

the stony brook

PRESS

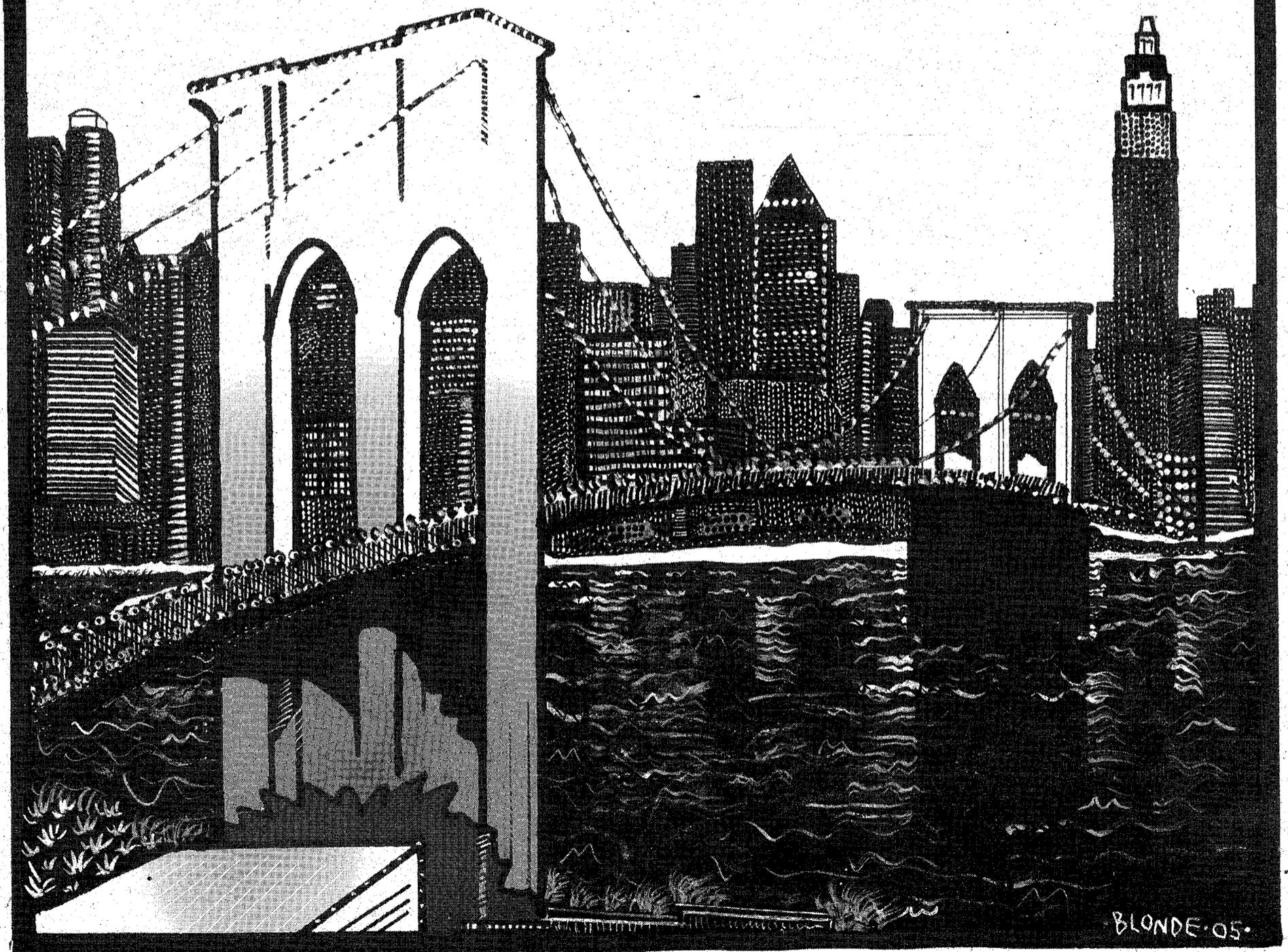
the community news and features paper

Vol. XXVI, Issue 8 "She used to say agita, but I guess I don't give it to her anymore!" Jan 26, 2005

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

IT'S A HELL OF A...STATE?

SAM GOLDMAN REPORTS PAGE 2



The State of Greater New York

By Sam Goldman

A small article in the January 18th *New York Post* shed light on one of the more curious ideas to ever come across the City Council's desk.

The article states that a bill that would set in motion plans to have New York City secede from the state to become the 51st state, after two years of inaction, will be brought up for debate in the council again.

The bill (Intro. 386) was introduced by Councilman Peter Vallone Jr. (D-Queens) in February of 2003. In May of that year, the bill went to the Government Operations committee - and has been stuck there ever since. It states that, at the next election after passage of the bill, a question to be placed on the referendum asking voters to okay a commission to study the feasibility of the city seceding to become "Greater New York." The commission would have seven members - three chosen by the mayor, three chosen by the council, and one chosen by both sides who would serve as the chairperson. In a time span no earlier than 24 months and no later than 30 months after the creation of the commission, they must present a state constitution to the mayor and the council, after which six months of public hearings would be held. After that, the commission has the right to bring the constitution to a referendum, either during the regular election cycle or by a special election if the commission so desires. At such an election voters will have 2 referendum questions - whether or not to adopt the constitution, and whether or not to keep the commission in place to draft an alternative constitution in the event that voters vote in the negative on the first question. All this means that, even after such a commission is created, it would take probably three years at a minimum for anything to come out of it.

If voters agree to adopt the constitution, things get more difficult. At this point, the bill requires that the commission draft state-level legislation allowing the city to disengage itself

from the state. Assuming that the state Senate and Assembly vote the bill into law, then consent must be granted by the U.S. Congress, giving all parties the final permission to make New York City the State of Greater New York.



I LOVE...NEW YORK CITY.
OH YEAH! NEW YORK CITY!
Courtesy of www.CartographersUnite.com

An August 2004 article in *New York* magazine, while advocating secession from the United States as opposed to just New York state, still gives some interesting points to consider. The city's gross domestic product, which stands at \$413.9 billion, puts it just ahead of Switzerland and just behind that of Russia. It has more people than Ireland, Switzerland or New Zealand.

Why was such an idea brought forth in the first place? Many cite the grandeur of New York City, and other more recent, politically minded scribes cite that three out of every four registered voters in the city happen to be

Democrats. Some even cite the events of 1975 that led to the *New York Daily News*' infamous "FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD" headline as a reason to be a self-sufficient as possible. But, as with all things politics, the main reason is money.

A press release touting the bill's introduction cited Jonathan Bowles, research director for the Center for an Urban Future. According to his statistics, the city receives 32% less municipal aid from Albany than a decade ago, including a giant \$0 in supplemental municipal aid (a state program that has divvied \$728 million to local municipalities since its inception in 1996). In addition, the state has enacted at least half a dozen laws since 1994 requiring the city to boost salaries or pension payments to certain municipal workers, measures that have cost the city hundreds of millions of dollars. Lastly, the city contributes about 47% of total revenue to the state, while receiving only 40% of total state spending (1992-1997 period).

In addition, the city remains annoyed at not getting enough homeland security funds from the nation, or enough education dollars from the state (a problem that recently rectified itself thanks to a lawsuit won by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity), and the city would enjoy the advantage of not having to have construction projects, such as the pending West Side stadium, okayed by the state. Many city officials have grown tired with dealing with Albany in general. The legislative branch is widely considered by many the most corrupt and inefficient legislature in the country, and many are unhappy with George Pataki, who is seen by many in the city to favor upstate New York over the city.

Vallone Jr. in his comments to the *Post*, said it best. "Gov. Pataki is slapping us on the back with one hand while lifting our wallets with the other," he said. "We cannot raise taxes any more, nor can we make any further cuts. This may be our only viable option."

Relief in Asia and Spending at Home

By Dustin Herlich

The tragedy in Asia has devastated the lives of millions and simultaneously brought together billions in aid. As I type this piece, President Bush prepares for his inauguration gala, an event which will cost almost forty million dollars. Granted, most of that money came from private donations and corporate donations but it is still \$40,000,000.00. That's a lot of zeros. Also as I write this piece, the government is asking for billions more dollars to fight in Iraq. Oh, yeah, the war is "over" in Iraq by the way. Private donations in this country have dwarfed federal aid for this tragedy.

According to Wikipedia.org, the US is actually on the low end of donations. While our amount in dollars of donations is larger than many nations, as far as percentage of GDP goes, we're one of the worst. You have nations like Australia, which have pledged as much as 1.16 per mil of their GDP, while the US has pledged a paltry .1 per mil. It has been asked why the wealthy Arab nations don't come forth and protect their own people; why should nations such as ours give to this cause? There are some very simple answers to that.

Primarily, the people impacted by this event were not Muslim, so wealthy Muslim nations should not be lambasted for not "protecting their own." Indonesia is mostly Muslim, but they have refused aid from nations such as Israel due to racial hatred. I assume that means they either don't need the help, or have already

gotten it from nations they don't mind getting aid from. Sri Lanka is mostly Buddhist. In fact, it has a very small Muslim population at all. There are more Christians than Muslims! The current administration of this country is doing all that it can to remind the American people of just how Christian it is, and how much that should matter to everyone. I guess killing innocents in the Middle East and actually enacting laws that inhibit giving is the Christian thing to do right now.

"The US is actually on the low end of donations. [A]s GDP goes, we're one of the worst."

Really, one of the biggest reasons we shouldn't be complaining about how much we have given, and instead, complaining how we haven't given enough is the fact that we can afford it above almost all other nations combined. Our economy, weak as we may see it being in our eyes, is still light years ahead of our nearest competitors. Do we really need forty million dollar inauguration dinners? We always talk about how leaders of impoverished nations live in splendor, while their people

starve. Don't want to give more to tsunami relief? Ok, how about all the poverty in this country? How about the people in Florida who are still living in huts on their lawns, waiting for aid to help rebuild their homes? How about AIDS in Africa or war in the Congo? Oh, right, most of the money came from pharmaceutical companies. So how about they give a price break to the elderly for their medicine? How about donate drugs to third world nations, or to places hit by the tsunami that are still in need of medications and antibiotics? I guess a big party for an already wealthy man is much more important.

What these countries really need right now is cold hard cash. On the January 13th 2005 edition of *InFocus*, guests from the SLMANA (Sri Lanka Medical Association of North America) reachable at <http://www.slmana-east.org/> were asked directly about what kinds of aid they are in need of. They don't want our clothing. They don't wear the types of clothing we do in Sri Lanka. They have too much clothing, food, and in some rare cases even medicine coming into the ports. There is a backup of these items, and they can't be shipped out to needy areas fast enough. We can't send them lumber and other building materials, because the types of materials and lumber we use here don't stand up to that climate. What they need is cash. They have the manpower, they have doctors and engineers

Relief in Asia (Continued...)

By Dustin Herlich

and others coming over to help. They need the money to buy the lumber from places where they can use the wood. They need the money to rebuild roads, keep order, keep peace, and to get their economy back on track.

On the main page of their web site it states "As a result of the overwhelming and generous support of the public, we have collected a tremendous quantity of food, clothing, and medicine, which is being sent to Sri Lanka. Therefore, SLMANA is no longer accepting donations of food, clothing, and medicine for the time being. SLMANA thanks the public for its generosity in this time of tragedy." The aid workers are ecstatic to see how much aid and outpouring they have received, and how much people still want to give. The real help now is the money. Sri Lanka is one of the harder hit nations, and their case is sim-

ply a good representation of what is the current state of affairs. Other nation's needs may be slightly different, but overall most of them are in a similar situation. For more information about donations by each nation, please refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarian_response_to_the_2004_Indian_Ocean_earthquake

There are individuals on campus who have dedicated time to helping out with this event. One in particular, Jason O'Hare, was on the aforementioned episode of InFocus, along with representatives from SLMANA. I wish them luck in their endeavors, and hope they accomplish what they set out to do. If you are really stuck for organizations you'd like to give money to, there is always the American Red Cross at <http://www.redcross.org/> Perpetually, it is a well regarded charity, helping millions.

Double Crossing the United States

By Jorge Sierra

"In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the [International Red Cross and Red Crescent] Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at anytime in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature." So said Francois Bugnion, a Very Important Person in the International Committee of the Red Cross (no, that's not his real title) during a May 2004 speech on the history and continued importance of the ICRC's principle of neutrality. With this lofty principle firmly in mind, this humanitarian organization goes into different parts of the world, where detainees of armed conflicts and other prisoners are held, to monitor conditions and advocate for humane treatment. They made a visit to our own base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba this past June and issued a confidential report to our government and military in July.

Boy did they screw up.

I am referring to the secret memo on the ICRC report someone leaked to the *New York Times*, the one that says that our methods of interrogating detainees are "tantamount to torture." The November 30 *New York Times* article shares this and other juicy gossip, such as the stormy debate that took place way over in the ICRC's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Especially galling to some ICRC people were reports of corroboration between detainees' psychologists and our government's interrogators. Apparently some members had wanted to take a public stance against the Bush administration. It now appears that someone has decided to betray the United States and take justice into his or her own hands.

The problem with all this is that, according to its own stated policies, the International Committee of the Red Cross is not supposed to take sides in public, ever. You can look it up on their website (www.icrc.org), that neutrality bit is one of the first words you'll see. Moreover, the report the secret memo quotes from was confidential, written for the sole consideration of the US government and military. According to Mr. Bugnion and most of the ICRC's annual reports, this is a very common and necessary practice when it visits prisoners or sends its members into conflict-ridden nations. Promising neutrality and confidentiality is the only way it can even gain an audience in many nations that violate human rights. That doesn't mean the ICRC doesn't take a stand on

human rights—we now know they gave our military quite a tongue-lashing. What it does mean is that it can stand face-to-face with the bad guys in the world and deal with them like gentlemen, at least get their attention, maybe even get them to realize they have to at least moderate their policies. Personally I'd add that every person, every organization, every nation deserves to have at least *someone* willing to work with them as equals. It's an awesome responsibility, one that should not be tossed away lightly, like some anonymous idiot has just done.

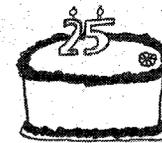
Because now we've had pro-American commentators like Bill O'Reilly jumping all over this story, accusing the ICRC of anti-Americanism, hypocrisy and Western European Head-in-the-Sand Syndrome. It certainly doesn't help that the memo appears to apply sensational charges to such tactics as solitary confinement, temperature extremes and sleep deprivation. I mean, the *Times* didn't headline its story on the post-traumatic effects of too much air conditioning. It didn't even open with the more serious charges like occasional beatings and that corroboration bit. Nay, what the *Times* really wanted to talk about was that "tantamount to torture" catfight. Did we really learn anything new from that?

With the ICRC mired in the politics surrounding Guantanamo Bay, its reputation for impartiality suffers, and this hurts everyone. The reason this organization has been so effective is because it is *not* your average bunch of activists, but a group of people who really care about and are willing to treat with everyone, no matter how despised they are. Well, except for the United States, apparently. How can they have any credibility to point out our abuses when they so easily betray our trust and their own standards? What is the ICRC doing to ensure this never happens again? The bad guys in the world are going to look at this and think "this could happen to us" and close the door on the ICRC, putting hundreds and thousands of people who desperately need services and moral support at grave risk. You can be sure that after this episode of kiss and tell, our military will be reluctant to ever let them set foot anywhere we keep captives again.

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Martin Luther King, Jr. was truly an American hero; they don't come along often these days. While he was a mortal just like the rest of us, and he had his flaws, just as we all do, Dr. King nevertheless comes closer to being an American hero than most famous figures I could name. When we consider Dr. King's work and the work of all those involved in the civil rights movement that continues to this day, it becomes clear why this day in his honor is to be taken seriously.

We live in a time when heroes are few and far between. We live in a time when hypocrisy and hatred and fear and apathy put our freedom and our society at risk. We live in a time when terrorism on the part of immoral guerillas and greedy men in the corridors of power creates a culture of fear and borderline paranoia. We live in a time when the goal of equal rights for all and equal dignity for all people—the stated creed of our nation—is still just out of reach, though the gap is closing. Now, more than ever, Dr. King can serve as a hero for a new era, the foundation of which is yet shaky because of fear and uncertainty.

The foundation we build our society on can only be as sturdy as the values we believe in. Dr. King spoke of values and morality as the impetus of his work. Taking cues from Jesus and Gandhi, he preached of love and a rejection of violence and warfare as the *best* means of achieving reform. Even though we often miss the mark and fail to live up to these ideals in our words and actions, we can still hold on to them and strive to meet them. That makes us better people in the end.

You cannot craft positive social change and espouse positive values and enforce positive morality through negativity and brute force, for violence breeds

more violence, until the only person left to fight is yourself. You cannot promote peace through warfare. You cannot promote love through hate. You cannot promote morality through sin. You cannot build a foundation for a just and moral society upon a lake of blood; you need something more substantial. You cannot build this foundation through corpses; for corpses rot. You cannot build this foundation with bones; for bones crumble to dust, along with the foundation and the edifice built upon it. Dr. King was just one of a long line of men and women, going back to Jesus and Buddha, who highlighted these values. And in a time of war, terrorism, and paranoia, we need to get back to these values if we wish to survive.

The War on Terror is an ideological war that can be fought and won only by heroes such as Dr. King. By living in fear and by responding with fear and hate, we lose. By responding to tyranny and corruption and hypocrisy with apathy, we lose. By responding to unjust warfare abroad and social injustice at home with apathetic acceptance, we lose. By abandoning the values the Dr. King stood for in favor of chest-beating and war-mongering and fear-mongering and bigotry, we may win a few battles but we will lose the war. I think that's what Dr. King would be saying were he here today.

January 19th was a day of lofty speeches and sound bites, of commemorations and salutes, of remembrance and admiration of Martin Luther King, his work in the civil rights movement, and the foundation he and the movement he was a part of laid for us today. And what it all boils down to are four simple words:

Thank you, Dr. King.

More Tuition Hikes, W000000T...

Hey everybody! It's good to be back for another semester, isn't it? So good, apparently, that someone thought it'd be a good idea to raise tuition for all us rich folks here at Stony Brook to get more of what we crave... um, yeah, sure. Well, before you toss your arms in the air and say "Oh well, that's life," we've got a Fun Facts Sheet about tuition hikes here for you:

New York State public college tuition rates are already, before these hikes, some of the most expensive in the country.

Automatic tuition increases, the ones that pop up every year for a supposedly small amount, are not grounded in any real set of guidelines. These hikes can promise to be small, but when the time comes the board can set the amount as high as they need to. This has already happened in other states and will happen here. A major reason for these hikes is the lack of state funding for SUNY. In short, we're paying more because the state doesn't want tax dollars going to something as silly as "higher learning." Who needs it anyway?

It is extremely unlikely that any conditions will change around campus, despite the extra money you pay. Interestingly enough, SUNY will see the same flat budget for a long time, no matter how much they

raise your tuition. In other words, don't cross your fingers for more computers at the library SINC site or for the Roth Swamp to be replaced with a pond anytime soon. It's not happening.

Lastly, these tuition hikes DO NOT NEED TO BE APPROVED. You, as a student of a SUNY school, are completely at their mercy. They can raise the amount you have to pay at their own convenience and you are left with no choice but to keep paying it.

Here's a look at your fee increases this semester:

Fall 2004	Student Activity Fee	\$83.25
	Comprehensive Fee	\$436.00
Spring 2005	Student Activity Fee	\$84.25
	Comprehensive Fee	\$502.50

Okay, so now that you've got your Fun Fact Sheet, what do you do? As you've probably guessed, there are a lot of people who aren't happy with these increases, and if you want to have a voice the best place to go is always NYPIRG. Their office is located in the basement of the Student Union, right next to the SINC site. Don't let the tuitions board take advantage of you. Speak out.

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Press Responds to Own Article with Righteous Indignation; Violent Retribution Expected

To *The Stony Brook Press*,

I take offense to Bradley Marks' article "Stolen Laptop," a tale of a single laptop ruining a student's life. At first touching and drawing sympathy, it later comes as somewhat misguided.

I plead Mr. Marks to see that it was *himself* whom had sealed his own fate by allowing the laptop to be stolen. Be not mistaken; this is not an attack, but as a different way of viewing the situation. The stress of losing a family member, starting at a new college and other financial obligations must be enormous.

Short from having it ripped from your arms, the computer was found missing. Missing, as well, are the details between the lines. Had there been any thought given to any consequence that an integral part of his life (the laptop) could be taken away, and if so, why didn't

he guard it with his life? A common quote used by computer enthusiasts is "if a file doesn't exist in two places, it doesn't exist at all." Relatively inexpensive zip disks could have gotten Bradley back on his feet in hours, which are probably irreplaceable now.

If there's a will, there's a way.

First, is it now so important, especially since now Bradley is healthy, to buy a new laptop? I know of many students who solely use the university's numerous SINC sites and Blackboard to conduct their college lives.

Second, if an education remains important at Stony Brook, Mr. Marks should appeal to the school's Ombudsman to see if they'll take exception. This would be even more in his favor if he were an exceptional student beforehand. That's another detail left out. If not, I repeat: he may have sealed his own fate.

Finally, because of the quasi-patriar-

chal relationship to his deceased uncle's family of Jewish decent, Mr. Marks can rightfully lobby the Jewish groups (or any other) on campus about running a fundraiser to subsidize a trip to Israel. Stony Brook is filled with kids just waiting for a chance to do the right thing.

Speaking directly to Bradley Marks: being as mature as those circumstances demand, I can only hope that this was only a temporary weakness in character. Many articles of *The Press*, especially my own, have been fueled out of fleeting anger. I have offered you something to think about, and I sincerely hope that you take them to heart, just as you have touched the hearts of many of the *Stony Brook Press*' audience.

Sincerely,
Tom Senkus

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OPEN HOUSE! Feb 2nd!

Dear Tom,

Indeed, you have given us all something to think about. What manner of world is this where such weakness is not only given physical form, but must be forced upon the masses? I hope everyone takes this correspondence to heart; for good Thomas's pontifications are not merely an airing of grievances, they are also a call to arms.

A world where such blatant intestinal fragility dares to exist and poison the minds of the strong is not a world worthy of the gift of humanity. In order to make the worthy among us heartily sing the praises of life once again, the herd must be culled. Honestly, could one that would lament the disappearance of some technological bauble in such an unbecoming fashion be allowed to continue insulting the rest of us with his existence? Surely not.

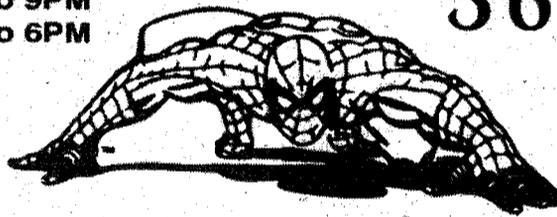
Beware, all bemoaners of stolen mechanical trinkets! We have judged you unworthy of this mortal plane. Now that the time for your destruction is nigh, we shall raise our weapons that have been forged with the blood and torment of our unworthy foes and ride towards your undoubtedly humble location with the grit and fervor of the Valkyries themselves! Enjoy your last moments on Earth you dolorous scion of machine, for our vengeance is swift.

Sincerely,

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One-Upmanship in the Race for Tsunami Aid

By Natalie Schultz

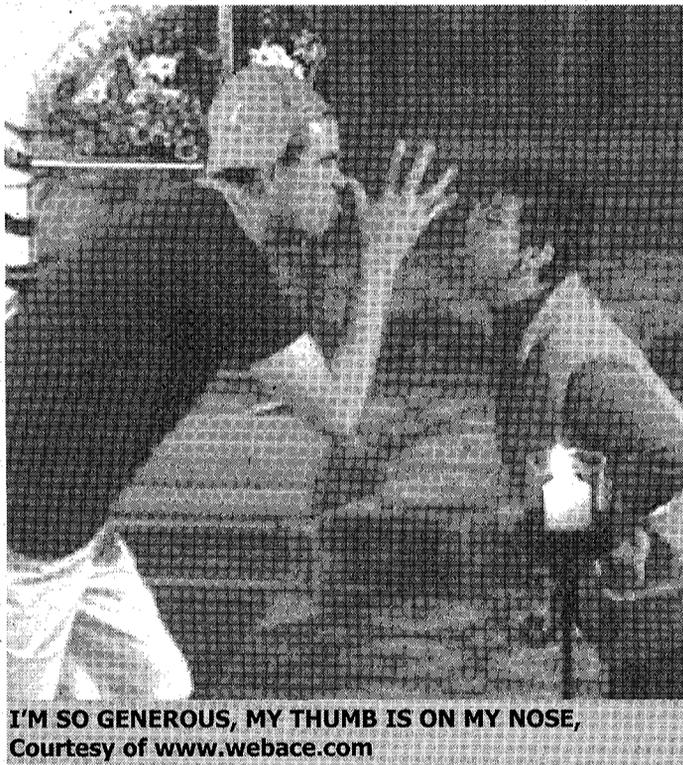
The tsunami disaster has brought to the forefront the antipathy of the European Union and United Nations towards the United States. It all began shortly after the tsunami hit, when George W. Bush, President of the USA, took three days to make a public statement about the disaster. Immediately critics began calling our initial relief aid of \$15 million cheap. The press, both international as well as domestic began berating the American government for not pulling its weight in foreign aid. By now, everyone knows how the story continues – we immediately increased our aid to \$35 million, and then to \$350 million. And individual Americans donated to the disaster relief in record numbers as well; half of all Americans have now contributed money out of their own pockets. More importantly, our military is spending \$6 million a day distributing the immense amount of aid that has arrived to the most remote areas. Without the use of American military helicopters the aid would not have reached the most desperate people; instead it would still be sitting in large piles in city centers. This \$6 million a day in military aid is in addition to the \$350 million our government has pledged in relief aid.

Four days after the tsunami hit, Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, made his first public statement about the disaster. Very few members of the press criticized him for waiting so long to react. In other words, the world expects the President of the United States to rise up and lead everyone else. Let me re-phrase that: the rest of the world expects the United States to be the financial leader in digging the rest of the world out from its troubles. Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't it the case that the primary job of the President of the United States is to protect the citizens of the United States, and the primary job of the head of the United Nations is to protect the people of world in general, particularly the most in need? If that is the case, then why did George W. Bush speak out before Kofi Annan and pledge American financial aid before the United Nations did so?

Now, let the games begin! You know that song that goes "Anything you can do I can do better, I can do anything better than you. No you can't! Yes I can! No you can't! Yes I can! No you can't! Yes I can! NO YOU CAAAAN'T!" Well, that should be our world's anthem. In a race to one-up each other, many western nations have been steadily increasing their aid. Some view this political one-upmanship as a good thing for the less fortunate people in the world. But, from an economic perspective, it has gotten downright out of hand. The USA hasn't increased its aid beyond \$350 million; instead George W. Bush has called upon former presidents Clinton and Bush to spur on individual and corporate donations to the disaster relief. This has got to be our current president's best idea since taking office four years ago. He has managed to team up a former president well liked by Republicans with a former president who Republicans love to hate, and who is in his own right loved by the liberal Democrats in our country. This move was so ingenious that I can only imagine that the spirit of good 'ole Ronald Reagan took over George W. Bush in that moment. Rather than pledging more money than our government can actually afford, Bush has taken a bi-partisan stance that will in all likelihood spur on individual donations by not only ordinary Americans, but the rich big-wigs with whom our

former presidents are buddy-buddy as well. Economically, this is the best tactic, because individuals and corporations generally know just how much they can afford to donate, as opposed to our government over-extending itself and racking up more debt at the cost of American taxpayers.

Other Western nations, on the other hand, are most certainly over-extending themselves; yet it appears that they are doing so mainly to one-up the USA. Any country can pledge hundreds of millions of dollars, but then the question must be begged: Where are they going to get that money? Kind-heartedness is one thing, but financial irresponsibility will only lead to disaster in the long-run. Canada's government has already voiced concern over where the money the Canadian government has pledged will come from. Promising to increase the \$80 million already pledged, a spokesman for Finance Minister Ralph Goodale admitted he isn't sure where the relief money will come from, stating "The details have yet to be hammered out." This has given rise to concerns that existing program spending will be sacrificed or cut back to make fiscal room for Canada's financial pledges toward tsunami aid.



A quick glance at the monetary pledges of many western countries should set off alarm bells to economists as well as the citizens of those nations. How far into the future will the taxpayers of these countries be paying for their generosity? Germany has pledged \$674 million (\$8.17 per capita). Germany is already financially weak with 10% unemployment and high taxes impeding its growth, along with outdated and inefficient social systems such as health-care and welfare. Norway has pledged \$180 million (a whopping \$39.13 per capita). With the highest taxes in the world I wonder how the Norwegian people survive, especially since the cost of living is also among the highest in the world at 189% compared to the USA. Japan, with a notably unstable economy, has pledged \$500 million (\$3.90 per capita). Australia has pledged \$764 million (\$37.82 per capita), possibly putting the brakes on currency reform. Other high per capita donations are Denmark with \$76.2 million (\$14.11 per capita), Finland with \$65.3 million (\$12.56 per capita), Sweden with \$75 million (\$8.33 per capita), and

Switzerland with \$96.2 million (\$13.00 per capita). Surprisingly (or not), the USA, Great Britain and France have pledged the least per capita. United Kingdom: \$95.1 million (\$1.61 per capita), United States: \$350 million (\$1.19 per capita), France: \$64.6 million (\$1.05 per capita).

As for non-western responses, China comes in a pathetic last with \$63 million (\$0.05 per capita), while Taiwan (whom China won't set free) gave \$50 million (\$2.21 per capita). Saudi Arabia only gave \$30 million (\$1.17 per capita), which is pretty pathetic considering it is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and it is Muslim, and most of the victims are Muslims. Smaller Muslim countries did pledge a considerable amount though, in particular tiny Qatar with \$25 million (\$29.76 per capita). Meanwhile Turkey, aspiring to enter the EU, has pledged only one million dollars.

Russia's responsible reaction: Russia was the first country to fly aid and medical personnel to Sri Lanka. Russia's military has delivered a field hospital and 150 medics to Indonesia, 100 tons of aid to Indonesia and Thailand, and 10 mobile electric power generators and 15 tons of bed linen to Phuket, Thailand. Yet Russia has only pledged \$2 million in financial aid, and that has drawn criticism from some Western politicians. Moscow's small financial pledge is a calculated move aimed at keeping peace at home, said Vladimir Pribylovsky, a Kremlin expert with the Panorama think tank. He explained "The government understands that millions of dollars going to someone in Asia would be greeted badly by ordinary Russians, considering the rather meager aid that officials provide to their own people in trouble, such as the Beslan victims." Still, the victims of the school siege by Chechen rebels are donating 1 million rubles (\$36,000). "Beslan residents will never forget how the world responded to our tragedy. So, for our part, we will always respond to the tragedy of people who suffer natural disasters and terrorist attacks around the world," said Mairbek Tuayev, head of the Public Council of Beslan. Considering the weak financial, social and political situation in Russia, the Russian government has not only reacted responsibly to the tsunami disaster, but effectively as well. Rather than pledging monetary assets it does not have, Russia has sent the assets it does have – necessary goods and highly educated medical personnel.

Ironically, it is the words of French Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy that prove that money isn't everything: "I concede that Europe did not show exemplary logistical efficiency... We need a quick reaction force so that there is not just one country present within a few hours anywhere in the world." Douste-Blazy made this statement at a meeting of fifty European Union foreign ministers where they looked into ways to develop a rapid reaction force to deal with future disasters. One diplomat stated "The need for this mechanism is plain to see, but so are its limits." He cited the desire of member states to retain control of their civil emergency units in case of a disaster on their own soil. Apparently, the Europeans are willing to outspend the United States with money they don't have, but they aren't willing to send over the troops that they do have.

Balk as they might, but without the military aid of the USA and Russia, all the money that the European Union has pledged would be quietly rotting in the city centers of South Asia.

Medical Malpractice Suits are Dividing the Nation!

By Marcel Votluka

Perhaps you've heard the awful, awful news that medical malpractice suits are tearing this great nation apart. It must be true: President Bush is urging swift action to put caps on malpractice claims, lest this scourge further taint our country's resolve. But you may be wondering to yourself, "Just how did this horrific travesty visit upon this land in the first place?" Well, dear reader, allow me to educate you.

This whole thing started when an obese mother of three from Missouri levied a suit against McDonald's for making her fat. Her case rested on her outrageous claims that the food was addictive and made her crave it endlessly. Thus, she gained two hundred pounds of pure, unadulterated lard within a year, a la *Super Size Me*. Things got so bad that she was

"Congress eagerly passed these reforms... Except for Ted Kennedy, who, as we all know, is a traitor and a terrorist."

reduced to devouring her three brats during an especially bad binge session. After accidentally squishing her vegan husband as she tossed and turned in bed one night, she realized she had a problem. She tried numerous remedies but all failed. Finally, she decided to press charges, since her stay-at-home job as a telephone psychic for the Miss Cleo Psychic Friends Network didn't suffice to pay her bills.

The woman won her case, gaining one hundred million dollars in damages. She used part of this money to get a series of surgical liposuctions, but the pumps used to extract her body lard got lost in the folds of skin covering her body. So she filed a medical malpractice suit against her doctor, eventually winning three hundred million dollars in damages. She now resides in a palatial palace in Beverly Hills, California.

Since that seminal case, America's moral resolve has been torn to shreds in the ensuing storm of medical malpractice suits. The medical establishment is cowering in fear in the face of this horror, like scared chipmunks. Meanwhile, their sleazy victims and their greedy lawyers are getting rich off the honest mistakes of the poor doctors. It seems that there is no end in sight. As I write this, liberal and conservative media pundits and politicians are screaming at each other about this national disaster. Red States have threatened to secede from the Union (again) unless this crisis is solved. Only one man has the courage, moral fortitude, and testicular capacity to deal effectively with this issue: President George W. Bush.

Seeing that the nation was being torn apart by this scourge of malpractice suits, President Bush immediately did what he does best—he declared a second War on Terror to put a stop to them. From his golden throne in the West Wing, he decreed that there ought to be reforms in place to allay the scourge and save the wealthy, irresponsible doctors from a tragic fate.

First, he asked Congress to set caps on medical malpractice damage claims, from the current maximum of one billion dollars to a maximum of seventy bucks (Canadian), not including lawyer's consultation fees. This was intended to not only keep the doctors' already moderately inexpensive insurance premiums from inching higher, but also to spare innocent, kindly old HMO's from having to hold all those doctors accountable for their actions. Congress,

seeing the President's infinite wisdom, followed suit. Except for Ted Kennedy, who, as we all know, is a traitor and a terrorist.

Then the President asked Congress to put a myriad of restrictions on the circumstances under which legal claims may be filed against negligent doctors. For instance, a patient who is the victim of malpractice may only file a legal claim if the doctor in question repeatedly committed malpractice over a long period of time—this is the "three strikes and you're sorta-kinda-not really out" rule. In addition, a malpractice victim is not allowed to have legal representation in court, while the doctor is to be provided with the best lawyers money can buy. Oh, and the jury must be made up of medical students in crushing debt. This is all intended to make things fair and balanced. After all, well-

off and reputable surgeons are an oppressed class in this country, didn't you know? On top of that, HMO's may not be sued under any circumstances—no matter how negligent or abusive they may be, their intentions are noble and we should trust them as agents of God on Earth. This is the "divine immunity" clause. Finally, patients who file claims must undergo a rigorous background check from the Department of Homeland Security. After all, they might just be a terrorist bent on undermining the medical profession!

Congress eagerly approved these new regulations, except for Ted Kennedy, because he hates America. By ensuring that patients have no legal recourse in cases of medical malpractice, these tough new provisions will hopefully stop the scourge on humanity that are medical malpractice suits. By limiting damages, victimized patients will learn self-sufficiency and build character by learning to deal with their physical and emotional trauma. By protecting doctors, irresponsible and inept surgeons and physicians will have a second chance to self-improve, and learn from their honest mistakes. By shielding HMOs from frivolous and petty lawsuits, America's bastions of medical care will be preserved for generations to come.

And, to be perfectly honest and frank, dear reader, leaving a scalpel in a patient's body is not that big a deal. Why, think of it as a memento of your appendectomy! And even if the surgeon accidentally severs your kidney during a routine hysterectomy, don't be alarmed—at least your liver's working just fine! If your doctor knowingly prescribes the wrong medication despite its potentially fatal side effects, just keep in mind that the doctor went to medical school and you didn't. Do you think you know better than the doctor? I didn't think so.

President Bush has shown that he

understands the scope of this problem, and he has the compassion and good sense to realize that doctors are not to blame for their own mistakes, patients are! After all, if the patient hadn't bothered the doctor to solve his or her mundane medical woes in the first place, the malpractice wouldn't have happened. Greedy patients are trying to ride the gravy train all the way to Omaha, and those pesky trial lawyers are making a mint. We are fortunate to have a leader who realizes that the root of the problem is not the medical malpractice itself, nor is it the HMO's insatiable greed and unethical practices, but the patients' and their lawyers' own avarice.

I caught up with President Bush at a recent fundraiser to raise money for wealthy landowning aristocrats hurt by the Asian tsunamis. He gave his personal thoughts on the malpractice issue: "Frankly, I don't see what the big fuss is all about. I mean, come on folks, the Rapture is a-coming, and I've got a VIP slot from liberatin' all those Iraqians into God's Kingdom. So what if patients have no legal recourse from medical malpractice? We're all going to Heaven anyway, unless you're one of them fags from Greenwich Village, so I say, roll with the punches."

Vice President Cheney chimed in, "this has nothing at all to do with cronyism or doing political favors to wealthy HMO executives. And it has nothing to do with rewarding those doctors who keep my ticker tickin'. I mean, sure, these malpractice caps will keep more money in the pockets of HMO's and doctors so that they'll have more on hand to donate to the Republican National Committee. But that's okay."

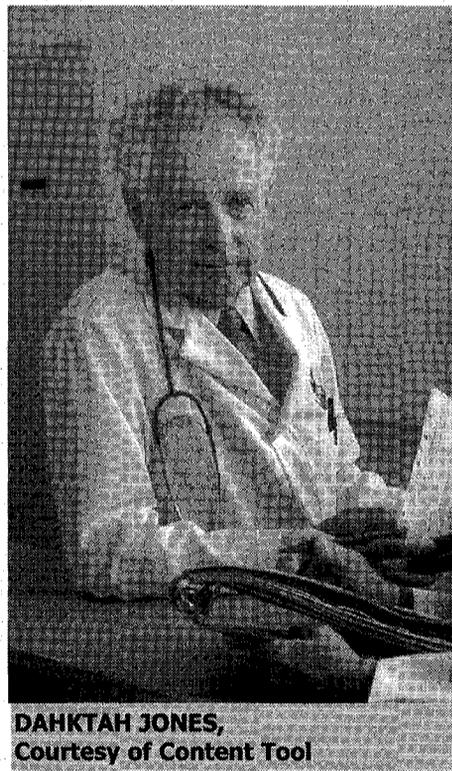
The President added, "Don't listen to all them bleeding-hearts who say that the obvious solution to the malpractice problem is for doctors to stop screwing up so much. And we don't need a "patient's bill of rights" any more than we need the real Bill of Rights, so don't get me started on that load of crap. It's just an excuse for the unwashed masses to extort all the doctors and enrich trial lawyers like Senator Edwards."

Indeed, accountability for doctors and HMOs is not the issue here. If this deluge of frivolous medical malpractice lawsuits continues for much longer, America's national character will be forever stained. And this is unacceptable. Our leaders and our govern-

ment understand that doctors provide such an invaluable service to us that we should be grateful and unquestioning of them, even if they occasionally screw up—life-altering consequences notwithstanding.

As for my credibility on this issue, put yourself at ease. I am indeed a licensed and accredited physician, due in large part to the fact that Paraguay doles out licenses like Halloween candy. So you can trust that I and I alone truly know what I'm talking about, and you may find solace in my wisdom.

And remember: *only you can prevent medical malpractice suits!*



DAHKTAH JONES,
Courtesy of Content Tool

It Has To Be Said...

By Ian Rice

Not that this will come as a shock to many of you out there, but people really suck. I know, big shock, right? "Tell us another one, seer of seers. Did you know that the sun is hot too?" But you – that's right, *you*, could suck and not even realize it. So before you go ahead and read this article with the smugness reserved for the proud few, keep in mind that you might be in for a harsh realization by the time this thing comes to a close. You might discover that you qualify as someone who deserves to be hit with a tack hammer repeatedly based on your daily behavior.

If you talk loudly in public for no apparent reason other than to allow total strangers to overhear your stories or statements, because you feel that they are so great, you're annoying and you suck. There's a reason why nobody gives a shit about what you're saying when it's at a normal volume. Raising the level isn't making it better, just harder to ignore. The only reason you should be talking louder than normal in public is if the person you're with has a hearing problem. Otherwise, keep the story of how you made an ass of yourself at a club the night before to yourself and whatever friend you're torturing with it.

If you were born and raised in the United States of America, yet insist on pronouncing the names of Italian foods in their correct Italian form, you are extremely pompous and you suck. I understand you're proud of your heritage and background culture. I come from a British family and I'm immensely proud of that fact. But you don't hear me saying I'm going to sit my bum down on the settee and watch the telly until it's time for tea, do you? No, because that'd sound silly and people would make fun of me when I wasn't around. The same applies to you. So add the "a" to the end of "mozzarella" and talk like a normal person.

If you blame your deplorable behavior on the fact that you were drunk, you're ridiculous and you suck. I have been drunker than 90% of the people on this earth and I have never done anything that I would be ashamed of because of it. If you're at a party and you spill an entire glass of beer on someone's brand new couch, you're just a clumsy ass. The fact that you were drinking shouldn't enter into it. I am

To Those Responsible



NUFF SAID.
Courtesy of www.vhfcn.org

friends with some of the biggest drinkers on the face of the planet and I've never had any of the problems that I've heard other people blaming on their booze intake. Get yourself together.

If you wear clothes that are either too big or too small for your body type, you aren't kidding anybody and you suck. If you're a woman, there is absolutely no shame in having a body that isn't like Britney Spears' body. There is shame, however, in trying to wear clothes in Britney's size. Be proud of what you look like and dress to suit said look. If you're a man, there is no good reason for wearing pants that situate your back pockets behind your knees. Do you see professional, working people dressed like that? No. You know why? Because adult people don't dress like that! Stop it already.

Along the same lines as the above complaint, if you go out in public wearing an entire bottle of cologne or perfume on your body, you suck and you need to try showering. Cologne and

perfume are two things that are meant to be subtle, worn in small dabs on the lower part of your neck. If you're too lazy to wash your body before you go out, don't torture the rest of us with the overbearing scent of Polo Sport. If other people can *taste* what you're wearing, you've put on too much.

If you preface asking a question by saying, "Question," you're overly verbose and you suck. It is extremely obvious to the person your posing your inquiry to that you're asking a question. It's a vocal inflection that is difficult to mistake. Nobody is going to mistake, "Can you tell me where the bathroom is?" for a declarative statement. Save us all some time and cut to the chase.

If you talk on your cellular phone while operating a motor vehicle, you have a problem and you suck. I mean, there are laws against it now. It was bad enough before those laws were in place to see some jackass riding around with a Nokia in their ear. But now that is a ticketable offense, it's time to stop. If you have an axe sticking out of the side of your head and you're en route to the hospital, then by all means make that call. But if you have the urge to read your buddy somebody's witty bumper sticker, make a mental note of that comedy gem and wait until you see your friend to fill him in on what he missed. And, for the record, holding the phone away from your face and putting on the speakerphone option is the same thing as holding the thing right up to your head. Stop trying to manipulate the law and put the thing away!

Of course, there are a plethora of other things that make people suck. The above are just a few that I see time and time again that had to be said. If you've read through this article and can honestly say you never have and never will do any of these things, hold your head high. You are an intelligent and considerate person that respects the other people you share the planet with. If you do or have done any of the things I've mentioned, please come to terms with the fact that you suck and do your best to rectify the situation. I hope this has been a helpful and informative session for everyone.

Graduation...Now What?

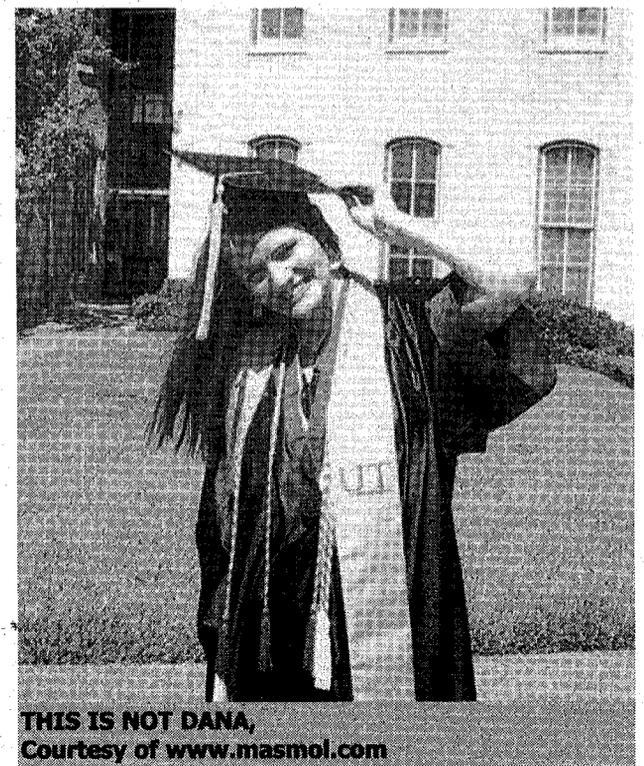
By Dana Gomi

It's that time of the year again: the spring semester of college. It's also your final semester because you are finally going to graduate after five years. Your parents are the happiest people in the world. But you are not. Why? Because once college is over what are you going to do? This is one question that I ask myself all the time. I am finally going to graduate in May from this university, yet I still don't know what I am going to be. I mean you had a major but does that really mean your going to get a job in your field? Nope.

My major is English, and right now you are saying another English teacher. Nope, sorry, not what I want to be. I want to be a journalist, meet famous people and be rich. But will that dream become a reality for me? I mean, sure, you get out of college and think, yes, I can do this, I can get a job in my field. But then I have thoughts of, what if I am not good? What if I just can't find a job? Will I be in retail all my life? These are the things going through my head as I come closer and closer to that degree, Bachelor of Arts from Stony Brook University.

I know I am not the only one with these thoughts, but no one wants to admit that being

an adult is not easy and it is nothing that I am looking forward to. Everyone is excited to graduate and get out of college, but will we miss it once we have a nine to five job five days a week? I know that I need to do this. I need to grow up and get away from the folks. Graduation is scary, yet exciting, to me. Finally I will be done with college, but now the challenge is finding the job you love and moving out of the home you have always known, rent free. Ah well, maybe something great will come along my way, like *Newsday* calling me up to be their fabulous new Sports Editor and offering me lots and lots of money. And then again, maybe not. Ah, I can dream, can't I? Well, it's time to move on, get the heck out of this place and finally be on my own. So, come May 20th, the real world better look out, because I am coming into it. Graduations is a fun time for parties and getting out of college for the final time. So bring on graduation and all the plans life has for me. It's time for me to become a big girl and be on my own



THIS IS NOT DANA,
Courtesy of www.masmol.com

Power to the PEOPLE

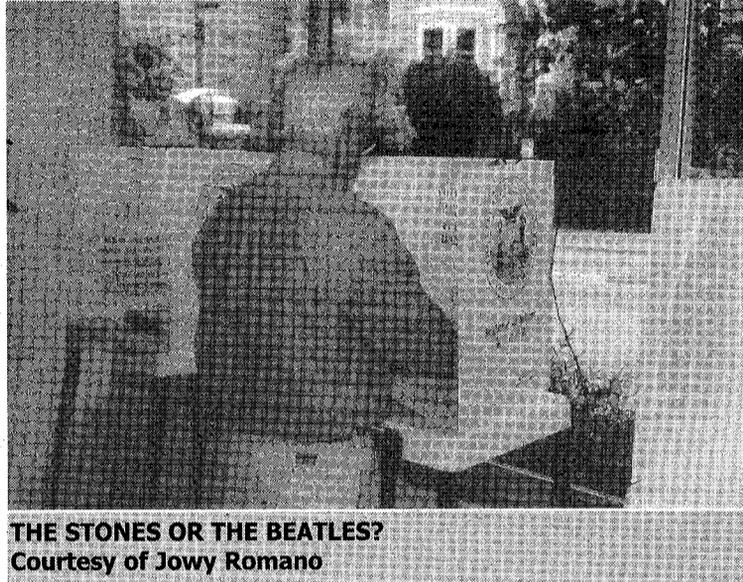
By Natalie Schultz

On September 26, 2004, 57% of Swiss citizens voted not to ease the road to Swiss citizenship for second-generation immigrants. 52% voted not to ease restrictions on third-generation immigrants. Concerning the vote on Swiss citizenship regulations, spokeswoman for the Swiss People's Party, Maria Angela Guyot, stated "We don't want Switzerland to be a doorway for all and sundry." This is the third time in twenty years that the Swiss have voted against such easing of citizenship regulations.

Currently there are 7 million people living in Switzerland; 1.5 million of them are not Swiss. Immigrants say that denying them citizenship is not fair because every aspect of life in Switzerland is voted on by the people. Unlike most modern governments, the Swiss system is based on **direct democracy**, in which the local people within a community vote on everything from state pensions to the appointment of local schoolteachers. The power is in the hands of the Swiss people, not the government officials. Therefore, it is this right, the right of local communities to judge each and every application for citizenship individually, that the Swiss people vigorously defend. The Swiss people believe that the local people are in the best position to decide who is ready to be Swiss, and who is not.

Delegates of the Swiss People's Party, the largest party in Parliament, launched a campaign persuading voters that the government cannot be trusted to decide on citizenship. Wow, can you believe it? A government Party that insists that the government cannot be trusted, that only the people can make the best decisions for themselves? Now the neutrality of Switzerland in international affairs finally makes sense. I mean, everyone has their own opinions, but how often does every single

person in one country have the same opinions? The problem with most western governments is that we hold one bitter election every few years, a slim majority of the voters walks away happy, and the rest of the citizens mope and plan their counter-attack. And the worst part is that even those people who voted for the winner often only voted for the lesser of two evils. And even worse than that, they often end up getting stabbed in the back by their candidate before his/her term is up.



THE STONES OR THE BEATLES?
Courtesy of Jowy Romano

So, the decision of the Swiss people may not sound very nice to westerners living in countries with more lenient citizenship requirements, but the point is that it was the decision of the PEOPLE! And isn't that what democracy is all about? About letting the PEOPLE have their voices heard? It isn't about bitter political campaigns between two useless multi-million-dollar power-hungry morons

who do nothing other than outspend each other trying to brainwash us into believing that one is better than the other. The fact is, when you let the people voice their opinions directly everybody wins in the long run. If you don't like the way a certain locality is run, you have every right to move. In fact, you can go through the records and move to a place where the voting record tends to align more with your own views.

It takes a lot of people to fight a war, but it doesn't take that many to decide to go to war.

If all the individual communities throughout the USA voted on whether or not to go to war in Iraq, would we be where we are today? Sure, some communities would have voted yes, but there is a good chance that even more would have voted no. But, the United States citizens, the voters, never got the chance to cast their vote on the issue. Yes, our representatives, our congressmen and senators voted for us. Come on now; in our society calling our representatives "representatives" is an oxymoron. Our society is way too diverse to have one person, or even a handful, represent all of us. And that is the least of our "representatives" problems, since most of them don't really care about anything other than themselves and lining their pockets, either illegally, or legally behind a nice cushy office for a few months of the year.

To ensure the strength of a budding democracy a representative government is necessary to prevent the land from falling into chaos. But after 200 years our republic has outgrown itself and has become nothing more than an expensive farce. It is high time we do away with leaders who don't lead. Power to the people; let the people lead themselves. The world will be a lot better off for it; after all, how many wars has Switzerland been in?

Usui Reiki

By William Lewis

Disclaimer

Reiki is not a substitute for any treatment from a doctor or other members of that community. Reiki complements the healing process and the person who is receiving it will only absorb the amount of energy needed at any out point. Always talk to doctors and use them for medical treatments. Reiki is not a medical treatment; it is a healing energy that helps the body and medicine heal a person.

Usui Reiki also known as Traditional Reiki and Usui Reiki Ryoho all came from one man Dr. Mikao Usui in the early nineteenth century. Story of Reiki as it is nowadays goes as this. Mikao Usui was the principal of the Doshisha University in Kyoto Japan and a Christian minister for the people. One day one of his students asked him to show them the method the Jesus used in his healing. Unable to give them the answer they asked Usui started on a ten-year quest to learn Jesus' method of healing. With Christian authorities telling him to stop this quest for it was not meant to be talked about or understood, Usui then looked at Buddhism to see if its writings hold any clues that may be of some help for him.

Buddhist monks Usui met told him that the ancient spiritual healing that he was seeking had been lost over the years. They told him of the life of the Buddha the lived in India (Gautama Siddhartha 620-543) that had a life that resembled the teachings and actions of Jesus. Finding no answers in the lands around him Mikao Usui then left to go overseas to the

United States where he lived for seven years. In the States he was still unable to get the answers that he was seeking but in his time he went to school at the University of Chicago Divinity School. While there he studied comparative religions and philosophies and learned to read Sanskrit, the ancient scholarly language of India and Tibet. At the end of his time there Usui received his Doctorate of Theology degree at the school, yet he was still unable to find the answers that he wanted. After that he then decided to go back to Japan and reside in a Zen monastery.

While in the monastery Dr. Usui happen to find texts that talked about and described the healing formula that Dr. Usui was looking for. The texts were written in their original Sanskrit, however they did not talk about how to activate the healing energy. Dr. Usui knowing the text was written at least 2500 years ago he went off to go through a three week long period of meditation, fasting, and praying on Mt. Koriyama in Japan to try to understand what it all meant.

To help him keep track of the days Dr. Usui had set up a pile of 21 small stones in front of him. As each day passed he would take a stone and throw it off the side of the mount were he was. On the last day as he held the last stone he said the as he throw it he throw all of his beliefs and troubles with it and reached the point of giving up. As one of the people in my life once told me "Things need to get worse before they can get better" and it was for Dr. Usui. As he sat there a light came down from

the sky and washed over him and came to rest on his third eye.

Dr. Usui either lost consciousness for some time or fell into a deep trace; whatever it was he saw millions of colors and the symbols of Reiki and all of their meanings. Dr. Usui somehow received all the Reiki attendants and knowledge form that light. Some people say that is was from Angels and others for the Divine Cosmic source, but it matters little as to who is right for it is still the same thing in the end.

What followed next is called the 4 miracles. Dr. Usui awake from the state he was in a got up to head down the mountain. He stubbed his toe as he walked and laid his hands on it. His hands became hot as he held them over the torn toe that was bleeding; as he held his hands over it the toe became held. The first miracle had just taken place. Next he went on down until he reached a house that served food. He asked for a full meal which he eaten fast for he had no food in his stomach for 21 days. After the meal Dr. Usui took ill in the stomach and placed his hands over the pain. As he did that the pain ended as the second miracle had just taken place. Not having any money with him Dr. Usui was not sure as to how to pay for the meal. The women who owned the house was in pain from a toothache, so Dr. Usui placed his hands over the side of her mouth that the tooth was on and healed the pain. The third miracle had paid for the food he ate with the end of the women's pain. On his returned at the monastery Dr. Usui

Continued on page 12

The Burden of Proof

By Natalie Schultz

Ask the average teenage American citizen what the greatest burden of their age is and he or she will likely respond that they do not have the legal identification with which to purchase or consume alcohol. Ask the average teenage European citizen and that is not generally the case. The average American teen looks forward to three milestones: getting a driver's license at age 16, being able to legally vote, and perhaps smoke, at age 18, and being able to drink at age 21. The average European teen does not have to wait as long to drink or smoke, but I'm sure that they too look forward to the day when they can start driving (although the great public transportation systems in Europe make this more of a fun goal than a necessary one).

Most anyone who has ever traveled to Europe knows that even those in their late teens and early twenties are not ID'd when purchasing alcohol. In the States, anyone who appears to be under the age of 30 must show ID to purchase cigarettes, and to purchase alcohol the age appearance minimum is even older (my mother was even ID'd to purchase a drink a year or so ago; and sorry mom, but there is no way that you look under 21 years old). So, in Europe, young people have no drive or desire to get a hold of that little piece of paper called an ID card. Yet they all have one. In fact, every single European citizen carries an identification card with them at all times. Many of them call it a passport; but this is not a passport to travel outside of their country or the EU; that is a wholly different form of identification just like our passports to travel abroad. No, this is just an identification card to prove that they are legal citizens of their particular country. In fact, many European countries also require that you register again when you move to another state or county within the same country. No big deal, you say? In the States we have the equivalent identification with our driver's licenses. Not true. In Europe you have yet a separate driver's license (although the two are sometimes combined into one document).

The point is this: legal American citizens look forward to and respect the privilege of obtaining a legal driver's license. It allows us access to age restricted products and venues; it allows us the privilege to own and drive a car. European citizens, on the other hand, have no real personal need for an identification card. Yet they all carry one at all times and feel no burden placed upon them for it. So, our driver's license is essentially a passport to fun, while the European identification card is actually that: proof of European citizenship.

You see the truth of the matter is that our identification card does not actually protect and guarantee our rights as citizens. Because, honestly, there are more important aspects of being an American citizen than being able to smoke, drink or drive (not at the same time, of course). Among the rights of being a legal American citizen are the right to vote, the right to be educated, and the right to have access to necessary medical care. But guess what? You do not need to provide any form of identification to obtain any of these services. In fact, you do not even need to show identification when you register to vote or when you go to the polling place to cast your vote.

So I ask you this, if Dick and Jane Doe are legally registered to vote at a certain polling station, and Sue and Bob Smith are not, what happens when Sue and Bob show up at the polling place earlier and cast votes under the

guise of Dick and Jane? It can happen. People have tested the system by actually registering their dog "Rover Jones III." Ok, so I'm sure that an investigation will be held into the Doe vs. Smith case; but what about the services that legal Americans are entitled to? That we, as law-abiding Americans pay for with our hard-earned tax dollars; the services that most of us consider a safety net that we will never need to tap into?

So, back to were I began. Ask the average person of any age who has entered the USA *illegally* what their greatest burden is, and it is likely to be "no problemo." As of December 22, in Arizona, this is no longer the case. In the election this past November, the registered voters of Arizona passed Proposition 200 by a 56% margin, despite major opposition to the bill. Amazingly, it took the order of Federal Judge David Bury, on December 8, to free Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano to sign into law and implement portions of the Proposition and declare that voters approved sections of the initiative which require proof of citizenship to register to vote and mandate that those seeking to cast a ballot must first present identification. But Judge David Bury had left intact part of his original Nov. 30 restraining order which barred the state from enforcing the section of Proposition

"[O]ur identification card does not actually protect and guarantee our rights..."

200 which says that government employees must get proof that applicants for public benefits are here legally and are required to report illegal entrants to federal officials.

This is the situation: 56% of registered Arizona voters, including 47% of Hispanic voters, want Proposition 200 implemented. But Arizona Governor Napolitano, Attorney General Terry Goddard, and many other officials are against the measure. In fact, Napolitano has a history of anti-citizenry votes: on June 26 she vetoed H.B. 2345, a bill that would have required voters to show identification at polling places. She claims that carrying ID is inconvenient and **burdensome** for the elderly!

The highlights of Proposition 200 are as follows:

Section two states that illegal immigration is causing economic hardship, contradicts federal policy, undermines border security and demeans the value of citizenship.

This is based on the fact that Arizona's illegal alien population is now estimated to be about 500,000. The annual cost of providing public benefits to illegal aliens living in Arizona now exceeds \$1 billion, or \$700 a year per household.

Sections three and four require new voters to document their US citizenship when they register to vote.

Section five requires voters to present a photo ID at the polling place.

Section six A. three prohibits public agencies from accepting insecure identification cards to show eligibility for public benefits, unless the issuing agency has verified the immigration status of the cardholder.

Section six A. four requires state and local government employees who discover a violation of federal immigration law to make a written report to federal immigration authorities.

Section six c creates additional protections against discrimination not found in other federal or state law. Advocates for illegal aliens gain a new right to sue any government agency that discriminates in the verification process in state court.

Additionally, the procedures for verification of eligibility that will be required under Proposition 200 comply with federal regulations known as the SAVE (Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement) system. The Proposition is fully constitutional in that it does not amend federal laws ruling that illegal aliens cannot be denied access to benefits that are exempted from verification by federal law. These programs include K-12 education, emergency health care, immunization programs, in-kind disaster relief, emergency food assistance, federal school lunch programs and public services that are necessary to protect life or safety.

Full implementation of Proposition 200 was held up by a lawsuit that was filed on November 30 by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. The suit alleged that Proposition 200 is unconstitutional because it usurps the federal government's power over immigration and naturalization. The plaintiffs also claimed that the Proposition turns state employees into immigration agents, denies benefits covered by federal law and could discourage thousands of Arizonans from voting. The lawsuit is what prompted Federal Judge David Bury to impose a restraining order; the case was finally heard in court on December 22, and the voters of Arizona won.

Regarding his restraining order, Judge Bury wrote that the court was not ruling on the merits of the measure and that he lacked sufficient information to reach a conclusion on the constitutionality. He added that the "court finds itself in an extremely undesirable situation" in delaying the proposition's implementation. "On the one hand, a majority of Arizona voters cast their ballots in favor of Proposition 200, and this court is loathe to disregard their decision. On the other hand, this court is obligated to uphold the Constitution of the United States, even when to do so stands in opposition to popular opinion."

So, I ask you: What has our country turned into when the voices of our citizens cannot be heard? Where are we headed when the law-abiding taxpayers who make our great country so great have their hopes and dreams of pursuing happiness, one of our *unaliable* rights as American citizens, ripped out from under their most virtuous, honorable act of upholding our republican ideals by voting?

The line between chaos and order is fading. A new system of rule is evolving: Anarchistic Democracy. Those who break the laws are the ones who win the rights of freedom and democracy.

It's time we citizens break free: Democratic Anarchy is the only answer! No political correctness, no telling each other how to live or what to think. Laissez Faire! Laissez Faire! in all of life's endeavors. You stay out of my way; I stay out of yours. As long as we don't do any harm towards each other we can all live in peace and harmony and realize the true American Dream. And to make sure that things don't get too out of hand, that we don't become so over-populated that we are living on top of one another, thereby bound to harm each other at some point, we will have National Identification Cards. And in the happy land of Democratic Anarchy, that is but a small burden to bear.

Democracy finally availed in the Arizona case, but the fact that the voices of the citizens were put on hold is evidence enough that our representatives do not "represent" us. The political leaders of the state of Arizona were against Proposition 200, but luckily for the voters, the judge happened to agree with them. But what happens when none of our representatives in government, executive, legislative or judicial, uphold our votes?

You Forget the World Isn't New York

By Dustin Herlich

Sometimes, you forget that the world isn't exactly the same all over. You forget what kind of a sheltered and privileged environment you live in around here. We complain about our weather and our people. We complain about the rich and the poor. We just don't know how good we have it sometimes.

The first thing I noticed when I got in the car to leave the airport was that not a single car had a "support our troops" or American flag motif ribbon on it. No "terrorist hunting permit" stickers, etc. Would you not think that the people in Florida, a Bush controlled southern state, would be proud to show off these emblems? Well, I guess not. They sure love their confederate flags, though. The confederate flag, I was told, is not really referred to by many as the rebel flag or confederate flag any more, but as the "southern flag," and isn't supposed to denote racial superiority or any of those things. If that was really the accepted meaning of the flag, I think that less people would cringe at it every time they saw it. I personally still have a hard time seeing it as anything but a symbol of hatred and repression. Maybe I'm just a dumb Yankee.

So why don't they have all these American flags and symbols? Are they not American? They sure look American, and they listen to plenty of western and country music. No one else but Americans can listen to that stuff, I'm sure. Maybe they're just comfortable enough with their Americanism that they don't need to shove it in each other's faces. Proverbially, their penises are big enough that they don't need the Ferrari. Maybe we up here all feel we have something we need to hide, or something we need to make up for. Do we just have more money for silly little trinkets like those ribbons? Either way, the lack thereof was striking.

Driving through West Palm Beach, you see a sunny, pleasant Florida. You see happy little homes, and people, for the most part, who have fixed the hurricane damage. Keep driving to Jupiter, and you'll be greeted with blue FEMA tarps, smashed houses, and trees that still have not been cleared away. It's been quite some time since the last hurricane, and up here we'd like to think that it's all done and over with. The reality of the situation is very different. There are still destroyed homes and businesses everywhere. There are still fences with trees lodged in them. There are still people who have lost everything. Maybe we should be taking a moment to think of these people again.

Florida isn't a completely backwards insane hick repository. Some parts of it look that way, but a lot of Florida is still beautiful, clean, and refreshing. Except the water. Water in most parts of Florida comes from wells, and the wells are terribly polluted, and full of all kinds of nasty minerals and metals and arsenic. Thankfully, few residents actually have to drink unpurified well water, but anytime you wake up and smell sewage, you're pretty sure your neighbor is watering his or her lawn.

From a state that has no emissions standards on cars to speak of, you'd expect a constant haze like LA, and a landscape that looks like the clips of the future from terminator. Somehow, the place is still teeming with lizards, snakes, 'gators, birds, rednecks, and snowbirds. People don't think twice about pouring motor oil down the drain, or hunting animals that are protected or out of season. To a lot of people, this is terrifying and horrifying. Me, I wonder how with all this going on the state isn't in much worse shape. Considering the kinds of pressure put on the environment you'd figure that there

would be a lot more problems, but there don't seem to be.

People do a lot more of what they want to, and don't get bothered nearly as much by anyone else. Sure there are laws, but the enforcement of these laws is lackadaisical at best in most cases. Shoot cans with a .22 in your backyard up here and go to jail for twenty years. Do it in Florida and suddenly you have a party for



DAISY THE BUTTERFLY
MISSING SINCE: JANUARY 12, 2005
DESCRIPTION: CUTE AS A BUTTON
RESPONDS TO: "DAISY" or "CUTESY WONDERFLY" or "FLOATSY SNUGGLEBOTTOM"
REWARD: ONE (1) YEAR'S SUPPLY OF BUTTERFLY KISSES
Courtesy of Dustin Herlich

the neighborhood, complete with more beer than you know what to do with.

It's really fascinating to see how life works in Florida. Life is not as hectic. People leave you alone, and you're not under undue pressure every day about how much money you make. You don't need a PhD to make a good living. You don't even need a High School degree. Florida, aside from being cheaper than New York in every way, seems to have a lot more opportunity.

With all these glowing compliments, it would only be fair to talk about the dichotomy in Florida, and the really ugly side of things. Let's just say that I love to visit, I would never move down there. You have places like Jupiter Island in Martin County where the homes cost easily a million dollars or more, and the average income for the 92% white population is over \$200,000 dollars a year; and places like Jupiter in Palm Beach County (right next door really) where the median income is less than \$55,000 dollars, and the median house price is less than \$150,000. The only reason I'd say that the numbers are that high is because there are increasingly large amounts of rich folk building houses in Palm Beach county because it's cheaper than on Jupiter Island.

The weather in Florida is not for me. I can't stand the heat, I can't stand the humidity: Hurricanes are no fun. Lately, they've been getting a LOT of hurricanes. Yeah, that about sums up the weather, warm and humid in winter; hot and unhealthy in the summer.

Florida is still in the south, and the south still has a lot of issues with things like minorities. As I mentioned before, the "southern flag" still means different things to different people. The Florida dept. of corrections has identified no less than 14 active and healthy supremacist hate groups operating in the state. They include the American Nazi Party, Aryan Nations, The Holy Order, The Silent Brotherhood, White Aryan Resistance, Church of the Creator, KKK, National Socialist White People's Party, National Socialist White Worker's Party, United White People's Party,

The New Order, National Democratic Front, Skinheads, Aryan Youth Movement, etc. What's frightening really is that some of these organizations are right there along side many mainstream groups, fighting against the current war in Iraq, and for environmental causes. Go figure.

The North of the US isn't without its racism, but at least we don't encourage it. People like David Duke get elected simply because of their hate for non-whites. Someone like him I'd like to imagine wouldn't do as well politically in NY, but you never know. The vestiges of Jim Crow laws still have their marks in the south. If we think there is a lack of equality up here, all we have to do is look at the south to feel better about ourselves. It's all relative. The area around Stony Brook itself is considerably wealthier than most places I've been to in the south. They've got Wal-Mart, and CVS and all of those places, just like us. The difference being Wal-Mart is a lot more of a community fixture, providing cheap goods and employment. A Wal-Mart job isn't a King's fortune, but it's enough. In New York, it might work as a second or third job.

Nashville has a historical plaque erected celebrating that all the Jews moved out in the 1950's and moved to West Nashville. I didn't see anything like that in Florida, but I think the Jews in Florida voluntarily keep themselves confined to Boca Raton. New York is a melting pot of cultures and ideas whether we like it or not. Down south, well, to put it cordially it's still rather old fashioned. The south, it's a great place, go visit, have a great time. Just don't forget to come back to NY where it's safe.

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Usui Reiki Continued...

By William Lewis

Continued from page 8

was told the director was in bed with an arthritis attack. Dr. Usui went to the man and was able to heal the arthritis as the forth miracle that took place that day.

Naming this healing energy Reiki (Rei meaning Universal, cosmic life force and Ki meaning the flowing life force that binds everyone and everything) Dr. Usui head off to the slums of Kyoto. There in the slums he made his home in the town's beggar's quarter. The ethic of his time was that people with deformities, missing limbs, or with apparent disease would live in the beggars' part of the town as the community would "support" them. Dr. Usui lived there doing healing for the beggars and teaching them how to heal others and themselves. After each time he held a person Dr. Usui would ask that person to go and start a new life, but he found the same people he healed come back. Becoming increasingly discouraged Dr. Usui left the slums. As he left he asked the beggars why don't they go on and change their lives. To that he was told they liked begging and some many were mad at Dr. Usui for they now had to find work. The people did not really cherish the gift that he gave them and some people nowadays feel that it was due to the lack of a payment. I will talk more about this later.

Feeling that his times in the slums were a failure, Dr. Usui traveled on foot across Japan holding lectures and sharing Reiki with the people. On this pilgrim path Dr. Usui then met with a man named Chujiro Hayashi was a retired naval officer. Hayashi was trained by Usui in Reiki and received his master training in 1925 at the age of 47 and he became Usui's successor. Dr. Usui died 5 years later with Hayashi left in charge of teaching and sharing Reiki with people. Hayashi started to train teams of people in Reiki and trained sixteen people as Reiki Masters. Hayashi opened a healing clinic in Tokyo that gave Reiki to people who lived in the clinic. Reiki healers even went to the homebound to give them Reiki healing.

Hawayo Takata, a widowed wife from Hawaii with two small children to raise had developed nervous exhaustion and physical problems. She was diagnosed with gall bladder disease which needed surgery to fix, but Takata also had a respiratory condition with breathing difficulties that would make anesthetic dangerous for her. As the days went on her health deteriorated leaving her facing her own death without the surgery which might have killed her as well. In 1935 her sister died and Takata left for Tokyo to tell her parents who lived there after they left Hawaii. In Japan Takata entered the Maeda Medical Hospital in Akasaka Japan for surgery.

At this time she was diagnosed with appendicitis and a tumor along with her other illness. The night before the surgery Takata heard a voice in her prayers that told her that she did not need the surgery. It was on the operating table being prepared for the anesthetic that she heard the voice again; feeling compelled Takata asked the doctor if there is another thing to she could do instead of the surgery that had a high chance of taking her life. The surgeon there told her yes and told her about how his sister was healed at Hayashi's clinic by Reiki.

The next day Takata was taken by the surgeon's sister to the clinic, where she stayed for 4 months being held by the Reiki practitioners there. After she was healed Takata

asked to be trained in Reiki but was turned away for Hayashi did not want the practice to leave Japan feeling the Takata would let it travel across the world. But Takata was able to convince Hayashi to teach her Reiki, and thus she



THREE MAIN FOUNDING REIKI MASTERS,
Courtesy of Essential Reiki

received her Reiki II training. After her training and work with Reiki in Japan Takata went back to Hawaii and opened her own clinic in Kapaa with a massage therapist's license that protected her from harassing authorities.

In 1938 Hayashi visited Takata in Hawaii and they embarked on a lecture tour together about Reiki. During this lecture Takata was trained to be a Reiki master/teacher and was named Hayashi's successor. Before Hayashi left for Japan he told Takata that when he called for her she was to come to Japan right away. One year later she opened up her second Reiki healing center in Hilo Hawaii. 1941 Takata had a dream that Hayashi was standing at the foot of her bed looking at her with sad eyes. When she woke up, Takata felt that she must go to Japan and talk with Hayashi, thinking that this was his call for her to come back to Japan.

In Hayashi's healing clinic at Japan, Takata and other Reiki practitioners (and Hayashi's wife Chie) were sitting there talking among themselves. Many of them were across Japan when they too had the feeling that they must come back to Hayashi's clinic. Hayashi told the Reiki practitioners who were all Reiki Masters that a great war was coming that would kill most of them and the clinic would be closed down from the war. Hayashi feared that Reiki may be lost to the world and that was why he named Takata as his successor so that she a foreigner could go on and teach Reiki and help spread it across the world.

Hayashi, being in a navel reserve officer, had been drafted, but as a healer he could not take a life. On May 10, 1941, with his students and wife present, Hayashi's Reiki students, Takata, and Chie, Hayashi stopped his own heart and died so that he would not be forced to take part in the war. As World War II started Reiki no longer became available in Japan. After the war his clinic and house were taken over by the occupation forces and his wife Chie was no longer able to use the clinic to help heal people.

Takata was able to keep Reiki going on across the world. First she brought it over to Hawaii and then to the mainland of America and finally Canada and Europe. Takata felt and said that both Reiki healing and training needs to be paid for so that it can truly work and help the person heal fully. It is this reason that Dr. Usui felt that he failed with the beggars that he tried to help. Due to the lack of a payment or, if you will, an exchange of energy, they did not appreciate the gift of Reiki. With the people I give Reiki treatments to many of them do not have the money to spend on something like Reiki, but they still give me something as a form of pay-

ment. At times they go out and pick a few flowers and give them to me, or other times a cup of something to drink. At times when people don't have money to spend on something like this I feel it's a matter of letting them do something.

Case in point one: of the Reiki Masters I know knew a guy who wanted to learn Reiki, but he did not have the money. So the Reiki Master still willingly taught the guy Reiki anyhow. That night the guy—under no one's rule other than his own went to the Reiki Master and gave him a pair of white pants as payment. There is nothing wrong with that; the payment was there. At times a gift from the heart is good way for a person to pay. Paying in some healthy way is the best thing when you know the person does not have the money. Reiki treatment price in money depends on the person, but mostly I have seen them around \$30-\$60 for a 30 minute period.

Down below I have put the Line of Reiki as it goes from before Dr. Usui and a bit after him found in the book *Essential Reiki* by Diane Stein.

Chronology

- 620 BCE: Birth of Gautama Siddhartha, Sakyamuni Buddha, on India-Nepal border.
- 542 BCE: Death of Gautama Siddhartha at Kusingara, India.
- 2nd-1st Century BCE: Tantra Lotus Sutra written other healing text extant.
- 7 BCE: Historical birth of "Jesus"
- 5 BCE: The "Three Wise Men" come from the East to seek the reincarnation of an Enlightened One. They take Jesus and family to Egypt and India.
- 27 or 30 CE to 30 or 33 CE: Jesus returns to Jerusalem for 2-3 years
- 30 or 33 CE: The Crucifixion.
- 46 or 49 CE: Jesus returns to India 16 years after Crucifixion
- 110 CE: Death of Jesus in Srinagar, India. Legends say he lived to 120 years of age, not unusual for his time.
- Late 1800s: Mikao Usui's quest for Reiki
- 1900: Birth of Hawayo Kawamura (Takata)
- 1917: Hawayo marries Saichi Takata
- 1925: Chujiro Hayashi receives the Reiki Masters degree at the age 47
- 1930: Death of Mikao Usui. He made 16-18 Reiki Masters, sources vary; Death of Saichi Takata
- 1935: Takata goes to Japan for healing at Maeda Hospital in Akasaka, then to Hayashi's Reiki clinic, Shina No Machi, Tokyo. She is held 4 months later.
- Spring 1936: Takata receives Reiki I from Chujiro Hayashi
- 1937: Takata receives Reiki II from Hayashi then returns to Hawaii. She opens her first healing clinic in Kapaa.
- Winter 1938: Takata receives Reiki III from Hayashi in Hawaii. On Feb 22, 1938 Chujiro Hayashi announces Hawayo Takata as Reiki Master and his successor
- May 10, 1941: Death of Chujiro Hayashi. He made 13-16 Reiki Masters including the first women his wife Chie Hayashi and Hawayo Takata
- December 11, 1980: Death of Hawayo Takata. She made 22 Reiki Masters from 1970-1980. Some sources give her death as of December 12

Continued on next page

Usui Reiki Continued...

By William Lewis

Continued from previous page

Three Main Reiki Masters from the late 1800 through 1980

Mikao Usui
Chujiro Hayashi
Hawayo Takata

What is Reiki?

Now that we talked about the history of Usui Reiki let me tell to you about what Reiki is. First off let's take a look at the meaning of the word Reiki. "Rei" as we are told means universal cosmic life, if you will the energy of the one main force (think of it like a divine energy that flows down to us). With the word "Ki" means the flowing life force that we all are bind together with.

With Reiki there are also many other "types" that are shown to other people. Some of them are Tibetan Reiki, Sacred Path Reiki, Tera Mia Reiki, Karuna Reiki, etc. Still, with all of this I have had other people ask me what are the differences between the many paths? The answer is the way they are shown from us, the way they are taught, and mostly the symbols used in them. I will talk more about the symbols later on. In the end, when every thing is said and done, it all comes from the same source. As well in some cases you must be a Usui Reiki Master before you can study the other paths of Reiki. Add to all that the Reiki paths we see nowadays stem from the Usui Reiki Path that is commonly seen. With Usui Reiki and other Reiki types you the person must be first attuned to the follow of this energy.

The way Reiki works is that it is an energy of healing power that flows from the cosmic life force (if you will) down in your Crown Charka and down out your hands like a flowing spring of fresh clean water. We as people can only receive our Reiki attunement from Reiki Masters/Teachers. With attunements you are having the Reiki energy being channeled into your aura and spiritual body. As a Reiki Master I (and other Masters) attune people to the frequency of the Reiki energy that flows around us. Most people are not attuned to this but we as people do have the ability to heal other people, but we must first learn how to do it. It is called Kismet.

With energy it will feel different from each person. When I was first attuned I felt heat and fire over my body, but not in a painful way more like sun bathing. Another person I know feel a coolness rap over them like a sheet of cloth. It was back in the summer in NYC that I had my first Reiki treatment. I was with some people I know as we went to a vegan food event at Lincoln Center being run by a group called Earth Save. It was hot and I was not in a good mood, feeling like brooding over my lack of love in my life. A "lad" of mine was talking with me as we sat back and drank some green tea. Sitting there I saw one young lady given some guy an energy healing treatment. Then off to the side I saw a table with a bunch of people with blue and orange T-shirts on.

One of them in a orange shirt walked over to me and asked me if I want to have a Reiki treatment. Needless to say I said yes since I read about it and yearned to learn how to use Reiki. I made my "lad" sit with me in what became a circle. While I was there for some rea-

son I took notice of a young lady in a blue shirt and with a gem sticker on her brow. After the circle became filled with other people the man who talked to me sat in the circle with the young lady in blue by his left side. He first asked us if any of us there have had Reiki or even heard of it. Some people have, but most like me until then have had never felt Reiki. With other people he got up and went around the circle and gave us some Reiki with our eyes closed.

I felt like I was under water yet not under water. My lungs felt like they were trying to breathe as my body wanted to take flight and run, yet an equal part of me wanted to put my hands on the hands that were channeling Reiki to me. At the same time I felt some ghost from my past come and fade away. When we were told to we opened our eyes. When I did everything had a very nice purple tint haze look to it with the lady in blue being the focal point. Her brow and crown were a blue color. In the circle we talked about how we felt, none of us had the same exact feeling. Most were alike in some one or another but still different. My feelings were very much different from every one, but later on that day I started the healing process from a past trauma that I call the time of Banjax in my life.

And after I learned Reiki and started to give Reiki to other people I found that they felt different things as well. Most commonly they felt heat from my hands. One person I know who was a stripper felt heat from one hand and cold from the other. Latter on that week she stopped stripping and went back into college, and now she has fallen in love with someone and has plans to go into painting on canvas with oil paints.

The thing I am trying to get at is this: Reiki can have different feelings to it and different actions on us that help us heal. My mother was in the hospital with cancer dancing with death. I was able to channel Reiki to her when I was visiting and send it to her when I was at home. She is alive and in remission from the cancer and she also learned to let go of some things she was holding on to that was very unhealthy for her. She could not put into words what she felt, but it does not matter.

The most common way we see Reiki written is like this; with "Rei" being written on top and the word "Ki" being written on the bottom. This is written in modern Japanese but there are other ways you can write Reiki. Also below I have put down for you three other ways I have seen Reiki written.

The Secret Method of Inviting Blessing; The Spiritual Medicine of Many Illnesses

The original Japanese Principles/Affirmations:

For today only, do not anger, do not worry.

Do your work (mediation) with appreciation.

Be kind to all people.

In the morning and at night, with hands held in prayer, think this in your mind, chant this with your mouth.

The Usui Reiki method is to change your mind and body for the better.

Western style of the Reiki Principles/Affirmation:

Just for today, I will not anger.

Just for today, I will let go of worry.

Just for today, I will do my work honestly.

Just for today, I will give thanks for my many blessings.

Just for today, I will be kind to my neighbor and every living thing.

Just for today, I will honor my teaching.

The Western style is what most people in the States and Europe are used to. I first learned the Western Reiki Principles when I was learning Reiki. When I became a Reiki Master/Teacher I learned the Japanese Principle. I don't know if that is how it is was to be, but that is how I was taught.

Reiki Initiation

The Reiki Initiation is a permit thing that opens and connects you and other Reiki users to the flow of Universal Reiki healing energy that work on all levels of our beings (mental, physical, emotional, and psychically). As well Reiki also clears and balances many important energy channels that are with in our bodies.

With Usui Reiki (traditional) is taught in three formal levels of initiation. Reiki I is the first level that just opens you to the flow of Reiki and you learn how to use Reiki on yourself on other people. Reiki II increases the flow of Reiki in you; you also learn how to send Reiki to other people who are not in your presents (distant healing). With Reiki II you also learn three symbols that are used in healing. Reiki III (Master/Teacher) you learn the last symbols and how to teach (initiate) other people to Reiki. With me I also teach the Reiki Masters other ways of "drawing" the symbols of Reiki. As I said before earlier some paths of Reiki want people to first know Usui Reiki before they learn other Reiki paths.

There is some controversy with in the Reiki community as to how long a person should let pass before their next Reiki initiations. Some people believe that there must be a real significant period of time between levels. Other people I know say there should be a point of time of 30 days from Reiki I to Reiki II, and a year from Reiki II to Reiki III Master/Teacher. It really depends on how the Reiki Master wants to teach it and what is best for you. When I became Reiki I it was only a matter of me asking the Reiki Master for the next level, which he did give me. In that class we had a young lady who became a Reiki I user only a few days ago. So you see it really matters to both people. I feel (as does my other Reiki Master) that you just grow at your own pace with the flow of Reiki.

I have seen many Reiki Master ask for a lot of money to as a high fee for each initiation into Reiki. I don't feel that is always right for them to do, but we must look at it from their standpoint. I am a mage and so I have taken a few students who wish to learn the ways of the Magi. I charged them for the lessons that they wanted to make sure that that were truly serious about the lessons. It is that unless they are putting something valuable into it then it matters.

靈 Rei
氣 Ki

THE TRADITIONAL CHARACTERS,
Courtesy of Bill Lewis

Heil Harry! Defender of Freedom!

By Natalie Schultz

Prince Harry, third in line to the British throne, was photographed by British tabloid *The Sun* wearing a military shirt with a swastika armband at a costume party. Since then, Harry, consistently berated by the press over the past few years as being an unintelligent rebel, has come under fire for this transgression. Immediately, prominent members of the press condemned him as being heartless and ignorant of the past. Leading critics, such as the ADL (Anti-Defamation League) have called for his punishment, namely that he be forced to visit Auschwitz to witness first-hand the atrocities committed by the Nazis against Jews.

Prince Charles, Harry's father, has given in to the uproar and has decided to send Prince Harry and his brother Prince William on a personal tour of Auschwitz with a Jewish charity. In addition, Prince Charles is requiring them to watch *Schindler's List*.

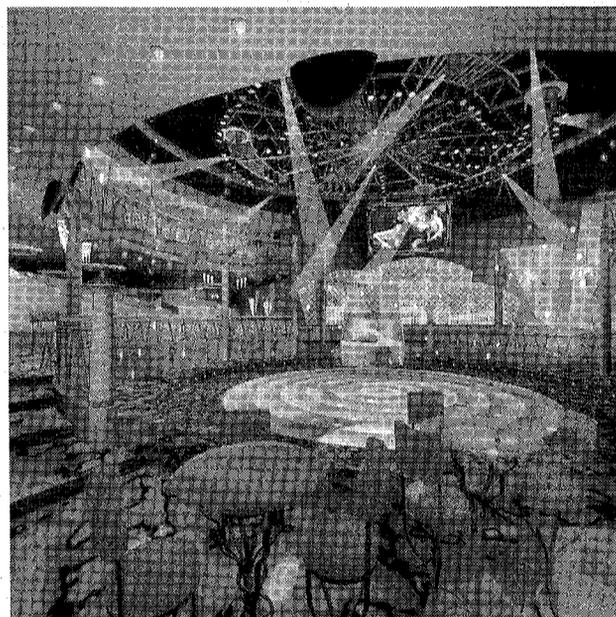
British veterans of WWII are understandably upset over Harry's costume. During WWII the British people were consistently bombed by German troops for over a month-long period known as the Blitz. Harry's costume brought back memories of abdicated British King Edward VIII's friendly ties with the Nazis. That the British people who had lived through WWII were taken aback by Harry's costume is understandable, considering that Great Britain was the leader in the war against the Nazis. But, the press did not focus on the British victims of WWII, or any of the other victims of WWII; the press focused solely on the Jews. Rather than meeting with British veterans and apologizing, he is being sent to Auschwitz. It would be understandable if the man who could one day be King of Great Britain were implored to sit down with the Brits who lived through WWII and listen to their stories; but he is not going to be doing that. No, the Jewish consortium has made sure, just as it has over the past fifty years, that any allusion to WWII is always about the destruction of the Jews; and that any criticism of Jews automatically makes one a Nazi.

When I first saw the photo of Harry on the internet I was so excited. Immediately I began to write an article about how great it was that a person in his position had the guts to go out and do something so politically incorrect. At that moment he was a beacon in the dark – a glimmer of hope that our freedom of expression has not been totally destroyed by the likes of the ADL – the anti-democracy league. The words of Voltaire filled the air "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." The First Amendment of the United States Constitution was grasped and put on display in an in-your-face expression by the Prince of England!

But the story didn't end in a democratic way. No, instead, taking its cue from Hollywood,

the little Prince is being forced to watch *Schindler's List*, just like the perpetrator in *A Clockwork Orange*.

Where has our freedom gone? The press holds steadfast to its freedom, but it uses that very freedom to curtail the freedom of the masses. Does the statement by Justice Anthony Kennedy "The First Amendment is often inconvenient, but that is besides the point. Inconvenience does not absolve the government of its obligation to tolerate speech." no longer hold water? What about Benjamin Franklin's "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Or Carl Schurz's "If you want to be free, there is but one way; it is to guarantee an equally full measure of liberty to all your neighbors. There is no other." Or Ronald Reagan's "Coercion, after all, merely captures man. Freedom captivates him."



THE AUSCHWITZ-ANHEUSER BLITZ,
Courtesy of www.canwellartwork.com

Many people were offended by Prince Harry's costume; that is understandable. At least in England he still has the right to wear whatever he pleases. That is not the case in places such as Germany, where true freedom of expression and speech does not exist. That is not the case in the Islamic nations upon whom we are currently trying to force our idea of "democracy." Salman Rushdie was given a death sentence for writing *The Satanic Verses* in Islamic Iran; Islamic headscarves have been banned in France. What words or garments are next on the chopping block?

If knowledge is truly the punishment that Harry deserves, as the public and the press claim, then that learning experience should be well-rounded, not one-sided as is the punish-

ment currently meted out. He should visit Auschwitz, not with a Jewish charity, but with a coalition of representatives from all the different groups and countries who fell victim there. Jews were not the only victims of the Nazis, and Hitler was not the worst tyrant of the past century. I personally visited Auschwitz in the spring of 2003; on the day we began the war with Iraq in fact. What I saw there was shocking – shocking because it was not what I expected. I expected to learn of all the Jews who died, but instead I saw buildings and pictures of the victims held there – French, Belgian, Polish, Dutch, Czech and more. I saw my people – blonde-haired, blue-eyed Christians – they too were victims, but Hollywood doesn't tell us about them. Most people have never heard the stories of the French Catholics burned alive in their church, or the Byelorussian Orthodox who faced the same fate. The media places all the focus on the Jewish victims of the Nazis, but they fail to note the murder of 20 million unarmed non-combatants by Stalin, including the 7-10 million Ukrainians who died during his man-made famine.

The problem with our Consumer Society is that we allow the media to teach us history, rather than using our own intelligence to learn the whole truth. Even history classes cannot teach the whole story, but they are a start, especially if one is willing to delve deep into controversial waters to learn as much as possible. *Schindler's List* is far from a well-rounded history; unfortunately I don't know of any one film that is wholly accurate. *The Boat is Full* is a good film about ordinary victims of the war; and *Band of Brothers*, although Americentric, did manage to portray WWII in a more realistic light. Following the path we are currently on, our future generations will be nothing more than the blind leading the blind. Repression of expression eventually leads to revolution, and in today's world that revolution is expressed as terrorism. Islamic fundamentalists in Iraq don't have the military prowess of our troops, so they resort to terrorist attacks against us. The same story has been told and will continue to be told among the Palestinians who are repressed by the military might of the Israelis.

Ending this article with a quote from Ronald Reagan, I can only hope that I have opened your eyes to the reality that the repression of expressions with which you disagree will only lead to doom in the long run.

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

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!

TOP TEN

Ways to get Arrested at the Inaugural Ball

10 Furtive Glances

9 Wear your new "Lord I'm Comin'" T-shirt. Bring extras in brand new pleather suitcase. Hurl into crowd to distribute.

8 Murder a bald, heartless businessman and wear his skin as a suit. Posing as Dick Cheney, attempt to get the president's autograph. Try not to giggle.

7 Try to give the President one of your patented "Screaming Hugs"

6 Talk Excessively to anyone who'll listen about your misfiled W2 forms

5 Shoot a Cop

4 Forcefully insist the first lady participates in your own personal tradition of "Pantless Thursday's"

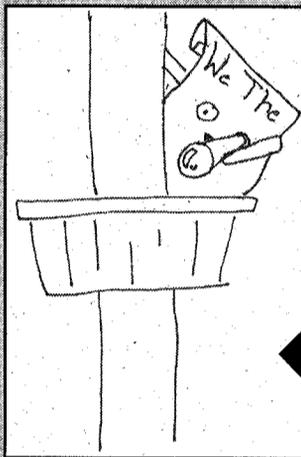
3 Set up a toll booth on the inaugural route and charge all Presidents \$40 million to pass

2 Be African American

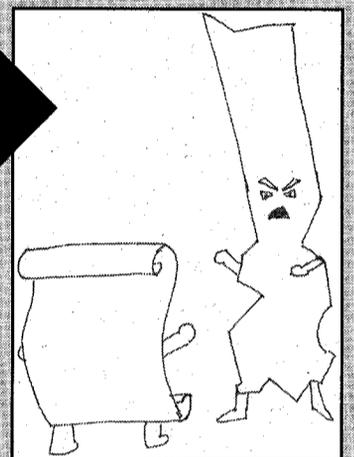
1 Invade a Middle-Eastern country based on false premises resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people

IT'S EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE ANTHROPOMORPHIC US CONSTITUTION!

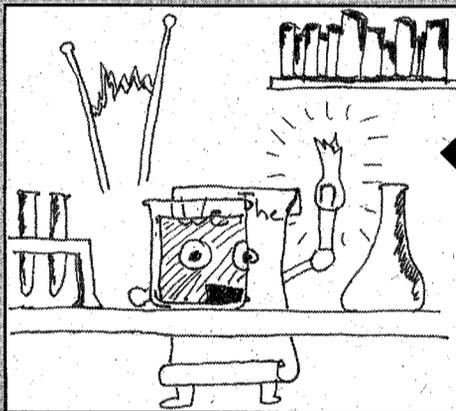
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF KOOKY SITUATIONS HE'S GOTTEN HIMSELF INTO THIS WEEK?



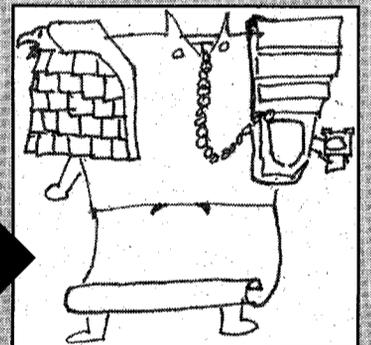
Fisticuffs with the anthropomorphic Herkimer County



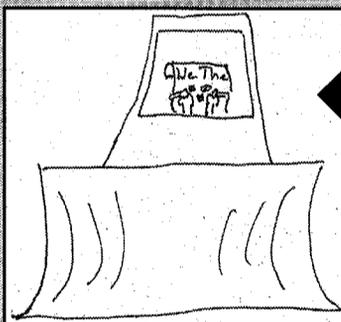
Yar! Tis that scoundrel PATRIOT Act on the horizon!



Ureka! Fabio couldn't believe it wasn't butter because it *wasn't* butter! That poor, poor, strikingly beautiful, son of a bitch!

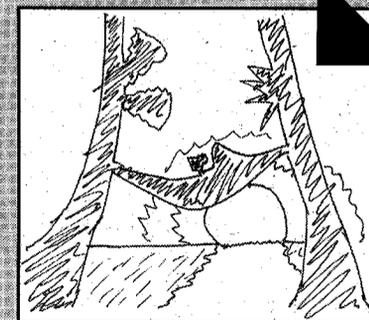
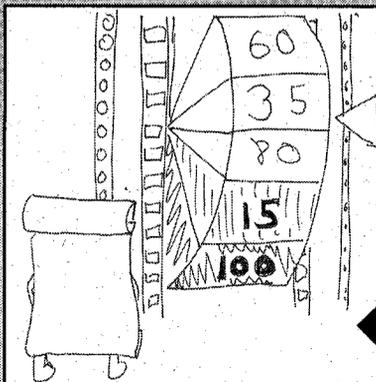


Uuuuhyugh! I am the law!



If you really think about it...and I mean *really* think about it, you would *have* to use a bulldozer to fill a mass grave.

Where do you go, dear friend, and what do you see when you quietly slip below the horizon at the day's end?

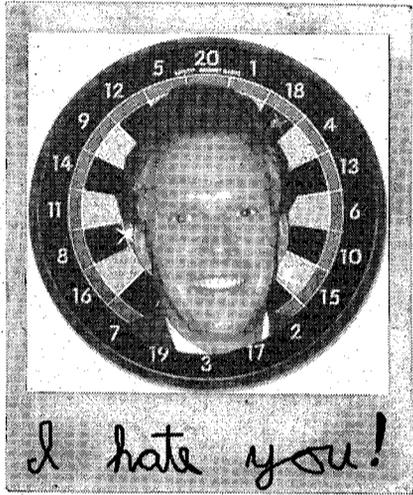
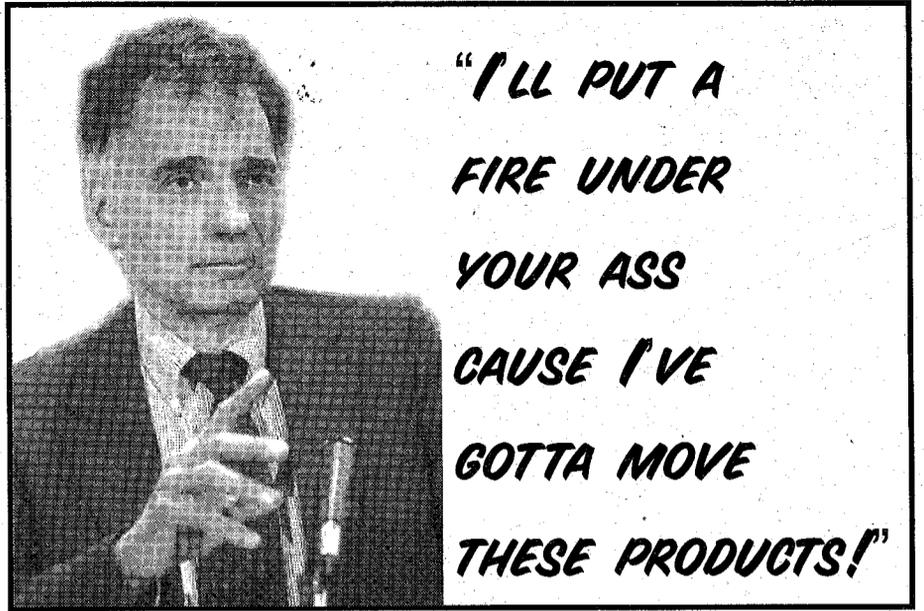


Why would *anyone* spin again if they already have 85 cents?!?!?

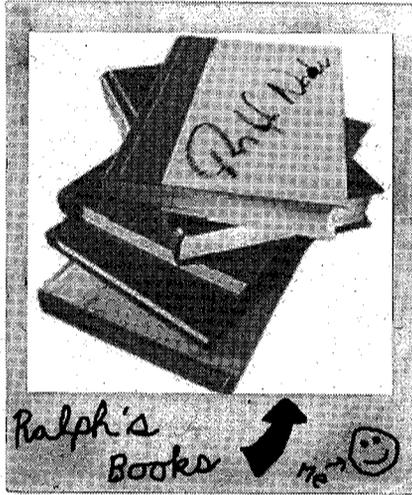
TUNE IN NEXT ISSUE FOR EVEN MORE TOM-FOOLERY AND HI-JINKS!

By Matt Willemain

RALPH NADER'S CAMPAIGN DEBT RETIRING FIRE SALE



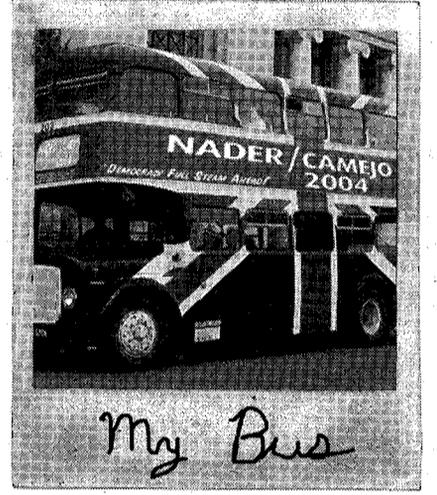
1) This is a dart board I made myself out of an ordinary dart board. It features a picture of outgoing Democratic Chairman Terry McAuliffe and my autograph.



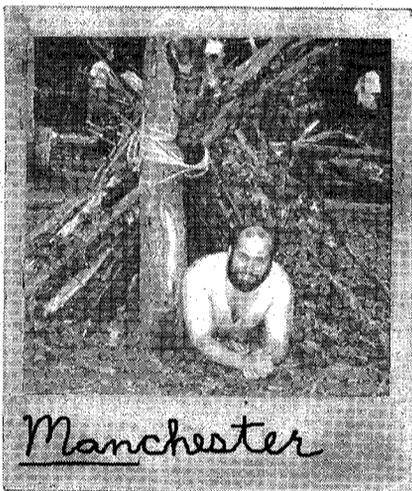
2) These are some encyclopedias I found lying around my house. I autographed every page! That's like 1,000 Ralph Nader autographs! You can give them away to everyone you know as Christmas presents! That like 1,000 autographed Christmas presents!



3) You can buy the autographed suit off my back! I've been wearing it for 45 years and it's encrusted with justice! If you don't turn on to my suit, my suit will turn on you!



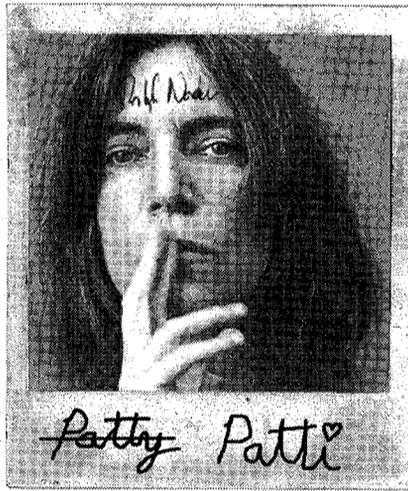
4) The "Rolling To A New Tomorrow" campaign van, along with five copies of retired Marine Corps General Smedely Butler's *War is a Racket*, all autographed by me.



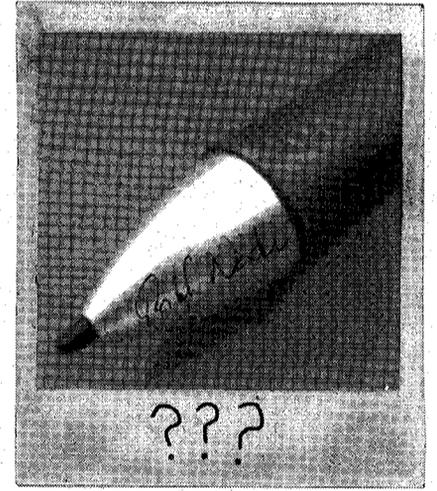
5) A lean-to in New Hampshire, which I have conveniently autographed. For those of you who were never in the boy scouts, that's a sort of impromptu shelter you'd make if you were living in the woods.



6) Cool T-shirts in lots of sizes and colors!

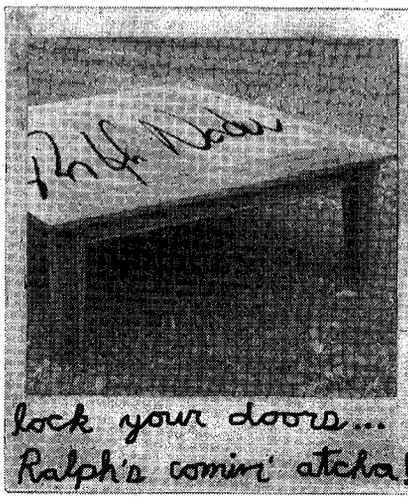


7) Patti Smith



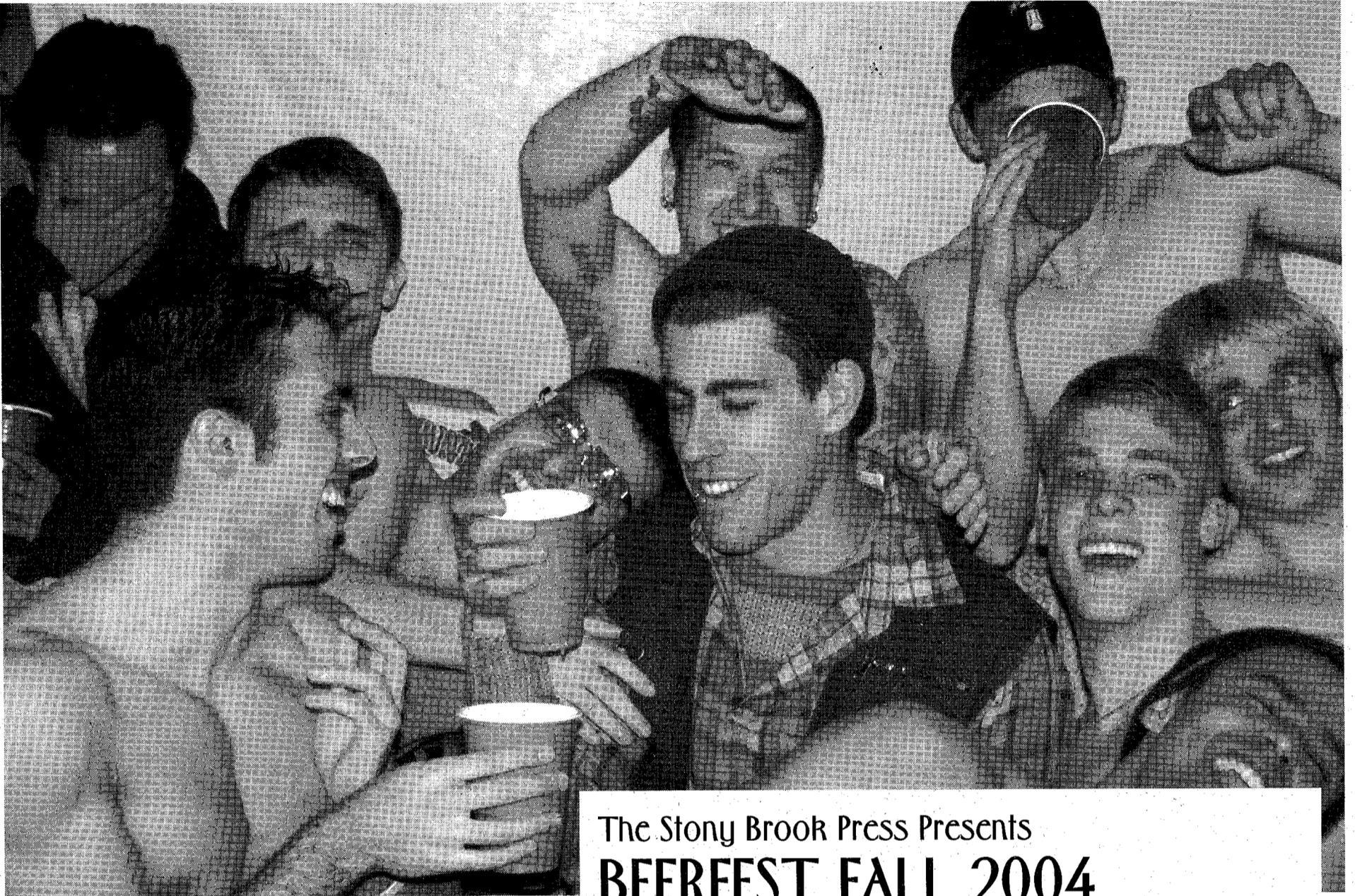
8) The soy-ink pen I used to autograph all the other items, itself somehow autographed. How did I do it? You may never solve the puzzle, but you can launch a thousand ships of conversation with this pen on your coffee table.

**REMEMBER, WE CAN'T MOVE FORWARD TO
"A NEW TOMORROW" UNTIL WE GET PAST
THIS MOUNTAIN OF CRIPPLING DEBT.
ALL ITEMS MUST GO!**



9) Your coffee table. You left the back door unlocked. Autographed.

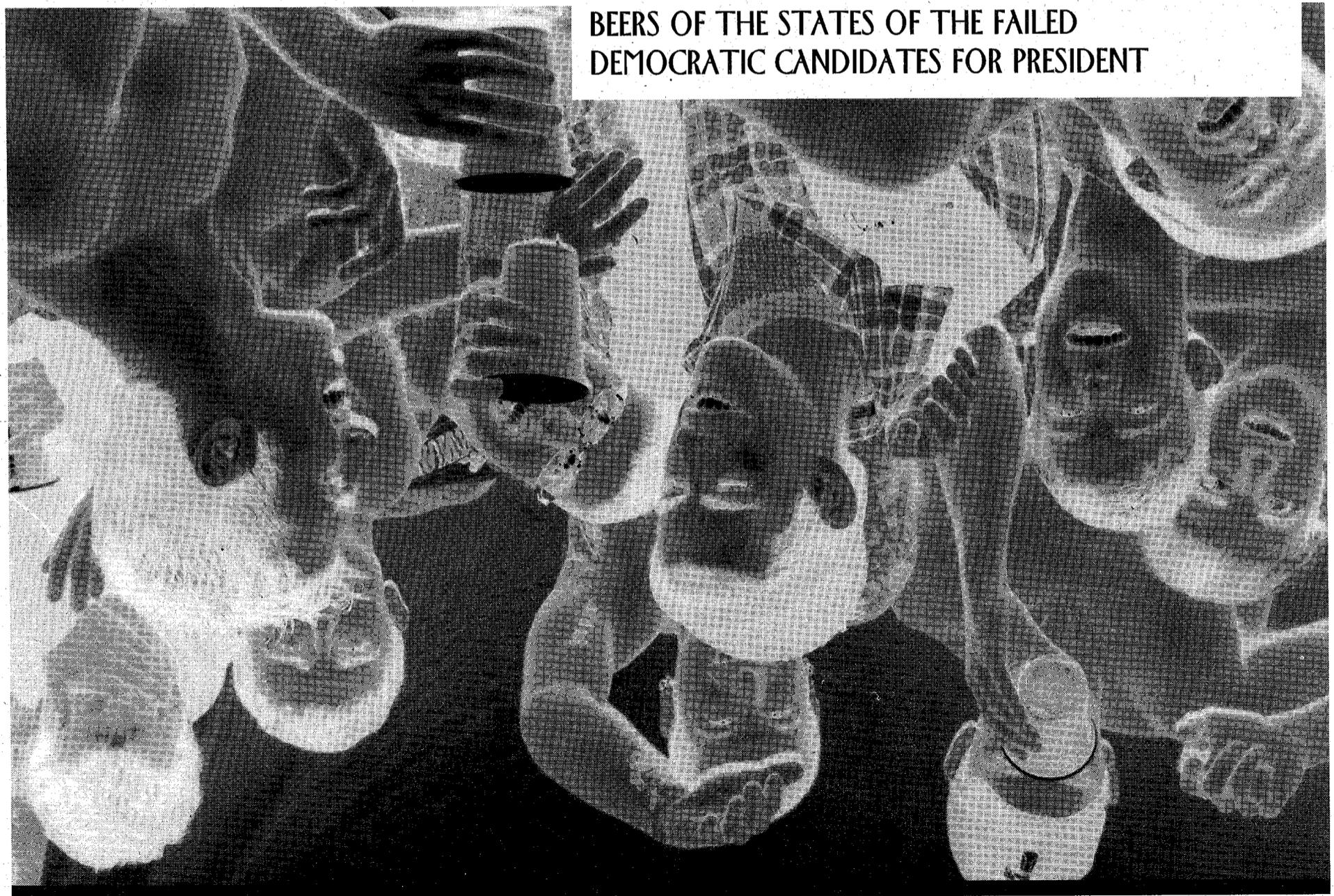
By Matt Willemain and Joe Filippazzo



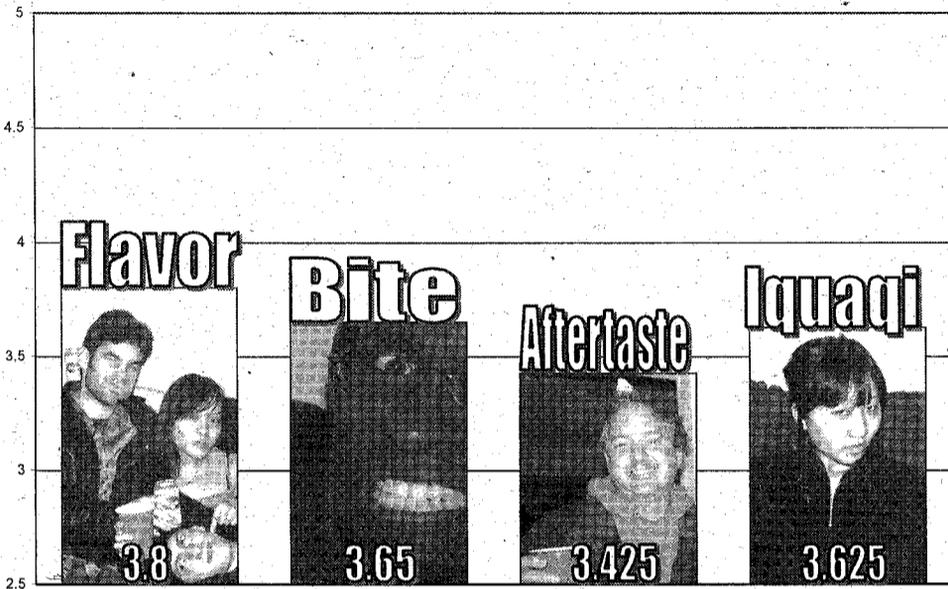
The Stony Brook Press Presents

BEERFEST FALL 2004

BEERS OF THE STATES OF THE FAILED
DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT

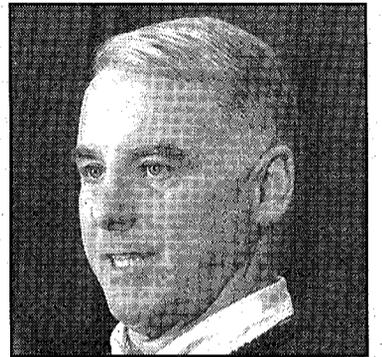


Harpoon - Vermont - Howard Dean

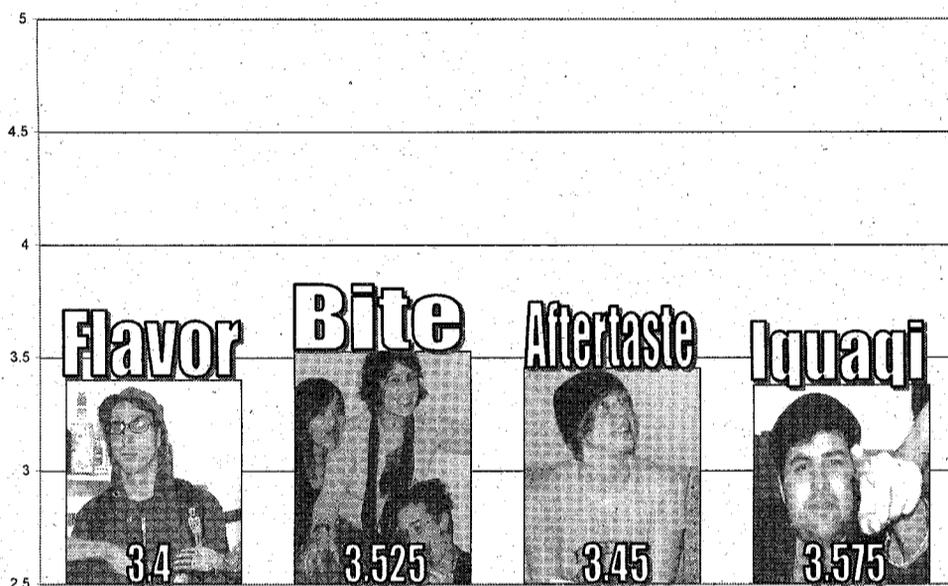


What was said about this beer:

- "Newt Gingrich peed in my mouth once, and it tasted exactly like this. Of course, at the time, he was wearing Barbra Bush's panties on his head."
- "I'd know that flavor anywhere... those damn Rugby boys are in heat again."
- "I asked for a SoCo and lime. This ain't it. Hey, where's my pants?"
- "Where did these pants come from?"
- "This beer tastes like partially digested Schlitz. Scratch that. I threw up in my mouth again."



Blue Point - New York - Al Sharpton



What was said about this beer:

- "I had a dream... No, never mind, it was a nightmare, and this beer was in it."
- "You need to drink a lot of beer to drown amphibious sorrows."
- "When we were in bondage..."
- "I've got some pot back in my dorm room."
- "When is the world going to realize that Ted Turner is right? THEY'RE TAKING OUR JOBS! CLOSE THE BORDERS!"
- "Someone slipped me a roofie, and I woke up next to this beer"



Smirnoff - Illinois - Carol Moseley-Braun



What was said about this beer:

- "Is this Sprite?"
- "Is this 7 Up?"
- "Is this Ginger Ale?"
- "Is this Sprite?"
- "Is this Sprite?"
- "I feel like a fifteen year old school girl again... By the way, I'm male."
- "Who brought the bitch beer? Oh, *The Press*? What a bunch of fucking bitches."
- "Diet Sprite. I'd bet my spleen on it."



Budweiser - Ohio - Dennis Kucinich

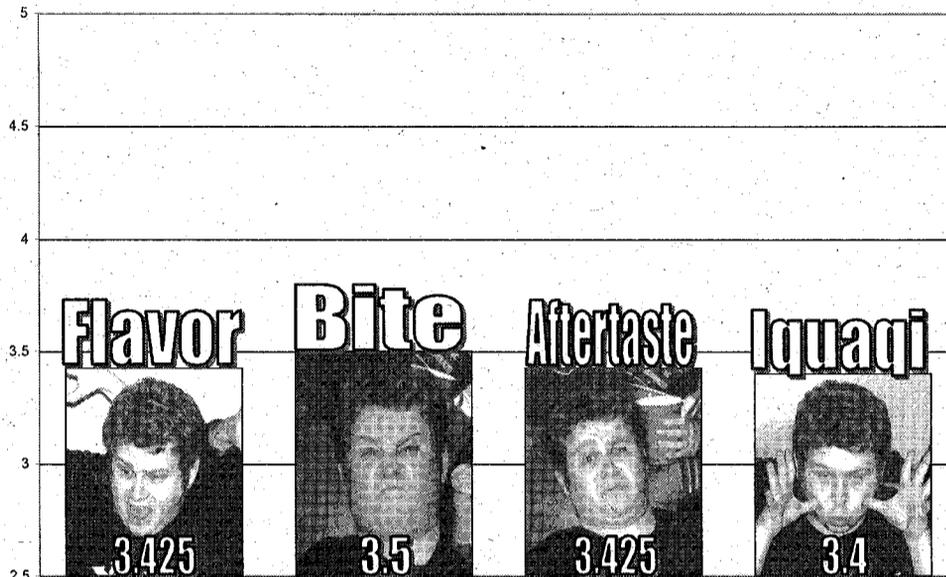


What was said about this beer:

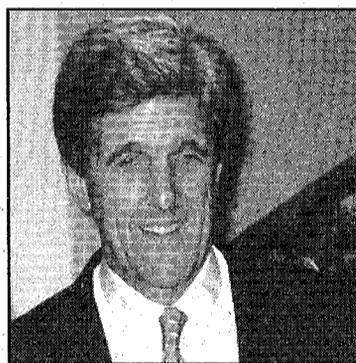
- "I don't know, man. This tastes like the Baron of Beers."
- "This is the bottled screams of children."
- "Instead of hops, they just fermented some scabs. Scab scabby-scab water. A band-aid should cleanse the palate."

- "Frothy funkiness, I desire to pound back a Cyanide chaser."

- "Beer beer beer beer. So long, inhibitions! Hello, shirtless Sam!"



Sam Adams - Massachusetts - John Kerry



What was said about this beer:

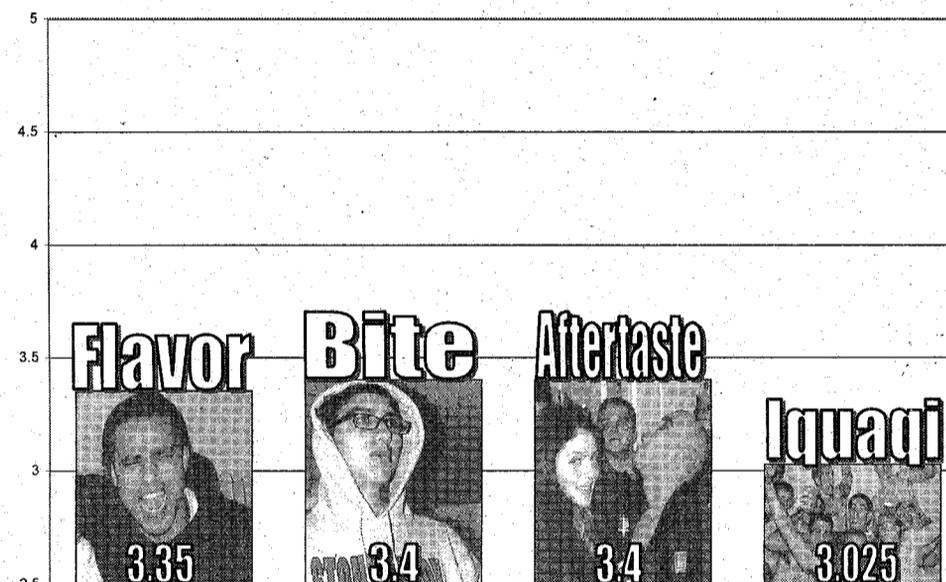
- "This is Sam Adams and if I'm not mistaken, it's from Massachusetts. That would make John Kerry the representative of this beverage. He is a useless, abandoning douchebag and I'm glad he's not the president."

- "This is Sam's, isn't it?"

- "This beer tastes like the brew of traitors. I hate myself for having consumed it in the first place."

- "I will find the guy who represents this beer and kill him."

- "No matter what beer this is, I fucking hate John Kerry and his spineless, pseudo-republican politics."



John Harvard - Connecticut - Joe Lieberman



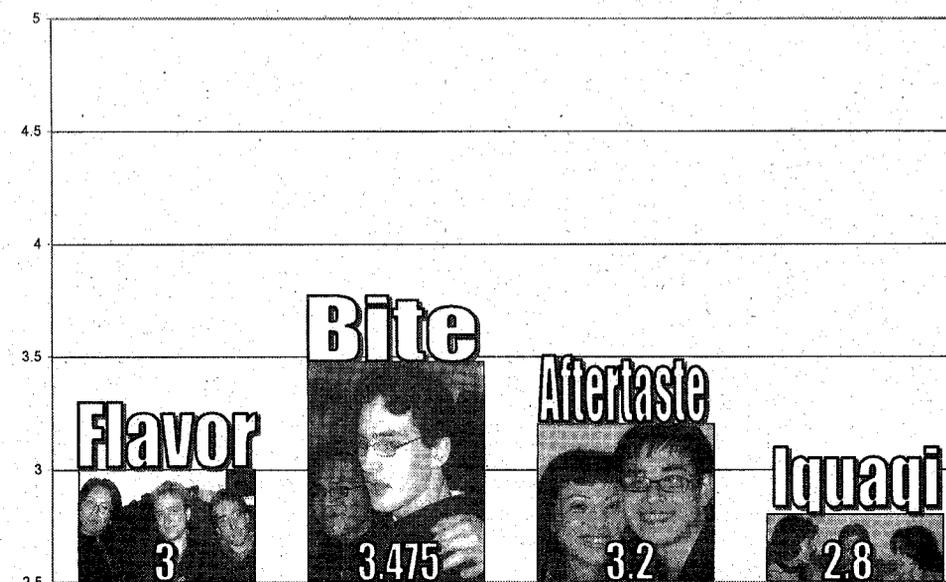
What was said about this beer:

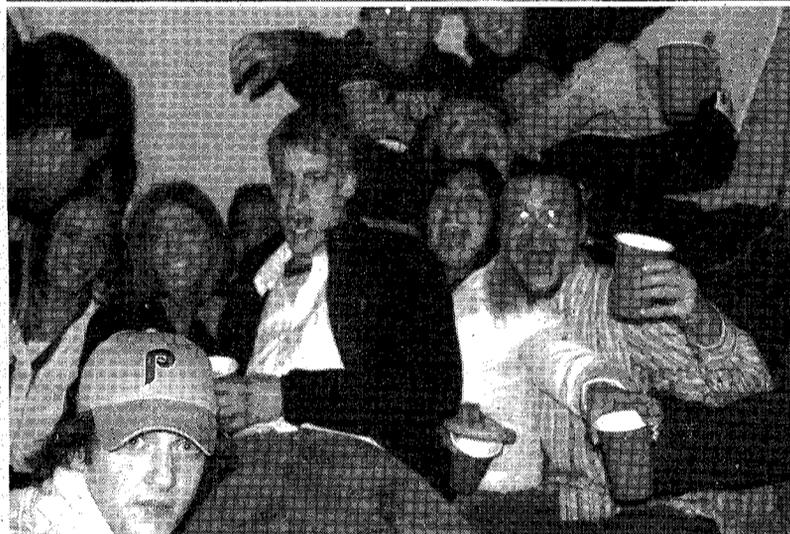
- "Since this beer came out of a growler, it's either John Harvard's or Drano. >hurk!< "

- "Personally, I prefer a sweet Chianti but them fava beans can suck my dick. By the way, I'm a woman."

- "I have an explosive device strapped to my torso. I will bring my Dark Lord a veritable feast this night!"

- "Joe Lieberman is an asshole. No more games. I peeked behind the bar and saw the John Harvard's growler. Using what I know of John Harvard's origin, the great Nutmeg state of Connecticut comes to mind. He has shamed you, my love. The Constitution state will prevail over the frail and mortal Herr Lieberman."





Beerfest Fall 04 was considered by some to be "wildly successful" while others referred to it as "One of the better Beerfests" and others still described it as "awesome." All of these answers are correct.

Can there be an incorrect answer to such a question? Yes there can. For example, an incorrect answer would sound like "It was not fun" or "I did not have a wonderful time" or "I didn't go to Beerfest Fall '04." Wrong. Incorrect. Totally unacceptable.

The beers were...interesting. With *Beers of the Homestates of the Failed Democratic Candidates for President* as a theme for this semester's Beerfestivities, we feel we really took Beerfest in a new direction; an incredibly convoluted and at times, untasty direction. The beers, as one can plainly see on the two previous pages, turned out to be Harpoon, Blue Point, Smirnoff Ice, Sam Adams, Budweiser, and John Harvard's. Most are not good beers. In fact, most are really shitty beers. But that's ok because we sure did have a lot of shitty Democratic Candidates for President in '04. Do you

see the correlation here, friend?

Besides, we did not promise that the showcase beers would be good. We didn't even say that they would be slightly enjoyable. You're the tool that just drank what was put in front of you. Real good,

pal. That's a great way to end up buried in someone's basement. Here's my impression of you: "Duh, what's in this cup? I don't care! Kill me and bury me in your basement!"

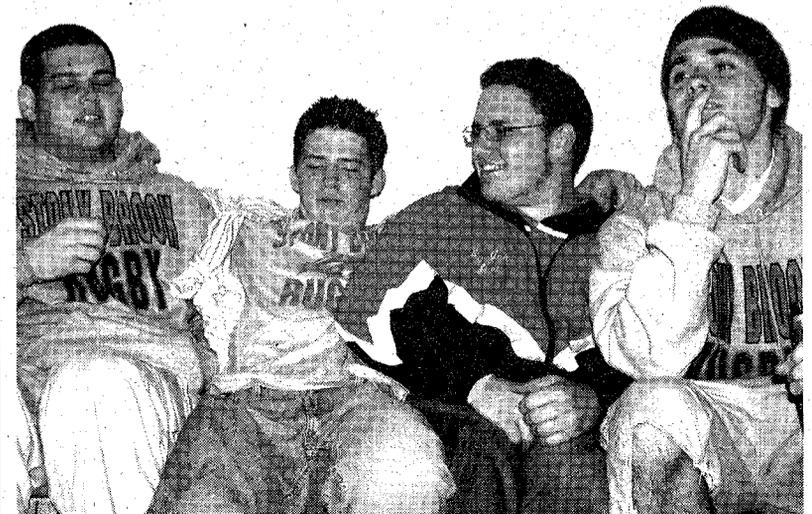
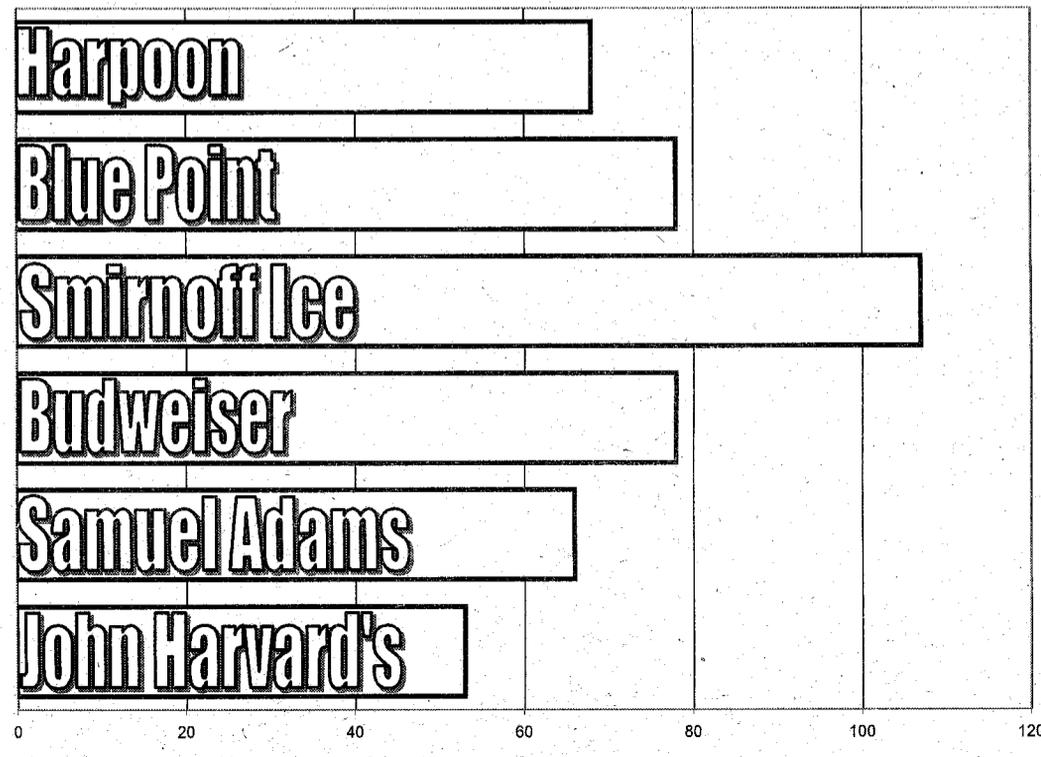
At this point in the rundown, *The Stony Brook Press* would like to express its sincerest disappointment in the final tally results. Smirnoff Ice?!?! I mean, really! How could Smirnoff Ice win over Harpoon and Blue Point? Ah well. The people have spoken and Smirnoff has won by a sugary, watered-down landslide.

On a more positive note, we would like to thank the fellas from the Stony Brook University Men's Rugby Team for co-sponsoring the event. Not only did they offer their humble abode to about 200 shit-faced undergraduates (all of legal drinking age, of course) but they went above and beyond their hosting duties and supplied most of the beverages. For this, we are very grateful. They're a bunch of swell guys and we cordially invite them into the Beerfest tradition 'till death do us part.

Beerfest Fall '04 has taught us many things. The first is; young people like beer. The second is; the rugby team is cool but their friends like Smirnoff Ice. The third is; *The Press* sure does know how to throw a kick ass party.

For updates on Beerfest Spring '05, come down to our office and be our friend. Hell, maybe even write for us. For I believe it was Confucius who said, "Go to sleep with itchy asshole, wake up with smelly finger."

The Final Tally

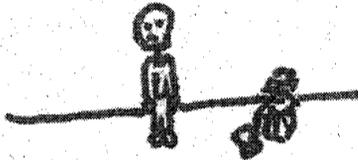


The Comics Section

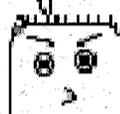
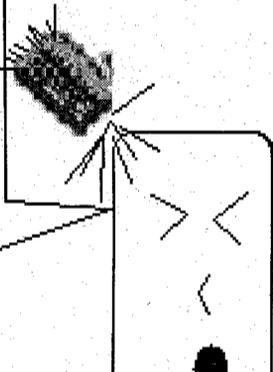
It's cold outside.



There's no one around.



I think I'm gonna take a nap.

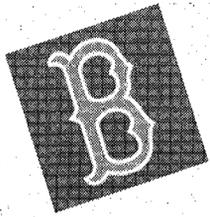
<p>College Boyz by: Joe Rios</p> <p>With a new semester about to begin, Let's take a few moments to go over how to register for a class at last minute. This is a two phase process that you should get to know very well...</p> 	<p>Phase 1: Prayer...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pray SOLAR isn't busy. 2. Pray the classes aren't full. 3. Pray your bills are paid up. <p>Phase 2: Truth...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Realize it's hopeless and throw your keyboard across the room!  	<p>Ha Ha! That's what you get for waiting until the last minute. Serves you ri- OW!!!</p> <p>Prick.</p> 
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Café Bar and Venue

rec 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

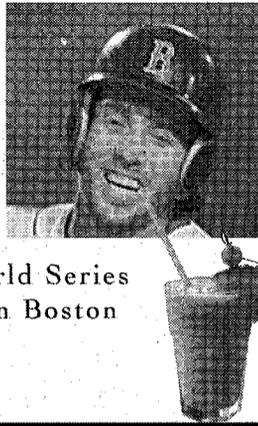
Episode Two:
Johnny Damon
Wilderness Adventure



Previously, on Your
2004 World Series
Champion Boston
Red Sox...

Mark Bellhorn kicked back
for a pensive moment.

"I wonder what adventures
and
other
crazy
hijinx
are in
store
for us,
the
2004 World Series
Champion Boston
Red Sox"



Several weeks later, at the
secluded mountaintop Red
Sox Cabaña, Bellhorn
is rudely interrupted from
his piña colada fueled
reverie by Jason Varitek.



"Put on your
uniform, Bellhorn!
You remember
how General
Manager Theo
Epstein was
working on
that secret bat
project? Well,
we sent Johnny
Damon to check
on some Balsa
trees hidden on
the perilous
North face of
the mountain.
He's gone missing!"



Solving Crimes!

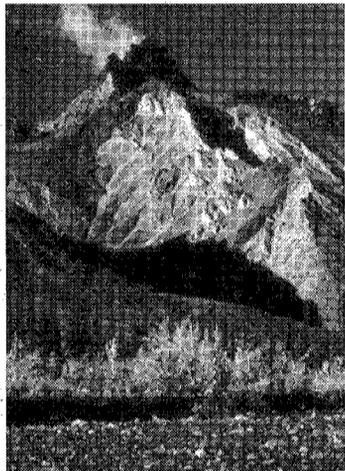
YOUR 2004 WORLD
SERIES CHAMPION



Fightin' Mysteries!

By Matt Willemain

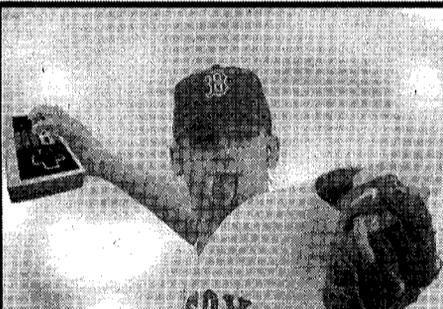
Towering over the fertile
valleys of New England,
Red Sox Mountain looms.



"The Balsa
trees were
hidden in the
forbidding
woods of Red
Sox Mountain's
notorious North
face. Johnny
Damon set out
to check on
their growth,
and he was
supposed to
be back six
days ago."



"You should take Bronson
Arroyo with you. That'll
get him away from that old
Nintendo and get him some
exercise."



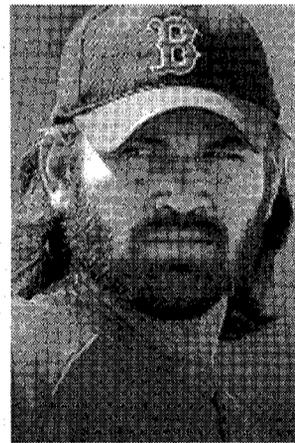
In the zone!

Maybe a little too
deep in the zone!

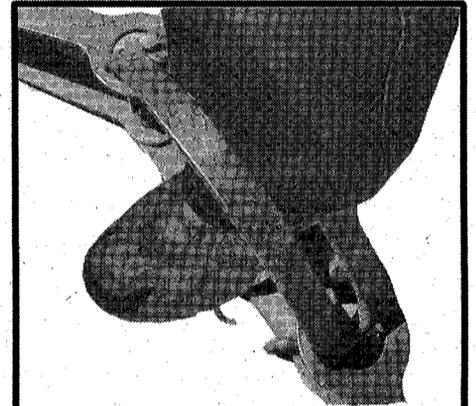
"Be careful, Bellhorn!
Don't forget, Johnny
Damon is a mountain
man! If he's in trouble,
it must be serious. Oh,
and you had better take
this map with you."



Deep in the woods...

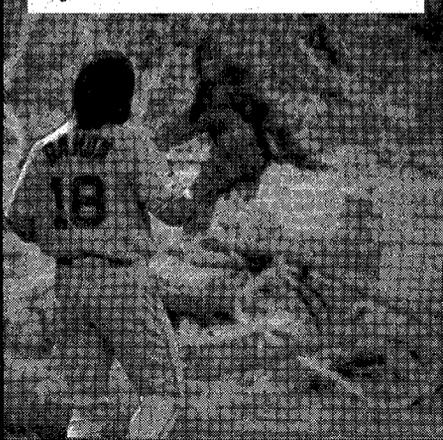


"Ow. Ow. Ow. Ow"

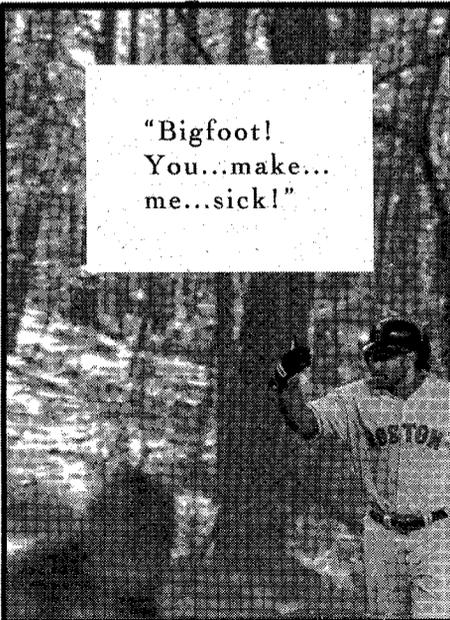


Johnny Damon was pinned,
caught in a bear trap and
exposed to the elements!

Bigfoot said, "At last,
Johnny Damon, I have
you right where I want
you."



"Bigfoot!
You...make...
me...sick!"

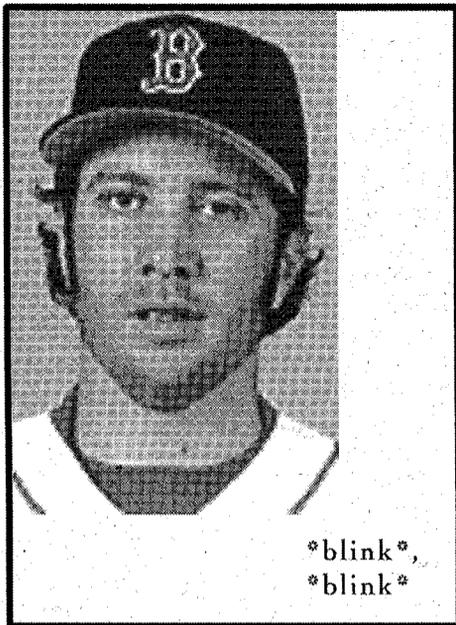


Meanwhile, Bronson Arroyo
was puzzled.

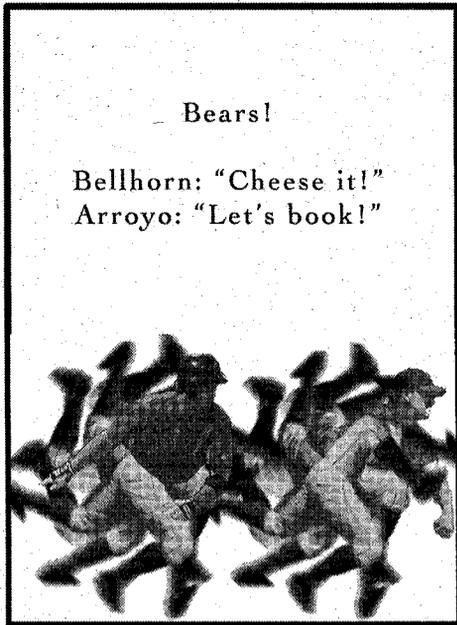
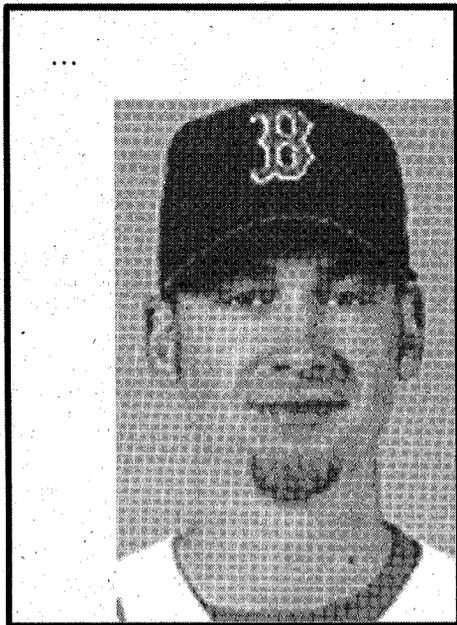
"Hey, Bellhorn, what do
you suppose this symbol
on the map means?"



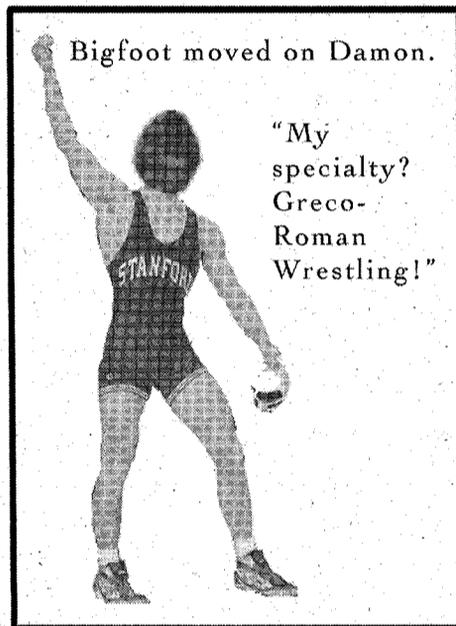
The symbol in question.



blink,
blink

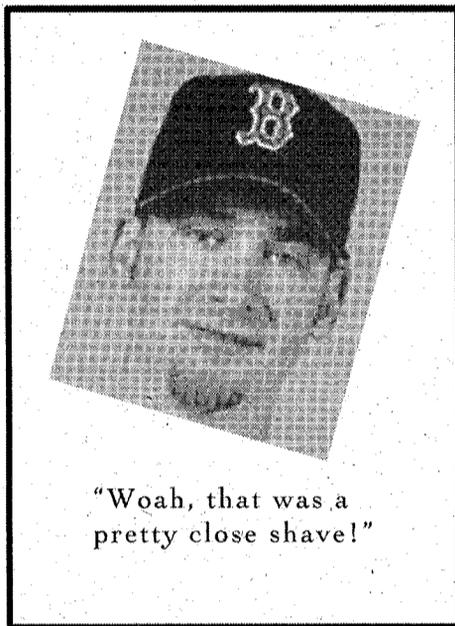
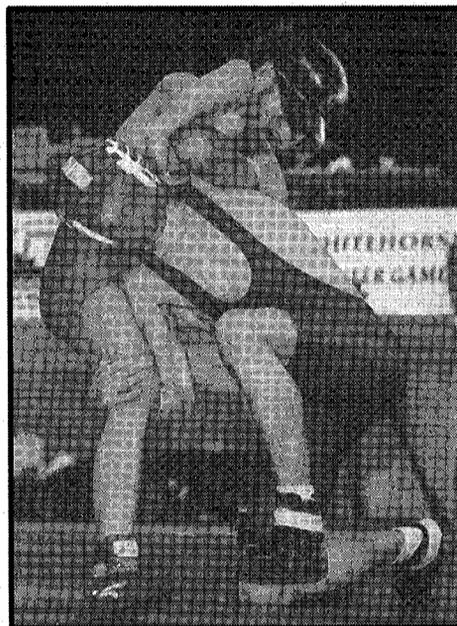


Bears!
Bellhorn: "Cheese it!"
Arroyo: "Let's book!"

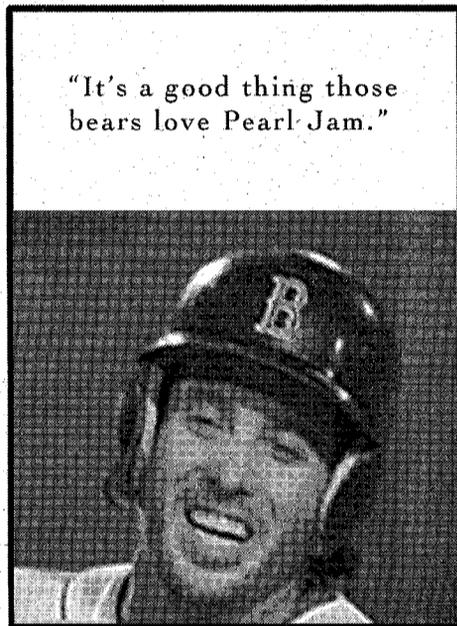


Bigfoot moved on Damon.

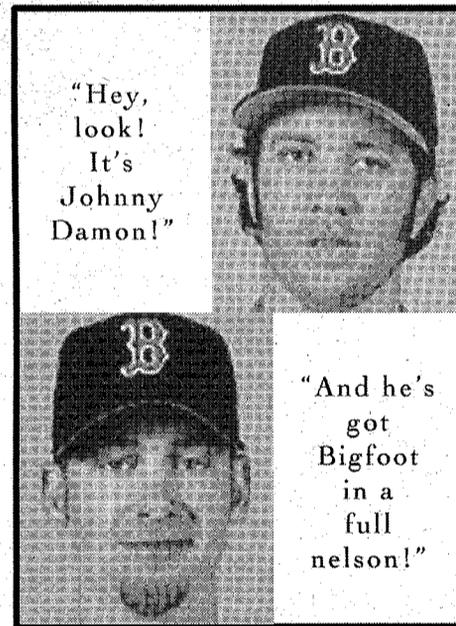
"My specialty?
Greco-Roman Wrestling!"



"Woah, that was a pretty close shave!"

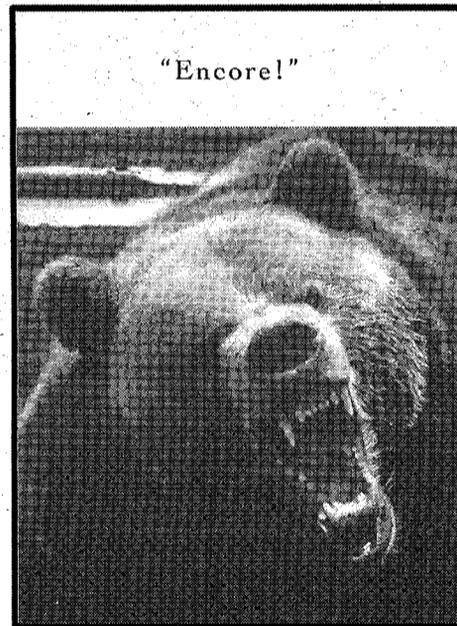


"It's a good thing those bears love Pearl Jam."

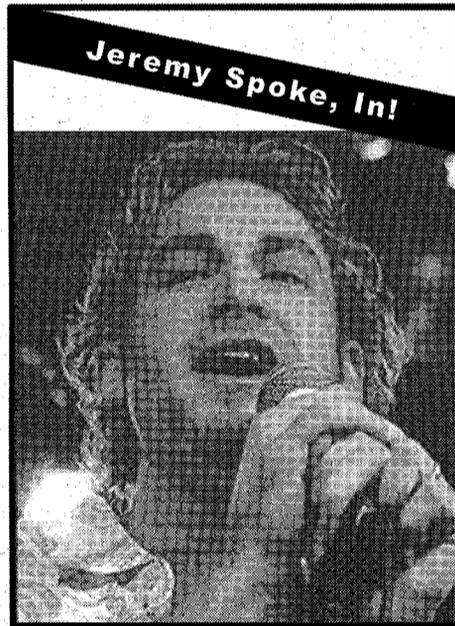


"Hey, look!
It's Johnny Damon!"

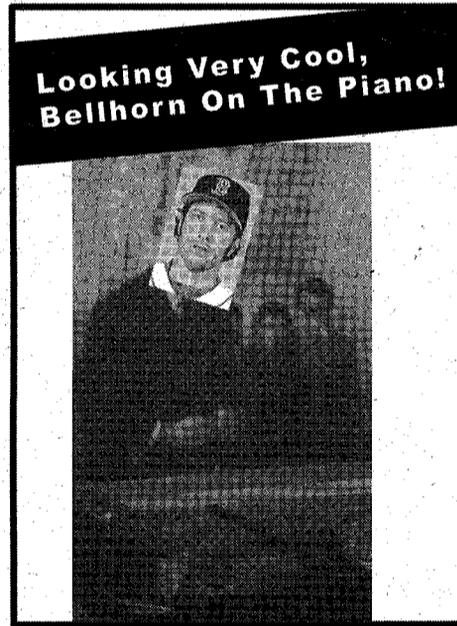
"And he's got Bigfoot in a full nelson!"



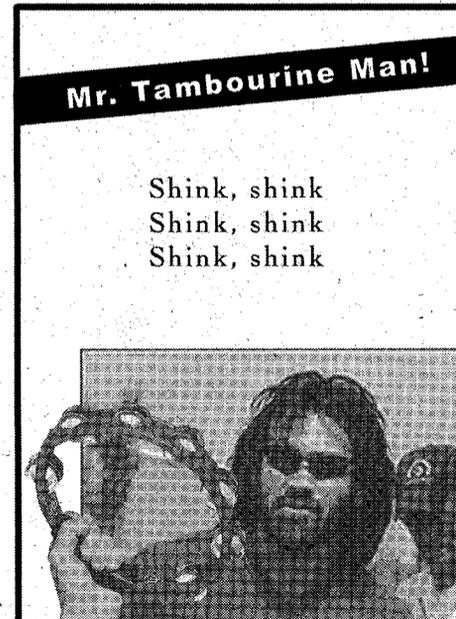
"Encore!"



Jeremy Spoke, In!

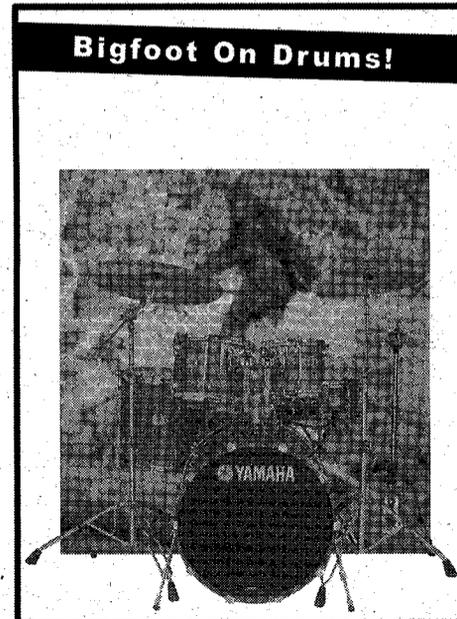


Looking Very Cool, Bellhorn On The Piano!

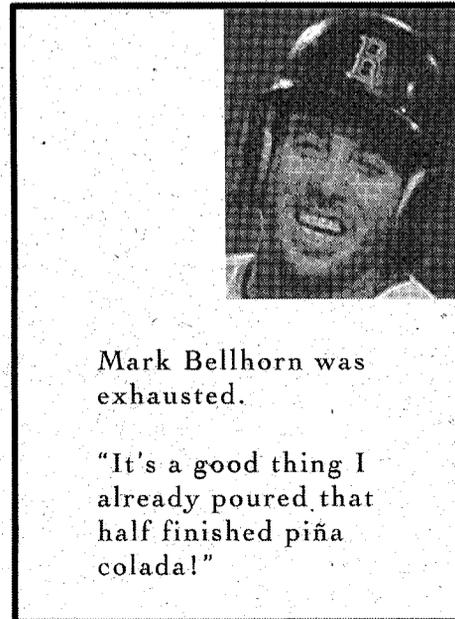


Mr. Tambourine Man!

Shink, shink
Shink, shink
Shink, shink

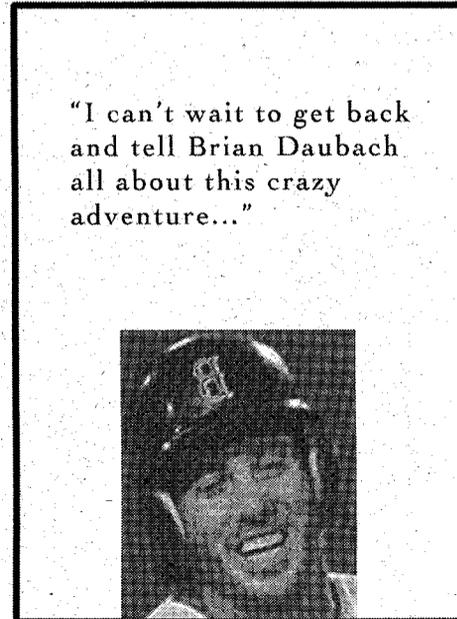


Bigfoot On Drums!

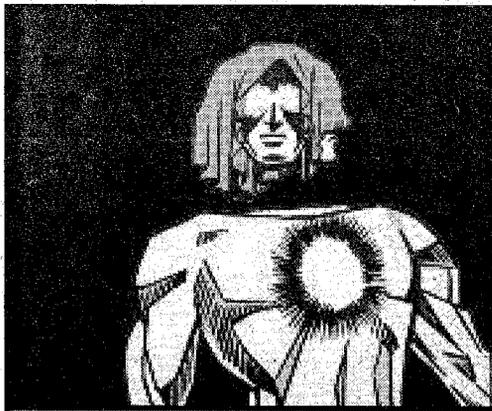


Mark Bellhorn was exhausted.

"It's a good thing I already poured that half finished piña colada!"



"I can't wait to get back and tell Brian Daubach all about this crazy adventure..."



The Living Tribunal Passes Judgement On:

The Death of Superman

The Death of Superman

An enigmatic creature bent on destruction emerges from the earth and paves a bloody swath across the US. After the Justice League fails to stop the beast's onslaught, it is up to Superman to end his rampage no matter what the cost.

PHILOSOPHY

"mmhhh...tttrrrrr...pppplll...sssssss," spake the creature as it cut its swathe of destruction across the myth dotted landscape of DC's America. What he was referring to? The city of Metropolis, home of Superman, the prototype of the comic book hero. But how was he doing this, was he beforehand given privy to the symbolic understanding inherent in the word? Did he somehow transcend the pedagogical difficulties which arise in the social formative stages of human life? I think DC just needed a great backdrop for the death of their god. Incidentally, providing me with a great excuse to bring in Hermeneutical theory.

Taken at face value, we must assume that Doomsday was an alien being suddenly thrust into the symbolic matrix of human history. As anyone who has been to a foreign country can testify, this is an alarming and oft times confusing situation. Imagine demanding no tomatoes on a cheeseburger in Bali, and you begin to gauge the problem. To go from complete ignorance, to aural reproduction, and then to symbolic interpretation of said aural reproduction you'd have to be some kind of genius! Perhaps in a different world Doomsday would be Dr. Day PhD, debunker of Quantum Physics!

But that isn't the case, instead this seeming idiot-savant decides that he has to go towards this "mmhhh...trrrrr...ppplll...ssssss" and I guess fight the wrestler he learned the word from. I won't go into the fact that Doomsday was not only able to gauge proximal measurement from the sign he read, but additionally representational qualities. That is to say, he understood that this symbol represented a location, and that it was a certain distance away. How the Hell was he able to do that? I can barely find my way around East Setauket and this single-minded destruction machine is able to, with no navigational technology I might add, find his way to Metropolis?

Anyway, I think I'll leave that topic because it hurts my brain, and instead examine the moral compass of the character of Booster Gold. I sure hate him, he's just a dirty gambling addict from the future. What kind of a hero is that? I suppose the descent of morality that embodied the 90's could be blamed, but I just think he came from a shitty writer. Anyway, his head gets closed in a car door by Doomsday, so I suppose I can forgive Doomsday his linguistic misgivings cited earlier. I mean who cares if someone can't logically have "language speak through them" if he's busy slamming a car door on the head of some yellow asshole from the future. God I love comic books.

PSYCHOLOGY

For the better part of a century, Superman has been the most iconic comic book character in existence. The reasons for this are fairly plain to see; the caped one is the archetypal American hero that everyone associates with comic books. The tall, square-jawed do-gooder is the proverbial boy scout, a role model in every sense of the word. In appearance, emotion, and behavior, Superman oozes nobility; a pure, dedicated vanguard of American values. Because of this, Kal-El is loved and adored by the people of Metropolis and every other corner of the DC Universe. Considering his aforementioned qualities, it came as a surprise to no one that Superman decided to challenge the unstoppable force known as Doomsday, despite the fact that he may well die trying.

And what of this "Doomsday" creature? Seemingly coming out of nowhere, the behemoth appeared in Ohio and began cutting an indiscriminating swath of destruction across the country towards Metropolis. From every possible angle, Doomsday is the complete antithesis of Superman. The grotesque, lumbering monster is a far cry from the all American looks of the son of Jor-El. While Superman harbors a single-minded dedication to justice, Doomsday is concerned only with death and destruction. The only emotion he feels other than anger is the joy that he feels when murdering woodland creatures or decimating highway overpasses. His goals and ideals are as muddled as Superman's are clear. Doomsday is a force of nature, and the only one that seemed to be capable of stopping him was Superman.

Other than the fact that the mysterious villain was on the brink of obliterating everything that Superman holds dear, what was his real motivation for stopping Doomsday? Why risk everything against a foe that Superman could have simply flung into space if he really tried? What Superman understood, whether consciously or unconsciously, is that he and Doomsday are two sides of the same kind. Both are bastions of immeasurable strength and determination, and the only real difference between the two is the moral compass that Doomsday lacks. While this is precisely what Superman is loved for, what would happen if he somehow lost this aspect of his personality? To Superman, the answer to this was wreaking havoc across the country.

Superman decided to give his life in battle with Doomsday to prove to himself and the populace that he still lived up to the myth that surrounded him. Driven by the fear of what he might have been, and still might become, Superman needed to destroy Doomsday no matter what the cost. While everyone around him saw a mindless leviathan, Superman saw himself. In response to this, Superman aimed to destroy his twisted reflection and eliminate the possibility that his admirers might see the similarities between himself and Doomsday. In doing so, Superman would ensure the love and adoration of his fans and colleagues; even if the cost is death.

COMP SCI

Booster Gold should have never been created. He was born in the 25th century and he was...a gambler who bet on the football games he played in. His tragedy was when his mommy needed an oper-blah-blah-blah. He stole a time machine in order to become a shitty character for the Blue Beetle to befriend. I was going to go over his suit, which was engineered with 25th century technology, but it was destroyed in the very story we are passing judgment on. Thank god. His suit was never repaired because it was too technologically advanced. One good thing came of "The Death of Superman," and that is it ended Booster Gold.

The DC Universe should collapse again, like the wiping clean of a hard drive riddled with antivirus holes, spybots, and spam. I mean, did they even look at the two-page spread on pages 18 and 19? How did it come to this? Just so long as when we install the good parts we remember to leave out things like AOL and characters who never moved beyond saying "...before it manages to eat its way right through my force field!" or "Perhaps only an Almeracian may have the power to stop him." This is why I couldn't even read "Crisis on Infinite Earths." It was written like George Bush speaks on the subject of terrorism. The only character written well was Doomsday.

Doomsday had the most efficient algorithm. Let me demonstrate with pseudo-code:

```
main
{
  boolean hatred = true;
  while(hatred)
    kill();
}
```

It's a real shame that he died. Yeah, he died at the same moment he killed Supes. Pretty anticlimactic if you ask me. Martha cried. It was quite bad, you didn't really want to read it anyway. Especially when Superman doesn't stay dead and neither does Doomsday. DC just jerked our chains for a few months and even had the chumps at Time magazine fooled. Four Supermen popped up, where's the logic in that? What piece of erroneous code causes a memory leak that spiraled so far out of control as to create four supermen, FOUR! Damn, I remember a superman who had a blue suit and electricity powers or something dumb like that. Comics need a "test" phase.

Hey, I just realized the implications of Booster being from the future. You'd think he'd know the history of things to come, especially if it dealt with the untimely demise of the Boy in Blue. Yet another reason why future characters suck.

The Living Tribunal The Death of Superman

ECOLOGY

So the death of Superman has been judged, and it had been judged to be ridiculous. From an ecological standpoint, it's one of the most offensive and absurd comics ever printed. It's enough to make a proper scientist cry. It's one thing to stretch the laws of physics, but to spit in the face of Mother Nature so viciously is unforgivable.

Let's start with the first few moments of Doomsday's awakening. While still confined in a suit that makes him look as dopey as those clay guys from Power Rangers, he kills a rare species of bird, *Yellowus birdius*, and kills an endangered deer. How wrong is that? Shouldn't the writers and editors of DC take better notice of these things? Are they that insensitive to some of the most important issues in our daily lives? For shame!

Superman, if he was such a great hero would know better than to dump and adversary into a lake. How does he know the bottom of that lake is even made up of silt? Did he not understand how horrifying it was for him to do that? Let's assume that the bottom of the lake indeed was made up of silt. Being so close in proximity to Metropolis means that there would be a fair amount of pollutants, probably dioxins held captive in the silt. By disturbing such a sensitive ecotone, not only do the pollutants now become re-suspended in the water column, but anything living tenuously in that silt is now dead. Dead. Dead like Superman. That's nature just paying him back for his wanton disregard for the health and safety of future generations.

Lakes are not simple ecosystems. Life in fresh water hangs in a delicate balance, and upsetting that balance can cause the entire system to collapse quickly. The addition of once settled out pollutants into the water not only endangers and fish and plant life in the lake, but also any human life in the area. I'm willing to bet that people fish out of that lake. I hope superman feels good about poisoning all the people who eat from that lake for the next 30 years.

Now, we can take a look at the final fight in Metropolis. You'd like to think that the final fight just broke up some buildings. WRONG. The shockwaves from their blows no doubt disrupted the sensitive inner ear membranes of almost every bird in a 40 mile radius. Thank you Superman for preventing thousands of our avian friends from being able to migrate. No more flying south in winter, because they can't navigate! And let's not forget bats who are now deaf, and will starve to death because they can't use echolocation. I bet he killed half the earth-worm population in Metropolis with that last blow.

You fail Superman, You fail to care.

The Living Tribunal is:
Mike Prazak, Mike Billings,
Rob Pearsall and
Dustin Herlich

The Comics Section

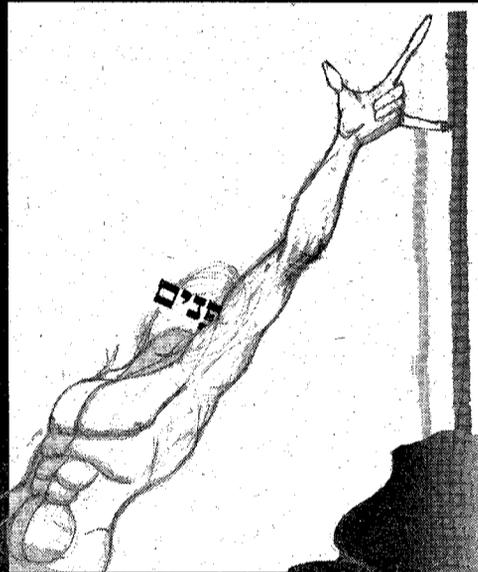
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HEY, WHO ORDERED THE REVIEWS?

Nicholas Sparks Book Review

By Dana Gomi

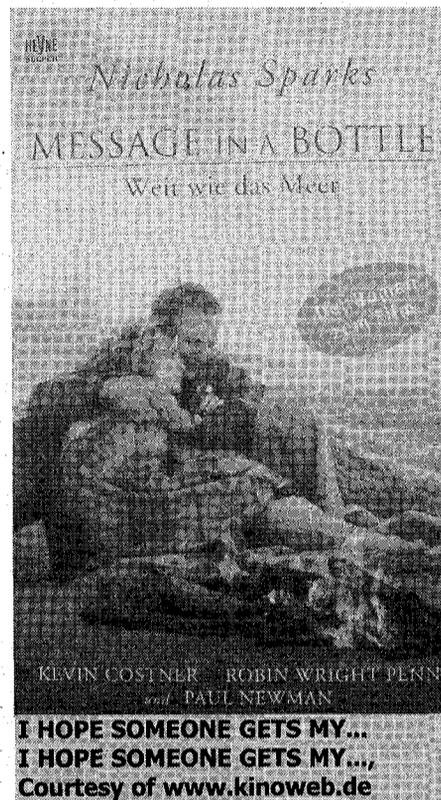
When movies are made from books they are not anywhere close to the original. But this is not true in Nicholas Sparks' novels. Sparks' is a number one *New York Times* best selling author, crafting such great books as *Message in a Bottle*, *A Walk to Remember* and *The Notebook*. Each novel was so moving and touching as a written piece, yet was also flawlessly turned into a movie that made millions of dollars. It's a task that has been accomplished by precious few.

The first book I read by Sparks was *A Walk to Remember*. I was so moved and touched that it literally made me cry. The book was definitely a romantic novel, following two different teenagers, Landon Carter (the boy who is misunderstood) and Jamie Sullivan (the minister's daughter) who fall in love and face some monumental problems along the way. I can't tell any more without revealing the whole plot, but you will get hooked into it. I couldn't put it down for a second. The book just pulls you in with Sparks' nuances and gift for narratives.

Once you read the book, it is essential to rent the film version, featuring Shane West and Mandy Moore. They were the main characters in the book. The movie was an updated version of the book, trading in the 1950's setting for a

more modern 1990's one. This is most likely to win the hearts and minds of today's teenagers, as the film's messages (strong faith, kindness, forgiveness, charity, redemption, looking past the obvious to see the person within), are particularly refreshing when compared with most movies geared toward their demographic these days. The movie was as great as the book, with Shane West and Mandy Moore turning in wonderfully inspired performances.

Sparks has had other books of his that have undergone the transformation into great movies, such as *Message in a Bottle* (with Kevin Costner and Robin Wright Penn) and last year's *The Notebook*, starring the up-and-coming talents of Rachel McAdams and Ryan



Gosling. Both were as great film adaptations as *A Walk to Remember* was, proving that Sparks has a very lucrative future ahead of him.

After reading these books and watching the film adaptations, I found myself changed. I finally found a contemporary author I can appreciate and derive hours of joy from. I recommend reading any of Nicholas Sparks' novels. Actually, I recommend reading all of them. I'm currently working my way through *The Rescue*, which will no doubt be another best seller and fodder for a future article. So what're you waiting for? Go out and get the books! You won't be disappointed. Trust me, girls!

A Guy and His Guitar

By Tara Lynne Groth

The opening act in Farmingdale on December 7, 2004 was Matt O'Brien (see interview!). Matt's performance at the Downtown was a hard act to follow, being that his impressive guitar compositions and bittersweet lyrics resonated intimidating talent. Aside from myself, and fellow *Stony Brook Press* staffer genius Tom Senkus, the audience consisted mainly of impressionable high school girls. Yes, Tom was in his glory.

A week prior to the show, during my entertaining interview with Matt, I was informed that a great many tickets were sold to a local high school. The juvenile spectators only redeeming quality: more parking spots for me! Towards the back of the Downtown, parental units milled around the bar, walking the line of their children's mandatory circumference of coolness that must be maintained when attending such a "mad" and "chill" shindig.

If I were an anal individual who classified her own audio collection by genre instead of artist, I'd place Matt O'Brien's music in the Easy Listening niche. I'm sure others would say the John Mayer Double, but Matt isn't running through the halls of his high school screaming at the top of his lungs. His lyrics express emotion, as well as an extensive vocabulary. I heard "sedentary" used in one of his songs—and it worked!

Appearing slightly nervous at first, Matt quickly collected himself and compensated by delivering an amusing and pleasant performance. Being that Matt is "averse to clichés," he almost successfully avoided them by not asking the crowd where they're from, not having the audience clap along, and not plugging his CD (see end of article for demo listening information) every two and third seconds.

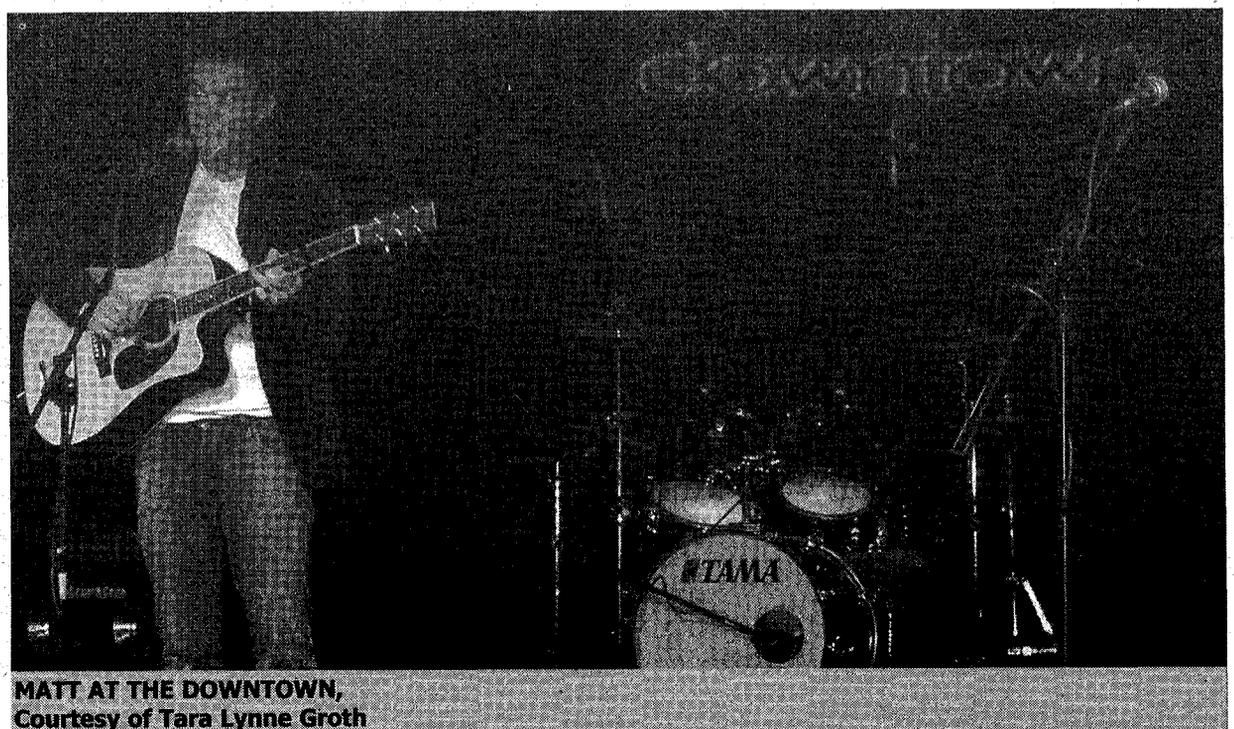
During his transitions, Matt took his time sliding the capo up a fret, alluding to his

home life in Pennsylvania, his experience at Berklee College of Music and his current employment at the Huntington Village Waldbaum's. He recounted days of penning songs in Pennsylvania, and, in an attempt to warm up the audience—a goal which he achieved—Matt described his typical day at the supermarket: stocking tampons. Nonetheless, Matt explained how he doesn't blame women when they turn the other way as soon as they see him stocking said tampons. A cute play on the stereotypical self-consciousness of women, and a girl's menstrual cycle, and the high school-age audience giggled and blushed. One of these days Matt will realize he's already stocking something he can stick in the ladies.

Matt's songs didn't exactly slice through the mumbling side conversations that the audience sustained during his vocals. Upon recommendation of a random audience member, it would have been nice to have an a capella section in a song or three to turn a head or three.

The bad did *not* outweigh the good of course, and for the minimal price of \$7 and an evening of new talent, this Tuesday night was well spent.

Matt O'Brien's music can be accessed on his website www.purevolume.com/mattobrien. You can email mattobriensdemo@hotmail.com to request a \$5 demo CD if your little heart so desires.



MATT AT THE DOWNTOWN,
Courtesy of Tara Lynne Groth

HEY, WHO ORDERED THE REVIEWS?

George Carlin's *When Will Jesus Bring The Pork Chops?*

By Sam Goldman

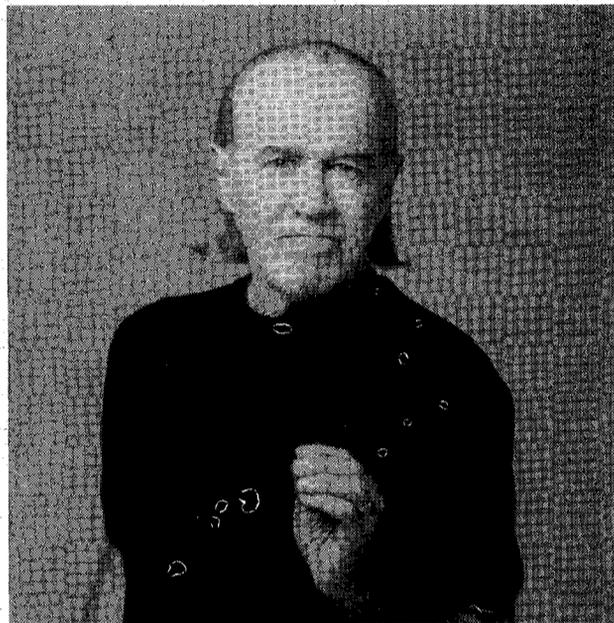
When Will Jesus Bring The Pork Chops, a collection of essays, jokes and musings on life by comedian George Carlin, starts off with, of all things, a three-page poem. Called "The Modern Man," it sets the stage for what Carlin is trying to do in this book (and everything else he does) — highlight the things people say and do that we take for granted and ask ourselves why the hell we are doing it. To Carlin, such things — such as the book's running gag of dissecting the proliferation of politically correct euphemisms, which he has actually found used for everything from "ugly" (which has become "those with severe appearance deficits") to "stupid" (now "minimally exceptional") — seem positively ridiculous.

To Carlin, the creator of the infamous "Seven Words You Can't Say on Television," the "New Language," as he refers to it, is an equally insidious form of censorship, which "cripples discourse, creates ugly language and is generally stupid." He does a good job of dissecting language throughout the book, from where politicians don't "say," they "indicate," to how the term "leader of the free world" is, to him, nothing less than jingoistic babble.

This book finds Carlin being much more of a social satirist than a comedian. It is generally understood that the line between the two is blurry, however, reading this, there's a sense that Carlin wants to hopscotch from one side to the other throughout the book. Here's George making crude masturbation jokes. Here's George talking about the Department of Homeland Security. The parts where he puts on his social satirist's hat are illuminating and interesting to read. However, much of it really isn't the kind of laugh-out-loud funny you would hope for if you were buying a book written by one of the more well-known comedians on the planet.

Once he puts the social satire aside and veers towards comedy, however, George Carlin is

a very funny man. Funnier bits include three skits taken verbatim from his most recent HBO special, *Complaints and Grievances*, which happens to have been held over three years ago (which is disappointing), yet still manages to be quite funny (which makes up for it). The mono-



SAM READ THIS BOOK WHILST LYING SEDUCTIVELY ON THE COUCH, Courtesy of www.starplazatheater.com

logue involving the American public's fascination with scabs is a keeper. Equally good are "Bits and Pieces," which are essentially collections of one-liners that are interspersed throughout the book (a sample, middle-of-the-road funny line: "if you have a perfectly DNA-matched identical twin, technically, it's possible to go fuck yourself"). Also sprinkled throughout the book are Carlin's biographies of his "uncles," such as Uncle Montezuma, who

"wanted to be a gynecologist but claimed he couldn't find an opening." The book, on the whole, is funnier than not, but you can't help but hold the book in your hands and wonder, "is that all?"

It should be mentioned that there has been consternation, especially looking at the customer reviews from Amazon.com, about the offensiveness of some of Carlin's material. Hello? "Seven Words You Can't Say on Television?" Carlin has always had very little problem being offensive. The interesting thing, however, is that, unless you are a hardcore environmentalist, someone obsessed with political correctness, or a member of the Bush administration (and, you gotta admit, that cuts a pretty wide swath), nothing here is going to send you on the phone to your local congressman. And, seriously, with the exception of Dennis Miller, how many comedians *don't* do Bush jokes?

Speaking of Miller, Carlin's *When Will Jesus Bring The Pork Chops*, by virtue of its subject matter and tone, inevitably invites comparisons between the two. To be blunt, you can't read this without slowly getting the feeling that Carlin has begun his long, long descent into the black hole that sucked away Dennis Miller's funny bones, leaving only a wounded shell of a man striving to be a political satirist. However, unlike Miller, and fortunately for us, Carlin will always succeed where Miller does not, because while Miller strives to be obtuse and above the common man, Carlin strives to relate to the common man.

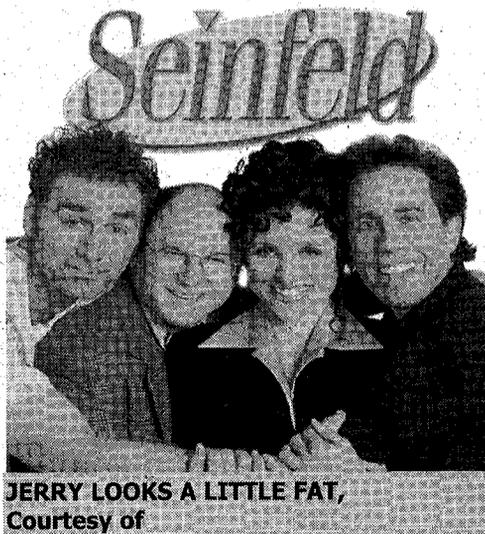
Finally, in the last week of December, George Carlin voluntarily entered a rehab clinic because, in his words, "I use too much wine and Vicodin." Here's to hoping that Carlin gets clean, avoids Miller-itis, and gets down to writing some new material. As for *When Will Jesus Bring The Pork Chops*, I'd suggest that you wait for the paperback.

Seinfeld DVD

By Mike Billings

Widely considered one of the best sitcoms ever produced, the first two seasons of *Seinfeld* were finally released on DVD recently. The long awaited collection features the aforementioned seasons and pilot as they originally aired fifteen years ago. To go along with this, the collection includes a short documentary detailing the trials and tribulations of the burgeoning series as Jerry Seinfeld and Larry David attempted to get the show about nothing a spot in NBC's lineup. In addition to this, the viewer can switch on the "notes about nothing" to see bits of information flash across the screen during the episodes.

Along with all of the standard DVD fea-



JERRY LOOKS A LITTLE FAT, Courtesy of

years from the airing of the first season until the DVD, a little more effort could have been put

tures, a few of the episodes contain an audio commentary track with either Seinfeld and David or Michael Richards, Larry Charles, a writer for the show, Jerry Alexander, and Julia Louis-Dreyfus; the actors who played Kramer, George, and Elaine, respectively. These tracks are where the only problem with the DVD comes into play. Including the pilot, there are a total of eighteen episodes contained in the collection, but only six of them have audio commentary. Considering that fans had to wait fifteen

forth to give all of the episodes some kind of commentary. The actors are already sitting there, it can't be that difficult to hang out for a few more hours and give the fans what they want.

As for the audio commentary that's on there, it's mostly entertaining. David and Seinfeld offer insightful comments about the creation of the episodes while Richards, Alexander, and Louis-Dreyfus make fun of each other's clothing. The commentary with Larry Charles, however, leaves much to be desired as he trudges through the episode saying very little. Similarly, the "notes about nothing" were a bit disappointing as they detailed mostly production notes and facts about the set. Overall, this DVD is a worthy purchase for fans of the show. Despite the lackadaisical commentary, the set offers seminal episodes like "The Busboy" and "Chinese Restaurant." This is a great way to learn about the beginnings of the show and revisit the episodes that are rarely played in syndication.

Who Smoked the Shisha?

By William Lewis

You see them at Kelly quad, the Football field and yes even by Roth pond but all this time you had to ask what the hell are they smoking? Shisha, or if you will they and me all alike happen to be there smoking hookahs. When I first heard of the word I had to know what a hookah was and what it looked like. In a very similar construction of a water bong you can find a hookah (Shisha smoker) which is sold on line at different stores or even in "little Egypt" in the city as I have been told by a member of the Stony Brook Shisha smokers who like to meet up the Roth pond and plot out plans for Student Government.

Hookah is one of the oldest and most popular traditions in Turkey. There is no discrimination when it comes to smoking the hookahs; as both men and women can equally enjoy the use of a hookah. From Turkey the hookah had made its way to and from India and even Iran and the rest of the Middle East before it jumped onto the world market as an ethnic object that is seen in many Hollywood films and people's homes. Yet it is Iran that happens to be pegged with the use of hookahs while the users of the hookah range from people of different groups and faiths.

The hookah itself was from Turkey in its tradition, design, and form, and very little if at all has changed in its design and use of over 500 years. In both Turkey and Iran you can find coffee being sold in hookah smoking cafes where people are paid to set up the hookah for you from setting the coals and changing the tobacco. If you ever have the chance to step into one of these hookah cafes in either country or even here in the States, you can find it to be a rather calm and surreal setting where people can just sit back and take it slow, or talk about the political stage that is before them. I have even been part of some deep religious talk and poems being read around the hookah.

The tobacco that is used in hookahs is combined with fruit molasses and honey, including a mashed mix of dried fruit pulp, flavored molasses, and fresh tobacco leaves which happen to come in different flavors such as Rose, Coca, Fruit Cocktail, and Apple to name a few in many different flavors that you can get.

The hookah should be cleaned thoroughly, if not every time then after a few times smoking it and usually when changing the flavor of the tobacco. The glass base should be washed out and water should be ran through the hookah's pipes just not the hose that you use to smoke out of. A thin cleaning brush is used with the hookah when you're cleaning it. Initially the water running through the pipe will come out slightly yellow to tarnish brown; continue running the water until it is clear. A common mistake is to wash out the hoses that you smoke out of. Most hookah hoses should never be washed or to have water in them, but instead they should be blown clean. The reason is that the water will either rust the hoses' metal tubing and/or will cause the hoses con-

structed from composite fiber to begin breaking down making the hose rather grainy in pull and feel. The water in the hose will eventually lead to the need to replace the hose sooner then you want to.

Once the base is clean, put water to a level that will result in the hookah pipe being submersed in about 1.5 inches of water or what ever water level that works for you. Too much water in the glass base will result in the water bubbling up into the hose during the smoke. Once the water is placed into the base the top hookah pipe can be attached.

Once your hookah is all clean you're ready to smoke it as you please. The most important thing you can do when setting up to



SHISHA!
Courtesy of www.zounds.net

smoke is the making of the tobacco "head" that will be in the clay bowl. Before placing the tobacco into the bowl try to break up the clumps and remove any large pieces of leaf stem. If you get a good name brand of tobacco you will not have such problems. Take the tobacco in your fingers and crinkle it so that flakes fall into the clay bowl but at no time you should have to touch the tobacco in the bowl. You want to have the tobacco evenly spread around in the clay bowl, but not packed tightly and not so high that the aluminum foil is in direct contact with it or that you have any that goes over the level of the clay bowl. Once this is done a piece of normal kitchen foil should be placed over the top of the bowl. The foil should be stretched over the tobacco and the clay bowl. You can use a pin (not a knife or any other objects) to make holes in the foil all around the tobacco, since you want to keep your holes to pin-hole size.

The charcoal or coil should be lit "outside or in a well ventilated area," but you can do it inside your dorm room or offices as I do without a problem. Once the coal is fully lit, place it on top of the bowl it is best to start with one coal and to see from there if you feel that you need more then the one coal. It is important to move the coal(s) around the on the foil to help ensure

that all tobacco is used evenly and to prevent it from burning and giving you a harsh taste. There is a very distinct taste difference that will occur when the head is burnt. Some people have different thresholds before they consider it burnt.

"I started smoking cause my friend had one at a party. Then I started going to hookah bars. I went to Israel and bought one for cheap there and brought it back to the States. I like hookah 'cause it's a social experience just like a coffee shop or a bar, but it's much more mellow and goes hand in hand with good company, mellow music and dim lights. And, it tastes amazing!!!"

—Vlad Golub

Unlike Vlad Golub many people who started to smoke hookah started from a "friend" offering them a smoke on it. It is a very social thing to have and to use, it was when I got my hookah, which I either call "Drag" or at times "Mr. Tickey the Winkey" depending on my mood, that I did see first hand how social a hookah is. It was over in Roosevelt Quad that on the fire escape that a Sci Fi Forum member and her friend sat with me smoking. We all have our own different reasons as to why we smoke a hookah or, if you will, Shisha. When asked why she smokes a hookah, Jenn Nayeem said, "Smoking shisha is yet another 'fuck you' I've reserved for the American government and its corresponding corporations. Unlike marijuana, you can legally smoke shisha in outdoor, public spaces. And unlike cigarette consumption, you're not supporting companies that exist on the basis of advancing subtle suicide. Go support your local Egyptian, smoke some sweet melon flavored bliss."

"I smoke because I can and because it's a great stress reliever without as many chemicals as cigs. But it's also mainly a social thing. I never heard of hookah until I came to SBU...no one understands upstate, where I'm originally from," Sarah Bermas said when asked why she started smoking a hookah. A hookah is a fun way to blow off steam and stress from a week of classes and crazy professors. You can find hookahs at good prices, from online Shisha stores to even E-bay as well some students that go overseas and to the city are willing to pick you up a nice hookah, the same can be said about the tobacco and coal that are used with the hookah. So go out and try a hookah; if anything it can be a nice way to meet people ranging from apathetic views of the policies of this nation, to people that feel they must wage a "righteous holy war," on to student government, as well you can meet a lot of laid back cool people. I even had my hookah set up at the *Press*' 25th anniversary party last year which people were digging to even smoking my hookah in every quad on campus.

Swords

Sorcery

Technology

LESBIANS!

CRASHWORLD

— A NOVEL —

www.andrewpernick.com

What's Passing for Entertainment These Days

By Ian Rice

This just in, courtesy of Reuters News Service (via Yahoo!):

"Meet the Fockers set two records over the (New Year's) weekend. Its Friday haul of \$12.2 million was the best for New Year's Eve, beating the four-year-old record of Cast Away, which brought in \$8.5 million. Fockers continued its winning ways the next day with sales of \$18 million, surpassing the New Year's Day record of \$12.8 million set last year by The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King."

If that isn't enough, this also came down the wire:

"The children's comedy Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events, starring Jim Carrey, held steady at a distant No. 2 with \$14.7 million, taking its total to \$94.8 million after three weekends."

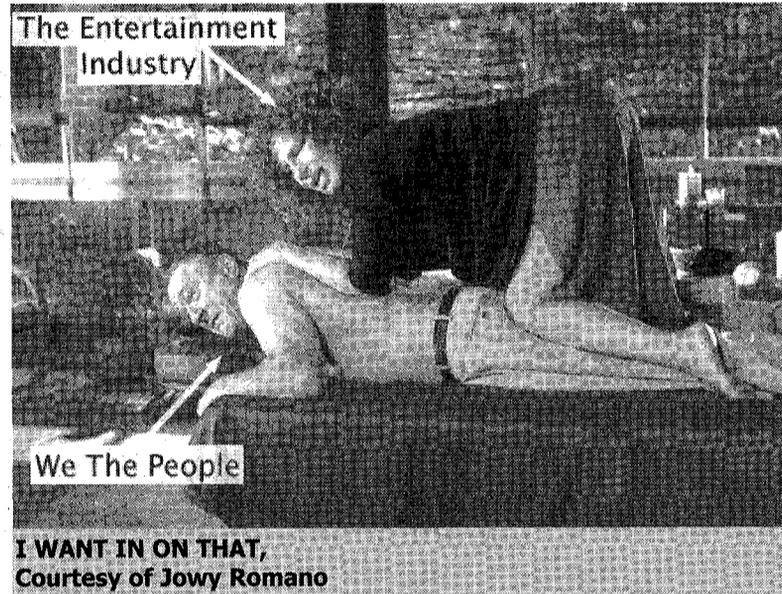
I'm officially appalled. Well over \$100 million has gone to the two biggest pieces of shit ever to be committed to film. Excellent films, ones that have awe-inspiring performances and unprecedented writing prowess, tanked at the box office over the same weekend (most notably Wes Anderson's brilliant vehicle for Bill Murray, *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*), proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that entertainment and American culture are face down in the gutter.

I saw the Jim Carrey embarrassment. Why? Because I'm stupid. Actually, the only way I could get my girlfriend to go to Bill Murray's latest with me was if I agreed to see *Lemony Snicket's Blah Blah Blah*. It was almost unwatchable. Jim Carrey's character disguising himself as various characters to cagily regain custody of child orphans that will make him a billionaire via inheritance was about as believable as Clark Kent putting on a pair of glasses and nobody recognizing him as Superman. Like most films aimed at children, it relies heavily on the premise that adults are assholes and have the mental capacity of a small bag of almonds. Which is fine...after all, kids do think adults are stupid assholes. But this particular film takes it to ridiculous levels.

It's clear to me now that Jim Carrey's time has passed. For the almost two hour duration of *Lemony Snicket's Blah Blah Blah*, Carrey acts like an idiot, playing things way too far over the top. Which is not much of a surprise, given his past work. But at least it was somewhat

fresh in films like *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* or *Liar Liar*. Now it's just played out and makes this bomb even worse for the viewer. In fact, the only breath of fresh air in this film is the always funny Billy Connolly, who appears as the orphans' uncle and near-savior about halfway through the show. Connolly's endearing performance almost gave me hope with this film, until he was aced out after fifteen minutes and it was back to the bullshit.

I didn't see *Meet the Fockers*. But to be honest I really didn't have to. I saw the trailer before three other movies I attended and that



was more than enough. First of all, how many times is Robert DeNiro going to make a complete asshole out of himself on film? It started with *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle* and was perpetuated with another awful sequel, 2002's *Analyze That*. But *Meet the Fockers* has him looking worse than ever. The man was in *Raging Bull* for fuck's sake! He's better than this film and the only reason I can see that he did it was to collect a paycheck. The same goes for Dustin Hoffman, who also comes off like a complete jackass in this film as the father of Gaylord Focker (Stiller). These two actors really need to reassess their script-taking skills and be a tad more selective when it comes to the movies they choose to appear in.

The most aggravating and inexplicable element of *Meet the Fockers*, however, comes with the casting choice of Mrs. Focker. Who do they get to play the eccentric aging hippie matron of the Focker family? Barbara Streisand. Nice heads, guys. Nice heads. The most greedy, pompous, overrated ass in the entire entertain-

ment industry is chosen to play the friendly and free-thinking Mrs. Focker. Good call. And on top of that, Barbara looks like shit now too. Not that she was a vivacious beauty prior, but now she has really gone downhill. As I write this article, I am hard pressed to think of anyone more wretch-worthy than Barbara Streisand and I'm coming up empty.

I'm not trying to go against the popular vote on this one. I really hate this film and the success it's getting, because to me that ultimately means that the entertainment industry has finally lost any credibility it had in the last few years. But I know that I'm in the minority by thinking that way, as the theater I was in had people falling out of their seats laughing when the trailer for *Fockers* came on. I didn't laugh once, probably because the sight of Robert DeNiro trying to fish his dog out of the toilet it was just flushed down isn't my idea of funny. Yes, I know the dog had the blue water all over him. It's still lame.

Entertainment is just sad, plain and simple. If these two piles aren't enough to prove that statement, here's a small sampling of what's coming to a theater near you in the not-so-distant future:

Coach Carter, in which Samuel L. Jackson plays (surprise!) a tough-but-lovable African American man with an increased vocal volume.

Elektra, in which Jennifer Garner carries on the making of film versions of lesser Marvel characters.

Are We There Yet? in which Ice Cube continues to ruin the credibility he gained from *Boyz In the Hood* by making slap-sticky bullshit.

Bewitched, in which ragged-ass Nicole Kidman takes over the character made famous by Elizabeth Montgomery in the 1960's, with the continually misused Will Ferrell shouting his way through as the modern Darren Stevens.

The Wedding Date, in which Debra Messing gets to act in film due to the popularity of her sitcom, *Will and Grace*.

People, please don't go to see these shitty films anymore. Otherwise, they'll never stop being made. Do yourself a favor: take half the money for your admission ticket, go to Blockbuster and rent *The Godfather* or *Almost Famous* or...hell, just something good. You'll feel a lot better in the long run. Oh, and you won't have to wait half an hour to get popcorn and a soda either.

The Incredible Mix Tape

A musical odyssey by Tom Senkus

The Beatles "Blackbird"

DFA 1979 "You're a Woman, I'm a Machine"

Rilo Kiley "Bulletproof"

Travis Morrison "My Two Front Teeth, Parts II and III"

King Crimson "Another Red Nightmare"

The Smiths "How Soon is Now?"

Modest Mouse "Beach Side Property"

The Minutemen "Themselves"

Dillenger Escape Plan w/ Mike Patton "Pig Latin"

Nick Drake "Pink Moon"

Elvis Costello "Watching the Detectives"

Echo and the Bunnymen "Lips Like Sugar"

Bad Brains "I Against I"

Dead Milkmen "Punk Rock Girl"

By Tara Lynn Groth

In class, you may differentiate yourself by the questions you ask (for some, the clothes you wear), around friends, by the jokes you make, with lovers, by the lovin', with writing, by the mediums you choose to fill. There is a *validation* or a self-affirming aura granted from contextualizing your thoughts in an arena where friends, faux friends, ex-friends and strangers can potentially absorb what you have to say. At least, this is what I'm proposing as defense for my question, what's in a blog?

Rizzo told Danny in *Grease* to go "flog" his log (then she went off and got hickeyed by Kinicky), so is blogging an electronic, textual masturbation? Perhaps, perhaps.

Livejournals, Xanga and whatnot clog the blog arteries of webspace. These perplex me in drowsy moments. I'm curious to know why Deadjournals aren't in existence (a chronicling of the afterlife by the afterlife!) or why I have a propensity to push a rectangular square from the base of a homemade leaning tower of—oh, *Jenga!* But this is just me playing with words.

Other times I revel in my discomfiting theory that blogs were created in a conspiracy to further consume people's time in an electronic realm. Haven't spent a majority of your

life watching movie trailers, reading album reviews, downloading music, porn and whatnot? Well, try blogging. It will extend your time online extensively—leaving less time for human interaction. I speak from my experimental Xanga phase. People spending more time on the Internet means more potential for them to buy something, sell something. All the more opportunities for e-marketing and the like to get the most out of their advertising budgets.

In my less intense modes I oh-so-firmly believe that blogs, as well other personalized websites (i.e., digital pictures, homepages, etc.) are outlets for the narcissism that is highly prevalent in today's American society. Me, me, me. It's like "Daily Affirmation." See my picture, read my thoughts, relate to my ideas, reassure me that I write good ("well" for crying out louder!), now I can sleep well—after I announce it in my Away Message.

Yes, yes, as the adage goes—and I'll leave it anonymous for now because I don't feel like Googling—"we are creatures of habit." Some try to rebel against this cyclical echo, but you can't stop the sun from doing its thing—and only Superman can move the friggin' moon. Those rebels attempt to defy habits, probably through

blogs, but this is a pattern in itself. It's escapable. Blog abstinence should be preached. For every hour spent writing one's own blog or reading another's, maybe spend an hour doing something *real*. Creating, dreaming, making love, staring at the stars instead of a screen, making someone smile. Cue orchestral crescendo.

I'm not entirely against the blog lifestyle. Any writing/typing is developing someone's skills and advancing their ability to communicate. The mass amount of ideas and emotions that are shared by so many people at one time can't be overlooked. It's stimulating in that respect. There are too many cliché blogs out there documenting the commonplace occurrences of people's days that are better left unsaid. If one decides to blog and to share it, then do so with the highest of standards. Not the "my Cheerios got soggy so I ate chocolate cake instead and it was good" or "I hope he'll call, my phone rang but it wasn't him" waste-of-blog-spacers.

Not that I'm a blog pro, but I can't help thinking that when people die today, their blogs will be here tomorrow. Leave some life behind.

Ray, Sideways, and the Academy Awards

By Sarah Cassone

I could have done an in depth analysis of this year's Academy Award race, going over all the major categories and who I feel will be nominated. Instead, I decided to focus on the two films that are the most perplexing in terms of their Oscar buzz.

I. Ray

In the age of \$100 million plus movie budgets, you'd think the Academy Awards would be interested in the actual quality of the film above the dollar signs. Apparently not. In fact, a film's box office status has as much, perhaps even more, to do with its spot on the nomination ballot than its quality. The most obvious example this year is Taylor Hackford's *Ray*. The Producers Guild and The Golden Globes have nominated the film and the Directors Guild has nominated Hackford. Yet it seems to be riding on the success of its 70 million domestic intake, Universal's brilliant and beautiful ad campaign, and Jamie Foxx's outstanding performance. The film itself is a mediocre effort and the directing has many flaws. Hackford's frequent cutting to flashbacks disrupts the flow of the film, making it choppy, uneven and very often confusing. His awkward close-up, jumpy camera techniques during a key drug withdrawal scene takes away from Foxx's emotional struggle and heartfelt acting, making you aware of the camera's tricks and breaking away from invisible style. These unfortunate choices, along with an extremely abrupt ending, one of the worst I've ever seen actually, make *Ray* a film that is not great but whose lead actor makes it impossible to dislike. Foxx consumes the persona of Ray Charles, and is the driving force of the film.

That said, it is certainly not one of the five best films of the year, nor one of the best directed. Come January 25th, it will be a shame to see its name announced at the podium. The Academy Awards should be about great filmmaking, not big bucks. Enough blockbusters and clichéd films are made for pure entertainment value. Once a year, powerful, unique filmmaking should be awarded. My hope is the Academy throws a curveball, like they usually do, and substitutes *Ray* for one of the great foreign films this year that were unfairly ineligible for

the Foreign Language Oscar.

II. Sideways

I'm in the minority when it comes to *Sideways* and as exhibited on the Internet recently, if you are too, you'd better run for cover. *New York Times* film critic A.O. Scott wrote a piece recently calling *Sideways* the



YES, WE ARE OVERRATED, CHEERS!
Courtesy of Sarah Cassone

"most overrated film of the year" and it's become ridiculously controversial. He expressed his confusion at its appearance on almost all the Best lists of 2004 (and mostly in the #1 spot), and it's nearly unanimous praise by critics everywhere. He claimed the reasoning could be found in the main character, played by Paul Giamatti, who himself is a critic of sorts, leading other critics to identify with him. Scott's article spread like wildfire, reactions to it were posted on websites and blogs, mostly negative. Film pundit David Poland wrote a rather heated response, wondering if Scott was trying to "influence" the Oscars and thus, *Sideways'* chances. He also expressed anger over Scott's article not being an Op-Ed piece but dis-

guised as a "news story." That comment had me at a complete loss. Scott's article was not disguised as a news story. It was simply an inquiry on the status of a film. And yes, it contained opinions, but then, so do all movie reviews. Does that mean every film review should be under the category Op-Ed? Of course not. No film reviews are objective because everyone has subjectivity when it comes to their likes, dislikes and interests. The fact that Scott's article is being singled out has less to do with his comments and more to do with the fact that the film he is analyzing is widely adored by critics and audiences around the country. This wouldn't be happening if he were discussing *White Noise*, *Catwoman*, *Alexander*, or any other film that has gotten mediocre reviews.

I fall in the corner of Scott. Seeing *Sideways* after it had already received glowing reviews and was considered an Oscar frontrunner, I left the theater confused and wondering as to why everyone was raving. It's a very good film, but it isn't amazing, brilliant, outstanding or any other similar adjective. In fact, it is forgettable. The only acting performance, I feel, that deserves recognition is Thomas Haden Church for his role as the witty, narcissistic best friend. Giamatti has been better and his character is one any good actor could play with equal conviction. Virginia Madsen, who is getting the most award buzz out of the three (and who's already picked up multiply critics' trophies) has me even more perplexed. Her performance was average. It's not something that stays with you, and the fact that she is leading the Oscar race is sad when there are four other women better than her, particularly Cate Blanchett for her stunning work as Katharine Hepburn in *The Aviator*.

Nevertheless, expect to see *Sideways* nominated in all the major categories come January 25th. Unlike *Ray*, it is not a mediocre film but it isn't an amazing one either. And if it wins, it will be a big mistake. Expect a follow-up article after the nominations are announced with my reactions on who was included, who was snubbed and who were the shockers. For now, check out my nominations wish list.

Interview with Matt O'Brien (said in Don Pardo's Voice)

By Tara Lynne Groth

FADE IN:

EXT.—STARBUCKS COFFEE, HUNTINGTON, DAY

A silver Volkswagen with Pennsylvania plates rolls into a handicapped parking spot. A not-so-handicapped, MATT O'BRIEN, 20, exits the vehicle and beelines toward the caffeine giant.

CUT TO:

INT.—STARBUCKS COFFEE, HUNTINGTON, DAY

MATT enters the commonplace venue and scans the territory. TARA GROTH sits oh-so-patiently, tapping her foot unconsciously to the Christmas (completely Catholic-centric) jingles hanging above them. MATT recognizes TARA.

After Matt O'Brien orders a Tall Green Tea and Tara barbers for a Tall Decaf Chai, the tea chugging commences and an interview like no other is underway. Matt is a musician originally from Pennsylvania who recently moved to Huntington pursuing an entertainment career. A highly intelligent individual with boyishly handsome features, Matt creates music that is layered with knowledge and emotion that reflects his experiences during his gratuitous year at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts and his latest arrival here on Long Island.

Ryan Cabrera, err, I mean—Matt performs with his acoustic guitar that he has been fiddling with for approximately five years. Matt explained to me that during a recovery from a broken ankle around the age of fifteen he needed a way to pass the time, thus he borrowed his friend's guitar. After his six week sentence ended, his guitar playing did not. Years later Matt still fancied his guitar over the curriculum prescribed by Dr. Penn State, the prescription? This was remedied by enrolling at what Matt has heard referred to as "Guitar College," or in more academic terms: Berklee College of Music. A strong focus on songwriting classes and a taste of the overly competitive student body were acquired in his time there.

Instead of a heathen "me play, you give money" mentality, Matt expresses a genuine desire to create music that people will enjoy, and that he can hopefully profit from and realize his dream of performing at Jones Beach. Living on an unwavering belief in himself, a logical career strategy, and an entry-level salary from a local Waldbaum's, Matthew took a few hours from his day to answer my Stereotypical Questions, My Real (Fo' Real!) Questions, and my Tribute to James Lipton Questions. Here are the highlights:

Stereotypical Questions

Tara Groth: Who influences you?

Matt O'Brien: (laughing) I had a feeling that question was going to come up. My influences...when I first started playing guitar I listened to a lot of Blues guys, one in particular was B.B. King. I listened to him a lot. I really like the way he approaches playing guitar because it's different than a lot of other players.

He's not the greatest, but...in just a few notes he says so much, whereas a lot of other guitar players take a couple of minutes to solo and there's too many notes hitting you all at once...that was a big influence. It was saying that you don't have to pound people over the head with music because you'll hit their heads, but you won't exactly get to their heart, which, I think, is a lot more important. As far as other stuff I listen to...a lot of Dave Matthews in high school. I like the way that he plays the acoustic guitar. He could just do shows by himself and it sounds so full because of the way he plays. His lyrics—not so much. I like Ben Folds' and Rufus Wainwright's way of writing. I think they both have this way of writing lyrics that are conversational, not always huge metaphors, and very easy to relate to. Anything that has musicality behind it. Like Kanye West, his record is very much pop, but there's a lot of musicality behind his record. I admire people who can keep it pop, but maintain the music tricks behind it. Same with rhythm and soul. Like Stevie Wonder. When Stevie Wonder sings—you can feel it. That goes back to the Blues guitar players, because you can feel what they're playing.



THE MAN HIMSELF,
Courtesy of Tara Lynne Groth

TG: When I first heard your song, I thought—John Mayer. My sister overheard it playing and she said the same thing. Do a lot of people say that you sound like John Mayer?

MO: I hear it...a lot. The whole comparison with Berklee—he went there too—it's brought up, but it's not intentional. I listen to him and I like him, I think it's also because it's just him and his guitar, and I do that too.

TG: Where do you see yourself in five years?

MO: I'd like to gradually build a fan base...keep doing what I set out to do: continue making music.

I would love to tour. If I am touring in five years, that would be great. I would like to see the fan base build. A lot of people what to know: Why not Manhattan, or L.A.?

TG: That was another one of my questions.

MO: Really? Yeah, I get asked that a lot. Why would you come to a small place instead of Manhattan where all the buzz is?

TG: That's my question!

MO: Yeah, well, I think there is an intelligent way of approaching a long-term career in music. One of the biggest things is developing a base. If I were to go to Manhattan or L.A. and go up to record labels and hand them my demo and promise them I'm good—I wouldn't have anything to back it up. Knowing that hundreds upon hundreds of other people are doing this, I know I'm different. That's one of the reasons I want to start off small...it seems more of a waste to jump into the deep end like that...my old roommates at Berklee are going to move to L.A., and, I don't know. They're good, they're really good. But there's so much going on out there—what's going to make you stand out? You're going there without any fans, you're going to get fans—but it's not guaranteed. I think that's why it's more important to start off kind of small and then you'll build and be big in places like Manhattan or L.A.

TG: So in five years you hope to be in one of those cities?

MO: I hope to be in a lot of cities in five years. In very many cities. Each city a different night.

That's what I want to do. The people I grew up listening to—that's what they do: tour. Dave Matthews was constantly on tour. All those guys, they don't do the thing where they make an album, go out on tour for a little bit, then fade out, and come back in a few years—which I think happens to a lot of pop artists.

Real (Fo' Real!) Questions

TG: Who inspired your song "Cross the Line"?

MO: (laughs) That was a girl at Berklee...who had the roommate that said—

TG: —wicked—

MO: (laughing) —don't say it! Don't say it. It reminds me of Boston, which reminds me of cold, and bleh.

TG: (laughing) Okay, sorry.

MO: That was a girl named Shelby who was from Canada. We met at Berklee right around this time of year...it's kind of a bad thing, but I guess it happens to everyone. Where you know there's a little more there, but you're afraid to take it there. You have an inkling that they feel the same way, but you could be totally wrong.

TG: You get rejected.

MO: Exactly, and you never want to set yourself up for that. Things started to happen...so it's about stop wasting time and moving ahead with a relationship, which turned out bad.

TG: (laughing) Anything else bad about Berklee?

MO: (laughing) Here we go...at Berklee you audition for placement reasons.

TG: Yea, I remember hearing that.

MO: Yea...imagine waiting for your audition in a hallway lined with 100 guitar players all practicing their scales as fast as they can. It's terrible, destroys you before you even start playing. You're thinking how incredible these people are and how you stack up against them...here you are: a musician. And everybody else is too. I thought it was really cool going into it. After a couple of months, you find out that's all they're about. It's so arcane and esoteric. You practice at night, after classes, all day, and it consumes you. What happens is that music becomes more of a practice than an expression. Once that happens, that's not good. You just constantly want to get better, and get better and get better.

TG: And you're not enjoying it.

MO: Right! You stop enjoying it...I didn't go there to be the next Steve Byer or Joe Satriani—really skilled guitar players that many Berklee students look up to as their main influence, reaching for their level of technical ability. I remember I went to a gym on campus. I went with a friend who I met at Berklee, and something came on the radio. He said, "Wow, I never knew that they used harmonic minor in this song. You know what I mean?"

TG: (laughing)

MO: (laughs) First of all, I don't know what you mean. Secondly, why would you bring that up right now? I just got out of class at the time, I don't really care that you know what scale he used for a solo in the song.

TG: Do you find you compose the music first or the lyrics?

MO: The music always comes first. It starts as a spark, a feeling, or maybe I had an idea already. The music reflects the idea without words, and the words definitely come in later and fill it in.

Tribute to James Lipton

(The following interrogation is lifted from James Lipton's "Inside the Actor's Studio" television show that airs on Bravo. The questions were originally asked by Bernard Pivot on a

Continued on page 32

Interview with Matt O'Brien

By Tara Lynne Groth

Continued from page 31

French series, "Bouillon de Culture.")

TG: What's your favorite word?

MO: A word that you used, "privy." But I'd have to say kumquat, which is a fruit.

TG: What's your least favorite word?

MO: I'm really averse to clichés. Like when you know someone is going to say it, reality television is a great example. You think they're going to pull something out that's really cool, but no! Especially lyrics with clichés, that's really bad. Clichés are pretty terrible.

TG: What turns you on creatively, spiritually or emotionally?

MO: Emotionally? So what makes me attracted to a girl? I guess if a girl has a nice set of pearly whites, that's cool. (laughs) I guess what really turns me on is focus and determination. I'm really into people who know what they want and are willing to sacrifice a lot of things in get it.

TG: What turns you off?

MO: Lack of focus and determination. It is really irritating. When you see someone with potential and you think they could definitely do something...maybe it's laziness? That's what it boils down to. Someone who talks a lot and does nothing to back it up.

TG: All talk?

MO: Right, right. It's terrible when someone is really good and they say they're going to do this and that. I hate talking to people that I know don't have the drive and you have to congratulate them.

TG: What's your favorite curse word?

MO: (laughing) I was actually exposed to some really great foul words at Berklee. My roommates had a really great way of stringing curse words together. So instead of getting one curse word, you were getting double the value. Like

"The music always comes first...The music reflects the idea without words..."

shitfuckdamn. It gets the point across.

TG: What sound or noise do you love?

MO: I like rain—no I'm just kidding—don't write that down! (laughing) See that'd be cliché. So many sounds...I like Christmas sounds because it brings me back to being younger and not having to worry about anything. I like sounds that take you back to where you heard it the first

time, and it struck a nice chord with you, and has a nice place in memory.

TG: What sound or noise do you hate?

MO: I don't like my alarm clock in the morning.

TG: What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

MO: I really like art history. I took a course at Penn State and it turned out to be my favorite. I think I would be an art historian or teacher.

TG: What profession would you not like to do?

MO: Anything where you leave unhappy and arrive unhappy. If your day is made up of *work* you don't enjoy being there and you leave angry. That's why guitar suits me because I'm happy while I'm doing it. You hear horror stories of people who hate their jobs, and if your job is your life, you begin to hate your life. Working in a cubicle and hating it, or if your boss is an idiot, or if all the responsibility is on me, I wouldn't like that.

TG: If heaven exists, what would you like God to say when you arrive at the Pearly Gates?

MO: (laughing) I'd like him to say, "You're early and I'm sending you back." I like it here. I have a lot left to accomplish.

Matt O'Brien performed Decemer 7, 2004 at the Downtown in Farmingdale (see show review). Matt's demos are available for your listening amusement at www.purevolume.com/mattobrien.

Screaming Thunder

By William Lewis

Off over the water the sun slowly drifted away into the ends of the waterfront as I slowly creep onto the Brooklyn Bridge. With the raw of my soft-tail's engine I ripped down the bridge, rushing pass slow moving cars and wires that whizzed past in a blurry wash of grey whose solo job was to hold up the slabs of road that I race along.

There is a saying when it comes to riding Harley-Davidsons that I have been told by guys that I used to chill with; it is that if someone asks you what it's like then they just can't understand what the feeling is like. It is very true, but I will try to explain what it felt like in a ride I took when I got back home after SBU for winter break.

With a kick to the old soft-tail the once cold and stagnant beast of the street jumped alive with a snarl to splinter the very concrete that was to be served as its dinner. With a flicker the black light colored head light buzzed to life with the sound of enraged killer bees flooding the land before the beast with malevolence light from some powerful eye that belonged to the Gods of war. Suited up in my vestments of blackened leather and steel I climb onto my beast to start my trek. At first I had to ride a few blocks to fill the belly of my street beast. Slowly we slithered into the Shell station as people stood aside gazing at the jet black paint on the bike that pulled all light into its hide of metallic skin to never to be set free again. With the words "Hold Fast" written below my knuckles I grip the handle bars taking off from the Shell station with a belly full of gas into the setting sun going 30 MPH in the 'burbs, which was not cutting it for me. But once I hit the open road it would be another story.

Cutting down the open road is what it's all about. Riding her, my Harley, hard and fast, we were breaking free of earth-bound limits, it is the closest thing to Zen you can find on the road. Pulling on to the on ramp the bike cries and moans like some smutty women on your sheets begging for more, to be allowed to race

free. Before you know it your slipping onto the highway with one hand on the suicide shifter, with each shift of the gears my mind races back to memories of things that where not meant to be for me. Somewhere between 55 to 60 MPH a smooth liquid flowing sweep of your hand moves the helm of the bike into a "cruse control" that is toggled switch/button, your shoulders that where once stiff and ridged loosen up and your grip relaxes; you settle in on the bike to just cruse the roads. All the time nothing seems to be moving and your mind and being have sharpened themselves to a refined manner of self.

Between your legs sits a nice and tight silver engine. The radiation of the heat crawls over your lower legs, up along your legs and inner thighs. With each thrust of the pistons and cylinder heads that are jiving in their place, the thumping of the beast's heart is felt in your whole body. Racing down at 60 the winds pick up and wrap around your chest like the loving embrace of a long lost lover that is your "soul-mate." Wrapping around your chest the cold air grips and clings at your exposed neck whispering into your ear "come with me" with its ice-cold licks of razor speed.

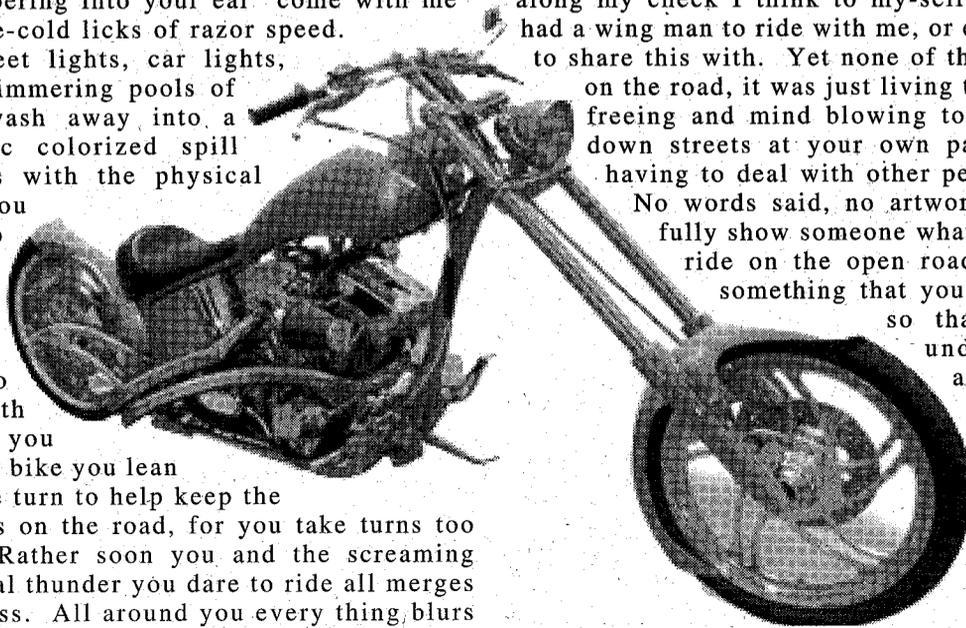
Street lights, car lights, and the glimmering pools of sunlight wash away into a psychedelic colorized spill that mixes with the physical feelings you have into something that only Alex Grey could hope to paint. With each turn you take on the bike you lean against the turn to help keep the two wheels on the road, for you take turns too sharply. Rather soon you and the screaming heavy metal thunder you dare to ride all merges into oneness. All around you every thing blurs

together yet you can see every thing around you. It is Zen on two wheels, an orgasmic feel that you only long for later when the rush fades away.

Even the angry buzzing of the jet bikers bleed away into "white noise." Cars, trucks, and buses all become objects that you weave between like a needle and thread in the finely woven fabric of that is the cosmic life. With the rush of it all you are no longer riding; rather you are flying as a bird of thunder over the landscape. You feel that if you were to let go of the bike's handlebars and push off you could very well fly to all the great wonders of the world finding oneness with the cosmic mind. Later in the new day I slowly creep my bike to its convenient home as I head back to my own home. With hot water from my shower beading over my chest down my back, along my out stretch arms I tilt my head back still feeling the power that I had between my legs earlier that day.

While on the road all of life's problems had drifted away, a bleeding heart healed, and a small time of joy and peace was found. Crawling back into my bed water drips from my hair along my cheek I think to my-self if I only I had a wing man to ride with me, or even a lover to share this with. Yet none of that mattered on the road, it was just living to ride. It's freeing and mind blowing to be ripping down streets at your own pace without having to deal with other people's shit.

No words said, no artwork done can fully show someone what it's like to ride on the open road, it is just something that you have to do so that you can understand it all.



If I Were Picking the Oscars

By Sarah Cassone

The following is my dream ballot if you will, not my actual predictions for the way I think the nominations will play out (aside from the obvious choices) Hey, I'm not *that* detached from reality.

Best Picture

The Aviator
Million Dollar Baby
Kill Bill Vol. 2
Bad Education
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

Won't be nominated: *Eternal Sunshine*

Why it should be: Original, clever, astonishingly well made film, but too cool for the Academy.

Won't be nominated: *Kill Bill Vol. 2*

Why it should be: Tarantino's created an epic here with his two volumes, and the second is a dialogue, character driven piece that deserves more attention.

Won't be nominated: *Bad Education*

Why it should be: Almodovar creates a film noirish thriller filled with passion and intensity. The best foreign film of the year.

Best Director

Clint Eastwood - *Million Dollar Baby*
Martin Scorsese - *The Aviator*
Quentin Tarantino - *Kill Bill Vol. 2*
Pedro Almodovar - *Bad Education*
Michael Mann - *Collateral*

Won't be nominated: Quentin Tarantino

Why he should be: Tarantino's done better work since *Pulp Fiction*, mainly both *Kill Bill*'s. His auteur status shines especially bright in volume 2.

Won't be nominated: Michael Mann

Why he should be: Mann, with his smart directing has created a fresh, unconventional thriller. The pacing is brilliant, the attention to dialogue and the three dimensionality to the films characters could have been hurriedly glossed over in the hands of someone else.

Best Actor

Leonardo DiCaprio - *The Aviator*
Jamie Foxx - *Ray*
Sean Penn - *The Assassination of Richard Nixon*
Matt Damon - *The Bourne Supremacy*
Gael Garcia Bernal - *Bad Education* or *The Motorcycle Diaries* (He's equally wonderful in both)

Won't be nominated: Sean Penn.

Why he should be: Penn outdoes himself with a portrayal even better than his award winning work in last year's *Mystic River* — a nearly impossible task. This riveting performance is so palpable it feels like he's physically in the room instead of an image up on a screen.

Won't be nominated: Matt Damon

Why he should be: Laugh if you will, but this was the most underrated performance of the year. Damon creates a complex character who emotes so much through silence then he probably ever could through words. A tormented killer in an amazingly directed, smart film that contains not one corny line. Try finding that in a big budget action film these days.



GOLD LITTLE BASTARD,
Courtesy of

Won't be nominated: Gael Garcia Bernal

Why he should be: Bernal continues to show his depth, starring in two completely different films, yet equally brilliant in both. I can't choose and it doesn't matter anyway. Hopefully soon he'll get the attention he deserves.

Best Actress

Hilary Swank - *Million Dollar Baby*
Imelda Staunton - *Vera Drake*
Kate Winslet - *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*
Uma Thurman - *Kill Bill Vol. 2*
Catalina Sandino Moreno - *Maria Full of Grace*

Won't be nominated: Uma Thurman

Why she should be: Thurman really makes *The Bride* a character rather than caricature in this film. She shows a humane woman on the path to do something inhumane. Beautiful work.

Possibly won't be nominated: Catalina Sandino Moreno

Why she should be: She has a good chance of being nominated, actually. Her first ever film, it's one of the most quietly intense performances of the year.

Best Supporting Actor

Thomas Haden Church - *Sideways*
Clive Owen - *Closer*
Peter Sarsgaard - *Kinsey*
David Carradine - *Kill Bill Vol. 2*
Morgan Freeman - *Million Dollar Baby*

Won't be nominated: David Carradine

Why he should be: Carradine was brilliant as Bill, portraying his monstrous personality with an edge of compassion. We almost feel for him...until he does something psychotic again.

Won't be nominated: Peter Sarsgaard

Why he should be: Sarsgaard was wrongfully snubbed last year for his standout performance in *Shattered Glass*. Sadly, it looks like that will be the case this year too. One of the most talented young actors today, he brought naïveté and hopefulness to *Kinsey*.

Best Supporting Actress

Cate Blanchett - *The Aviator*
Natalie Portman - *Closer*
Laura Linney - *Kinsey*
Joan Allen - *The Bourne Supremacy*
Kate Winslet - *Finding Neverland*

Won't be nominated: Joan Allen

Why she should be: Along with Damon, another incredibly underrated performance by a fantastic actress. As *Bourne*'s adversary, she played a confident, hard as nails woman living in a man's world and she held her own with the best of them. Still, lurking behind her cold professional mask was someone who knew she was in over her head and shattered when things went wrong.

And there you have it. Sadly, virtually none of the underdogs in here will be recognized, but then again, who knows? There are always a few surprises thrown in. Until the nominations...

Chance To Advance Mentors

are needed to be a friend and liaison to youth in foster care.

1-on-1 Mentors will help to connect a child with enrichment programs and extracurricular activities according to their academic, athletic, artistic and cultural interests, as well as college and vocational coaching.

If you are interested in becoming a Mentor with Chance To Advance, please contact Nicki Logan at (631) 737-1454 or by email at

NickiLogan1@yahoo.com.

Ask The Bearded Christian Anything



By Ye Olde Bearded Christian

Attention: This guy had nothing to do with this article.

Dear Bearded Christian,

My friends just told me yesterday that they robbed a gas station, and that's how they paid for the movie they went to see. I think what they did was wrong, but I don't know what to do about it. Do I call the police, do I tell my parents, or do I just forget the whole thing? Help me out please.

Torn in Massachusetts

Dear Torn,

You know, the Good Lord sayeth that He provideth for us, and that to taketh from thy neighbor is not to followeth His plan. The lord hath a song to singeth, and he singeth it to you. Heareth that song and loveth thy Lord. Followeth thy own path, young young-one.

Dear Bearded Christian,

I wanted to print this article about AIDS because I think it's important for all readers, young and old, to become familiar with this dreadful disease:

AIDS has been diagnosed greatly in children under age 13.

Nearly twice as many African-American males are diagnosed with AIDS each year than Caucasian males.

More and more people are diagnosed each year and the numbers keep on growing.

Thank you for printing this article. I hope it serves as an eye-opener for all viewers, regardless of age, gender, or race.

Hopeful in Vermont

Dear Hopeful,

Ah. You know, there beeth an old saying about those who haveth the "dread disease." I hopeth it may spreadeth the light on your wonderful article:

"God shineth down on those who are ill and weak with fear

But God hath no sympathy for the demons who art queer."

We do not meddleth in the affairs of the "A-disease," for we as Christians do not believe it truly existeth. It is another device of the Evil homosexuals to wipeth out civilization. We musteth fighteth back by beingeth good, compassionate Christians and destroyeth the "queer." But oh, what wrath spreadeth in my warm heart! We love everybody. Except for homosexuals.

Dear Bearded Christian,

How do you stay so nice and warm and welcoming all the time? Aren't there mornings where you look at yourself in the mirror and want to drive a spike through your face? Please share with us.

Really Fucking Curious in Minnesota

Dear Curious,

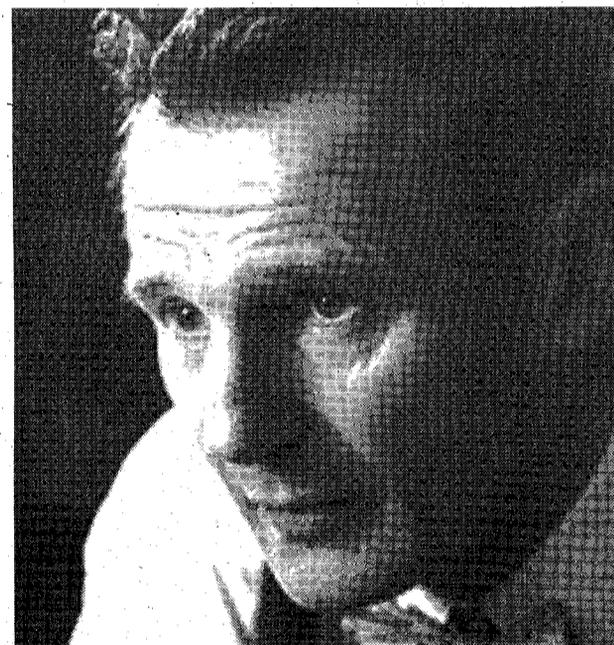
You little shit. Go fucketh your mother, and eateth my shit, wanker-breath.

Kinsey and Surplus Repression

By Sarah Cassone

Writer/Director Bill Condon's latest effort is a biopic of Professor and sexual revolutionist Alfred Kinsey. In 1948, Kinsey startled America with his publication of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Before Kinsey, there was no Sex Ed taught in schools, no knowledge of what people do sexually, what is and is not a myth. Things that were deemed "wrong" or "taboo" by society had never been questioned or challenged because people never thought they had a right to. Kinsey revolutionized the way people think and talk about sex and tried to break us away from surplus repression. Tried, being the key word.

"Man plus woman equals baby," says Kinsey, played by Liam Neeson, in Condon's film. He says this in a Sex Education lecture to a room full of wide-eyed students who are only used to this concept. It's what they've been taught and is the definition of surplus repression; the "right" sexual act is that which causes procreation between a (married) man and woman couple. Kinsey taught people that masturbation won't make you go blind, that there are more positions than just the standard missionary and that bisexuality is more common than most people realize.



AN EVER-INTROSPECTIVE LIAM NEESON,
Courtesy of IMDB

Through extensive research and interviews, Kinsey was able to diagram sexuality in ways never done before. He dreamed of a world of tolerance and openness. As I watched this film, I realized how disheartening it was to see how little has changed. Homosexuality and bisexuality are scarcely more tolerated and our country's views on sex seem to be heading backwards. The same day that I saw this film, President Bush announced his plan for abstinence classes to be taught in schools. He said he wishes to do away with all other kinds of Sex Ed. Bush has previously stated that he'd like to get rid of all forms of birth control. Every one of these acts is instilling a surplus repression mentality on America. It's a sad reality and if Kinsey were still alive today, he'd be ashamed at how little progress we've made.



Taxi Cab Professions: Volume 2

By Tom Senkus

"I Never Pay Full Price for Anything"

"Nothin's doin'" is a grammatically bad phrase. Horrid, I'd say, but I only use that word when an unattractive female is my passenger and I want her to assume I'm gay. Gay has almost become a synonym for "thorough."

Where was I? Right! *Nothin's doin'*. Taxi lingo to camouflage my ability to articulate my thoughts. The phrase is almost Zen if you think about it. Nothin' was doin', and I need somethin' to do. In from dispatch comes a local cheap call, but a call nonetheless.

Pick up from one bar to the Ronkonkoma Railroad: \$4 plus gratuity. For a short run like that, to make more than a one dollar tip, one must either skillfully avoid a terrible accident or act as a personality fluffer. A fluffer is a male or female who keeps the male in a state of arousal during lulls of pornographic filming.

Arrival at bar. The guy gets in and instantly changes his plans. He wants to go to Central Islip. for \$10, but on the return, he'll pay the difference plus a tip. Sounds like a scam, but again: Nothin's doin'. After gas money and commission taken away plus a tip, I'd end up 5 bucks for 10 minutes of my time. Not too shabby.

I agree. After a few ice-breakers, my cabbie-sense goes off. I'm a DaVinci when it comes to character sketches: This guy's on something, probably sells it or abuses it, and won't let me get a word in edgewise (whatever edgewise means). In other words, he's talking at me. The man begins to tell me a lame story of getting a couch for two hundred dollars cheaper than retail.

"I never pay full price for anything." Add to the character sketch: "cocky".

The story ends prematurely, so I add stupid questions that he interrupts. Automatic speech interrupter. Say a phrase, get interrupted.

Finally, I see C.I.

As I flip the left turn signal, he does some signaling of his own. "No, I gotta go over there," pointing to a shifty place I've been to once before, and heard of many times. The one time I had to go was my first night on the job, and I remember my passengers as "transferring their minds to an objective state." Leaving the cab, one of those passengers sigh-talked, "He's dragging me into *it* again." I know now what *it* is. A club that shall remain nameless, but bears the name of the capital of a country near England. "It" is distributed from *it*.

In other words, crack.

There is a 3% recovery rate from crack after abusing it.

It's been said my chin looks like a butt crack. There's a 0% recovery rate from having a butt-chin.

"Go around the block and I'll pay you when you get back." This was his odd request, but he might have to deal some D-rugs. I'm a fucking naive child, what do I know? I drove around in less than ten seconds.

He was gone. I had to exercise my options.

In other words, go into a crack bar.

The barmaid eyes me, knowing I don't look like the crack-type, nor the bar-type. "Have you seen a bald guy walk in here? He owes me money for a taxi". As I utter that, here comes the dude, looking more pathetic. The more potent brother of cocaine must be cha-cha'ing with his nervous system. One, two, cha cha cha. Three, four, cha cha cha.

"Do you owe this guy money?" Mother Barmaid asks. Looking to her, then to me. Through quivering lips and under watery eyes, "I put it on your seat."

Stupid me: "I'll look."

Of course there's no money in the car outside. For some reason, the guy comes out, looking agitated. "No money, sir," emphasizing "sir" to diffuse any situation. "I paid you

at it, and where's my camcorder to capture ephemeral moments like these?

A short turn, and we're at her house. It's too dark to tell, but her lakefront property seems almost too good for a girl who hangs at a bar on weekday. She must live in an apartment out back.

Talking. The couple makes plans to call each other the following day.

Smiling. Female is all smiles, male with a knowing grin. Lips smack with suction.

Leaving. She's out, and looks back. Obviously something to make life seem like a movie.

Waiting. We wait until she's in her house. His eyes are fixated on her bouncy, nubile frame. Chivalry, in a modern sense.

"Goddamn!" he shouts to relieve the sexual tension. "Did you see that girl?" Girl? I don't know about that, but it seems she's still youthful, so I'll go along with him. But wait, I've been through this exact moment before. Just let him speak; that was just a rhetorical question. Without being too careful, I slowly inch back until I ram, RAM, into a telephone pole. Who needs to check the damage? You should see this bumper already. A kaleidoscope of paint. Must be bird shit.

"Wow, you just backed up into that pole." The guy barely noticed anything.

"I sure did."

"I can't wait to fuck that girl..." The "..." doesn't mean that he trailed off; it means that for the rest of the ride, all I can listen to is a description of all the things he's going to do to her body. She works out, in her ass, sucks cock like that's all she was born to do, up in her pussy, spread eagle, slut, blowjob, and so on. Why is he telling me this? What is his motive? It's not anything new; just another selfish man.

He interrupts my "obvious" pleasure with his amazing sexual oration. "How much to Selden?" Originally, he was going out East. East is where the money is. Southampton, Quogue, Riverhead. Money. Judging by his dress, he didn't seem to have much of it. Selden? That's more affordable.

Not even missing a step, he leans into another story. Instead of a week's distance to getting laid, he needs it...*tonight..NOW!* "I need to just call to see if she's awake." At first, I didn't get why he changed his destination, but now it all seems so clear. I was angry with losing out on money, but relieved I didn't have to hear the word "spank" uttered again.

Already, he's known the previous girl a week, and he's lying to her. He's impressed her by supposedly living where there's money. Not only the lying, but having sex with another lady.

One dollar tip. Here's a tip for the female public: Never underestimate the power of the male sex drive.



TEN IN TWENTY TEN! TEEEEEN IN TWENTY TEEEEEN!
Courtesy of Jowy Romano

before, and now..." he starts into a story that he paid me, and that I was the one who was trying to extort *him*.

Smart me: "Well, if you don't pay me, I'll have to call the cops." That phrase is *money!* Any moron who thinks I'm bluffing is often disturbed by Officer Not-So-Friendly ten minutes from now. One time I had to call the po-po three times in one night...but that's another story.

On cue from the word "cops," the barmaid materialized from the entrance. "I'll pay the fare!" she offers. "This guy," pointing at me, moving closer to my face. I retreated to the safety of the driver's seat. "Tryin' to steal money...here!," grumbling the phrase, and an airborne Hammy floated through my window.

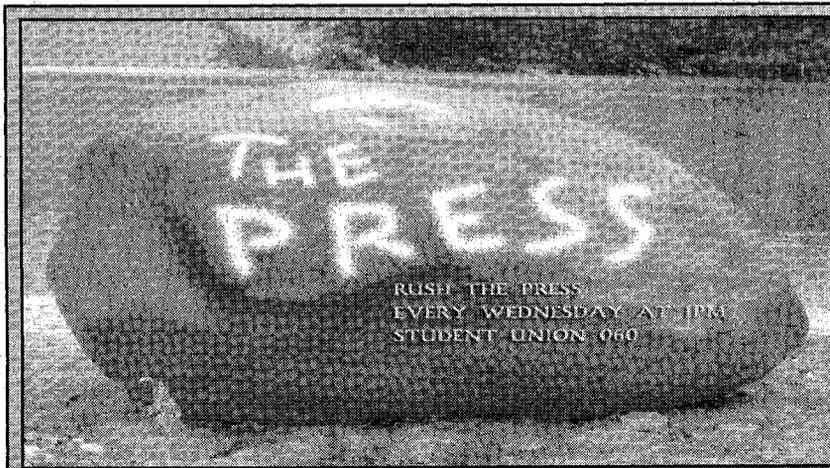
Ordeal over. Total money screwed over: \$4 plus + gratuity. I fucking hate C.I.

"The Ole' Switcheroo"

A giddy thirty-something couple gets into my car. After explaining to me where they are going, the plan is to drop her off, and then drop him off. I get a sense that she's ready to go

We here at the office hate this ad. We don't know its intended purpose. Who would really respond to fake spraypaint on a rock? It's our name on a damn rock for Pete's sake. We don't even know who made this ad, it just appeared here and its validity and pertinence have been universally accepted for as long as we can remember. So we use it...against our better judgement.

-Management



The Stony Brook Press

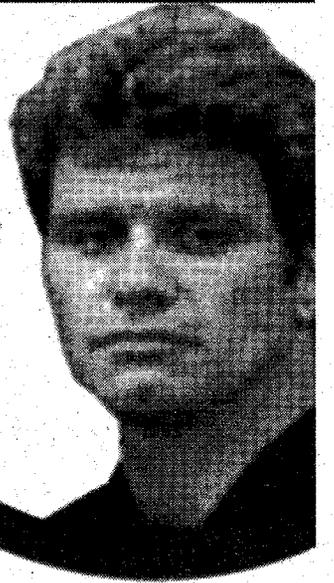
Open House! Wednesday February 2, 2005

Testimonial:

"I got crane kicked in the face once...
but i was being kind of a son-of-a-bitch.
Don't let this innocent neonate feel
these toned fists of hate."

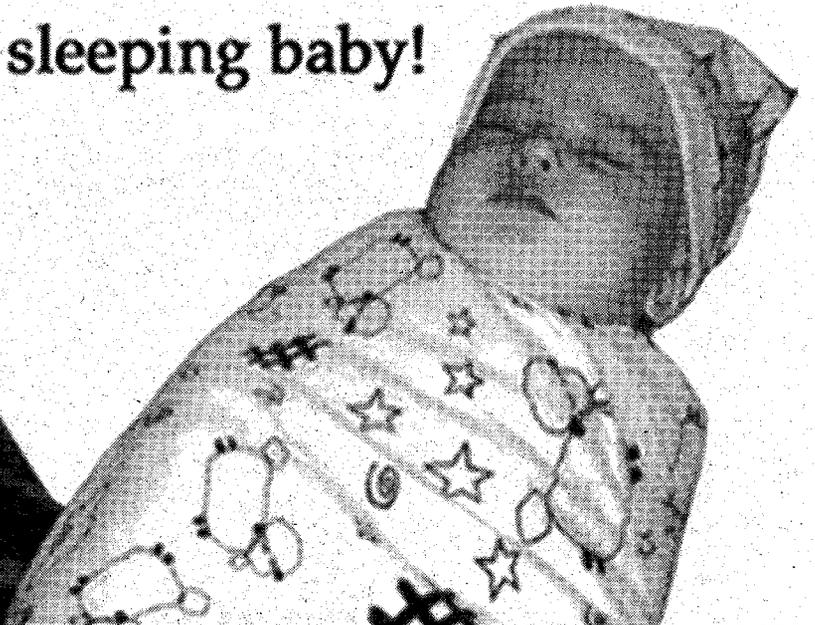
- Shirley Strum Kenny

John
Kleese
says:



**"Student Union
room 060 at 1pm
FREE PIZZA!
FREE PIZZA!"**

You will work for
The Press... or we let
Ralph Maccio go ape-shit
on this
sleeping baby!



DEATH EGG ZONE