about how you look as *chiqué* as a sheik. Now, if you'll excuse me...

Gaudy jewelry? Check!

Outdated basketball jerseys? Check!

Puffy jackets? Ditto!

Rickets-type pimp roll? Check!

Grabbing at crotch like a venereal disease? Yowza!

Hasty and Tasty Interview with Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood

By David K. Ginn and Nicole L. Barry

Quite some time ago, *The Stony Brook Press* was given the opportunity to have a face-to-face interview with the two stars of "An Evening with Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood". For those who don't know, Colin and Brad are very famous comedians and two of the most well known cast members from the popular T.V. show "Who's Line is it, Anyway?". It should first be said that the show itself was amazing. Never before have I laughed out loud for so long without stopping. They are truly geniuses in their field. Plus, they offered us food. Rock it, man.

Rock that, yo

The problem with the interview is that the PR girl decided that we could only have ten minutes with the two actors. We had to be crafty and creative to get ourselves out of this one. Too bad we weren't.

Here's the interview:

NB: So, we can go in there now?

PR: Yes. You have ten minutes.

DG: Ten minutes? (to Nicole) Is that gonna be enough?

NB: I hope so.

DG: Okay.

We go in and Colin and Brad see us. The old boring "I'm a huge fan, I think you guys are great" thing goes on for about seventy-two seconds, and then the interview begins.

NB: Do you ever wish these type of

interviews would touch on more hard hitting subjects?

CM: God, no.

NB: Do you find dead baby jokes funny?

BS: Not after you have one.

Silence.

Okay, here's where things get a bit hazy. Since we only had ten minutes to write down an entire conversation between four people, the notes ended up looking a little something like this:

NB So, do you guys fhgfr ep4 djhfw &4?

C I thodh snhdrh rjhftks f
Hjhfh dks f.
B fhfk le et.

It really wasn't our fault. We thought we'd have more time to write it down. The point of this all is that since we have absolutely no direct quotations, except for, ironically, the dead baby question, we were unable to reconstruct the interview at all.

Alright, so we weren't able to write the interview. We've got a cool picture, though. Maybe we can blow it up really big and make the interview seem like it actually happened. They signed autographs for us, too. They were awesome.



Super Secret Plan to Thwart Catholicism By Way of Strategically Placed Italics Step Sixteen

Build an *anti-church* next to a *regular church* and then hold *anti-mass* every *anti-Sunday* complete with *anti-communion*, *anti-prayer*, *anti-psalms* and *anti-followers*. You'll be the premier *anti-priest* in the *anti-diocese* and *not* the biggest thing since *un-sliced not-bread*!

"The Nutcracker" at The Staller Center

By Zhengzhong Yu

The performance entitled "The Nutcracker" displays a range of eclectic movements and complimentary scenic considerations, which surpassed my expectations beyond all comparison. The theme of the dance suggests a progressive narrative of what first occurs at the house of town mayor Hans Stahlbaum and what follows in the dreams of Clara, the daughter of Hans. Its relevance strikes me as part of my childhood, and recalls a tradition, which I hope will continue for all children. I thought I had no childhood, but as I heard the compositions of Peter Tchaikovsky and saw the Christmas tree grow taller, I felt my childhood becoming increasingly vivid and apparent.

The dance begins with the godfather of Clara, Herr Drosselmeyer, preparing several exquisite dolls. When Herr arrives at the gathering, he immediately presents gifts, along with several spectacles of wonder, to all the children. Fritz, the son of Hans, receives a rocking hobby train, and Clara receives the Nutcracker. Seemingly unsatisfied, Fritz attempts to take the Nutcracker from Clara, and in the process, breaks it. Herr then repairs the Nutcracker and lets Clara know it is okay. When the guests leave the gathering, the Stahlbaums all go to bed, though Clara awakens alone in the middle of the night and goes back to the living room to play with the Nutcracker. When at last content, Clara falls asleep in the living room, and begins dreaming of a struggle between the Rat King and her beloved Nutcracker, ending with the eventual defeat of the Rat King and the fleeing of Clara and the Nutcracker to the night sky.

Here marks the intermission and the beginning of the more complicated and varied, second part of the dance. Whereas the settings for the first part focused on realism, the second contrasts the opposite. As the curtains rise, the audience becomes mesmerized by the Sugar Plum Fairy, gliding in the middle of the stage, surrounded by clouds of thick mist, encapsulated in the Kingdom of the Sweets, utterly unaffected by anything remotely insincere. It becomes then natural to the audience the performance is one of a kind, and the experience, impossible to match.

The title of the dance suggests the dance is about the Nutcracker, but the duration of the dance more so surrounds the dreams of Clara, and the Nutcracker is only representative of how the dreams come about rather than the actual dance. The program notes on the other hand, are more accurate in describing the duration of the dance. In terms of the spatial design, the conceptual movements promoted the theme by first, directing the attention of the guests toward the middle of the stage where Herr per-

formed, second, separating the boys on the left and the girls on the right sides during the play scene, third, dividing the stage in half during the battle sequence between the Rat King and Nutcracker, fourth, permitting Clara and the Nutcracker to travel across the whole stage on the sled, and fifth, creating the open line formed by the angels in which the Sugar Plum Fairy moved through. All the arrangements of spatial design worked well to direct the attention of the audience to the space for which the dancers emphasized. The floor patterns in addition contributed to the surreal mind-set in the dreams of Clara, most specifically, as the platform seemingly became clouds of thick mist during the presence of the angels and the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Furthermore, elements of surprise, tension, humor, and drama were all justified, and can be seen throughout the dance. Apart from the surprisingly well-coordinated and symmetrical movements of the dance as a whole, the element of surprise can be seen toward the end of the dance, as the maid discovers the diamond belonging to the Rat King, next to where Clara slept in the living room, suggesting the crossing of real and surreal worlds. The element of tension is seen most directly seen in the battle sequence between the Rat King and the Nutcracker, since the audience eagerly anticipates the outcome. The element of humor occurs in the beginning of the dance as one of the exquisite dolls kicks Herr playfully in the behind. There exists no better place to put the element of humor than the beginning of the dance, since, there, the element of humor yielded levity, enjoyment, and the old-fashioned Chaplin-esque motions so seldom seen in contemporary society. The element of drama is most evident as Clara responds to the breaking of the Nutcracker by Fritz. As Clara notices the Nutcracker broken, Clara furrows her eyebrows and seems generally disappointed. Beyond a doubt, the elements of surprise, tension, humor, and drama played memorable roles in the dance, but moreover, the most outstanding moment had to have been the first few seconds of the second half of the dance. The contrast between settings along with the arrangement of the Sugar Plum Fairy portrayed brilliance immeasurable, and perhaps insurmountable.

The choreography in the dance resembled either neo-classical or contemporary genres of ballet, depending on careful argumentation of whether a plot is identifiable. Though one concept independently new to me, was the incorporation of quite a number of young dancers whom had been obviously skilled, as well. In it all, the settings and dancers were able to present what

I, and perhaps others, consider a dreamland. I realize the dreamland is only temporary and I ought not see the dance again for the sheer enjoyment of its presentation, and will probably only take children to see it during Christmas seasons.

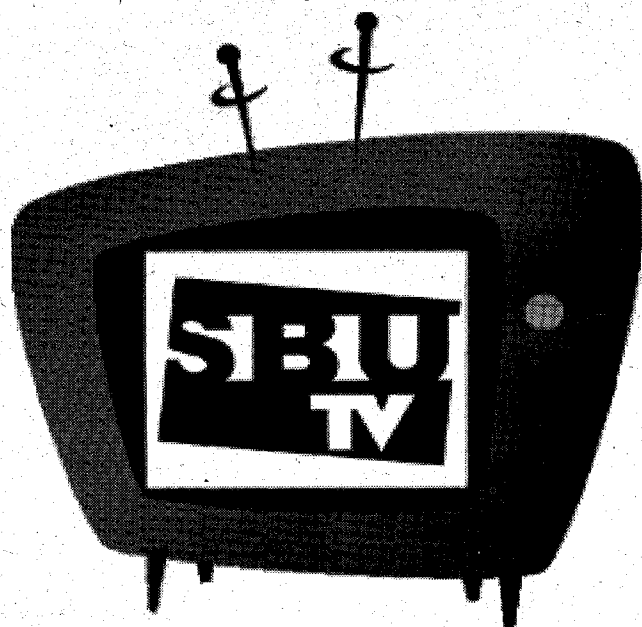
The individual movements and movement patterns seemed as if the dancers were skating on ice, and as a result, were visually interesting and related to presentation of the dreams of Clara. The technical support in terms of set design was the most elaborate and coordinated of just about any dance. The set seemed to have displayed a general orientation toward three-dimensional layering and disparity of colors from dimmer to brighter, outward, as well as curtains expanding on both sides to the left and right likewise, outward. Light variations were even used during intermission as snowflake designs were emitted on the curtains and sides of the stages.

According to the program notes, the libretto, character names, and plot twists have all been open to interpretation and change over time, but the music has never changed and have remained constant. The music has always served to enhance the theme since as the situation changed, the music changed accordingly. I highly support its consistency over time. Though perhaps of equal importance, without the costumes, the piece would not have been conveyed as clearly, since after all, the characters were many and the dancers were about the same build and height. Furthermore, it can be said the costumes enabled the dancers to utilize the movements of the lower body more precisely and with less interference.

Technical considerations in terms of props were intricate to the work. The props enabled the horses to move, the sled to slide, the fans to fan, the rifles to fire, and the cannon to blast. Judgingly, the most imaginative prop was unquestionably the canon, for the cannon would blast out a piece of cheese rather than cannonballs. Blasting out a piece of cheese is most imaginative and highly intelligent, because cannonballs would create a hazard for the dancers and probably scare the children.

In brief, "The Nutcracker" still stands as one of the most famous dances to date. After seeing it as an adult, I realize "The Nutcracker" has reasons well justified to be the most famous—well choreographed, well performed, well designed, well accommodated, and well rehearsed—dance amongst dances.

"The Nutcracker" plays annually at the Staller Center, and more information can be found at www.nutcrackerballet.com.



TV SUCKS!

BUT YOU CAN CHANGE THAT

JOIN SBU-TV 20

WE NEED DIRECTORS, PRODUCERS, EDITORS

CAMERA PEOPLE, CREW, AND FRIENDS.

DROP BY ROOM 074 IN THE UNION BASEMENT

OR EMAIL SBUTV@IC.SUNYSB.EDU



"Shhhh! Buy a Bush Board!"

ADVERTISEMENT

Want Bush?

Get a

BUSH BOARD

**Insert
Bush-ism
Here!**



\$5

**11" x 17" Re-Useable Dry-Erase Board
featuring
Your Favorite Commander-in-Chief!**

**For product information, contact
James Blonde
1.800.659.6369
bushboardstore@hotmail.com**

Bush Board© James Blonde, Inc.