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They came together on a hot afternoon in Los Angeles, howling and clawing at each other like wild beasts in heat. Under a brown California sky, the fierceness of their struggle brought tears to the eyes of 90,000 God-fearing fans. They were twenty-two men who were somehow more than men. They were giants, idols, titans, Behemoths. They stood for everything Good and True and Right in the American Spirit. Because they had guts. And they yearned for the Ultimate Glory, the Great Prize, the Final Fruits of a long and vicious campaign. Victory in the Super Bowl: \$15,000 each. They were hungry for it. They were thirsty. For twenty weeks, from August through December, they had struggled to reach this Pinnacle...and when dawn lit the beaches of Southern California on that fateful Sunday morning in January, they were ready. To seize the Final Fruit. They could almost taste it. The smell was stronger than a ton of rotten mangoes. Their nerves burned like open sores on a dog's neck. White knuckles. Wild eyes. Strange fluid welled up in their throats, with a taste far sharper than bile. Behemoths. Those who went early said the pre-game tension was almost unbearable. By noon, many fans were weeping openly, for no apparent reason. Others wrung their hands or gnawed on the necks of pop bottles, trying to stay calm. Many fist-fights were reported in the public urinals. Nervous ushers roamed up and down aisles, confiscating alcoholic beverages and occasionally grappling with drunkards. Gangs of Second-crazed teenagers prowled through the parking lots outside the stadium, beating the mortal shit out of luckless strangers. What? No...Grantland Rice [one of Nixon's favorite authors] would never have written weird stuff like that! His prose was spare & lean; his descriptions came straight from the gut...and on the rare and ill-advised occasions when he wanted to do a "Think Piece," he called on the analytic powers of his medulla. Like all great sportswriters, Rice understood that his world might go all to pieces if he ever dared to doubt that his eyes were wired straight to his lower brain—a sort of de facto lobotomy, which enables the grinning victim to operate entirely on the level of Sensory Perception. Green grass, hot sun, sharp cleats in the turf, thundering cheers from the crowd, the menacing scowl on the face of a \$30,000-a-year pulling guard as he leans around the corner on a Lombardi-style power sweep and cracks a sharp plastic shoulder into the linebacker's groin. Ah, yes, the simple life: Back to the roots, the basics—first a Moustap, then a Crackback & a Buttonhook off a fake triple-reverse Fly Pattern, and finally The Bomb. Indeed, There is a dangerous kind of simple-minded Power / Precision worship at the root of the massive fascination with pro football in this country, and sportswriters are mainly responsible for it. With a few rare exceptions like Bob Lypsyte of The New York Times and Tom Quinn of the (now-defunct) Washington Daily News, sportswriters are a kind of rude and brainless subculture of fascist drunks whose only real function is to publicize & sell whatever the sports editor sends them out to cover. Which is a nice way to make a living, because it keeps a man busy and requires no thought at all. The two keys to success as a sportswriter are: (1) A blind willingness to believe anything you're told by the coaches, flacks, hustlers, and other "official spokesmen" from the team-owners who provide the free booze, and (2) A Roget's Thesaurus, in order to avoid using the same verbs and adjectives twice in the same paragraph. Even a sports editor, for instance, might notice something wrong with a lead that said: "The precision-jackhammer attack of the Miami Dolphins stomped the balls off the Washington Redskins today by stomping and hammering with one precision jack-thrust after another up the middle, mixed with pinpoint-precision passes into the flat and numerous hammer-jack stomps around both ends." Right. And there was the genius of Grantland Rice. He carried a pocket thesaurus, so that "The thundering hoofbeats of the Four Horsemen" never echoed more than once in the same paragraph, and the "Granite-grey sky" in his lead was a "cold dark dusk" in the last, lonely line of his heart-rending, nerve-ripping stories. There was a time, about ten years ago, when I could write like Grantland Rice. Not necessarily because I believed all that sporty bullshit, but because sportswriting was the only thing I could do that anybody was willing to pay for. And none of the people I wrote about seemed to give a hoot in hell what kind of lunatic gibberish I wrote about them, just as long as it moved. They wanted Action, Color, Speed, Violence. At one point, in Florida, I was writing variations on the same demented themes for three competing papers at the same time, under three different names. I was a sports columnist for one paper in the morning, sports editor for another in the afternoon, and at night I worked for a pro wrestling promoter, writing incredibly twisted "press releases" that I would plant, the next day, in both papers. It was a wonderful gig, in retrospect, and at times I wish I could go back to it—just punch a big hat-pin through my frontal lobes and maybe regain that happy lost innocence that enabled me to write, without the slightest twinge of conscious, things like "The entire Fort Walton Beach police force is gripped in a state of fear this week; all leaves have been cancelled and Chief Bloor is said to be drilling his men for an Emergency Alert situation on Friday and Saturday night because those are the nights when Kazika, The Mad Jap, a 440-pound sadist from the vile slums of Hiroshima, is scheduled to make his first—and no doubt his last—appearance in Fish-head Auditorium. Local wrestling impresario Lionel Clay is known to have spoken privately with Chief Bloor, urging him to have 'every available officer' on duty at ringside this weekend, because the Mad Jap's legendary temper and his invariable savage reaction to racial insults. Last week, in Detroit, Kazika ran amok and tore the spleens out of three ring-side spectators, one of whom allegedly called him a 'yellow devil.'" "Kazika," as I recall, was a big, half-bright Cuban who once played third-string tackle for Florida State University in Tallahassee, about 100 miles away—but on the fish-head circuit he had no trouble passing for a dangerous Jap strangler, and I soon learned that pro wrestling fans don't give a fuck anyway. Ah, memories, memories...and here we go again, back on the same old trip: digressions, tangents, crude flashbacks. When the '72 presidential campaign ended I planned to give up this kid of thing. But what the hell? Why not? It's almost dawn in San Francisco now, the parking lot outside this building is flooded about three inches deep with another drenching rain, and I've been here all night drinking coffee & Wild Turkey, smoking short Jamaican cigars and getting more & more wired on the Allman Brothers' "Mountain Jam," howling out of four big speakers hung in all four corners of the room. Where is the MDA? With the windows wide open and the curtains blowing into the room and the booze and the coffee and the smoke and the music beating heavy in my ears, I feel the first rising edge of hunger for something with a bit of the crank in it. Where is [McGovern campaign staffer] Mankiewicz tonight? Sleeping peacefully? No, probably not. After two years on The Edge, involuntary retirement is a hard thing to cope with. I tried it for a while, in Woody Creek, but three weeks without even a hint of crisis left me so nervous that I began gobbling speed and babbling distractedly about running for the Senate in '74. Finally, on the verge of desperation, I took the bush-plane over to Denver for a visit with Gary Hart, McGovern's ex-campaign manager, telling him I couldn't actually put him on the payroll right now, but that I was counting on him to organize Denver for me. He smiled crookedly but refused to commit himself...and later that night, I heard, from an extremely reliable source, that Hart was planning to run for the Senate himself in 1974. Why? I wondered. Was it some kind of subliminal, un-focused need to take vengeance on the press? On me? The first journalist in Christendom to go on record comparing Richard Nixon to Adolf Hitler? Was Gary so blinded with bile that he would actually run against me in The Primary?



Hunter S. Thompson: 1939-2005

# "Witch Hunt" to Take Over USG

By Andrew Pernick and Marcel Votlucka

Many members of USG have come forward to tell of the conspiracy to take over USG first revealed in the February 9, 2005 issue of *The Stony Brook Press*. While some have been willing to speak on the record, some, out of fear, have only been willing to talk to *The Press* on condition that their identities be withheld, and still others only off the record.

As described in that issue, a conspiracy exists, headed by Irfan Syed, who was named by USG to head the Committee on Religious Entities [CORE]. USG established CORE to fund non-secular activities of religious groups and organizations on campus, but which, in its first act, wrote to USG that USG itself is a group subject to CORE, making USG a subsidiary organization answerable to CORE and bringing it under the direct control of Syed. USG immediately suspended CORE after it sent the letter. CORE's suspension is set to last until such time as the USG Judiciary rules on whether or not the CORE Laws violate the USG Constitution.

At a meeting of the Senate on February 8, at which the article in *The Press* was presented, several Senators came forward and said that they had also been approached to join Syed's conspiracy. As a result the Senate proposed that an ad hoc committee be established to investigate the facts presented in *The Press*' article. A further investigation by *The Press* ensued, and was met with cooperation by some members of the student government, and fear by others.

At the February 15 Senate meeting, USG President Jared Wong informed *The Press* that the decision to investigate this matter via an ad hoc committee had been reversed and that no such committee would be formed. At the time of this article, it is unclear how, or if, USG will conduct an investigation.

Syed's control of the Senate does not end with Senator Andrew Thompson. *The Press* has confirmed claims that Syed has control over Senators Richard Hsu, Huy Huynh, Jackie Wu, and Vincent Rasulo, as well as the recently-elected Chair of the Elections Board, Robert J. Romano. According to these sources, also involved with Syed are Executive Vice President Jeff Kruszyna, as well as former Senator Jon Lawson and former C.S.A. [Commuter Student Association] President Jim Driscoll.

One USG member who was willing to be identified and speak on the record, Sam Darguin, President Pro Tempore of USG, told *The Press* in response to a question from *The Press* as to Syed and his group's plans for the Senate, "Their whole model was that the Senate cannot operate unless the garbage or the people who are hindering the Senate are taken out. Their main goal was to throw out, like a witch hunt, basically, people they felt didn't belong in the Senate, people they felt didn't have the same agenda as they had in the Senate." Syed is not a member of the Senate, and does not, in fact, hold any office or position with USG.

President Darguin further said that Irfan Syed tried to convince him to join his conspiracy to take control of USG, working to further Syed's agenda. He was told by Syed, "I have the power to make you President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Me and my Senators will make sure

that you come in." Said Darguin in an interview, "That was one of the quotes from Mr. [Irfan] Syed trying to have me become part of his malicious group of Senators to try to disrupt the processes of USG." President Darguin said that he has always acted independently in his office, on behalf of all students, and has never joined Syed in his scheme or worked with him to further it.

President Darguin continued, "Basically, several Senators have come up to me with concerns, telling me, especially last semester, that they have been approached by Mr. Syed and several of the Senators basically trying [to] get them to vote in certain ways to trying [sic] to give them prior information on bills that they want passed to basically get the Senate's support in passing those bills." President Darguin later narrowed the time-frame to late September-October 2004.

Also according to President Darguin, before his election he was invited to a meeting at the University Café where a number of people, including Syed, were present, and "they were watching a video tape and mocking the other Senators that were trying to take a stance against them."

President Darguin said his suspicions were aroused by the letter sent to USG by Syed as head of CORE, claiming that USG is subject to CORE's authority. USG suspended CORE after that letter was sent.

Although *The Press* has spoken with a number of other members of USG who have corroborated President Darguin's statements and provided further information, others have agreed to cooperate only on the condition that their statements be off the record and their identities withheld. Several said outright that they were afraid of retribution from Syed and his allies and either refused to talk with *The Press*, or insisted on anonymity.

One person willing to speak on the record is Senator Kfier Kuba, who confirmed that Syed "was going to try to impeach [USG Executive Vice President] Esam [al-Shareffi] and he said he didn't want anyone to know about it, he wanted it to be a surprise so that his plan wouldn't be spoiled somehow." The plot to impeach Vice President al-Shareffi was reported in the February 9, 2005 edition of *The Press*.

According to Senator Kuba, Syed routinely meets with a group of Senators at the S.A.C. before Senate meetings. At one such meeting he circulated an e-mail which had been sent to incoming Senators by then-USG Executive Vice-President Esam al-Shareffi, who offered to meet with them to advise them on Senate procedures to "get them up to speed," in Senator Kuba's words. "Esam wanted to have an informal meeting with the new Senators and

Irfan wanted to use that to impeach him." Syed managed to obtain a copy of the e-mail and entitled it "The Case Against Esam" and told the Senators at the pre-Senate meeting that because of this al-Shareffi should be impeached.

Senator Kuba continued, "The second I saw it [the e-mail] I ripped it up. The whole row of Senators that was next to me all ripped it up also and one of the other Senators told me that they found a picture of me online and my face was really red. It was me ripping it."

As to the purpose of the conspiracy, Senator Kuba said Syed complained that certain groups, mentioning Hillel and the Gospel Choir by name, were getting too much funding, and others, specifically the Muslim Student Association [MSA], Chabad and Baptist Campus Ministry were not getting enough. According to Senator Kuba, Syed "didn't mention MSA too much to me because he would try to put it in perspective to me, a pretty good strategy by him, because he knows I'm Jewish and go to Chabad and know the Rabbi. He was saying why should Gospel Choir and Hillel get

money but not Chabad? That's what he'd always tell me."

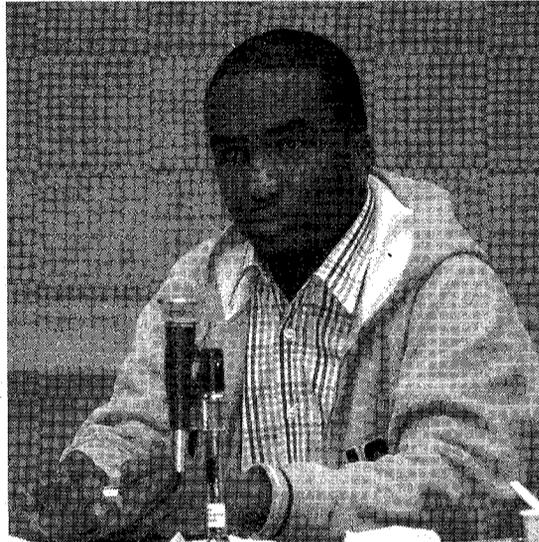
Senator Kuba continued, however, that Syed "never made it a religious whatever. He made it the groups that could be thought of as religious versus the actual religious groups that are getting money. He never made it about individual religions."

As Senator Kuba told *The Press*, "at the subcommittee meeting, I think it was agreed upon that each one of the five that he brought up, Chabad, M.S.A., Baptist Campus Ministry and two others, would each get \$750 and then Jared [Wong, President of USG] would give \$250 from his Presidential Discretionary Fund \$250 to each one. That was what we agreed upon at the subcommittee meeting."

Regarding other aspects of the investigation, President Pro Tempore Darguin noticed that there was a startling similarity to the bills introduced to the Senate, which to him indicated that they were written by the same group, although they were introduced to the Senate by different Senators. He continued, "The reason a lot of these bills look so familiar is because it's the same core group that comes down and writes these things. They change small, different things to different acts. If you saw, especially since the beginning of the semester, a lot of the acts that were put forth were basically of the same structure."

Several sources confirmed that many pieces of legislation introduced to the Senate were written by Greg Lubicich at the behest of Syed. Lubicich is a Stony Brook student who is not a member of USG. One source, speaking on the condition of anonymity, stated that Lubicich would often give Syed-controlled Senators bills to introduce to the Senate during Syed's pre-Senate meetings held in the C.S.A. office. Often present at these pre-Senate meetings, sources say, were Senators Thompson, Hsu, Wu, Huynh, Rasulo and Lawson.

Apparently because of this investigation, a reporter for *The Press*, a former member of Syed's conspiracy and another individual with knowledge of Syed's activities have all been threatened, and have filed police reports.



PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE SAM DARGUIN,  
Courtesy of Jowy Romano



SENATOR ANDREW THOMPSON SWEATS  
OUT THE SENATE MEETING,  
Courtesy of Jowy Romano

# The Problem With CORE

By Mike Billings

At the USG Senate meeting on February 15th, Irfan Syed, Chair of the currently defunct Council of Religious Entities (CORE), formed what he claims to be the first political party in USG, the Coalition of Righteous Egalitarians, henceforth referred to as the "CORE party." While the merit of political parties in student government is a debate out of the scope of this article, the CORE party is an interesting phenomenon. Led by Syed and comprised of several USG senators, including Andrew Thompson, Richard Hsu and Vincent Rasulo, the ostensible purpose of the CORE party is vague at this point. When one looks deeper, however, it is fairly clear that this new political party is just another vehicle for Syed to organize his Senatorial puppets and attain power over USG.

"To make it perfectly clear, the Executive Board of *The Press* wholeheartedly supports the funding of religious clubs."

*The Press* has had knowledge of Syed's ultimate goal for months, and that goal was reported by Sam Goldman in the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 edition of the paper. According to what Syed told Executive Editor Joe Filippazzo, Syed wishes to change the way the student activity fee is distributed. As of now, USG forms several subcommittees representing the different types of clubs on campus, and these subcommittees review the budget requests of the clubs and organizations that fall under their particular umbrella. Instead of this, Syed would like to implement a check-off system, which he refers to as "direct democracy," that would decide how the fee is distributed. Basically, the mandatory fee would still be paid, but students would log onto SOLAR and indicate which clubs would receive a given amount of that student's activity fee.

As was stated in the aforementioned article by Sam Goldman, this type of referenda voting was deemed illegal in the cases of *Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin v. Southworth, et al.* and *Southworth v. Grebe*. In these cases, the courts found that mandatory student activity fees in a public university were legal, and that if such a fee is in place at a given university, the distribution of said fee must be viewpoint neutral. In accordance with the educational goals of a public university, it is imperative that all speech, even unpopular speech, be protected. In these cases, this protection takes the form of eliminating all forms of favoritism when dispersing the fee. This is precisely the reason that Stony Brook has eliminated the referenda system, and it is precisely the reason that Syed's goals are illegal. Syed's "direct democracy" is simply a more comprehensive referenda system. If this system were implemented, there is no way that the activity fee would be distributed in a viewpoint neutral manner, since students could easily squelch whatever speech or activities he or she found distasteful.

Ironically, the aforementioned court cases also make the Council of Religious Entity laws, or CORE laws, just as illegal; despite the

Continued on page 10

# A National ID Card Bill Passes in House of Reps

By Marcel Votlucka

The House of Representatives has passed a bill that critics claim amounts to creating a de facto national ID card. The Real ID Act (HR 418), passed on Thursday, February 10, requires that states comply with federal standards for driver's licenses. Licenses would henceforth contain what the bill calls "a common machine-readable technology," which could mean a magnetic strip and/or an RFID chip. RFIDs (Radio Frequency Identification tags) transmit information about a person's movements to a central computer.

The bill standardizes not only the kinds of documentation that people must present in order to get a license, it also provides that the Department of Homeland Security is to be held responsible for drafting the details of what other kinds of information could be required—given expanding technology, this may include biometric information such as retina scans, fingerprints and even DNA information.

Henceforth, state issued IDs would require a digital photograph, so that the images may be kept in computer files—presumably to be transferred to other agencies if desired. In addition, paper copies of source documents—birth certificates, Social Security cards, et cetera—would be kept on record for years under the terms of the bill. ID cards that fail to meet the prescribed requirements would not be used by any federal agency for any purpose.

Moreover, the bill also provides for states to provide databases with applicants' information, which can be shared with other government agencies under the provisions of the bill.

On top of all this, the bill also contains a proposal to build a fence along the California-Mexico border.

The Real ID Act's supporters claim that it is aimed at standardizing identification procedures as a way of thwarting illegal immigration and terrorism. The bill's official stated purpose is "[t]o establish and rapidly implement regulations for State driver's license and identification document security standards, to prevent terrorists from abusing the asylum laws of the United States, to unify terrorism-related grounds for inadmissibility and removal, and to ensure expeditious construction of the San Diego border fence." By enforcing these new regulations, supporters argue that terrorists will be made less able to abuse asylum laws to enter the US, government agencies will be better able to exchange information, and, therefore, Americans will be more secure. Supporters also point out that if biometric information such as fingerprints and even DNA information is to be included on federalized drivers' licenses, this could make identity theft more difficult.

However, the bill's opponents argue that this standardization is tantamount to a national ID card, that it undermines state's rights, that maintaining databases will lead to massive invasions of privacy and that the bill cannot and will not prevent terrorist acts or stop illegal immigration. Furthermore, they argue that people fleeing from repression in foreign lands will be made less able to claim asylum in the US because of the bill's provisions.

It is the proposed databases that the bill's opponents find particularly disturbing. Section 203 of the Real ID Act provides for a "Driver's License Agreement," in which states will maintain databases and share information with other state agencies—including records of motor vehicle violations, suspensions and

points on licenses, in addition to addresses, Social Security numbers and information on immigration status. If states do not comply, they will be ineligible for certain federal funds.

Opposition comes from a broad range of groups, liberal and conservative alike. In particular, firearm rights groups such as Gun Owners of America and civil libertarians such as the ACLU contend that the new regulations make state DMVs agents of the federal government, a situation which they contend is a violation of Constitutional principles. Gun Owners of America argues that the new regulations could mean that the federal government could gain total control over who may obtain a driver's license and abuse that power.

Others warn that if denied one of the new breed of IDs, people may be unable to travel freely on planes or trains, and lose access federal courthouses or any place administered by the federal government. Critics say this situation could create innumerable problems for many people in their daily lives.

The White House strongly supported the bill, which passed the House with 95% of House Republicans supporting it. House Democrats, on the other hand, overwhelmingly opposed the bill, with 75% voting "nay." Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton criticized the Republicans' advocacy for the bill, "I thought the other side of the aisle extols federalism at all times...So what's happening now? Why are those who speak up for states whenever it strikes their fancy doing this now?"

Criticism is not limited to Democrats, however. Ron Paul, a Texas Republican, angrily denounced the bill on the House floor. He was one of the few House Republicans who voted against the measure. Rep. Paul argued, "this bill is a Trojan horse. It pretends to offer desperately needed border control in order to stampede Americans into sacrificing what is uniquely American: our constitutionally protected liberty." He addressed the proposed databases—the information in which will be shared with Canada and Mexico—and pointed out the realistic possibility that corrupt officials may abuse information or even give or sell it to others for their own use—including terrorists.

Rep. Paul continued, "There are no prohibitions against including such information in the database as information about a person's exercise of First Amendment rights or about a person's appearance on a registry of firearms owners."

Rep. Paul addressed a claim by the bill's supporters that it is voluntary and is not really a nationalized ID card. "Supporters claim the national ID scheme is voluntary. However, any state that opts out will automatically make non-persons out of its citizens. The citizens of that state will be unable to have any dealings with the federal government because their ID will not be accepted." Echoing warnings about how the bill may ultimately impede citizens' ability to travel freely if they are actively denied access to a card or for some reason do not have one, he warned, "In essence, in the eyes of the federal government they will cease to exist. It is absurd to call this voluntary, and the proponents of the national ID know that every state will have no choice but to comply."

The Real ID Act will have to pass in the Senate before it becomes a law. It is expected to come to a vote soon, possibly attached to war spending for Iraq.

# Alone in Kyoto

By Brian Wasser

In a time when U.S. political leaders flaunt their one-world visions and exalt the imposition of "universal" standards and ideals onto other peoples, it's nice to know they see fit to exempt themselves from certain rules that should apply to everyone. Especially when those rules don't fit their rigid neo-liberal ideologies. At least there's consistency in this hypocrisy: That's right, it's international agreement time.

For ten days in December of 1997, 150 countries met in Kyoto, Japan for what the *New York Times* called the first attempt on this scale by humanity "to use deliberate, collective foresight on a risk whose full impact will not be felt for decades." Last Wednesday, ceremonies took place in the same city, and in everywhere, heralding the Kyoto accords as international law. But as with all environmental legislation, this accomplishment should be taken with a grain of salt. "Let us celebrate," announced Kofi Annan, "but let us not be complacent." Now that the party is over, giant leaps are needed following the baby-step. We are badly behind schedule.

Wednesday's implementation, four years after the U.S. pulled out of the agreement, has further anachronized American arrogance and mass-marketed short-sightedness. This American myopia, brought to you by conservative think tanks and energy company front groups, most often takes the form of skepticism of the science that proves human-induced global climate change is occurring, as well as the extreme exaggeration of any short-term economic price or effort on behalf of these companies. With a little help from the media (i.e., lost cause), the next few years should be a wake up call to anyone who is still stuck debating whether or not we are actually causing it. And no matter what Michael Crichton will tell you, these arguments of skepticism are the direct result of a stubborn kleptocracy that has a lot to lose from adhering to international environmental regulations, and of industrial giants who can't see past the ends of their bankroll. That's about it; Halliburton had no opportunity to profit from Kyoto. All else is just poetics.

And no matter what our corporate establishment will tell you, there really are no economic reasons for not wanting to ratify an agreement as mild as Kyoto, whose main goal is to reduce emissions from developed countries to 5% below 1990 levels, by 2012. It turns out that investing in environmentally friendlier technologies rewards countries economically. It makes industry more efficient and creates economic growth, and just like the EU, we're more than capable of achieving modest goals.

Overcoming the inertia of an extremely comfortable energy corporatocracy just seems to be more difficult in this country. But Kyoto doesn't even demand much at all in the first place. If Kyoto posed any real economic threat, or asked any unreasonable requests, even Sweden wouldn't have accepted it. After all, industry opposition to environmental regulation doesn't just happen in the U.S.; it happens everywhere, and Kyoto's mildness, in the face of a threat even the Pentagon deems more immediate than terrorism, a threat Annan calls "one of the biggest challenges of the 21st Century," is a result of that opposition.

So what's the significance of Kyoto anyway, especially since the U.S. and Australia, which preside over the world's highest per capita greenhouse emissions, are not on board?



BRING YOUR OWN OIL-CLEAN-UP RAGS,  
Courtesy of Associated Press

Ignoring Lichtenstein, perhaps this fact alone offers clues. Nowhere have energy companies been as successful in both stifling political support for such cooperation, and creating a popular culture that profits them and resists change, than in these two countries.

The fact that America is relatively insulated should come as no surprise, but the level of animosity towards, and rejection of, the views of the world that seems to know more than us how to cooperate, is probably worse than we'd like to think. Senator Hagel made no secret of it when the protocol appeared in 1997 when he said that "it will not see the light of day in the United States" if the same emissions regulations are not binding for developing nations as they are for developed nations who sign it. Convenient for those who promote it, this common argument makes sense initially...why

should we have to regulate our energy use when Mexico, and China don't have to? It follows the parallel argument often made, that if we don't consume as much oil as we see fit in America, some other country will. This is where Kyoto is step ahead of the advertised resistance. Most people don't know, for example, that Kyoto allows developed nations to finance emissions reduction projects in developing countries instead, or that, last week, China called Bush's bluff by making a veritable energy U-turn amidst environmental concerns, halting the construction of 22 major power stations. So, there's really no way around it—America needs to get her finger out of her ass and stop blaming countries who have always done more to combat climate change in the first place. It's time to finally step up.

But instead, energy companies today spend more electing officials and avoiding regulations than would cost to follow and move beyond such regulations. They tell us we have a choice: to live comfortably, or to live in unlit caves. They tell us there's a desire by the rest of the world, including the comparatively energy-conscious EU, to subvert American cultural and socioeconomic privilege. The fact that the soundness of our climate is at stake is obscured and we're taught to be cynical of any real issue. "The American way of life is not negotiable." I guess Daddy Bush was right; but it's partly our fault for buying into it. We will never willingly give up the mass consumables, the SUV, and the comfort of a perpetually lighted driveway, because America is always first, even if an idiot could see the holes in the "if we don't use it, someone else will" argument. It hurts everyone when certain countries selfishly prevent others from moving beyond wood and coal. Given finite resources, it makes sense for those who are most technologically advanced and most gluttonous in the first place to take the helm. Otherwise, the divide between developing and developed countries will only increase, and that's not much of a global vision. Kyoto's participants (the rest of the world) see that. Why can't we?

But the problem isn't just cultural and political. Kyoto's implementation has hurdled some institutional inertia as well. The impacts of climate change are distant and vague, while the institutions that affect it are structured to select always for short-term self-interest. Reconciling short and long-term interests is almost impossible, but the tide may be starting to shift. The significance of last Wednesday's event can be found more in this cooperative symbolism than in any effect Kyoto will have on actually mitigating climate change. We'll leave that for what comes next.

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# Peace and Unease Looms Over the Middle East

By Joan Leong

For as long as I can remember, the countries of the Middle East were always in constant conflict with each other. It seems like every time the possibility of peace arises, an obstacle is thrown in its path. In recent weeks, the state of affairs has been both tragic and hopeful in this shaky region. The free elections, the peace summits, assassination and terrorist attacks are just a few of the headlines making waves across the globe. So, exactly what is going on over there?

## The Sharm el Sheikh Peace Summit

On February 8th, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak invited several leaders of Middle Eastern countries to the Red Desert Resort in Cairo to discuss how to bring peace throughout their land. In a historical move, Palestinian Authority Leader Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon agreed to end hostilities between their countries. It has been five years since the 2000 Camp David summit where Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak unsuccessfully tried to work on a lasting peace between each other's nations. They both walked away; Arafat believing that the compromises proposed were not enough and Barak reasoning that his side had bargained as much as they possibly could. In November, Arafat passed away, and the possibility of peace between the Israeli and Palestinian people surfaced. President Mubarak stated, "both sides showed a serious desire to work together truly and sincerely." Prime Minister Sharon promised to terminate Israel's military operations against the Palestinians in return for the end of violence directed against Israelis. The Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas finally also agreed to cease acts of violence, as long as all other militant groups also agree to a ceasefire. They are regarded as a terrorist group which is hell-bent on destroying the state of Israel, and they are largely responsible for the violence against the Israeli citizens and military. This is a genuine step towards a lasting peace between the two embittered nations, they were two of the key players in the violence. Israel also promises to free some 500 Palestinian prisoners and allow former Palestinian employees to work in Israel again. However, there are still about 8,000 prisoners being held, and those allowed to be released cannot be someone who committed an act of violence against an Israeli. More will be released in the months that follow. The Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi was also present and discussed the situation in Lebanon, the state of Iraq and Sudan's troubled Darfur region. The next Arab peace talk is to be held in Algeria in March.

## Sudan and the African Union

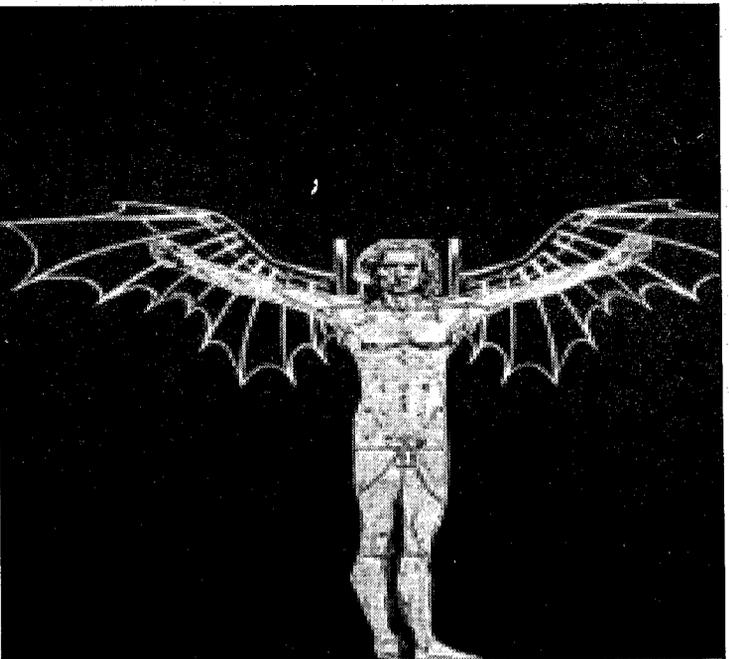
For decades, in Sudan, there has been conflict between two Muslims group, the Arabs and the non-Arab Africans. Sudan is ruled by a strongly pro-Arab government. The constant fighting between rebel groups and the government military was called to a ceasefire in 2003 after an agreement that would share state revenues between these two groups. However, the rebel groups were not satisfied, and they accused the government of giving preferen-

tiality to the Arab people. Soon after, the rebel groups launched a massive attack on various government military units. They were taken by surprise and unable to defend themselves due to the lack of troops and their distrust of their own soldiers within the units. Since then, there has been a massive "ethnic cleansing" and genocide in the Darfur region. Over two million people have fled the area, and about 70,000 to 300,000 people have already died in the two years of fighting. The numbers are still uncertain. The rebel groups, who are mostly the non-Arab citizens, started the war, but they comprise the majority of the casualties. Both sides have heavy casualties. The African Union is making major strides to end this frenzied war. Disillusioned by the unfulfilled Western promises to help with make peace, they do not want another Rwanda to occur and they have decided to take matters into their own hands. The African Union is a strong voice in the UN Security Council, yet they lack the funds and power to accomplish their goals. They have also been given some funds, but the organization is still very unsteady, and the money has not been dispersed in the correct manner. There are only about 1,400 troops currently stationed to help keep the peace and the number is expected to rise to about 3,000. However, the number is still very small for an area so large but it's difficult to muster up troops who will help keep the peace, since many of the troops were part of the trouble to begin with. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan called for an immediate action to stop the "near-hell on earth." A sum of \$200 million in peace funds is expected to help the conflict through 2007. The African Union is taking critical strides to end this war and hopefully, with outside support, the horrific genocide of Arabs and non-Arabs alike in the Darfur region will finally halt.

## The Iraq Free Elections

The Iraqi Elections results are finally in. The 275-seat assembly is dominated by the Shiites, taking up 140 seats. The underdog Kurdistan Alliance holds 75 seats and the rest went to Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's party and others. Saddam's Sunni Arabs have long dominated the government and now a complete reversal role has taken place. The Shias, who made up sixty per cent of the population, have been long oppressed by Saddam's regime and are ecstatic with the turnout. The Kurds are the minorities of Iraq, only making up about twenty per cent of the population, and the major election success is something short of a miracle to them. The Kurds' status in Iraq has always been unstable, with their limited autonomy under the US and British imposed no-fly zones following the first Gulf War, and their constant tension with the Shiites and Sunnis who tried to control their region. The Sunnis, who previously enjoyed all the powers in Iraq, are utilizing many of their forces to attack US forces and the Shiite people and groups. However, despite the Sunnis' big loss in this election, the committee plans to offer the Sunnis one of the two vice-presidents' jobs, or even the position as the speaker of the

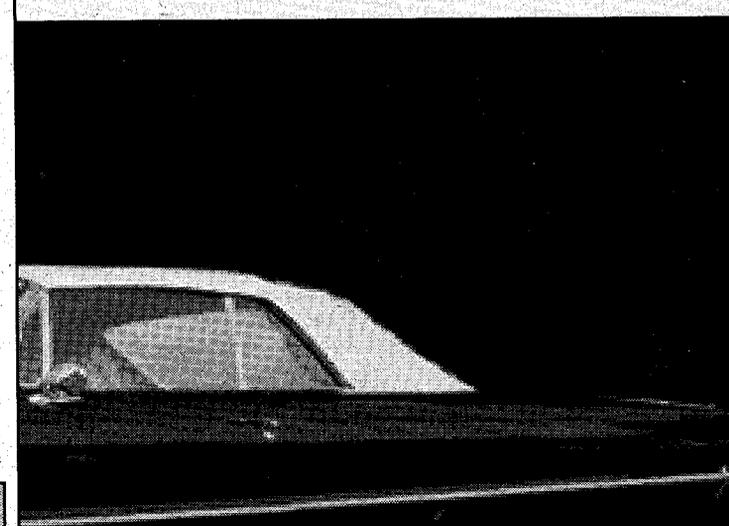
Continued on page 14



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**We Weep for the King of Gonzo**

The middle of the night had ticked past like some slow moving jungle sloth, the silence and tedium only broken by the saddening news. Dr. Thompson had killed himself Sunday night with two slugs, making the wall behind him a stained still-life of was-life. It was a tragic end as this man had molded not only me, but my compatriots and compadres at our rag-tag newsletter in ways that are seldom put to words. Thanks to him, the arid prose of our grandfathers would not permeate into our generation. News was no longer happening, it was a happening and we were to be immersed, anything short of that would be taking a step backwards. His mind had shouted the battle cry for a new generation of authors, and the world of literature was changed inevitably; an organic outgrowth of the topsy-turvy era that birthed him.

Especially here, in the halls of the Student Union, his memory rings with a particular resonance. I'd like to elucidate more on the power of 'gonzo journalism' and how revolutionary it was and is, but that would be like an ant trying to explain to an armadillo why eating him would be cause for karmic instability.

It is impossible and immoral and not remotely coming to the point. The armadillo needs to eat, and revolutionaries need to write. It's at times like these I wish I had a stable of drugs on hand to allow me to write what I truly want to, without the lies of syntax and illusion of grammar getting in the way. Biography and reiteration is the highest form of derision, so I won't tread on that path any longer. Go out, buy a book by this brilliant man and fucking read it, maybe it'll affect your life how its affected others; maybe you'll pass it by like the raving of some drug-induced madman. Either way, at least you'll have read something valuable, whether you know it or not.

Tapping away at this keyboard; trying to meet a 500 word limit for this editorial; it's idiotic. Crawling from the mouthpiece of a late night call attempting to do something symbolic and poetic for this man of a million minds. We'll fail, this endeavor is a failure, so I'm going to stop typing, and I'm going to ingest some psilocybin and lie in my bed and do what tripping people do when lying in bed. Good night.

**They Got Gretzky AND Gay Rights!**

On February 16th, before the Canadian House of Commons, Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin rose in support of the Civil Marriage Act (C-38). Not only did this speech outline his position in support of civil same-sex marriages, but it was also a thorough explanation of how the bill is a faithful interpretation of their Bill of Rights and Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It was also an even broader defense of minority rights, and the responsibility of governments to ensure religious and personal freedoms. In addressing the concerns of opponents of the bill, he outlined three major lines of reasoning.

First, this bill does not undermine religious freedom, as some have claimed, but instead guarantees it. The Canadian Charter states, and the Supreme Court affirms, that no church official shall have to perform ceremonies that are not in accordance with their beliefs. The Civil Marriage Act recognizes this right, as it is about civil marriage, not religious marriage.

Secondly, some opponents claim this measure should pass a national referenda before it is enacted. The purpose of the Charter and the Bill of Rights, however, is to defend the fundamental freedom of the minority against the impulse of the majority. The Civil Marriage Act is then consistent with these principles, not opposed to them.

Finally, some opponents argue that a new institution of "civil unions" should be created to address the need for some sort of legal recognition for same-sex relationships. This is the jurisdiction of individual provinces, however. Furthermore, not only would the inevitable differences in implementation seriously violate the ideal of equality, but the very creation of a separate institution also undermines the exact equality and fairness they seek to affirm.

Today, most of Canada already recognizes civil marriages, and the Civil Marriage Act will properly

apply the enshrined principles of fairness and equality for the protection of a minority. The Prime Minister himself just four years ago voted to agree with the 'traditional' definition of marriage, in an act not unlike the United States' own federal Defense of Marriage Act. His recent defense of Civil Marriage and equality is a politically courageous statement. The reasoning behind it is sound, and a welcome addition to the voices advocating for freedom.

How does this compare to our own laws and recognition of rights? While Canada is moving to support and act upon their ideals of justice, some Americans are ready to undermine our laws already enacted to protect against discrimination. The city of Topeka, Kansas will vote on March 1st whether or not to repeal their city ordinances protecting people from losing their employment or housing for the sole reason of their sexual orientation. In addition, the measure would bind the city from enacting or enforcing similar laws in the future. Fred Phelps, famous for his church's picketing of Matthew Shepard's (and other) funerals and for running [www.godhatesfags.com](http://www.godhatesfags.com), is responsible for the petition that put this measure on the ballot. While residents of Topeka often dislike the tactics of the Phelps family, it is yet unclear what the results of the ballot question—polled during a city primary—will be.

The people of Topeka should speak up to keep their anti-discrimination laws in place, otherwise they run the risk of creating a dangerous precedent in this country. They will be denying minorities rights established in the Constitution, favoring instead arbitrary fervor disguised as morality. While they examine their views, perhaps they will even look to the Prime Minister of Canada and recognize his recent decision for what it truly is: a step in the right direction.

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**INDEX**

USG Witch Hunt	Page 2
The Problem with CORE	Pages 3 & 10
Alix Olson	Page 8
Fascist Outrage!	Pages 13 & 17
Reviews out the ass!	Pages 18 - 23
Amberly Jane	Page 24
Living Tribunal	Page 25
Anime: Katsucon 11	Pages 44 & 45
Cock	Page 42

**To Set the Record Straight...**

To the editor:

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit research and advocacy group. We are focused on students' rights, government reform, higher education and environmental advocacy, among other issues. For 32 years NYPIRG has maintained a strict non-partisan agenda. That is why we were distressed to read that, "[with help from the Stony Brook campus chapter of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), the College Democrats have successfully made Stony Brook University a political force in Suffolk County." ("The College Democrats" by Joe Filippazzo, Stony Brook Press February 9, 2005).

NYPIRG wishes to make clear that during the fall general election we worked with many groups, individuals and the administration here at Stony Brook University. Our coalition included but was not limited to: Undergraduate Student Government; The Dean of Students

Office; Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance; Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Alliance; Sigma Beta Honor Society; Graduate Student Organization; Undergraduate College of Leadership and Service; Campus Residences and dorm legislatures; College Democrats; College Republicans; registered Libertarians; Socialist Workers Party; Builders/Peace and Justice Party; Independence Party. Together this coalition registered 2,985 new voters, educated students about issues and candidates, and organized Get Out the Vote efforts on campus.

NYPIRG's goal was to achieve the maximum student participation in the electoral process without regard to partisan outcome.

Thank you,

Eric Bruzaitis  
Project Coordinator  
NYPIRG at Stony Brook

*(Editor's note: Don't worry Eric, we have re-enacted The Passion of the Christ using Joe Filippazzo in the role of Jesus. With the cat-o-ninetails thoroughly worn out we let him continue writing articles.)*

Dear Eric,

My heartfelt apologies go out to you and your wonderful organization. Just to reiterate, there were many groups involved in Stony Brook University's polling success and together a great thing was accomplished. The effort put forth by members of NYPIRG just seemed to especially grab my attention so I got a little excited and over-zealous. The ambiguity in my article was also identified by Press Copy Editor Matthew Vernon Xavier Willemain but, in my haste to finish the issue, my mistake slipped through the cracks. For this, I would also like to apologize to Matt in his infinite wisdom.

Sincerely,  
Joe Filippazzo  
Executive Editor

**CORE Harassment Level: RED**

Dear Irfan, Richard, Jack, Vince, Andrew, and Greg.

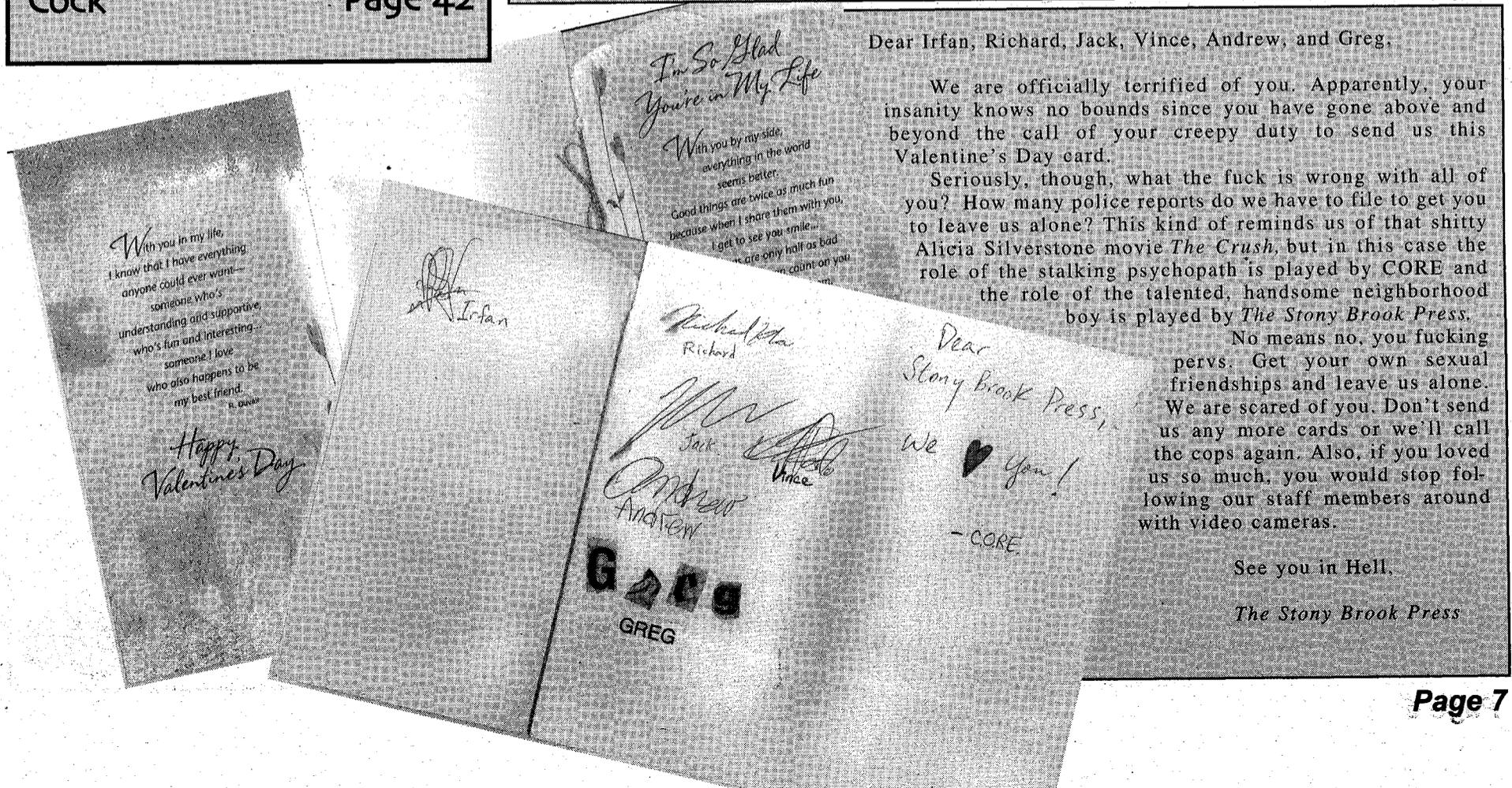
We are officially terrified of you. Apparently, your insanity knows no bounds since you have gone above and beyond the call of your creepy duty to send us this Valentine's Day card.

Seriously, though, what the fuck is wrong with all of you? How many police reports do we have to file to get you to leave us alone? This kind of reminds us of that shitty Alicia Silverstone movie *The Crush*, but in this case the role of the stalking psychopath is played by CORE and the role of the talented, handsome neighborhood boy is played by *The Stony Brook Press*.

No means no, you fucking perverts. Get your own sexual friendships and leave us alone. We are scared of you. Don't send us any more cards or we'll call the cops again. Also, if you loved us so much, you would stop following our staff members around with video cameras.

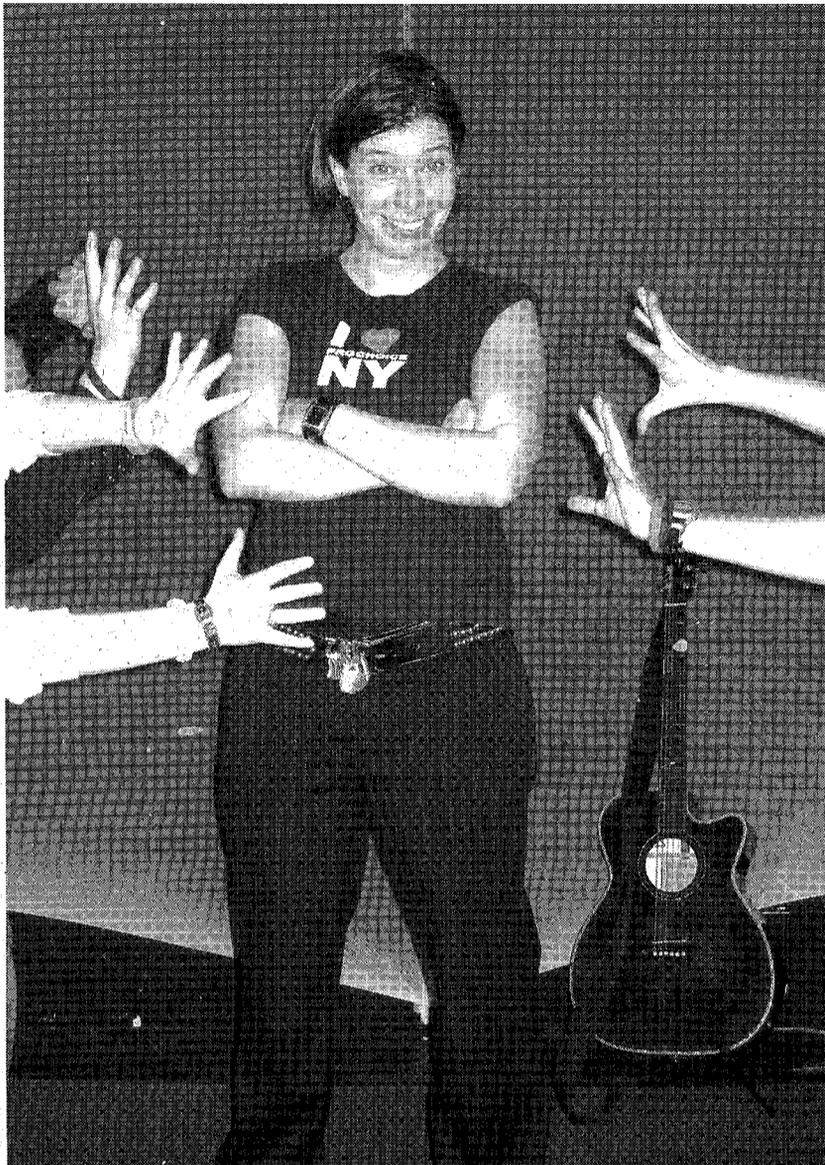
See you in Hell.

*The Stony Brook Press*



# Subtlety at Stony Brook

By Tom Clark



STONY BROOK GETS ITS HANDS ON ALIX OLSON,  
Courtesy of Jowy Romano

On Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, I in the cold stood outside the University Café, among a crowd of eager students and visitors, waiting in earnest when the doors would open. Tonight was the night I had heard about all semester; the night that Alix Olson would perform. I had heard about her several times last year, and almost non-stop as the semester reached mid-February. Extremely popular among the feminist and lesbian community, Alix Olson is a folk poet that receives rave reviews for her vibrantly powerful form of slam poetry. But I had yet to see or hear her perform, and as I waited, I thought to myself, "what introduction would be better than in person?"

When the sound check was over, we were allowed entry, and my friends and I quickly took over a large seating area near the stage, and continued chatting. The initial introductions were given by Saima Anjan from the Students For Choice, and an open mic ensued, where I had the pleasure of hearing poetry from Eric Anderson and Rachel Kalish my WST 247 Professor and TA, respectively. We were all in for a treat when a local openly gay comedian took the stage. There were a handful of students who found her jokes about looking like a fifteen-year old boy more than just amusing, it was their life story too! Once Christine Tanaka from the Stony Brook Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance took the stage to introduce Alix Olson, I found myself nervous and excited. I couldn't possibly have realized what would happen next.

When Alix took the stage, the crowd exploded with applause. In

between frantic photos, I watched Alix perform her spoken-word act, where she tells stories from her life, or whatever is in the news, as the backdrop for her poems. When she performs her poetry, it is a sight to behold. Alix manages to capture the various facets and struggles that women have faced and still face in society today. Whether it be about the courageous women in the past that have struggled so hard to further women's rights, or how she has to prove herself during the International Poetry Festival in Rotterdam, Netherlands (where she was one of two people chosen to represent America), Alix manages to encapsulate the entirety of the feminist movement in a beautifully moving ballad of fury and rage. Seeing her perform is like watching ten billion women over thousands of years rise up against the hegemony of the male patriarchy, no longer allowing their voices to be silenced. She is feminism incarnate.

Afterwards, Alix was kind enough to take photos and give autographs, and I left with such a surge of adrenaline that my hands shook for an hour afterwards. I came in knowing that I would be in for a treat, but I never could have guessed that I'd leave overflowing with such raw emotion, and an eagerness to put an end to the belligerent male chauvinism that pervades every facet of American society.

*Alix Olson is world-reknowned for her fiery brand of slam poetry. She has been featured in numerous television, radio, and print interviews, and has headlined HBO's Def Poetry.*

For more information, visit <http://www.subtlesister.com/>.

## A Letter About Alix Olson

By Bruce Russo, Jr.

I am a virgin. Or I was a virgin, to Alix Olson's poetry, poetry that bathes in brilliance and feminism, until last Tuesday night, when she performed at the University Café on campus. I was given a flyer by a classmate promoting V-day, a global movement trying to stop violence against women and girls. I read that a "folk poet" named Alix Olson was going to perform with others who had an opportunity to express their art, music and poetry. I followed a *Hansel and Gretel*-like trail, with pieces of paper taped to the ground instead of breadcrumbs, that had "Alix Olson" and arrows printed on them. They directed me through empty ballrooms and to the entrance of the University Café. I accidentally let the door slam while a comedian was making a joke about her mother and I found an empty space on the floor.

I was instantly mesmerized when Alix Olson stepped on stage. She introduced herself and mildly attacked the local news radio and random Republican drivers. She told us a story about how she tried to reach for her inner "New Yorker" and give someone the finger for cutting her off, but she realized she had mittens on. I think that is a metaphor for what kind of artist she is. She has all these struggles with the world: women's rights, stereotypes, pro-choice, gay marriage, capitalism within a democracy, and she expresses these issues with such passionate rhythm and poetic

beauty. She attacks the media, political administration and corporations with a language you would not hear on commercial radio. But when she expresses her thoughts with emotional outrage it originates from a pure, honest place. You can understand why she is wearing the mittens, why she is fighting this fight. Her mittens are, maybe, a clever way of saying she wears her "heart on her sleeve." Her words are like daggers that cut through the commonality of conventional poetry and everyday life. She is a missionary, an activist and a poet. She explained how Catholic schools breed atheists, or turn children off from religion. She introduced every poem with references from her past (tours, family and current news). She breaks the monotony of fifty-percent-off sales, censorship, corporate holidays, statistics and government funded beauty pageants.

After the second poem, I wondered where the "folk" element was, because she did not reach for the acoustic guitars that were against the wall behind her. But she found her own rhythm and cadence within her words. She used her breath to intensify a statement and she enunciated certain words so articulately. She moved on stage as if she was personifying her poems. Her hips would swagger and jolt. Her head would swing from left to right. I was hypnotized by her movements and prose. Animated and lyrical, she illustrated political and emotional landscapes and how they intertwine.

Her thoughts were on the verge of genius. Instead of supporting gay marriage, she suggested we protest against divorce. We should sanctify the act of marriage and prohibit couples from separating. One of her poems, titled "America's on Sale," was epic. She spoke into the microphone as if she was making an announcement in a Super Wal-Mart, talking to all the "cell-phone masses and plastic-surgery suburbanites."

Despite my hypocrisy when I work for a greedy corporation that Alix Olson despises (United States Postal Service), and I even consume beverages almost daily from a universally known coffee chain (Starbucks) that Alix Olson beautifully attacks in such a poetic manner, I understand the fight she is fighting. I realize that American society is turning into an ignorant, unintelligible mass of caffeine-soaked zombies. We need more artists like Alix Olson that can educate the world about what really is going on behind their television sets and biased newspaper articles. I think she was right when she told us we couldn't move to Canada, because we need to stay here to defeat the close-minded opposition. We need to take back our educational system and politics. We need to find the democracy we were promised.

Sincerely yours,  
Bruce Russo Jr.  
(a disgruntled postal worker)

# Slain Nun Mourned By Many; Message May Be Lost

By Michael Prazak

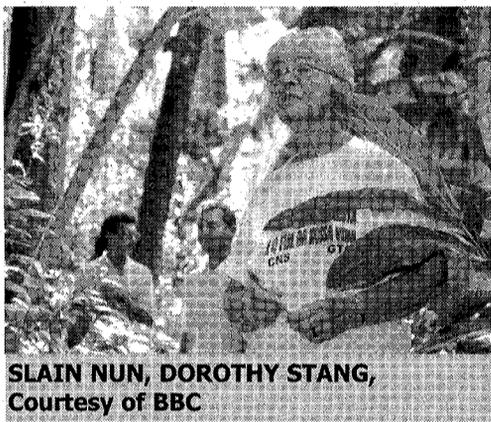
Dorothy Stang dedicated her life to the political liberation of the poor and indigenous peoples of the Amazon forest. She labored tirelessly to preserve their way of life, while waging an eternal war against the business interests threatening the crucial rain forest that housed them. Many times in her years of work her life was threatened, both for the obstacle to corporate greed she represented as well as the hope she tried to inspire in the people. Regardless of this fact, she pushed forward with her work as only those with steadfast purpose and a preternatural resolve can.

Having lived in Brazil for 37 years before being murdered it is sufficient to say that Sister Dorothy had an intimate and personal connection with these people. Becoming a Brazilian citizen, she eventually came to reside in one of the small rustic villages that dotted the Amazon Basin. In a recent interview, she remarked that it was not until recently her home had gained the modern dalliance of electricity. Through this comment she was attempting to highlight the very real conditions these millions of people live in. However more importantly, she highlighted the communal and spiritual link the people had with the land and advocated for an extension of property rights to them. In essence, the government and governments were not providing these people with any of the benefits of being citizens of the nation of Brazil, so why should bureaucrats feel that they could lay claim to the property on which these people lived.

In recent weeks, threats on the nun's life had grown in intensity, however Sister Dorothy remained candid about the entire situation. In an interview with a popular local newspaper, she had remarked, "no one would dare kill an old lady like me." Unfortunately, for her, as well as the people she served, these killers were restrained by no such morals. Witnesses reported that when confronted by her eventual killers, she stated that they had weapons and she had none but those of her lord, she proceeded to then read verses from her Bible. It was at this time, onlookers claimed that the gunman

brutally gunned her down, shooting her 4 times in the head.

With that biographical moment out of the way, I feel it would be a disservice to this woman's memory to speak about her, without acknowledging the issues she died for. It's stressed that these people are being systematically eliminated, nothing short of genocide is taking place in our world, and few bat an eye. A scene in the recent film *Hotel Rwanda* comes to mind and fairly sums up the emotive impact tragedies like this have. A CNN cameraman, speaking to the film protagonist, says in regards to the slaughter of the local Tutsi population: "People will see this footage and say 'oh my God, that's terrible,' and then go back to eating their dinners."



SLAIN NUN, DOROTHY STANG,  
Courtesy of BBC

It is shocking that in this world, it takes the death of a Western nun to highlight a tragedy that happens regularly. Nearly all people either involved with Sister Dorothy's charity work, or with knowledge of the area, stressed that murders such as this are not rare, nor subtler in their brutality. People are eliminated daily in order to clear the path for the brutal juggernaut of industry and "progress." It highlights the Western

world's arrogance in viewing the value of the lives of individuals. Our media, typically, follows suit, caters to this negative, and oft times superficial analysis of the situation.

The tragedy here is not that a nun died who dedicated her life to the service of the poor and dispossessed. This is sad, and albeit disturbing news, no sane person would argue this point, the tragedy lies in the fact that murders no less heartless and cold occur daily, but the world didn't take notice until one of 'their own' was executed. Moments like this show that we, as an "advanced" civilization, have a long way to go in terms of valuing humanity as a whole, and savoring the ethnic diversity we are privileged to have. When these people, possessed of nearly nothing are able to love their culture so much, they are willing to stand against the insurmountable; we should be dumbstruck with awe. We should pull our noses up out of the pages of the Post and witness what true bravery is.

# Long Island Man Accused of Robberies and Murders

By Joe Rios

Back on Feb. 3rd Connecticut Police identified a man they thought was responsible for a series of robberies in jewelry stores across New York and Connecticut. The name of the man was Christopher DiMeo, a resident of Glen Head, Long Island. DiMeo was tied to a number of robberies, including the most recent in Fairfield Connecticut, where a couple that owned a jewelry shop was murdered during a robbery.

Just one short day later, the police had DiMeo in custody; he was arrested at a hotel in Atlantic City after some discussions with a hostage negotiator. No weapons were found in the room, but the police did find thousands of dollars worth of stolen items from his grandparent's home, as well as some jewelry.

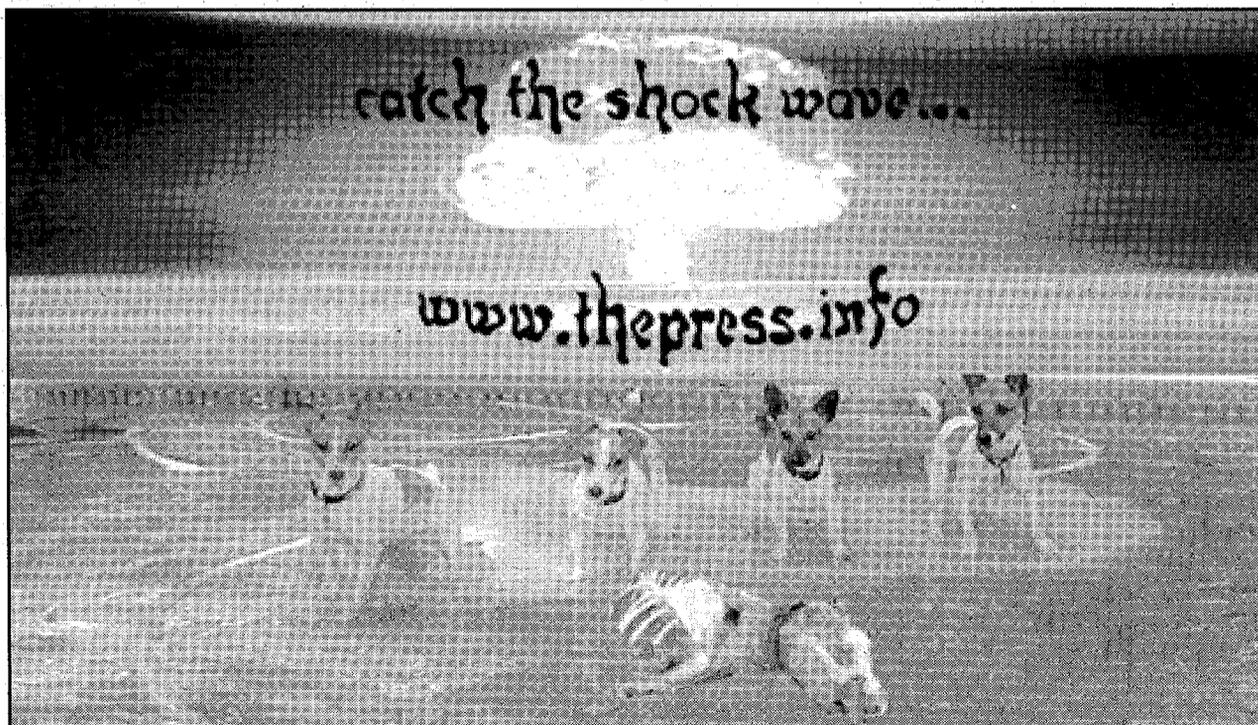
As weird as this story may seem, it gets

"DiMeo's mother was not the only loved one involved in his crime spree."

even weirder. Apparently, DiMeo was robbing jewelry stores in order to support his heroin habit. Furthermore, his own mother, Maryann Taylor-Casey drove a getaway car during a December robbery. DiMeo's mother was not the only loved one involved in his crime spree. According to prosecutors, 23 year old Nicole Pearce, who also uses heroin, was arrested in Atlantic City when attempting to pay DiMeo's hotel bill shortly before he was arrested. Casey's lawyer, Michael Soshnick stated during a court appearance, "My client is the victim of the evil actions of Chris DiMeo," believing that he forced her to do heroin and commit the robberies.

Nassau County prosecutor Robert Biancavilla seemed hardy impressed by the defense, commenting, "It's amazing the stuff he can spin. He wants to paint her as a victim." Presently, DiMeo, his mother, and girlfriend are all behind bars in different facilities.

Old friends and childhood classmates of DiMeo were shocked to find out that he had committed the robberies and murders. Opinions are mixed about DiMeo. Guido Penafiel of Glen Cove noted, "As far as I knew he was a short little chubby kid with freckles. Even if he was a little bit of a troublemaker, I never thought he'd do anything like this." Other friends, like Abi Zied, commented that there were signs of problems when he was younger. "I know around the class he was considered tough for his size. You were always hearing that Chris DiMeo got into another fight."



# The Problem With CORE Continued...

By Mike Billings

Continued from page 3

fact that Syed often uses the cases as a justification for his goals. The way the CORE laws are currently written, Irfan Syed decides which clubs and organizations are covered by CORE and how much money to give them. For example, Syed could easily deem NYPIRG, *The Press* and SBU-TV religious organizations, and cut off their funding with absolutely no checks or balances. In other words, the CORE laws would be distributing student activity fee money in a manner that is decidedly not viewpoint neutral. In fact, this is exactly why the CORE laws are tied up in the USG Judiciary and effectively neutralized for the moment.

In order to defend the legislation, CORE apologists cite that the fact current CORE opponent and *Press* Executive Editor Joe Filippazzo actually voted for the CORE while he was acting as a proxy on the senate last semester. When asked why he voted for the CORE laws, Filippazzo stated, "Getting the religious groups funding was my primary concern. I voted for the CORE Laws because I was under the impression that, although the specifics of the bill were a bit shady and gave an inordinate amount of power to Irfan Syed, they could be edited and cleaned up after the bill was passed." In response to why he, along with the Executive Board of *The Press* no longer support the CORE laws, Filippazzo noted, "I no longer support the CORE Laws because they

"If the CORE Laws are reactivated as written...USG will no longer be a democracy, it will be a dictatorship run by Irfan Syed."

are unconstitutional, unfair, undemocratic and a shameless grab for power on the author's part. While Irfan Syed was very successful in spinning the CORE Laws so that they sounded like a good idea, I now realize that he is just using the religious groups on campus as a front for his own selfish megalomania. He is a terrible human being and should not be allowed to corrupt the student government any further."

To make it perfectly clear, the Executive Board of *The Press* wholeheartedly supports the funding of religious clubs in accordance with *Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin v. Southworth, et al.* and *Southworth v. Grebe*. *The Press* vehemently opposes the CORE laws because Syed is attempting to fund these organizations illegally. Instead of the CORE laws, USG should create a separate subcommittee that funds religious groups akin to the subcommittees that handle media, academic and cultural organizations, just to name a few. This current system is the most realistic chance that Stony Brook, a University with over 200 clubs and organizations, has at adhering to the aforementioned court cases.

What the public needs to be aware of is that there is only one logical outcome to this situation if the CORE laws are reactivated as written and Syed is able to mold the student activity fee the way he wants. USG will no longer be a democracy, it will be a dictatorship run by Irfan Syed. The budget of every club and organization, including USG itself, would be subject to the whims of Syed. If this were to happen, it would only be a matter of time before administrators and the SUNY Chancellor decide to decertify the student government, and precious few of these people would be enthusiastic about starting from scratch after only three years. At that point, administration would be solely responsible for distributing the fee, and students would have no voice at all.

# The CORE Story

By Gregory Lubich

A Kudos to *The Press*

*The Press* was "extremely proud" when campus groups worked together in support of the Club and Organization Bill of Rights in Spring 2004, according to their website. So it is extremely odd that *The Press*' February 9, 2005 issue alleges a "conspiracy" somewhere in the CORE laws, laws intended to allow the funding of religious entities, since their members pay the \$165 per year Student Activity Fee (SAF) just like non-religious undergraduates. Various unsupported and/or uncorroborated allegations from certain highly questionable sources were also made about supporters of the CORE laws. Since the Executive Editor of *The Press* voted in favor of the CORE laws, if there is a conspiracy, one might guess that *The Press* is part of it. If so, then this would be the second time this year that the SB Press ran an exposé on itself. A kudos goes to *The Press*.

Who is Angry?

Is networking and organizing allowed only for groups with, allegedly, many "leftist" members, such as *The SB Press*, NYPIRG, SBU-TV, WUSB, Students for Choice, Social Justice Alliance and the University Democrats? Is lobbying and organizing disallowed for students from the Baptist Campus Ministries, the Catholic Campus Ministries, Chabad, Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship, the Chinese Christian Fellowship, Hillel, the Korean Christian Fellowship, Life Talks, the Muslim Students Association and the Protestant Campus Ministries? In what light does the campus *left* view observant Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Wiccans and theists in general? Some, but by no means all, of the campus "left" are angry that religious clubs and organizations can now get funding. They are very angry. They are so royally mad that they may be applying a double standard.

More than Money

Money is not the sole reason certain members of the campus "left" are unhappy with recent revisions to the Chancellors Guidelines. Granted, there are now more

clubs to fund, and thus potentially less for previously funded groups; however, that alone would not be enough for the campus "left" to become irrational, since day to day politics typically involves distributional issues. There is an ideological battle going on here. For example, one member of the University Democrats, in response to the proposed funding of religious organizations allegedly quipped, "In this country we have something called 'separation of church and state'" and "You've heard of separation of church and state, haven't you?" Once again, the issues at work here involve far more than money.

Legitimacy

Social and political legitimacy is garnered through social and political linkage. Thus, for the same reasons that the gay community seeks to legitimize homosexuality through government sanctioned marriage, certain elements of the campus "left" seek to delegitimize religion through denying religious groups access to student government funds. This is true despite the fact that religious students pay the same \$165 per year Student Activity Fee as non-religious students. Like it or not, a belief, or disbelief, in a deity, can no longer be used to deny funding to any club or organization at any state college in New York. Similarly, a political belief, or lack thereof, can no longer be used to deny Student Activity Fee dollars to any club or organization at any state college in New York.

What's the Catch?

A group of secular humanists at the highest levels of University Administration and sycophantic tools within the student body will continue to work against the best interests of the students and the University in this matter. For example, while secularists can no longer discriminate against theists simply based on belief, and vice versa, the option to apply for a budget is different from getting one. Likewise, getting a budget is quite different from receiving a check for an event. Quite some time ago, the author

"[S]ycophantic tools within the student body will continue to work against the best interests of the students..."

Are you an <http://Alleged.Leftist?>

Come to, supposedly, **The Stony Brook Press**<sup>1</sup>.

According to "rumors," meetings are purported to be at 1:00pm, or thereabouts, on, what sources say, are **Wednesdays** in, as I have been told, the **Union**<sup>2</sup> in what unconfirmed reports say is **Room 060**, which is located in, some imply, the so-called <http://union.basement>.

- 1: Which can only be described as an "alleged leftist jamboree"
- 2: The act of uniting or the state of being united

# The CORE Story Continued...

By Gregory Lubicich

of this article informed one of the University President's "right hand men" in a private conversation that the University was sitting on top of a legal and public relations nightmare, since the student government did not fund religious or political organizations in conformance with US Supreme Court decisions with which this administrator was well familiar.

Did high level administrators exercise due diligence in the representation of the University's financial and institutional interests by working to change the situation in a timely manner? In this author's opinion they did not. Arguably, there may have even been negative elements within the University Administration, and a few of their corrupt cronies in student government, working against the best interests of the students and the University in this matter. Nevertheless, despite the connivance of certain administra-

tors, their two faced bedfellows of convenience and servile tools within the student body, justice and fiscal sanity have prevailed, at least so far.

"A Kudos goes to  
The Press."

What's In It For You?

Whether one is a partisan or an observer in these matters, or even if one was previously or is currently disinterested, there are some lessons here. Learning to be politically effec-

tive means more than getting a fair-share funding for one's club or organization. It means more than being able to maintain an effective and clean government, free of some unscrupulous administrator's undue and potentially corrupting influence. To his credit, *Press* editor emeritus, Sam Goldman, in his March 17, 2004 article, pointed out that "Any administrator having that much power over any student government only serves to de-legitimize, cheapen, and generally make a mockery of it." It means more than refusing to allow club events to be blockaded by graft maximizing SAC and Student Union and Activities rules. It means more than refusing to let one's club budget be frozen arbitrarily. It means more than making the social and political legitimacy of a particular set of clubs and organizations explicit. It means that for the rest of one's life one will know how to fight injustice of any kind.

## Gay Marriage Politics in New York City

By Jorge Sierra

On Saturday, February 5, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, in a double-edged response to a court ruling Friday, announced that he supports recognizing same-sex marriage—and that he will appeal the decision ordering the city to grant licenses to same-sex couples. Have I lost you yet? By chance, Bloomberg had a prior commitment to appear before two gay rights organizations Saturday evening, so attendees had an easy chance to hold his feet to the fire if he made a decision to appeal or waffled on them. Instead, he muffled their outrage by coming out for the first time in favor of gay marriage and claiming that if he didn't appeal the decision, it would lead to "chaos" in the city. His reasoning, according to Gay365.com: "What you do not want to have is a repetition of California, when many people for a month were misled into thinking they could get the union they so much wanted" before a higher court invalidated the same-sex marriage licenses issued in San Francisco.

That was very shrewd of him, yes? Mayor Bloomberg gave the gay community something they didn't have before—his support for same-sex marriage—and still demon-

strated his independence from them. He even promised to lobby the state legislature to change the marriage law if the Court of Appeals invalidates the present ruling. To

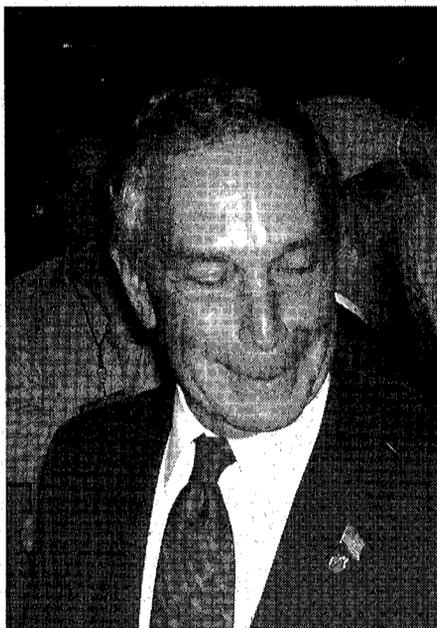
be fair, the mayor had no choice but to find some way to take a moderate position here. Opposing same-sex marriage would further damage his already unsuccessful efforts to cultivate a good relationship with the city's gay community. Supporting the ruling would leave Bloomberg open to the risk of being overturned and looking like an idiot. It might also cause respect for him to plummet, as a plurality of New York City residents—forty seven percent according to a March 2004 Daily News poll—oppose legalizing gay marriage. Besides, most people have their own pet agendas that they think are much more important.

There are some people who are unhappy with the mayor's split decision. Gay rights organizations are split between criticism and grudging support of the mayor's position. When the mayor announced his decision to his two audiences, some people heckled and booed him. More recently Gay City News ([www.gaycitynews.com](http://www.gaycitynews.com)) reported that a

coalition of gay rights groups organized a protest with 80 members at the site where the mayor formally announced his re-election campaign. Predictably, none of the mayor's potential Republican or Democratic opponents for this year's election supported his position, although the Democrats apparently didn't oppose it when Attorney General Eliot Spitzer said much the same thing last year.

Some of the activists at the most recent event attacked the mayor's overall record on gay rights, citing vetoes of pro-gay City Council bills and his participation in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade, which annually excludes a gay delegation. Yet Bloomberg also marches in gay pride parades, signed a law authorizing the city to extend the city's civil union provisions to recognize same-sex marriages allowed in other states, and we have his most recent statements supporting gay marriage as a policy.

In actuality, there is nothing ambiguous about the mayor's gay rights record; he's simply a by-the-book law and order guy first and an ally to the gay rights-agenda second. Gay City News reported last year that he vetoed the anti-harassment Dignity for All Schools Act because he believed it violated state law and overruled the Schools Chancellor's authority, but that he personally supported the Dignity for All Students Act written by the State Assembly. He defended his veto of the Equal Benefits law, which required city contractors to provide



AWWW, IDN'T HE CUTE?  
Courtesy of mayoralpics.com

Continued on page 15

Swords

Sorcery

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LESBIANS!

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# The Facebook and Steve Hofstetter at 103rd and Broadway

By Joe Rios

Since the fall, the big thing on campus has been *The Facebook*. If you've had your head under a rock on Mars, *The Facebook* is an online directory of college students. The concept is very similar to the non-scholarly *MySpace*, and the members are all college students or graduates, allowing you to find people at Stony Brook with similar interests and classes. *The Facebook* features over 200 colleges, covering everywhere from Adelphi to Yale. At Stony Brook there are literally thousands of students who are signed up for *The Facebook*, and the numbers are growing each day.

While *The Facebook* in itself is very impressive, perhaps one of the most impressive things is the amount of friends you can accumulate, and Steve Hofstetter is a prime example of the power of information. Steve is a comedian, whose primary audience is...you guessed it, college students. On Christmas Eve, Steve decided that he would shoot for 10,000 friends on *The Facebook*. It's now February, and Steve's friend count has soared past 70,000!

Aside from his *Facebook* quest, Steve also is the host of "4 Quotas" on Sirius Satellite Radio. His newest book "Student Body Shots: Another Round" just came out. He is also the head writer from collegehumor.com as well as a writer for *Maxim* and *Stuff* magazine. When he's not doing all that, Steve performs stand up comedy. He is the co-founder of Comedy Soapbox, which is regularly found at the Underground Lounge in New York City.

A few weeks ago, on a Friday night, my roommate and I hopped on the LIRR to The City, and, after a long trek, we finally arrived at the Underground Lounge, which is uptown on 125th and 8th, for those who were wondering. The cost of the show was about \$10, plus the cost of drinks. The show was extremely entertaining, and the small enclosed atmosphere of The Underground gives you an intimate connection with the performers. The evening's entertain-

ment included Steve, and was headlined by Christian Finnegan, who has been featured in a number of things, including *Chappelle's Show*.

After the show, I met Steve, and since we had a while before we had to catch our train out to Stony Brook, we figured we would head downtown with him on the 1 train. So after arriving at the 103rd and Broadway train station, we sat down on a bench waiting for the next train. I turned to Steve, with whom I had been getting along real well, and said "Hey Steve, wanna do an interview?" Steve was more than willing to comply.

So I interviewed Steve Hofstetter on the platform of the 1 train, waiting to go downtown.

Me: So, all introductions aside, let's get down to business. What inspired you to do comedy?

Steve: Unemployment. Ah, seriously, I come out of school with a great resumé. I had taken a year off from school to work. I was the head writer for the Yankees' website. I was a sports writer, and out of school I get an internship for *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, and it doesn't turn into a job, and suddenly I'm left there. I tried moving to Boston for a couple months to be a writer, but I worked the front desk at an inn. It was the worst experience of my life. So while I'm making beds and preparing fruit salads, I'm trying to be this famous writer, and it was the most surreal thing in the world. My first book had just come out, and I went and did my first book signing, and the next day I'm back at the inn, signing people in. It was then that I realized what a weird double life I was living where I was a somebody and a nobody at the same time. So I quit the job at the inn, and I moved back to New York, I had nothing else to do, so I tried stand up comedy.

Me: And the whole thing just took off?

Steve: Yeah, it took off, and it took off a lot quicker than it should have. I sit talking to

these new comedians, and I'll be giving them advice, and when I ask them how long have they been doing comedy, and they say "only two or three years" and I think to myself that the second time I ever did comedy was only two years ago myself. I did a hundred colleges last year, and they have never even done a college, and I think it's all a matter not so much of talent, but a matter of drive. I remember what it was like to sleep on my father's couch and I never want to do that again.

At this point we got on the train, and, in between the announcements for stops, the interview continued.

Me: So what's the deal with you and *The Facebook*?

Steve: Uh...in terms of what?

Me: Why go for ten thousand, why go for a hundred thousand, and why go for all these friends on *The Facebook*?

Steve: Well, I was on *The Facebook*, because it was Christmas Eve, and I'm Jewish, so I had nothing to do, and I'm playing around, and I was like "I've got shows here and there coming up, and maybe I should email some people and ask them to come to the shows." And then they were emailing me back and adding me as friends, and I'm like "hey, this is interesting, maybe I can get friends at all the schools I'm going to be at," and I started getting friends from schools I may never go to, so I said "Let's just go for ten thousand" I picked the number randomly, and I never thought that two weeks later I'd have ten thousand. So once I got ten thousand I couldn't stop there. I was going to pick something like 25 thousand, but then I thought "let me pick something completely unobtainable," so I picked 100 thousand, and here it is a month later, and I'm at 66 thousand.

Continued on page 17

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# The Real ID Act Is a Fascist Outrage By Marcel Votluka

*"Those who would exchange essential liberty for a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."*

— Benjamin Franklin

How would you feel to be treated as an animal in a zoo? If the proposed federalization of driver's licenses, the Real ID Act (HR 418), passes the Senate, we'll be on the road to further invasions of our privacy and freedom. Doubtless most people will argue that these new regulations will protect us from terrorists and illegal immigrants. The media is pushing the foolish idea that we have nothing to fear; the government, in all its wisdom, can be trusted to use this information wisely and judiciously. This is utter nonsense. The Real ID Act is not harmless to us, nor will it do anything at all to make America safe. Instead, it will make us less safe, not more.

## A National ID Poses Threats To Americans

The Real ID Act, and the de facto national ID card it creates, is dangerous to Americans for several reasons, not the least of which is massive violations of privacy.

First, it gives the federal government more power to collect and keep information on all of us—information that can be abused. The proposed databases sanctioned by the Real ID Act will be shared with Canada and Mexico, and there's no reason why, in this age of 'anything goes for the government,' an unscrupulous official can't give or sell this information to private corporations for their own use, or even terrorists—though it's more likely that the former will occur. Robert O'Harrow, author of the book *No Place To Hide*, warns that companies are setting up private intelligence services that can find or maintain information on any person for a fee. He states, "in many ways [they] do what James Bond and his colleagues would have liked back in the 60's movies except they do it faster and better in terms of finding links among people, establishing patterns, you know, showing tendencies, risk assessment." He warns that highly private and personal information on a person's background can become available for anybody who desires to check it out. One's privacy would be lost in this system, to those who would make a profit off exposing your personal life. Critics of the Real ID Act warn that government officials could hand information about citizens to such private investigation firms to be used as these companies see fit.

Such fears are not ungrounded, as this hypothetical situation actually has precedent. According to the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, until 1989 the Social Security Administration disclosed Social Security numbers to the private sector. Moreover, the reason why Stony Brook students now use SOLAR ID numbers is because public outrage led to an end to the former practice of using Social Security numbers as ID numbers. But there's not much to guarantee that in the future, information about citizens—presumably from one of the proposed databases—will never fall into unscrupulous hands without our knowledge or consent. Indeed, this situation is entirely possible.

The second reason the proposed national ID is dangerous is that including DNA information or fingerprints or radio tags (RFID tags) on ID cards—as the Act proposes—would be a gold mine for identity thieves. RFID tags transmit information about oneself to a computerized reader. Anyone with the skills and technology—and motive—could access this information without you even knowing it. What's to stop a hacker from accessing a database and taking your information to use as she or he sees fit? What's

to stop someone with their own reader from taking a peek at your private information? The State Department argues that the proposed technological additions to ID cards will make them harder to forge. That may be true, but it's also true that such technology can be easily manipulated and the information can be accessed and abused far more easily than some are willing to admit. Given the horror stories of identity theft that thousands have faced in their lives, it would be hasty and downright foolish to put such personal information out there, when there is no guarantee that it will be secure from snooping busybodies and criminals.

The third reason the Real ID Act is dangerous is that it will neither stop illegal immigration nor stifle terrorism—its stated purpose—and it will not stop crime, drug trafficking, drunk driving, or thwart fraud as some have suggested. Rather, it can provide more opportunities for innocent people to be taken advantage of and for abuses as mentioned above. The Electronic Frontier Foundation asserts:

"[T]he Real ID Act is dangerous...it will never stop illegal immigrants nor stifle terrorism."

*"Experience with smaller-scale identification systems in the United States and with national identification systems enacted elsewhere suggest that at best they relocate crime and more often cause wholesale violations of civil liberties without producing any crime-fighting results, at least nothing comparable to the efforts of law enforcement officers available at a fraction of the cost. Proponents have never commissioned studies about the psychological impacts of national identification systems on the populations who are subjected to them."*

Just as drug laws do not prevent drug abuse or commerce, and gun control laws fail to thwart gun violence, a national ID card will not thwart terrorists or any other criminal that can simply find ways to bypass the system. It merely creates a false sense of security due to a misplaced trust in government.

## Are We Animals In A Zoo?

At any rate, consider this: the US government can't properly educate our kids; it promises to keep drugs off the streets yet can't keep them out of its prisons; it promises to make us safe yet can't find Osama bin Laden after several years; it promises to bring freedom and democracy to the world yet subverts it here at home; it promises to end poverty yet through obscenely high taxes extorts money out of the hands of hard-working Americans who need it to pay their bills; it promises economic prosperity for all while giving tax breaks and privileges specifically to its wealthy cronies; and joins with drug companies and HMOs to mishandle medical care to the point where seniors must buy drugs from Canada and sick people are tortured with sky-high medical expenses (which are artificially higher than their true market value). So my question is this: why should a government such as this be trusted with information about who we are, where we live, what we do, what we have done, who we are, where we are at any given point in time, who we associate with, et cetera?

Are we to be treated like animals in a zoo, to be tagged and monitored 24/7? Are we to be catalogued like boxes of merchandise in a warehouse? Are we to be viewed as slaves, to be numbered and watched over lest we do something to displease our corporate fascist masters? Are we to be treated like criminals in a maximum security prison, instead of free and sovereign individuals? These are the horrid, yet unspoken and subtle, implications of the Real ID Act.

Consider the example of a California school that used RFID technology on its students' ID cards—without the knowledge or consent of either the students or their parents. Some would argue that this is harmless—why shouldn't a school be able to keep track of its students? The problems are threefold: first, there's the problem of hackers and identity thieves accessing information about students. Also, one could argue that the school can have kids wear such ID badges on its property, but the kids obviously carry these things with them all the time—does the school have a right to effectively keep tabs on its students while they are off school property? More importantly, parents and students alike were not even informed of the use of the RFID tags, nor were they asked to give consent. Keeping tabs on students without informed consent from either the students themselves or their parents is simply put, unethical.

Parents seemed to agree. One couple asserted, "Forcing our child to be tracked with a RFID device—without our consent or knowledge—is a complete invasion of our privacy." Another seethed, "we don't want any child to be tracked anywhere. Our children are not pieces of inventory."

Cédric Laurant, Policy Counsel with the Electronic Privacy Information Center [EPIC], points out another potential threat posed by the RFID IDs. "Forcing children to wear badges around their necks displaying such sensitive information as their name, picture, grade and school exposes them to potential discrimination since the name of their school may disclose their religious beliefs or social class."

The ACLU, EPIC, and the Electronic Frontier Foundation have joined together to challenge the school's use of RFIDs. But this is just one school district in California; can similar stories be repeated across the country if the Real ID Act, with its nationalized ID cards and databases, comes to fruition?

Consider also that the new US passports will include RFID chips, which will include a holder's name, digital photo, and address. Here we see the same issues with identity theft, privacy rights, and abuse of information databases and technology rearing their ugly heads. US regulations stipulate that certain countries must add biometric information [such as fingerprints and DNA information] to their passports in order for their citizens to have the right to visit without needing visas. These new passports are scheduled to appear in spring of this year.

And keep in mind that the Real ID Act provides that the Department of Homeland Security can order more kinds of information added to IDs as it sees fit. What kinds of information—and how much—could this be? Nobody can say for sure. But do we really want to find out? And at any rate, why should anybody have the right to demand by force what is rightfully yours? What will keeping track of all of us achieve? It will not make anybody safer; it will merely create a false sense of security, while the real criminals and terrorists will still be perfectly capable of doing their vile deeds. A

Continued on page 17

# Peace and Unease in the Middle East Continued...

By Joan Leong

Continued from page 5

assembly. That is a necessary preliminary because if the Sunnis' voice is repressed in the new government, the insurgents will probably never stop fighting. The violence has increased since the elections and the Sunnis are staging more attacks than ever. On the eve of the Shiites' most important holiday, 39 people were killed by Sunni insurgents. There is an extremely long road ahead for the citizens of Iraq who just completed their first free elections in over 50 years. The Shiites did not get the two thirds majority needed to control the Assembly and now they have to work side by side the Kurds and other parties to control the fate of the 26 million people of Iraq. Finance Minister Abdul-Mahdi, views this positively, because he believes Iraq will never maintain harmony, unless all the different sects of people have a voice in their government. However, some Sunnis, disagree and they believe the elections will create a "sectarian war." The Shiites' and Kurds' parties have asked the U.S. troops to stay longer and help maintain peace while the committee is still being formed. The Sunnis are still adamantly opposed to them. Iraq is an intensely religious nation and it's hard to foresee how they will overcome their religious differences to be able to work together. The Shiites and Kurds are more compromising on their positions, and are going to lengths to make sure there is a position for a Sunni candidate to help draft the new constitution. They are still trying hard to overcome the memories of the torment and anguish the Sunnis have inflicted on them all those years, but they are making an effort to include the Sunni voice in the new constitution. With such distressing history between these groups, only time will tell if the people of Iraq finally get some peace.

## The Lebanon and Syrian Tension

For fifteen years Lebanon suffered an all-out civil war where over 100,000 people were killed. Then, in 1989, the war officially ended, and Syrian troops remained behind to help maintain the peace and dissipate any troubles that may arise. That was sixteen years ago, and Syrian troops still occupy Lebanon in large amounts. They stayed under the approval of the Lebanese government and the Arab league. However, Lebanon is now relatively stable, with its people having more freedom than many other Arab nations, and they want the Syrian troops out. In 2004, the UN told the Syrian forces to pull out, but they still remain. The Lebanese people are fed up with the control and corruption of their government by top Syrian officials, who dominate behind the scenes. To put fuel on the fire, their beloved former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was killed on Valentine's Day. Mr. Lebanon, as he was frequently called, and sixteen others were killed in a massive bomb attack in Beirut with over 137 injured. Hours later, Hariri supporters pointed their fingers at the Lebanese government and the Syrians. His funeral on Wednesday turned into a chaotic scene of anti-Syrian sentiment. Mourners called for the Syrian forces to leave their country and for the Lebanese puppet-of-Syria government to resign. Syria denies having anything to do with the assassination. Prime Minister Hariri had his share of political enemies, because he wanted to oust the Syrians from control of the government. International support has poured in and plans to investigate and bring those responsible to justice are proceeding. This attack could have disastrous effects that are just bubbling on the surface. The civil war which ended sixteen years ago was

due largely to the conflict of the Maronite Christians and Shiite-Sunni Muslims that lived and governed in Lebanon. These three religious groups each hold the top three positions in the government and they have had many conflicts amongst each other. Mr. Hariri was a Sunni Muslim and his death could possibly rehash the bitter violence of the civil war all those years ago. The Western allies have agreed to put more pressure on Syria to pull its troops out and let the Lebanese govern on their own. However, things just got more complicated when Iran and Syria announced they have formed an alliance to handle the diplomatic pressures from the UN, the US and Israel. What happens next? There is a major call for reform in the Lebanese government, and as for its sketchy relationship with Syria, we will have to wait and see.



NICE DRESS, QADDAFI,  
Courtesy of stolenpictures.com

## Eyes on Iran

The United States has been sending unmanned spy drones over Iran's airspace to spy on Iran's nuclear and military facilities. The United States is suspicious of Iran's nuclear developments, but Iranian officials reiterate that their nuclear production is strictly for civilian energy. President Mohammad Khatami refuses to succumb to the pressures of Britain, France and Germany to permanently stop the development of uranium. President Bush states that the US has no intentions (as of right now) to attack Iranian nuclear facilities, but he is strongly behind the European nations for their diplomatic approach to convince Iran to stop their nuclear programs. On Friday, Russian President Putin announces his confidence in Iran's direction of their peaceful nuclear programs. He does not believe that they are developing enriched high levels of uranium for an atomic arsenal. President Putin will continue to support Iran in the technical and military fields. As for President Bush, he does not trust Iran, and wants to see further proof that their nuclear programs are strictly what they claim they are. Iran is also still currently involved in other conflicts with Middle Eastern nations. They are strongly against any diplomatic process that might ensure that Israel become legitimized as a Jewish State in the Middle East. Iran is also supportive of several Palestinian militant forces active in southern Lebanon who

continuously tries to take control of that region. With pressures on Syria to pull out of Lebanon, the two have created a political alliance to withstand the weight of the Western allies' demands. The recent public alliance could hinder the Palestinian and Israeli peace process. As for the whole nuclear programs issue, Iran and the European Union are currently in negotiation and results will be clear in mid-March. President Khatami reiterates that Iran has no intentions of creating nuclear weapons and vowed to uphold their word of their promises from November, when Iran signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty requiring only peaceful uses of the nuclear program.

The Middle East continues to be a region hounded by instability. With recent events in the past weeks, the ups and downs of the inconsistent Middle East are apparent. Palestine and Israel's truce is the beginning of future of peace between rivaling nations, however they continue to face the opposition of other countries such as Iran. The Sudan region of Darfur is still in a horrendous condition with no Western allied forces lending much of a helping hand. The Western allies are resolute about trying to maintain a lasting peace in the Middle East, yet blatantly ignore the ongoing genocide occurring in Darfur. Political funds have been handed out to recruit troops to create peace, but how is that ever going to happen when those very troops are fighting each other? Unless genuine international help is given, by sending troops to that region, the progress of the ethnic cleansing civil war is long from over. The Syrian and Lebanese conflict has the world's attention currently because of the uncertainty of how the people will respond in the following weeks. Will the horrors and near destruction from Lebanon's civil war sixteen years ago arise again? The United State's vision of a pro-US Iraq was vanquished when the religious Shiites won most of the seats over the US's preferred candidate Allawi. Now, the United States is seemingly just going to let the divided religious groups in the Assembly battle it out amongst themselves. The Sunni-led terrorist attacks are still occurring heavily. As for Iran, tensions are slowly mounting between the European Union and the United States. Iranian troops have been ordered to gun down any suspicious aircraft flying over their nuclear facilities. It is still early and the status of Iran's nuclear programs are uncertain, although that nation is adamant on keeping them. Iran is also now linked to Syria and it will hinder the autonomy the Lebanese are trying to get from the Syrians. Iran has been labeled as a threat in President Bush's Axis of Evil speech. While the Middle East is attempting peace, its efforts are still marginal in comparison to the tremendous unease and volatility that still lie ahead. Several leaders of the Arab world are continuously meeting to discuss how to obtain a lasting peace among the Muslim and Middle Eastern World. Will the continued diplomatic efforts from Western nations be effective? Will the Middle East ever see tranquility despite the hostile religious differences embedded among its citizens for as long as any of them can remember? With all the catastrophic disasters and people dying around the world, I truly hope for these disparate religious groups to find a common ground and maintain a lasting harmony. I wish for the end of the needless intentional murders of human beings by other human beings.

*"The direct use of force is such a poor solution to any problem; it is generally employed only by small children and large nations."*

- David Friedman

# Gay Marriage Politics Continued...

By Jorge Sierra

Continued from page 11

equal marriage benefits to same-sex and heterosexual couples, by claiming that this law was also illegal and would force businesses that objected to same-sex partnerships (for example, religious organizations) not to do business with the city. Now, you can agree, disagree, or be thoroughly confused by the legality argument, but to me it seems shrill and intolerant to call someone who refuses to put activism above the law an anti-gay hypocrite.

I'm not letting the mayor off completely. Being on speaking terms with gay rights organizations is not enough to call oneself a friend to the gay community. Even if he doesn't agree with them on everything, the obligation to find some common ground and act on it falls to him as well, because homophobia does exist in the city. Our schools, our jobs, our streets are not safe places for gay persons, and His Royal Bureaucratic Highness surely can throw a monkey wrench *somewhere* into the system to make the city a safer place. Mayor Bloomberg isn't the type to run around rallying for racial justice or reproductive choice, for example, yet he has promoted both by pushing for accountability in the city's public schools and mandating that medical schools provide classes on performing abortions. As far as I can tell, the mayor has never done a similar campaign against homophobic harassment, either by acting within the system or lobbying the state legislature. I think I've changed my mind. Mayor Bloomberg is an opportunistic anti-gay hypocrite who doesn't care about the real people.

But all is well with the world, because now he's going to lobby for same-sex marriage. At least, that's what I'm supposed to say. Well, I'm not falling in line. Why is it marriage, and not violence, harassment, or simple homophobia or ignorance that gets all the attention anyway? I could never understand that. Why is it among all the issues we could be having a national debate about, it just so happens we're fighting over the one status quo that is the least repressive, the most supported among the general public, and requires the most radical reform to eliminate? Isn't that a waste of energy? Why have the powers that be decided to alienate the greatest number of honest people with their choice of battles? There are many right-of-center Americans who find anti-gay harassment appalling. Why do I suspect that even if Mayor Bloomberg pledges tomorrow to eliminate homophobic violence (which he won't), if he does another anti-gay marriage thing he will become more ostracized, not less?

We have a very bad situation here. Most elected officials, like most people, are clueless about gay issues (the same also holds true for racial minority issues, working class issues, etc.). Those few people who want to do things right are ignored, attacked, or fed misinformation by the radicals, while those who don't care but are willing to get elected mimic whatever irrational agendas the activists preach. And meanwhile, the people who are most vulnerable remain silenced and victimized. I have just one more question: who is on their side?

# Attorney General Gonzales and the Use of Abuse

By Tiffany Russo

With the start of George W. Bush's second term, came the changing of many administrative positions. One of the more scary and alarming new recruits is the newly elected successor to Attorney General John D. Ashcroft, even though nobody is as terrifying and startling as Ashcroft singing "Let the Eagle Soar." Alberto R. Gonzales began his career in the Texas Supreme Court (appointed, not surprisingly by our very own prez, then governor, George Bush), most likely ordering kegs and coke for their weekly hoedowns at the ranch. He also served as Texas's secretary of state before being named White House counsel in January of 2001. Senate Democrats are most skeptical of Gonzales's involvement in the prisoner abuses at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. Granted, Gonzales is making history by becoming the first Hispanic Attorney General in U.S. history, he is still making it even more clear to me, and hopefully many more of

you, that the administration is choosing officials based on who kisses more ass and is least likely able to maintain an independent, or differing opinion. As Dan Eggen, of the Washington Post stated, Bush selected his "top lawyer and longtime friend to guide the war on terrorism and lead the federal government's largest law enforcement agency."

A memo written in January 2002, stated that the Bush Administration should be cautious of allowing negative prisoner treatment, which could be deemed "war crimes," unless they first agreed with the Justice Department attorneys who have decided, conveniently enough, that the Geneva Conventions do not apply to Al Qaeda and Taliban captives being held at Guantanamo Bay. Gonzales later claimed that he felt complaints about the memo were taken out of context. However, the State Department requested that the President not follow the advice of the Justice Department. This is the point at which Georgie's loyal friend Alberto decided to send him a nice little memo reassuring him that the Justice Department's assessment is valid, therefore basically stating that it's OK to use torture and not follow any human rights rules because we have made some exceptions. Critics say that

the general message of this memo and the policies on prisoner treatment that Gonzales has helped to draft "created the atmosphere" which led to the abuses at Abu Ghraib.

In the memo, Gonzales argues that Bush's beloved war on terror makes the Geneva Conventions "obsolete" and "renders quaint some of its provisions." In August of 2002, another memo from the Justice Department's Office of Legal Advising made implications that the torturing of Al Qaeda detainees abroad "may be justified" and that international laws regarding such abuses could be unconstitutional when applied to interrogation methods.

As soon as this memo became public, our fickle friend Mr. Gonzales claimed that the memo was irrelevant, unnecessary, and overbroad.

Gonzales's faith in the Justice Department lawyers means that he also supports their claims that physical abuse of prisoners is not torture unless it was "of an intensity akin

to...serious physical injury, such as death or organ failure." Also noting that mental abuse is torture only if it causes "lasting psychological harm." Doesn't any and all mental abuse cause "lasting psychological harm"? I don't know, maybe I'm wrong, but this seems to be consistent with the Administration's wordplay and mind games, of which no one should ever have to get used to. According to *The Nation*, the Justice Department has recently slipped some more clever, appeasing statements regarding their beliefs that the international and legal laws regarding prisoners fully promotes fair and humane treatment to all, even those captured during the "war on terror." Is it just me or does it seem like the Justice Department just can't make up its mind? If all of these laws and regulations are honored, then how did the Abu Ghraib abuses occur (oh I forgot it was those few "bad apples") and what about all those people at Guantanamo Bay who are being held without the right to a trial and attorney (a policy of which Gonzales publicly defended despite its rejection by the U.S. Supreme court). Well, in light of our bleak future of four more years of Bush and his new accomplice, as Charles Schumer put it, "he's a better candidate than John Ashcroft."



YOU GUYS HAVING A KEGGER?  
Courtesy of msnbc.com



# Silicon Gandhi: Civil Disobedience in the Digital Age

By Michael Prazak

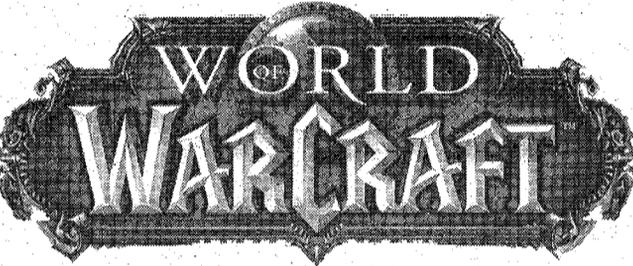
A collection of dispossessed citizens gathered together recently to protest a perceived inequality existing in their world. Rights were not being recognized, and the powers that be seemed to unfairly dole out allowances to certain classes. This is the standard setting for injustice, the means by which revolutions are born. However, this particular moment is fascinating for the medium through which it occurred and the manner that it was implemented.

The individuals involved in this moment of protest were conjured out of thin air, their existence debatable and their importance negligible. They stepped forth from the ether of the Internet and shouted in the voices they were allowed. The virtual world they hoped to change was that created in the game, *World of Warcraft*, and the lives they hoped to liberate were those of their characters, freed from the perceived injustices levied on them by the game's moderators and creators, Blizzard Inc.

A little back story is necessary, especially for those not acquainted with this game, as the concept of people living existences in virtual fantasy worlds, attempting to replicate the "real" world, is a bit foreign to many. The game of *World of Warcraft* is within the Role-Playing genre and, in particular, the sub-genre of Massively Multiplayer Online Games. Put simply, people play a game through a constantly evolving proto-social being referred to as either their character or avatar. This being interacts with a fully integrated, and all permeating, virtual world within which, typically, up to thousands of other "avatars" also exist.

So we have the setting for a virtual social

arena. Eventually, as in this world, perceived inequalities would possibly crop up. That is precisely what happened when the character class of Warrior, in the game, felt that the game's creators and implementers had violated their rights of equality. Not on par with the other classes in the game, they felt the weakening of their class was premeditated and doled out unfairly, providing no means by which the warrior class could compete with others in the game. In reaction to this, a group of similar minded individuals decided to stage a protest.



What they did was all create new warrior characters at the same time and ran them into the same area. They then allowed their numbers to grow until the server status was either compromised or greatly weakened as reports of the result of this were mixed.

Many of the masterminds behind this event had their accounts discontinued, and many others faced brief account suspensions. But the question still remains, what precisely should one call this strange and unique moment in Internet history? For instance, can this be properly called a protest, as those who were dispossessed were comprised of photons blinking on a screen transmitted through the circuit-

ry of a computer? Some have labeled this as an act of cyber terrorism, which seems nearly organic in this day and age. However, both seem a bit extreme when dealing with the world of video games.

It is fascinating to note that, although these characters existed purely in concept, their creators were rational enough to direct their grievance in a similar manner. They didn't, in pure anger and rage, storm the offices of Blizzard Inc. and slaughter the staff. Instead they hit them where it hurts, they created a situation that forced the powers that be to sit up and notice. Although it inconvenienced many innocent patrons of the game, the protesters also have to be credited with taking a logical course of action, given their few options. Rather than being charged with the murders of various programmers, they simply had their accounts banned.

It's a little upsetting that, in this world, people are willing to dedicate themselves to protests involving the slighting of a gnome warrior in the world of Azeroth, but will not bat an eye to the real horrors occurring in our world. Perhaps it's only when people are personally affected that any changes even begin to take place. But at least this gives us a clue, maybe if we can connect everyone to the personal and human aspect that involves us all, we may finally be able to implement change. However, a universal quality of man existed is one of those ideas that has been debated by the most intelligent minds the human race has ever had to offer, and an answer doesn't seem forthcoming. Oh well. In the meantime, at least my gnome will have his rights!

## Vintage Style

By Laura Positano

Have you ever noticed how old styles come back into vogue, decades later? The two most obvious examples are miniskirts and bellbottoms. Fashions originally from the 1960s and the 1970s were popular in the 1990s. Now, in 2005, people are still looking back in time for inspiration for what to wear. While the 1960s still has an influence on fashion (ponchos and bohemian prints), now the 1940s is where it's at. Pencil skirts, luxurious fabric, full skirts, feminine sweaters, even corsets, starred in Manhattan's Fashion Week. These designs are beautiful and romantic.

These silhouettes evoke a mood, a temperament reflected in 1940s classic films. Pencil skirts are reminiscent of a young Lauren Bacall, appearing sophisticated and independent standing alongside Humphrey Bogart. The full skirts evoke the mutual vulnerability and the romance between Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*.

However nostalgic these fashions are, they are also unattainable for the average college woman. Yet, if you can not afford to spend a considerable amount for such a wardrobe, you have many options. You could get a knock off in H&M, TJ Maxx, or other retailers. You can go to the local thrift store and see if you can find something old but in decent condition. Sometimes, neighborhood

yard sales et cetera actually have good finds.

It is also possible that your grandmother may have outfits lying around from her youth. As long as it is not filled with holes from moth bites, her old sweaters can be like new. Decades-old dresses may need the zipper to be fixed and buttons may need to be mended, but other than that, it is likely to be relatively low maintenance. After a good washing and mending, that dress will be ready for action!

Even if you can not find anything remotely reminiscent of the 1940s in thrift stores, yard sales, or grandma's closet, do not give up hope. The fact is, many fashions from the 1950s, including accessories like purses and pins, are also trendy. Crinoline skirts (one of the ways women of the 1950s achieved that full skirted look) are a really good rare find. Evening gowns, mini dresses, and ethnic-inspired dresses of the 1960s and 1970s, can make a unique, hip statement at a party.

If you are lucky, you could stumble upon a comfortable pair of vintage jeans, or a stunning vintage dress at a yard sale for the same amount you would pay for an overpriced campus lunch. Or at least you will find a witty Peanuts pin, costing twenty-five cents, like this writer did at a yard sale. If grandma threw out all her fabulous fashions, and you have gone to thrift stores and frequented yard

sales, but no luck, then try Internet web sites that sell vintage clothes.

The web site of Screaming Mimi's, which sells clothes and accessories dating from the 1950s and beyond, sells accessories on their web site for cheap, reasonable prices. Remember those slap bracelets you would somehow convince your mom to buy you? That's right; they have costume jewelry from the 1980s.

Enjoy your journey into fashion history. You may find yourself shocked at how an outfit that has a history can be so soothing. Perhaps you will start imagining what the original wearer of that outfit was doing when they wore it, or what type of person they were. Were they fantasizing that they were Ingrid Bergman or Lauren Bacall, romancing the suave men of the cinema of their time? Did they want to inspire a certain image that could only be attained by wearing such apparel?

Whatever the original wearer's purpose for choosing that same outfit, you live in a different period than they did. You can do more than just look independent. *You can be independent.* Fashion was at times one of the only ways women could express themselves until the women's movement of the 1960s through the 1970s. As a result, fashions now considered vintage once held considerable power. Respect and acknowledge that by making certain you take care of such treasures. That means not getting the vintage outfit stained with oil or paint, and other stains that can't be removed. Wear vintage, and you'll transcend fashion trends.



THE NEXT FASHION TREND:  
CRO-MAGNIQUE,  
Courtesy of gallery.hd.org

# The Facebook and Steve Hofstetter

## Continued...

By Joe Rios

### Continued from page 12

Our interview was interrupted mid-way by a begger on the train, once she left the car we continued onward.

Me: So now you're touring across the country, and you're going to all these colleges, and you have to wonder, why the college audience?

Steve: Basically, the people who find me funny are the people near my age. Anyone over 30 doesn't really find me funny. I make references to things like *Saved by the Bell* and the Mario Brothers, things that I grew up with, and older people don't identify with that. I mean, I got recognized by two college girls on the train the other day, and that would never happen with anyone older. It's an interesting dynamic, and I definitely do better with the younger crowd. College student are my favorite because I have the young sensibility, and, in my acts, I like to make people think, and people in college are willing to think.

Me: A lot of your material is based in the concept of stupidity, and I was wondering if there was any one particular case of extreme stupidity?

Steve: Well there's always extreme stupidity. For example, I was driving from Las Vegas to LA, and I came through a town called Yermo, and I thought it would be really funny if you wrote an "m" on the end so it sounds like "your-mom" and was telling someone the story and they just didn't get it. And the stupidity that exists is the basis of my act. I refer to my

act as "eight drops full" because I'm an optimist, as in "the glass is half full," but the world is really shitty right now, so I believe that it's eight drops full, and I believe that you can do something about it, and that's where my material comes from, and that's my outlook on life.

Me: You are doing really well for yourself, now, and where do you see yourself say...five years from now?

Steve: Well you have to remember that two years ago, I wasn't really a comedian, and now, thanks to things like *Facebook*, people are taking me seriously, and I've got my show on Sirius, and at the shows now, people are giving me the benefit of the doubt. I'm very happy with where I've gotten. I'm 25 years

old; I don't work for anyone but myself. I have my own apartment in LA, I've got two cars, and even though they're pieces of crap, and, totaled, they might add up to a car, but still, two years ago I would wonder if I could afford twelve dollar boots, so I have to be happy with where I am...I mean, I can afford a twelve dollar car!

Me: I know you have come very far in two years, but, in the future, where do you see yourself? Do you see yourself among the greats like Dave Chapelle and George Carlin?

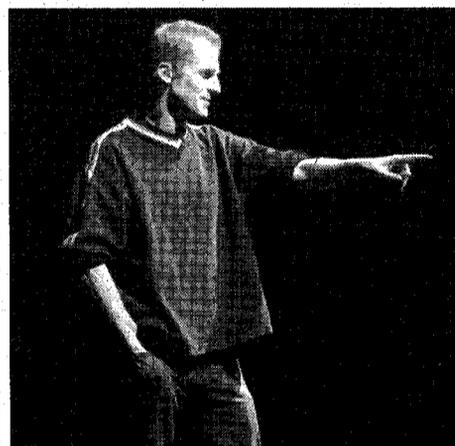
Steve: Well, no one can say they are going to be among the greats. I can say that things are building. I am starting to get through to people, and I'm doing more TV, and satellite radio is going to be huge! Thank God for [Howard] Stern for putting us on the map, and thank God that he didn't join until after I got my stock options. Ya know, five years from now, I think I'll be doing similar things, only the venues will be much larger. And this is my stop right here.

Me: Well, Steve, thanks for the good show and the interview

Steve: And I hope you are able to make out anything we said on this train with all the noise.

Me: Take care Steve, and I will keep spreading the word about you, and more people on *The Facebook* will hate me.

Steve: Yeah, I mean, hey, I



"I hate you already."  
Courtesy of [www.stevhofstetter.com](http://www.stevhofstetter.com)

hate you already!

Steve Hofstetter is continuing his *Facebook* quest even today, so if you would like to help, search for him on *The Facebook* and add him as your friend.

If you want to know more about Steve, visit [www.stevhofstetter.com](http://www.stevhofstetter.com) and for more info on the Underground Lounge and the Comedy Soapbox visit [www.comedysoapbox.com](http://www.comedysoapbox.com).

## The Real ID Act Is a Fascist Outrage Continued...

### Continued from page 13

national ID and database system will not and cannot prevent crime or terrorism. That is the central truth of the matter that power-hungry politicians fail to realize.

The Patriot Act provides very broad and vague definitions of what terrorism is, and gives the government a lot of power to declare citizens as "enemy combatants." This means that anybody could potentially be targeted for engaging in activities that the state doesn't like—antiwar demonstrators have already been targeted, as well as law-abiding Arabs and Muslims. The Real ID Act continues this strategy. Will you be kept safe and secure? No. You will be watched, and not by benign eyes. To those in charge, you will be viewed as little more than an animal—your right to privacy does not exist in their eyes. Your right to live your life without the government and its corporate cronies snooping on you is laughable to them. Your right to live free is unthinkable to those who view your liberty as expendable.

#### A Moral Outrage

And yet people accept this outrage; they fail to see the threats to their individual rights through this totalitarian scheme. Within a span of two hundred years, America has transformed from a relatively free country, with minimal government intervention in people's private lives, to a socialist monster that threatens our natural liberty and dignity. Americans have gone from a hardy, freedom-loving people to a childlike mass that trusts and even worships the state. And this is the true tragedy of modern America; that infringements on one's private life are tolerated and even defended.

As an example of the kind of nonsense that infects Americans today, I use the following. Last semester I participated in a debate about whether there ought to be a national DNA registry, and I argued on the con side, of course. But what I heard from my opponents alarmed me; they felt that the ends somehow justified the means, and a mandatory, state-sanctioned registry was acceptable and even necessary—their rationale was that it could prevent and solve

"It is symbolic to a culture of surveillance akin to...Nazi Germany."

crimes. Their view was this: *If we can help people, then we should do it at any and all cost!* Never mind that there is little evidence that such a registry could actually solve more crimes. Never mind the massive violations of human rights, the amount of needless bureaucracy that would be created, and the threat of abuse of the DNA information involved in such an enterprise. Never mind that our justice system is based on the principle that one is innocent until duly proven guilty—and that such a registry ignores that premise. Never mind that my opponents in the debate were—unwittingly—arguing in favor of expanding state power to totalitarian proportions, at the expense of their own liberty and dignity. One girl even had the gall to say that "Privacy is a privilege."

Privacy is not a privilege. It is a funda-

mental human right. Only criminals housed in prison do not have the right to privacy. Some argue that if one has "nothing to hide," there's no reason why one should fear surveillance. This argument is absurd. *Do you own yourself, or does the state own you?* I say: you own yourself, and your right to privacy is an obvious extension of this principle. It's bad enough the government is keeping lots of information on supposedly free citizens; now it wants even more, and it wants to make it even easier to gather and use this information—and for what? The Real ID Act's biggest drawback is that it is a morally questionable violation of one's right to privacy.

Yet, some argue that if one has "nothing to hide," one should not fear the bill's totalitarian provisions. Others argue that people's privacy is already being violated as it is; further violations are therefore acceptable. They are wrong. Not only that, they have a poor understanding of the core principles under which this nation was founded—it is shameful that such legislation is even being seriously considered in the first place.

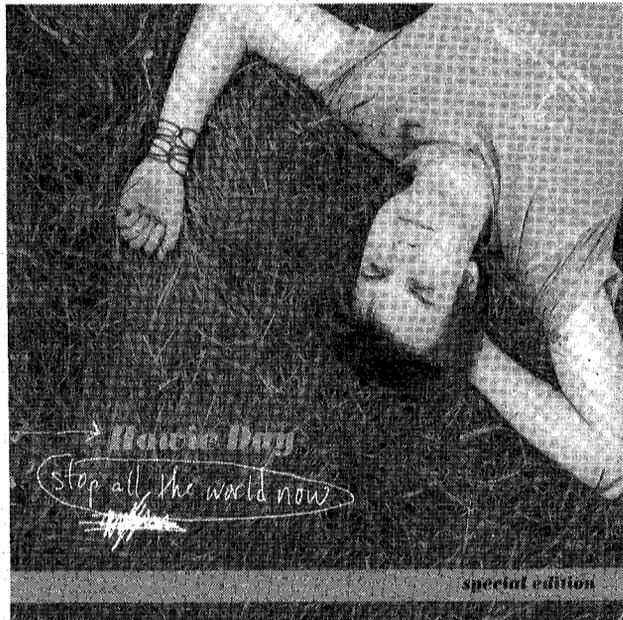
What the government is doing with this national ID card scheme is nothing less than fascist. It is symbolic of a culture of surveillance akin to Soviet Russia or Nazi Germany or, for that matter, Big Brother's Oceania. If the Real ID Act passes in Congress, what will the repercussions be for ordinary, law abiding, liberty-loving Americans? And more crucially: what will come next? We must all shout "No!" to this outrage if we value our lives and freedom and dignity. Those who exchange freedom for a false sense of security deserve neither security nor freedom.

# HEY, WHO ORDERED THE REVIEWS?

## Stop All the World Now [Special Edition] Review

By Melanie Donovan

The "signed, sealed and packaged" singer/songwriter Howie Day re-released his 2003 album *Stop All the World Now*, in a 2004 special edition package. Why he did this, I am really not sure. I have listened to this album a couple of times now, and it still is not sinking in. It is very bland and ordinary. No song really stands out on this album, but maybe it is one of those CDs that really start to sound good on the fifth, sixth or tenth listen.



WHY DO DREAMY BOYS LOOK UP AT THE SKY?  
Courtesy of Epic Records

*Stop All the World Now* is not horrible; it is very relaxing and melodic. The guitar in most of the songs is quite nice and soothing, but his vocals and lyrics do not seem like they are coming from him. It is almost like Day really does have emotions and talent, but there is a producer standing behind him, holding him back. His songs are very impersonal and sometimes dull. Day's music style is a mix between Dave Mathew's Band, Radiohead and Vanessa Carlton, which is really hard to imagine, but it's true. They literally must have combined all of those artists to make *Stop All the World Now*. He uses vocals that are similar to those found on Radiohead's *Pablo Honey*, he uses piano style similar to Vanessa and a folk sound like Mathew's. When looking for the Howie Day website, I found that there are many Howie Day fan sites. He seems to have a strong following, so maybe his other albums show Howie's real passion and emotion.

Howie Day is definitely a promising young artist, who does have potential. I hope to hear more of his music in the future. His voice will take him places, once he comes into his own sound and style. I would recommend to give *Stop All the World Now [Special Edition]* a listen so that you could hear for yourself this talented artist.

## Skin-Scapes

By Lena Tumasyan

On the evening of Wednesday, February the 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Angela Freiberger, a graduate student of the Master of Fine Arts [MFA] program here in Stony Brook, presented her new work. The location of the performance and art exhibition was in the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center [LACS] gallery, which is located in the Social and Behavioral Science building, room N320 [Latin American and Caribbean Studies is a minor in our campus]. The presentation began with an artistic performance. The artist was completely engulfed by oversized Japanese lanterns onto which a movie was projected. She then began to poke and pierce the lantern skin while the projection was playing...she wiggled and finally emerged. The piercing and poking of the lantern skin was imitating the piercing that goes on when one is being tattooed. The video projected was repeated on a television on the gallery. The video displayed spiral shapes drawn onto the artist's body that is meant to reference Robert Smithson's famous earthwork "Spiral Jetty."

For the poster part of the exhibit, Freiberger displayed overlaid art. She took photographs of marble statues and oil paintings from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and combined on top photographs of her own tattoos or of her models' tattoos. The result was a mixing and molding of different art types to create a swirl of artistic interpretation. When looking at one poster [and most were quite big—about 22" x 28"], it seems like you can visualize many things from each one. For example, one poster named "Venus' Snake and Elbow" featured a zipper running along two elbows that were close together and a snake coming out from the top of the zipper. I interpreted it was a commentary of FGM [female genital mutilation] because the elbows looked like female genitalia, which was

"sewn shut" by the zipper and from which the "evil snake" emerged. Perhaps the artist did not mean this, perhaps she did, but that is what I personally was able to see. Another one I enjoyed was a large bird tattoo on top of which two belts were placed. I questioned Freiberger about this piece, who by the way was very warm and open, and we agreed—the belts bound it and the bird was not free to fly.

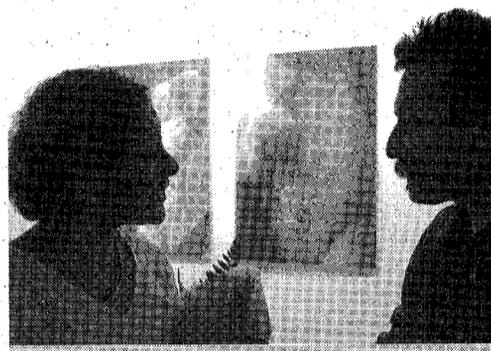
The exhibit was an unusual one and therefore deserving commentary, so I interviewed the artist. Freiberger told me that it took her since September to create the designs. The motivation was "an irritation of how much

men's work displayed women, but women did not display women." In a flyer she wrote, "The body speaks to the viewer of the violence and passion contained within it. I hope the sentiments of pleasure and pain and of beauty and the grotesque are legible from my layered surfaces."

However one might interpret the images, each one seems to contain a main focal point and other subsidiary points. All of them

combine to create an enchanting swirling or coloration and design. As you view one piece from the side, a face emerges, from another you can see the texture of the skin. This is a quick gallery on campus that is worth viewing. Albeit the video won't be displaying, because the room is used as a classroom most of the time, if you ever get the chance to explore art in the SBS building, don't pass this location up.

On a final note, Angela Freiberger was originally from Rio de Janeiro and has been living in New York for approximately 4-5 years. Art has been in her system since she was 8 years old and she is still finding new ways of expressing herself today. She was a teacher's assistant in the Staller Center last semester and is teaching sculpture there this semester.



ANGELA FREIBERGER AND HER ART,  
Courtesy of Jowy Romano



# HEY, WHO ORDERED THE REVIEWS?

## John Legend *Get Lifted* Review

By Justin Rowe

John Legend, a new R&B artist, is a breath of fresh air to an otherwise stale genre. Aside from artists like Usher and R. Kelly, most Rhythm and Blues music suffers from the same tired clichés. After a while, one can tire of unimaginative lyrics that frequently prelude to “getting your freak on” and numerous tales of wild sex.

This album is not your typical R&B album. With the production power of Grammy award winning artist Kanye West and others, Legend (who also produced a few songs and pretty much wrote the entire album) creates music that is timeless and for the most part tasteful.

The lead single “Ordinary People” is a great love song, that actually sounds like a love song, and not a mass manufactured “love” song that is passed out on the radio lately. “Number One,” produced by Kanye West, also features the “College Dropout” backing Legend with a few hip-hop lyrics. Thankfully the guest appearances by rappers are kept at a minimum (the other one being none other than Snoop Dogg in “I Can Change,” in which Snoop actually compliments him pretty well).

As for the rest of the album, it starts off with a high tempo number appropriately titled “Let’s Get Lifted.” At the album’s midpoint it starts to slow down, beginning with “Ordinary People.” After this it offers some great slow songs that you can probably listen with your significant other.

One treat near the end of the album has Legend and his own family singing with him in “It Don’t Have to Change.” That song, and others on this album, make it worth the \$10-\$18 it costs for this particular CD. Surprisingly, music lovers everywhere recently made this album certified gold. Appropriately enough in due time, John Legend will be a Legend in his own right very soon.

**Note: John Legend will be opening for Alicia Keys at Radio City Music Hall April 4/22-23 and at the NJ Pac in Newark, NJ on 4/24**

## *Hitch* Soundtrack Review

By Melanie Donovan

For all of you who do not know what *Hitch* is, it is a romantic comedy starring Will Smith and the guy from that show. If you wanted a review of the movie, see it yourself, because I will never ever see that movie, no matter how many times I see that stupid commercial with the guy from that show dancing like an idiot. I just thought I should clear that up before we start with the soundtrack.

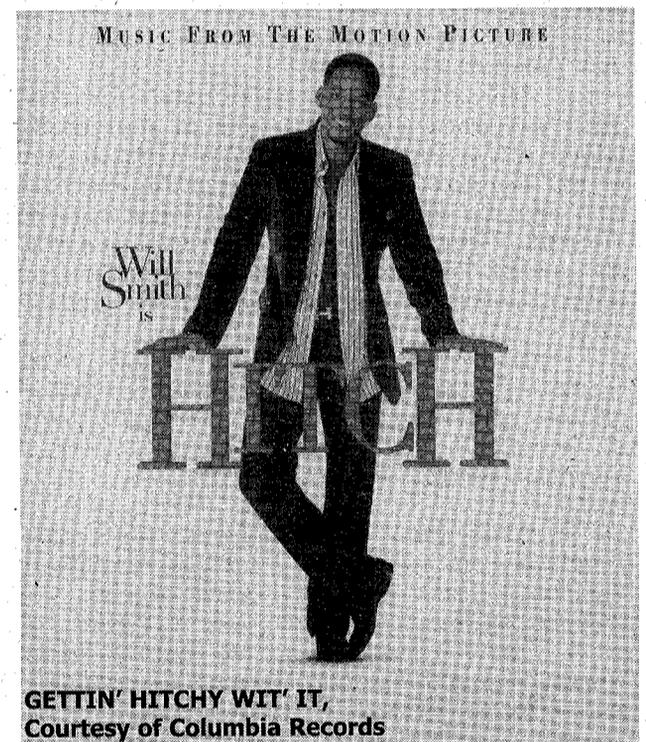
The *Hitch* soundtrack is a compilation of new and old songs that are featured in the movie (I guess). So let’s run through the songs. I found that a lot of the new singers on this album are almost identical to singers that are already out there today. The first song is by a young singer named Amerie with a song called “1 Thing.” The music in the song is very upbeat and not too bad, but her voice and lyrics are very similar to other solo African-American female artists. I would say she is comparable to Ashanti, but then Ashanti is comparable to Janet Jackson, so no one is original here. The next up-and-coming artist on this CD is John Legend. When I listened to his song I thought he was trying to sound like Stevie Wonder, and then I realized it was a Stevie Wonder song, “Don’t You Worry ‘Bout a Thing.” Meleni Smith has a song on here called “Happy,” and she sounds exactly like Nelly Furtado. I hate Nelly Furtado, but I did give Meleni a chance by going to her website to find out more about her. Her website was entitled, “the Meleni eXperience.” Do I go around calling my music reviews “the Melanie eXperience?” No, I do not; because these reviews are certainly no eXperience, and neither was her website.

A DJ by the name of Mark Ronson has a song on here called “Ooh Wee.” I was hesitant to listen to it because of its name, but then I noticed it was featuring Ghostface Killah, Nate Dogg and some other rappers. Then I started thinking about the 1994 hit “Regulate,” by Warren G and Nate Dogg. So screw the “Ooh Wee” song, let’s hear some tasteful lyrics from “Regulate”. “It was a clear black night / A clear white moon / Warren G was on the streets / Trying to consume.” Pure poetry, why don’t we have lyrics like this in rap music today?

Oh, snap! Heavy D & the Boyz are on this soundtrack with “Now That We Found Love.”

“One two, tell me what you got / Let me slip my quarters inside your slot to hit the jackpot... Here comes the brother with glow / A strugglin’, bubblin’ overweight lover hurt prone.” How romantic.

Earth, Wind & Fire make two appearances on this album, along with The O’Jays, Jimmy Cliff and Martha Reeves & the Vandellas. And finally, this soundtrack has The Temptations’ song “I Can’t Get Next to You,” which is definitely the best song on here. So if you somehow stumble across this album, just listen to this song over and over because this song is awesome and so are The Temptations. Seeing as I got a “shout out” in Mike Prazak’s last article, he will get his well deserved recognition in this article. I am reviewing the *Hitch* soundtrack because Mike said he would do it, but alas, he did not. Although if he did write it, I have a feeling it would be called, “Hi Will Smith, I Will Have Sex With You!” And that would pretty much sum up the *Hitch* soundtrack.



GETTIN’ HITCHY WIT’ IT, Courtesy of Columbia Records



Hey, did you hear about The Press?

The Press? Yeah, I heard about them.

Well?

I heard that they only like people with raccoons on their backs.

Really?!?

Word yo. Raccoons.

Boo-yah baby, I’m in like Errol Flin!

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# HEY, WHO ORDERED THE REVIEWS?

## Lost - The Best Damn Show on TV

By David K. Ginn

When I first watched ABC's *Lost* I was captivated. Never before had I seen something so fantastic, so diverse. I immediately downloaded all the episodes (well, immediately doesn't really describe it, considering it took two weeks for them all to finish) and watched them from the beginning.

The show is about a plane that crashes on an island somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, and about the lives and stories of those who have to band together to survive. *Lost* has everything: drama, action, emotion, comedy; there is something for everybody in this show.

One of the great things about *Lost* is the room the writers have to work with. Out of the forty-eight survivors the first season deals primarily with fourteen major characters. This enables the writers to create any type of character for the later seasons, and the audience will accept that they've been there the entire time.

Created by *Alias* creator J.J. Abrams and co-created with executive producer Damon Lindelof, *Lost* first premiered this past September and instantly became a phenomenon among both critics and audiences alike. If you haven't gotten your ass in gear to watch the show, then you better start now.

Most likely if you haven't started watching it's because you don't want to start in the middle. It is for this reason that I present you with a complete episode guide, starting from the first episode and extending to the last episode that aired. The next episode, *In Translation*, will air on Wed. February 23, at 8pm. Get up and get into it, because if you don't you're missing out on a lot.

Here's the episode guide for you, eager reader, complete with my own individual reviews and ratings:

### Episode 1: Pilot [Part 1]

After their plane crashes, forty-eight people are stranded on an island somewhere in the Pacific. Jack, a spinal surgeon, does his best to help the wounded as they recover from the crash. Afterwards Kate, a mysterious young woman, and Charlie, an ex-rock star, go on a search for the cockpit.

Review:

The first episode is absolutely amazing. The action is incredible, and the scenes of the aftermath are horrifying. We're introduced slowly to some main characters while the others stay in the background as extras. Some of the episodes climax comes off as a bit silly, but it's easily overlooked with so much else going on.

Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [9 out of 10]

### Episode 2: Pilot [Part 2]

After the trio returns to the beach camp, Sayid, and ex-Iraqi soldier, tries to get the newly-found transceiver working. A young man, Boone, and his nagging sister Shannon join him, Charlie, Kate, and the hot-tempered southerner Sawyer into the mountains to get the transceiver working. Meanwhile, Michael, an estranged father who just recently gained custody of his eight-year old son Walt after Walt's mother died, tries to please him by finding his pet dog.

Review:

The second part of the pilot is awesome, stretching out the energy flow from the first part but not breaking it. The lack of a major action sequence is made up for with the now-famous "polar bear scene". Also, the insights into the characters lets us know where the show is going. It should be noted that this is the last episode that isn't centered around any particular character (which becomes the theme of the show), and it serves as a smooth segue.

Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [8 out of 10]



LOST? MORE LIKE PARADISE EVERY HUMPDAY!  
Courtesy of www.lost-media.com

### Episode 3: Tabula Rasa

As the life of the U.S. Marshall traveling on board hangs in the balance, Jack and Sawyer argue over the "right thing to do". Meanwhile, Jack and the obese but loveable Hurley discover Kate's big secret and we find out what happened to her before she boarded the doomed flight.

Review:

This is the first of the flashback episodes, and it's done very well. More importantly though, the format is introduced softly and inconspicuously. It won't be until you watch a few episodes that you'll actually catch on to the structure of the show. Kate's story is a bit weak, but it's all okay because you have the rest of the episode to back it up.

Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [7 out of 10]

### Episode 4: Walkabout

After the camp is attacked by wild boars, the mysterious Locke leads Michael and Kate on a hunt for food. Meanwhile Claire, the sweet and very pregnant Aussie, tries to convince Jack to read the names of the dead from the flight manifest during a mass funeral ceremony. Jack has his reservations though, and it turns out Locke has secrets of his own.

Review:

Wow. Simply... amazing. Just see it.

Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [10 out of 10]

### Episode 5: White Rabbit

Stressed out by his responsibilities on the island, Jack begins to follow a mysterious man through the jungle who may not really be there. Meanwhile, the survivors are thirsty for water and it appears that someone has been keeping a private stash.

Review:

A good episode, one that keeps your attention the entire time. It's a Jack episode, and so far Jack's flashbacks have been downbeat and very *noir*-like. In other words: really awesome, but on a different level. The back story offsets the pace of the episode wonderfully, although there are some story-telling elements that seem a bit cliché.

Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [8 out of 10]

### Episode 6: House of the Rising Sun

After Jin, the non-English speaking Korean man, attacks Michael, the group holds him as prisoner until they can figure out what happened. Meanwhile his repressed wife Sun looks back on their lives together. Jack tries to set up an alternate camp in the caves, but not everyone is eager to join.

Review:

Simply beautiful. The episode itself is decent, but it's the flashbacks that really capture your attention. There aren't any cop-outs here; all the flashbacks are subtitled, the way they should be. In the end you feel pretty damn good about things. Very well written, once again.

Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [8 out of 10]

### Episode 7: The Moth

When the survivors try to make the caves hospitable Jack gets trapped inside and only Charlie can save him. Meanwhile, Locke continues to help Charlie with his addiction as we learn more about Charlie's troubled past.

Review:

Ah, Charlie, Charlie, Charlie. Charlie is the greatest. This episode did what I hoped it would do with his character; he's fleshed out, and you realize that there is a reason for everything he's become. This is also where we get the most distinct idea of what sort of role Locke has on the island. Don't miss this episode, please.

Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [8 out of 10]

### Episode 8: Confidence Man

When Shannon suffers an asthma attack Jack and Sayid bully Sawyer into giving up the medicine he's allegedly hiding. In the meantime Kate tries to uncover the secrets of Sawyer's life, while Sayid faces the decision of doing something he thought he'd never do.

Review:

Sawyer is awesome. He has a nickname

# HEY, WHO ORDERED THE REVIEWS?

## Lost - The Best Damn Show on TV Continued...

By David K. Ginn

for every single character, and he's such an asshole that you know he has to have a softer side. The episode works, and the flashbacks pay off in the end. You'll be thinking after this one.

**Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [8 out of 10]**

### Episode 9: Solitary



WOULD YOU? I MEAN, SHE'S REALLY CUTE...  
Courtesy of www.lost-media.com

Sayid is captured by a strange woman as he goes on a spiritual walk along the island shores. Back at camp Jack and all the other survivors are feeling the mental and emotional effects of trying to get by, and Hurley has an absolutely crazy idea that just may be the answer to their problems.

Review:

Sayid's flashbacks are great, but don't connect enough to the plane crash and the island. The redeeming factor here is Hurley, and my god it is great. I want to give this episode eight stars just for that, but overall I have to stick with seven. Doesn't mean you should miss it, though.

**Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [7 out of 10]**

### Episode 10: Raised by Another

When Claire tells Jack she was attacked during the night Jack suspects she might be suffering hallucinations. As a result of the shake-up Hurley begins a census based on the passenger manifest, and Sayid returns from the jungle with information that the others might not be ready to hear.

Review:

This is where the show starts to latch onto its subplot and stick with them. Claire's back story is touching, and the events leading up to the eventual cliffhanger are chilling. This is also where we see a deeper connection between many of the characters, making the ending that much more meaningful.

**Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [8 out of 10]**

### Episode 11: All the Best Cowboys Have Daddy Issues

Jack and Kate go on a search for Claire

and Charlie, and we learn a deeper revelation about Jack's relationship with his father.

Review:

Wow. This episode will keep you captivated. Some of the most intense moments to ever be on TV are captured here, and if you don't come close to tears at least once I question your humanity. Well, I guess it's okay if you don't, but still the episode's that damn good. Jack's back story is dark and intriguing, giving you a movie you could watch on its own. The juxtaposition of these deep, conversation heavy scenes with the intense chase across the jungle is mesmerizing. I was in my seat for about ten minutes after the episode ended, still captured by the world of Lost. This was the last episode before the winter hiatus, so we all had to wait a while for the next episode. That's okay, because this episode served as a perfect "mini-finale" on its own.

**Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [9 out of 10]**

### Episode 12: Whatever the Case May Be

When Kate finds a mysterious silver case in a lake near the crash site it sparks the interest of Jack and Sawyer, who are becoming more curious about the details of Kate's life prior to the crash. Meanwhile, Locke and Boone try to make sense of a strange find.

Review:

This is my least favorite episode of the series so far. It's not bad; in fact by normal television standards it's amazing. The problem of the episode as compared to the rest of the series is that Kate's back story is too compressed and holds no real pertinence to the rest of the episode, save the 'twist' ending. The scenes with Sawyer are hysterical, but other than that the episode just doesn't move you. Like always, it's still not to be missed.

**Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [6 out of 10]**

### Episode 13: Hearts and Minds

When Locke and Boone ponder over their recent discovery Locke must take extreme measures to keep Boone from spreading panic among the others. As Boone contemplates his relationship with Shannon, Hurley must make amends with Jin in order to get some fresh food.

Review:

A much better episode than the last one, even though the 'surprise ending' was somewhat anticipated. It's still amazing, and a crucial scene between Hurley and Jin will have you laughing to tears.

Oh, boy. I'm laughing just thinking about it.

The episode leaves you wondering about a lot of things, mostly about the true nature of the island and its other inhabitants.

**Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [7 out of 10]**

### Episode 14: Special

Locke and Michael go head-to-head when Walt insists on learning to hunt. Meanwhile a troubled Charlie deals with his guilt and his anger as the soft-spoken Rose tries to help him get back on his feet.

Review:

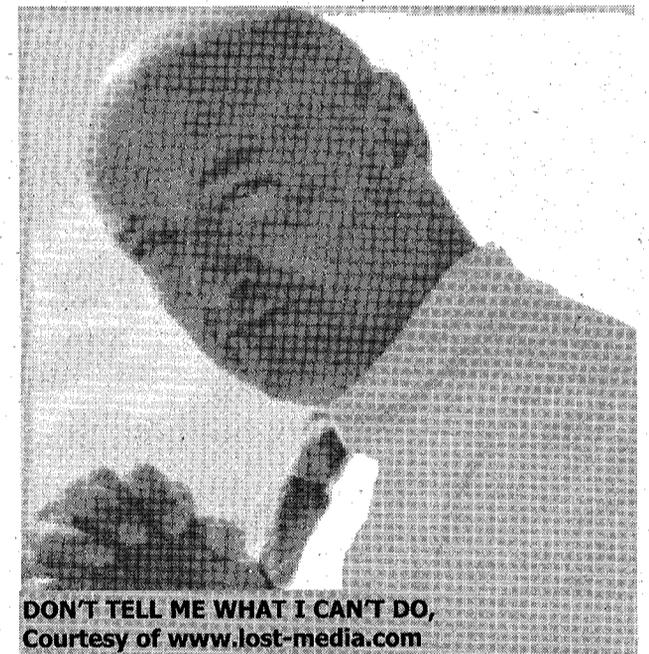
Ah, finally, at last, it's Michael and Walt's episode. I'd been waiting for this a long time, and I must say I was not disappointed. The back story is captivating and the episode brings back the fast-paced action you've been waiting for. The episode is moving, chilling, and most definitely one of the best so far.

**Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [8 out of 10]**

### Episode 15: Homecoming

After Claire's return the survivors must defend the camp against the ravenous kidnapper Ethan. Meanwhile Charlie must get over the guilt of Claire's abduction, especially after he learns that she has no memory of anything that happened after the crash.

Review:



DON'T TELL ME WHAT I CAN'T DO,  
Courtesy of www.lost-media.com

Charlie's second episode isn't as strong as his first but it works nonetheless. The back story is much less broad but that's part of what makes it so good. The best thing about the episode, though, is the standoff against Ethan. It's one of those rare moments when all the characters are working together, despite their individual problems. It also shows what would happen when you put these characters on the hunt, and how their primal instincts emerge.

**Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [8 out of 10]**

### Episode 16: Outlaws

Sawyer goes on a hunt for a boar he swears "has it in for him". Meanwhile, Charlie goes through a tough recovery from his brush with death as Kate follows Sawyer into the jungle on an errand that may be a little more than business-related.

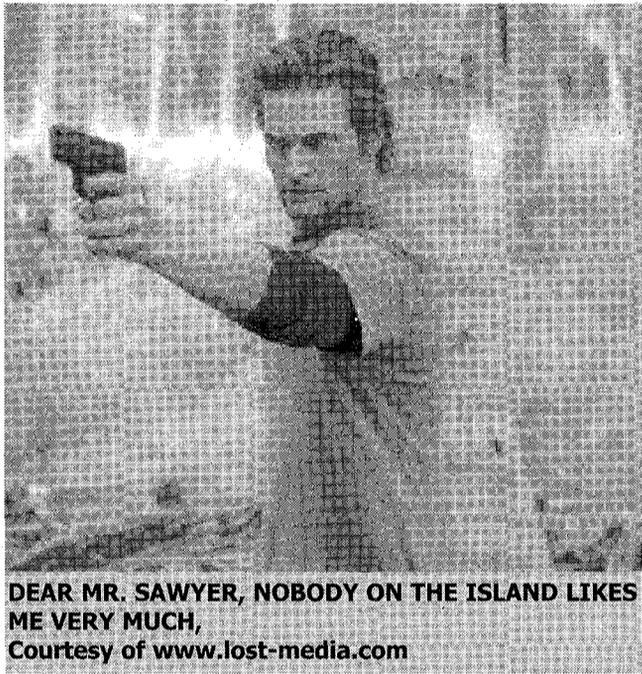
Continued on page 22

# HEY, WHO ORDERED THE REVIEWS?

## Lost Is Awesome

By David K. Ginn

Continued from page 21



DEAR MR. SAWYER, NOBODY ON THE ISLAND LIKES ME VERY MUCH,  
Courtesy of www.lost-media.com

Review:

This is one of those episodes in which the pacing of both the flashback and the episode seem to flow at an even speed. The mood is right, the story fits, and we see firsthand the depth of Sawyer through his flashback. It basically tells us what we already know or guessed, but this time it shows us, and at times it can be haunting. Another good go at a second flashback.

Rating: \*\*\*\*\* [7 out of 10]

Once again, make sure to catch Episode 17, *In Translation*, this Wednesday at 8.

*Lost* is aired on ABC every Wednesday night at 8pm.  
ABC is channel 7 on and off campus.

### For God-less, Subversive Use Only:

Awaken, comrades. A new day dawns. Open your eyes and see that the red sun rises in the east, stained crimson with the blood of our fallen compatriots.

Die, capitalism, die.

## Review of Sam Goldman's Birthday Party

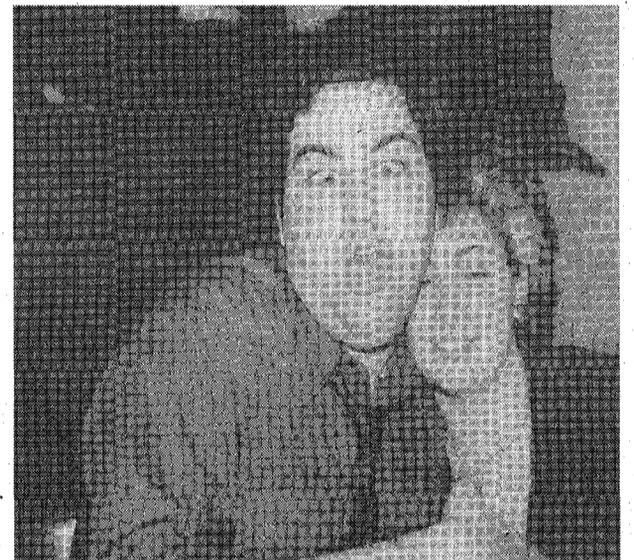
By Dustin Herlich

Sam Goldman, former managing editor of *The Stony Brook Press*, is now 25 years old. His family was gracious enough to invite us to a dinner in his honor at the Baku Palace in Brooklyn. Not only was this fabulously generous of the Goldman family, the party itself was spectacular. Not only was the food non-stop, it was impossible to stop eating it. I thought everything was delicious, except the vodka. I really can't drink, and don't like vodka anyhow, so I guess that doesn't matter much, then. What was good, though, was the white wine. Sweet, not too dry, exactly how I like it. I believe it was a Muscatel. How bad can a party be when it has two dessert courses?

The entertainment was several fold. First, we had the hired singers. They were the normal performers scheduled for that night, I assume, since the restaurant wasn't exclusively for the use of the Goldman family. The quality of voice mattered little, if at all, for the male singer was wearing a *fully* leather suit, and the woman was dressed as something akin to an inexpensive street worker. That alone was worth the price of admission. Getting a good look at everyone around us was even better. Throw into the mix the fact that one of the songs they sang was *Venus* by Bananarama, and you have one hell of a party.

All in all, it was a great time. I think that pretty much all of Sam's friends who came

had a blast, and we loved meeting his little brother. It's kind of like mini-Sam. Clearly, all the things that I have to say about the experience are rave reviews, and I can only image that everyone else who was there feels the same way. I just hope that Sam himself had as good a time as we did.

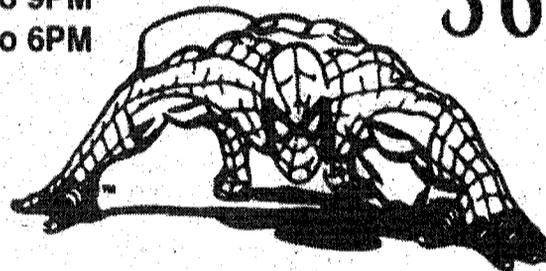


YEAH, IT WAS THAT MUCH FUN,  
Courtesy of Dustin Herlich

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# HEY, WHO ORDERED THE REVIEWS?

## Tortoise Millions Now Living Will Never Die

By Andrew Thompson

Multi-tasking is often a horrible thing, leading to an unnecessary amount of work later on. Bands try to do this, exposing themselves to so many different genres that they end up sounding about as diverse as Yanni, elevator musician to the world. After their initial failure, they attempt to focus themselves into an actually meaningful direction. Some artists succeed at this and find their niche, while others continue to mash together genres into a bland grayish paste of sonic tones.

Tortoise encompasses both extremes of this approach, being able to create truly amazing albums that encompass Kraut rock, dub, jazz, and xylophones in a fantastic display of technical knowledge and pacing. *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* would be a great example of their early success in fusing together separate musical ideas into a coherent whole. *It's All Around You*, their most recent album, is awful. I'd compare it to the multinational clichéd music of Yanni. Fortunately, I will not focus on their recent bland album but rather on one of their successes.

"Djed," the first song on the album, also covers every important movement for the past several decades. A simple bass line begins what starts off taut guitar lines. Eventually strange electronic keys shift underneath and the whole thing disappears into a minimal electronic rhythm. From this rhythm comes a simple guitar riff joined by xylophone which brings together the whole idea of the mergence of different musical ideas. The three elements build off each other and collapse, bringing into effect the strangest section, which of looped tape experiments that settle into a comfortable groove accompanied by ambient noise. Finally the end appears and with it the song's beginning is recognizable even through the thick layers of dub.

After the epic "Djed" everything that comes afterwards simply can not compete with the 21 minute jam they created. In fact, after the initial opus the rest appears like a modernized version of their self-titled debut, only with clearer sound and more dub-influence. The closer "Along the Banks of the River" offers a perfect, reflective end to their strongest effort.

It is unfortunate to see them settle for the mediocrity of their latest release, instead of being the unpredictable band influenced by rock, electronic, and jazz. Some have defended their fate, saying that as such a jazz-influenced band they ought to focus more on production of music rather than return to their more adventurous outlook.

Extremely slow rock, but by no means boring, there exists catchiness to the music that those less attuned to their audience would notice. Tortoise is a good name for the slow evolving music they create and despite the recent failure, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* proves the many avenues they have not yet fully explored. I can only hope that they will steer away from pointless navel-gazing music (for that is all *It's All Around You* is) and be able to progress in their ideas, instead of merely copying what has worked in the past.

## I Am Robot And Proud *Grace Days*

By Andrew Thompson

Hailing from a land of awe-inspiring wonder (Canada) which also hosts the MUTEK festival each year in Montreal comes a 21 year old who has accomplished in a short period what took years for others: the simple fact that using cheap samplers can be effective in creating emotional music. From the sounds he uses, it seems he possesses at most a version of Fruity Loops and various shareware programs. Many (wrongly) believe that having technical prowess automatically assumes that great music can be produced simply by using Max/DSP processing. Richard Devine proves this idea wrong, by continually making meandering boredom sound extremely well-tweaked.



I HOPE THIS IS REALLY REALLY TRIPPY MUSIC, Courtesy of www.google.com

I Am Robot and Proud remembers that there exists a little thing called melody and rhythm that many, including those who started the movement towards more intelligent electronic music, have forgotten. Richard D. James (aka Aphex Twin) used to make great albums, now he's struck congratulating himself (Drukqs unnecessary two discs) and generally being lazy (is 26 Remixes for Cash iron-

ic or just plain truthful). Obviously not everybody has fallen into this rut, but now many sit around their computer, producing sub-standard productions. I Am Robot and Proud shows that this cottage industry does not just make disposable music.

*Grace Days*, his most recent effort, is a nice mellow treat for those who enjoy laid-back, optimistic music. Beginning with a confident guitar sample and nervous glitches, it builds up to a momentarily quick tempo before dissolving and showing off the quieter elements that remained hidden underneath the percussion. Most of the album has a similar structure of being built up, down, and underlying themes which are brought to the forefront after the interest of the initial melody and groove has waned.

None of the songs are over 5 minutes, and there are only 9 songs, so it's a relatively easy listen both in terms of listening and time-wise. In fact, one of these songs "Winter at Night" was able to have quite an honor bestowed upon it; it found itself in some trendy sneaker ad. Of course most people would call this a form of selling out, but in an age where I hear mass-produced garbage being lauded for using 80s synths and calling them cool, I'm a bit more sympathetic to I Am Robot and Proud's choice. Music found in commercials has similar musical style that your average college radio station has. Those who DJ'ed decades ago now have the chance to set unconventional music for advertising. No longer are they forced to rely on mainstream pop for help, but instead can find a cheaper and more memorable substitute by choosing an obscure artist. It happened with the VW ad which used Nick Drake's "Pink Moon" and with the SAAB ad that used the Propellerheads' "History Repeating."

*Grace Days* is a polite album that uses warm nursery drones to come up with something that the average listener could associate with typical happy children's music. His website is also quite impressive (yes he is also on Epitomic.com) and I hope he does more, because somebody needs to prove that the bedroom producer scene is not hopeless and redundant.

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# Ask Amberly Jane

By Amberly Jane

I lead a pretty charmed life.

I can summon the necessities on a whim, and without much delay: sex, food, drugs, a place to crash, or a friendly face.

I'm healthy, and (prescription) drug free... unless you count birth control, which is altogether better than my friend's solution—chanting, "No baby, no baby, no baby..."

A crazed deviant is not likely to jump out from behind the SAC and chop me to bits, and I'm not likely to get blown up, beheaded or thrown in the clink for voicing my opinions (um, wait, scratch that last one).

My family is nearby, though not so close that I'm driven to kill. I possess a few modest talents, and have had my share of revelations, but basically I have run amok and stumbled merrily through life, getting entangled with luck and circumstance, skating by on a 1-dimple smile.

I realize that I am fortunate, and am supremely thankful for every THC-laden breath of air, every sunset, every orgasm, every creamy cannoli and dill pickle potato chip. Every movie by Terry Gilliam, every minute of Indiana Jones, every lick from Jimi Hendrix, and every inch of skin on Johnny Depp. I am grateful for all that is good and visceral, and for every jolt of inspiration I may give or receive.

I do, however, realize some basic unpleasant truths about our current "American" way of life.

The main gut punch is this: "The System" is not set up to help you. No, no. Bureaucracy, red tape, and greedy pig-bitches get in the way; if the whores can find a way to fuck you, then you can bet your ass it's gonna be sore.

My recent run-in with Medicaid Insurance, a root canal, a million phone calls, and a veritable rip-tide of *agita* has proven to me, yet again, how completely backwards our system is.

And if you don't know, or haven't realized yet, that the fat cat corporate swine care less about you than lining their own bank accounts and securing the power legacy of their half-brained kin, then you need to do some research, babe, and pull your head out of the fucking sand, because the revolution is coming, and they're going to be first up against the wall.

Which brings me to how I disrupted the space-time continuum.

You see, I wasn't supposed to go upstate this week; miss various important classes, copious amounts of work, and a muff party. The woman on the phone had been mistaken, and although she told me everything I *wanted* to hear about my Medicaid dental insurance, it turned out to be a complete ruse, and I traveled countless hours upstate only to be met with blank stares, and the feeble, "She didn't know — she was a *temp*."

I slogged around my hometown with an aching jaw, keen on making the journey fruitful, when I encountered the first in a bizarre series of events. Proof that I was tearing the fabric of time.

If you are where you are truly not supposed to be — can the repercussions trigger peculiar transpirations? (I lost my mind in the rift, but sadly found that my insurance doesn't cover that either.)

I was in a grocery store, mulling over the skimpy selection of baby powder, when I saw a man out of the corner of my eye. He was a very tall black man sporting a floor-length black cleric's coat, with a wide-brimmed

farmer's hat and sunglasses that shone white. He walked very stately, with his hands clasped behind his back, and when he meandered behind me, he said, under his breath but clear as a bell, "I could cum all over you."

Unsure of what to do, I just stood there, and he walked off. I went looking for him moments later, after the random lewdness finally sunk in, but he was gone.

Not five minutes later I was on line at the pharmacy, and this completely average-looking housewife type starts talking to me out of the blue. Not just about the weather, or some other insignificance, but about her 25-year-old son and his girlfriend who want to bleed her dry and abscond with all her money.

Then the clincher. "I used to be a prostitute," she said, her eyes wandering, and then finally fixing on mine. "I could get 100 dollars for that shit, you know," she gave me a naughty grin. "But my girlfriend gets it for free! You'd think she could pitch in for food once in awhile."

All I could do was smile, and offer my condolences. I told her I was familiar with the kind, and we shared a knowing laugh.

After leaving the grocery store of lunacy, I was yearning for a friendly face, and someone to share my rift in space-time theory. So I visited my dear friend Pete, and we spent the night making \*special\* brownies and catching up on high times.

Pete is a glass not merely half-full, but overflowing kind of motherfucking Renaissance Man. Multi-talented, generous and wonderfully charming, Pete has never let me down, and always helps me put life's little vagaries into perspective.

I told him about my friend Sam's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday party, a swank Russian enterprise set among tabletops swelling with cow tongue and Ukrainian vodka, and how my dear Press compatriots had to pull over three times on the way home so I could technicolor yawn all over the highway (A million thanks... in my defense that Vodka was more pungent than rubbing alcohol, and could have burned clear through the table in a single bound).

Pete and I talked into the early morning, as we often do, and he assured me that my trip upstate did not totally mess up any kind of continuum, and to further appreciate all the crazy individuals I encounter. He also gave me some porn, as he is pairing down his collection, and it has already cum in handy.

Otherwise, there were no questions this week, only some interesting mail. The first letter reminds me of when I worked at a radio station upstate; I used to get letters from this dude in prison every other Thursday. The envelopes would always have these beautiful elaborate bird drawings and in the 10-page letters he would say that he pictured me as a "young Karen Carpenter." Thanks, I would think, some folkly broad with anorexia. He would also write that he worked out everyday in the yard and that his legs were "as hard as diamonds."

Scary stuff, especially considering he said he listened to my radio show in his "special place."

Dear Amberly Jane,

I really hope that I spelled your name correct, it is a really pretty name, is it your real name or a pen name? I have been a *AVID* fan of you for god knows how long, it feels like I know you better than anyone else. I hope that is not too presumptuous of me.

Seriously I love your work it is why I read it

all the way here in Reno, Nevada. Have you ever been here? It is really nice. I know you were in Las Vegas last year, which is so cool that THE AMBERLY JANE was in the same state as I was. God do I sound like a stalker. I don't think so just wanted to tell you how I felt.

PS. I made a bust of your likeness out of cheese. I can only hope I did you justice.

-B

Amberly Jane,

Your column ROCKS! DAMN! THATS THE ONLY REASON I PICK UP THE PAPER SOMETIMES! And I save your column for last because its so fuckin sweeet! No offense, and I don't think you'll take any, but you sound like a toototaly NYMPHOMANIAAAC!! Well guess what?? Your perfect! You ever need someone to eat you out, you let me know, no joke. Keep on using that pen for whatever!

p.s. I'm in the library a lot also, so ya know, you need a quiet place to get off, you let me know ya hear?

-Admirer

For...any reason at all, e-mail: AskAmberlyJane@hotmail.com.

## Editor's Note:

In the "foul year of our Lord" 1977, the same year I was born, Hunter S. Thompson spoke at the University of Colorado.

The students asked him about various pleasantries: what he believes concerning 'The American Dream', aliens, politics, venereal disease, and of course, where to get the best drugs.

A woman in the audience asked how he escapes structure to be such a wonderful degenerate. After the swell of applause died down, Hunter replied, "Write real fast and never sleep much."

Hunter S. Thompson died tonight.

It is a sad, sad night ... but he lived how he died. Hard and fast and with a grand firearm in his hand.

His talent was, however, so much more than just the drug-fueled ravings of a maniac. He challenged the status quo, snubbed his nose at the stiff-necked 'professional' crowd, and wrote what was widely acclaimed as the best book on Dope Culture - *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

Before the gutless attempted it, he hung out with the Hell's Angels, and wrote about their proclivities for gang-rape and ugly dismemberment. He went to Vietnam, and has lambasted every president from Nixon to Bush the lesser.

He has been an unparalleled inspiration to many, and the man is a steel-balled freak. Was. He shot himself, which I can't really comprehend. It's no way to go for a man so fearless.

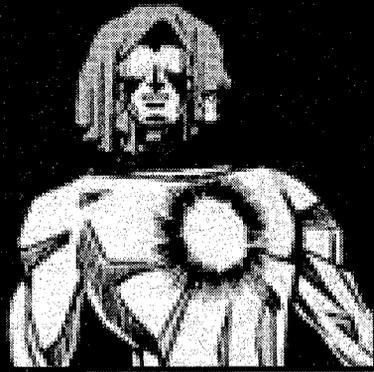
Who knows why he did it. What I do know is that more than any other writer Hunter showed me ~~not to~~ apologize for my insanity, ~~but to~~ embrace life with dick-swinging swagger and atavistic fervor.

He certainly was "a strange mutant never even considered for mass production."

Hunter, you will be sorely missed.

Mahalo.

-A.J.T.



# The Living Tribunal Passes Judgement On: Preacher: Proud Americans

**Preacher: Proud Americans**  
Jesse Custer has to save Cassidy from the clutches of Herr Starr and his castrated Italian-marksman before God and the Saint of Killers show up and clean house.

## PHYSICS

Allfather D'Aronique is approximately five-foot-eight and 700 pounds. In his attempt to escape the Reverend Jesse Custer, the mortal vessel of the otherworldly entity known as Genesis; and the Saint of Killers, the immortal cowboy given a divine right to murder by God himself; the Allfather must abandon his crumbling empire at Masada. As his get-away helicopter begins to take off, the megalomaniacal Herr Starr instructs the pilot to sharply bank left so that they may unload some "extraneous" weight. Unbeknownst to Herr Starr, the inbred adolescent who just happens to be the direct descendent of Jesus Christ himself awaits unawares below. What I propose to prove, via some heavenly calculations, is that the Allfather would not only crush the boy to death as illustrated by the very talented Steve Dillon in *Preacher: Proud Americans*, but he would in fact explode in the most literal sense of the word.

One of the most irritating things about physics, in my opinion, is its occasional inability to be applied to real life situations. The difficulty arises if there are oddly shaped masses, unstable thermal conditions, complex fields, or many-body problems because the mathematics becomes too complex to solve directly. Luckily, we do not have to concern ourselves with such physically intricate initial conditions. We will be able to generate a rather exact solution to our problem since almost all the components of the system are well known; it's just a fat guy falling out of a helicopter.

For all intents and purposes, the Allfather is about as close as you'll ever get to a uniform solid sphere of radius  $R = (5.667 \text{ ft.})/2 = 2.834 \text{ ft.} = .87 \text{ m}$ . This would give him a volume of  $V = \frac{4}{3} R^3 = 2.76 \text{ m}^3$  and a density of  $d = \frac{M}{V} = 170 \text{ kg / m}^3$ . Let's say the helicopter made it about 100 feet off the ground before dumping the grossly obese pontiff. It would take exactly  $t = v_T / g = 7.9$  seconds of freefall for fatty to attain a terminal velocity of  $v_{\text{Terminal}} = (2Mg / C_p A)^{1/2} = 77.41 \text{ m / s} = 173.16 \text{ mph}$  (assuming we only take the quadratic term of the freefall equation). Unfortunately, the helicopter is not high enough off the ground, so the Allfather will still be accelerating when he crushes the inbred child into the next life. But don't lose hope, friends, for D'Aronique will still be moving at an astonishing 99.03 mph when he hits 4.52 seconds after rolling out of the chopper.

Think about it this way: If a car on the New York State Thru-Way hits a deer head-on at 70 mph and the animal explodes, what would happen to a 700 lb. man if the planet Earth hit him at 99 mph? Well... he'd be fucking obliterated.

## BIOLOGY

Within this collection of "Preacher," the Reverend Jesse Custer attempts to rescue the vampire Cassidy, who undergoes slow torture. Cassidy's torturers exploit his high pain threshold and rapid regenerative abilities. Within this article, I will briefly discuss some possible explanations for Cassidy's accelerated regeneration. (I said "briefly" because there really is a lot to talk about. For real.)

I will assume that Cassidy's anatomy and physiology are similar to that of an ordinary human. Also, I will focus on his skin, for the sake of brevity. Traditionally, the repair of damaged skin is divided into three phases: inflammation, proliferation, and maturation. In the inflammatory phase, a blood clot forms, and infected skin cells are removed. The proliferative phase involves the initial growth of skin tissue and the initial re-growth of blood vessels. In the maturation phase, those lovely patches of damaged skin are made stronger.

Of course, the regeneration of skin is accelerated if all of the phases are accelerated. In the inflammatory phase, the response of cells and blood vessels to injury can be faster. The blood vessels constrict more rapidly. Neurotransmitter and hormone releases are increased. The collection of blood platelets and the network of fibrin develops sooner. In addition, blood vessels become more permeable. More cells and proteins go to the necessary site of healing. As a result, blood clots form more quickly. Macrophages clean up debris, and bacteria release enzymes that destroy injured cells. Macrophages also release substances that attract skin cells to the wound. The skin cells are encouraged to multiply until blood vessel formation. Then, the immune system kicks in by sending T lymphocytes to the site of the wound.

In the proliferative phase, epithelium-one specific layer of skin cells-forms over the exposed wound. As the epithelium moves across the injury, it dissects the injury and separates the healthy and damaged cells. Then, a collagen framework forms. The framework helps in the subsequent repair of damaged blood vessels. Simultaneously, the wound starts to close.

In the maturation phase, the collagen network becomes more organized. More collagen is produced. An extensive network of collagen will greatly increase the tensile strength of the skin. Also, cytokines help in injury healing. These protein-assisting molecules stimulate cell responses that strengthen the skin at the site of healing.

For Cassidy to heal thoroughly, a comparable set of accelerated chemical reactions will have to occur in his other biological tissues. These tissues include muscle, bone, nerve, and lymph.

The Living Tribunal is:  
Joe Filippazzo  
Chris Williams and  
Mike Billings

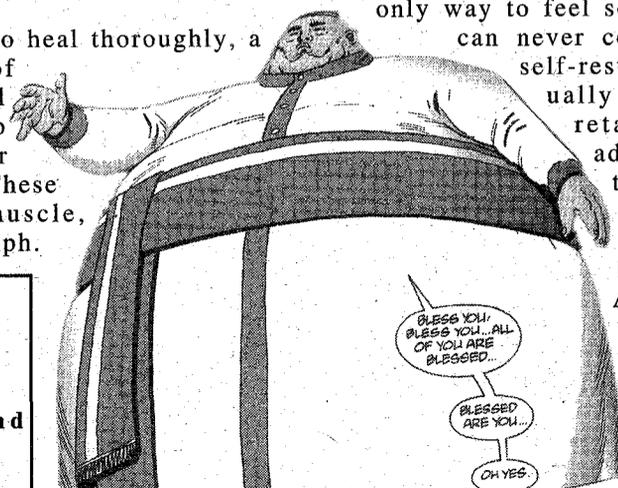
## PSYCHOLOGY

As the Preacher, Jesse Custer, makes his way to Masada, the story behind the mysterious organization called "the Grail" begins to unfold. For two millennia, this group of fanatics has been protecting the bloodline of Jesus Christ, allowing for his direct descendent, "the child," to live today. The Grail does this so that, one day, as the world plunges itself into Armageddon, the Grail can present the child as the world's savior; thereby gaining control over the world for themselves. To ensure the bloodline's survival until such a time, the Allfather, the leader of the Grail, travels with the child at his side at all times. Unfortunately, this self-same Allfather is a bulimic pedophile and looks to weigh about 1500 lbs.

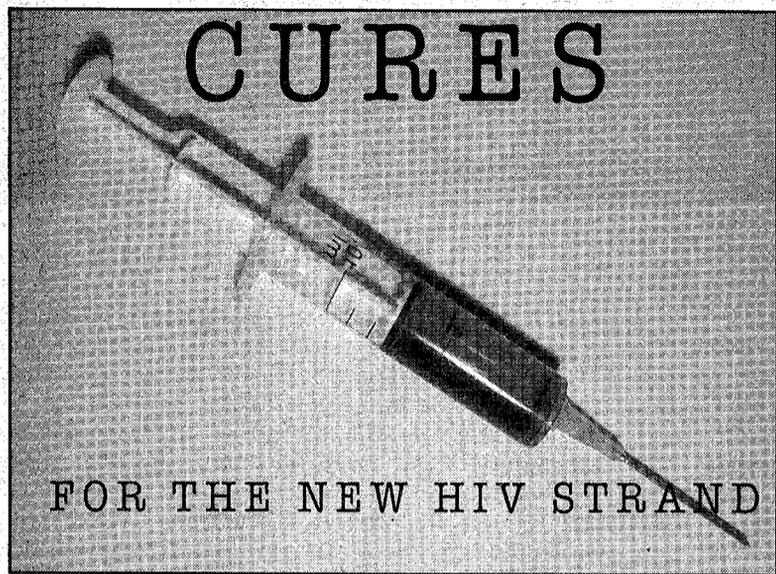
It all starts with the Allfather's obsession with the child. Spending so much time in close proximity with the child, who happens to be profoundly retarded due to millennia of inbreeding, the Allfather seems to have developed an intense devotion and attraction to him. Wherever the Allfather goes, the child must follow in tow; despite the fact that he could easily be protected by the countless guards the Grail has at its disposal. Despite his deep affection for the child, the Allfather is painfully aware that the bloodline of the Grail must not be tainted. Instead, the Allfather must seek out alternative methods for quenching the deep love he feels for the child; that alternative is blueberry pies and Mallomars.

In order to compensate for his intense physical and psychological for the child, the Allfather is compelled to constantly eat to numb the pain of unrequited love. According to legend, it is commonplace for the Allfather to consume enough food to feed a small village in a single sitting. After binging, the Allfather induces himself to vomit by inserting plastic fingers down his throat, thus completing the binging and purging cycle that is typically associated with most sufferers of Bulimia Nervosa. Unlike the normal symptoms of the disorder, however, the Allfather does not have any body image issues that would induce the disorder, but he does share the common theme of a desire for self control.

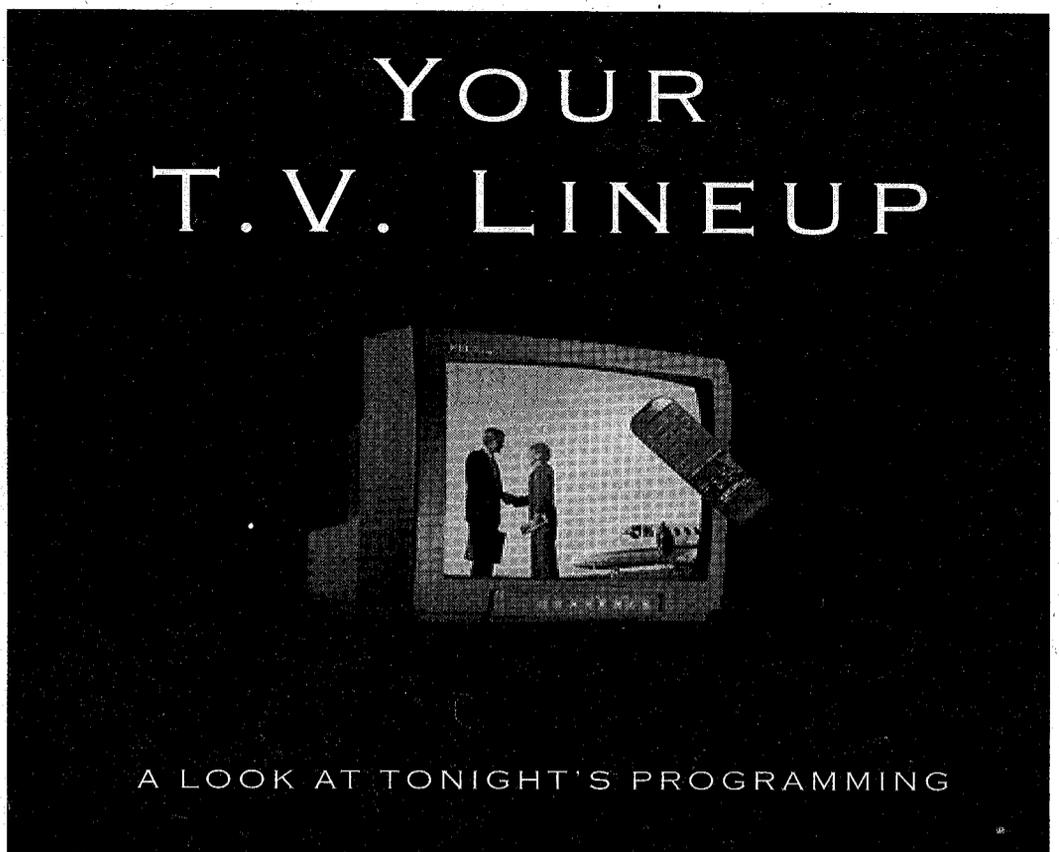
As the leader of the most powerful and influential organization in the world, the Allfather is in complete control of his external world. Internally, on the other hand, he is a maelstrom of illicit desire unadulterated longing. To the Allfather, excessive eating is the only way to feel something besides a love that can never come to pass. Although his self-restraint when it comes to sexually ravaging the profoundly retarded Christ-child is admirable, the Allfather needs to learn to deal with his emotions so that he can improve his eating habits. At the rate he's eating at now, the Allfather is headed for a lifetime of hypertension, heart problems, and disability. Only when the Allfather comes to terms with his love can the eating stop.



# TOP TEN



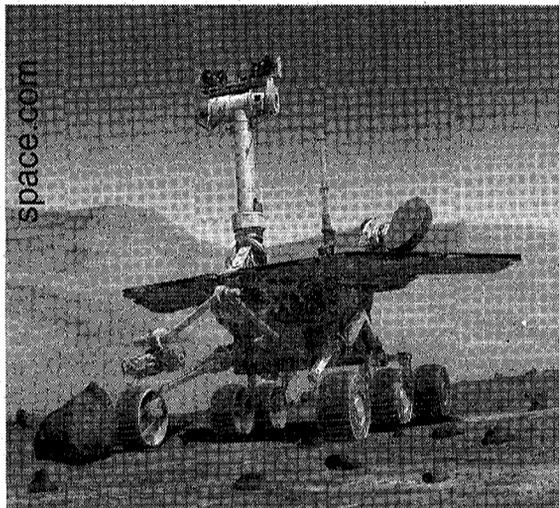
- 10 Quarantine  
The Stony Brook Press
- 9 Destroy the government facility that created it. (Destroy it with love.)
- 8 Issue naked pictures of Fred Phelps to those at "high risk."
- 7 Prayer... if you believe in that kind of shit.
- 6 Happy meals.
- 5 The Catholic Church has sudden massive paradigm shift, decides to educate its captive audience currently known as "Africa."
- 4 Construct a new death star on the far side of the forest moon Endor.
- 3 Socialized Medicine.
- 2 That Accursed and Sinful Stem-cell Non-sense.
- 1 Wait for enough rich people to get it.



Channel	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30
2 CBS	A very special two hour installment of Touched by Charlie Rangel (D-NY)			
4 NBC	Dahmer and Greg		Suddenly Sousa!	
5 FOX	Andy Richter Isn't Funny Any More		Grace Under Water	
6 UNI	Zapato Gigante		El Gordo en la Playa	
7 ABC	NYPD Jew		Party of Chives	
9 UPN	The OCD	Two Guys, A Girl, And a Pizza Face		
11 WB	Shaved By The Bell	Xenu: Extraterrestrial Tyrant		
13 PBS	Bill Nye The Secular Lie		Alleged "Leftist" Business Report	
25 CNN	The War In Iraq: Our Troops Need More Yogurt		360 Degrees of Anderson Cooper's Naked, Rotating Body	

# Comic Strip

## NASA DISCOVERS LIFE ON MARS...



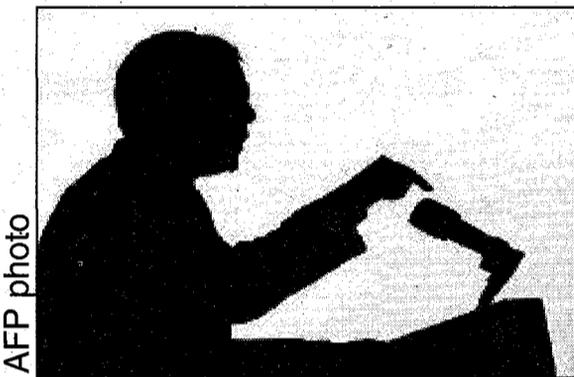
**...unfortunately, they're a red state.**

Mars rover detected traces of methane gas, which could indicate the presence of life beneath the surface of Mars.

If there is life on Mars, no doubt they voted for Bush, having no concept that after Iraq, Mars would be the next target for "liberation."

The Methane gasses proved to be faulty emissions from the '81 Dodge Dart that is parked out back of the Martian's trailer park, surrounded by empty Budweiser cans, waiting for repairs.

## THE W STANDS FOR WEED



**Bush admits to marijuana use.**  
Author Doug Wead recorded the then Texas governor, without his knowledge, between 1998 and 2000 for a book he was researching.

In the tapes, Bush allegedly admits to trying pot and cocaine.

He goes on to talk about how he would deny it if he was ever questioned by the media, citing that he wouldn't want young children of America to be influenced by his actions and get hooked on drugs.

But yet his actions influence the children of America to go fight a senseless war in Iraq, resulting in death and disfigurement, causing many soldiers returning hooked on a different kind of drug - pain killers.

## THE PUCK STOPS HERE



**NHL=No Hockey League.**

Due to a labor dispute, there will be no NHL hockey season this year, leaving a void of hundreds of hours of television programming from April to June.

To fill the empty time slots, TV execs plan on running repeats of HBO's Sex In The City and the movie Dude Wheres' My Car? And even creating new spin-off shows like, CSI:Istanbul and Desperate Eskimo Igloowives.

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**except speech**

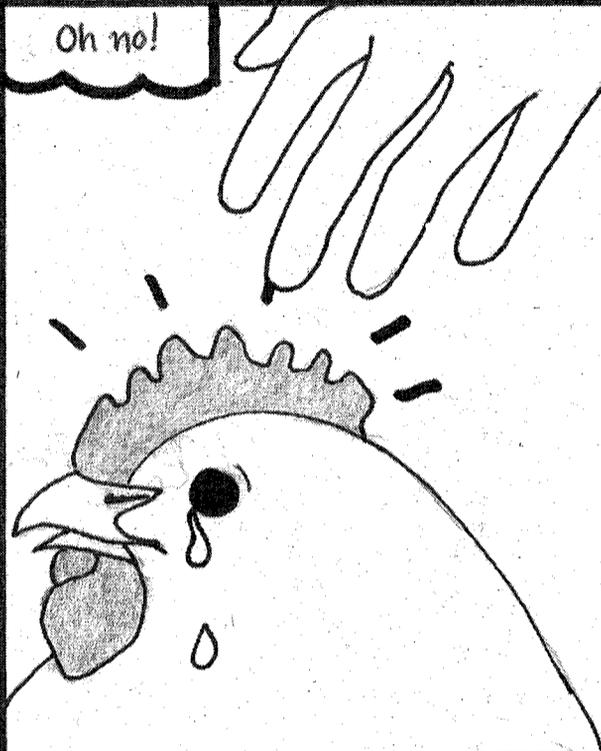
# The Comics Section

**A Pictorial Companion to Psychopathia Sexualis** • Nicole Barry and Steph Hayes

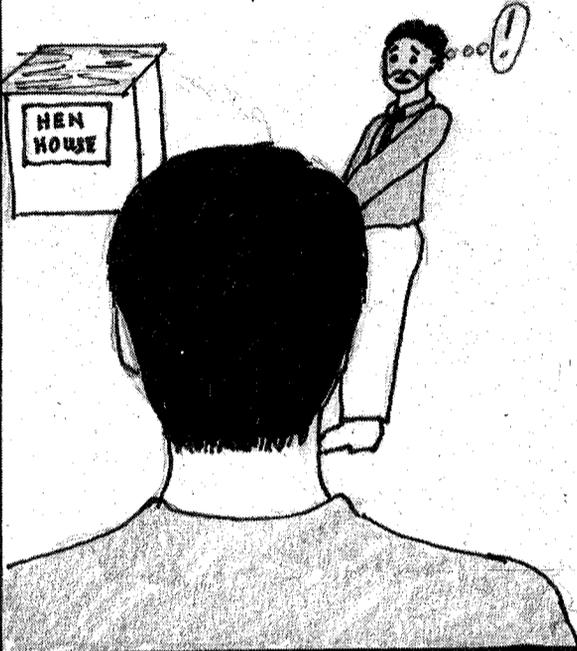
Once upon a time, there was a small village with a very sad mystery: Everyone's chickens were turning up dead!



Oh no!



One day, the culprit was found!

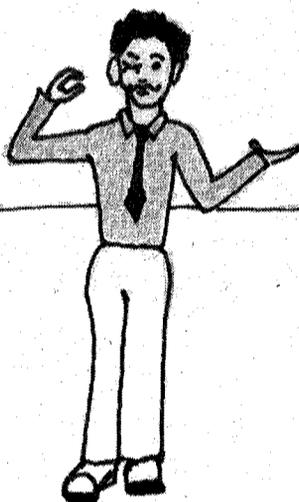


The judge was baffled. The perpetrator was a man of high social standing. He'd been sexually penetrating the chickens to death.

He blamed his behavior on the fact that his genitalia was too small to have coitus with women.

That man wasn't kidding! Medical investigation reported that his penis actually was quite small.

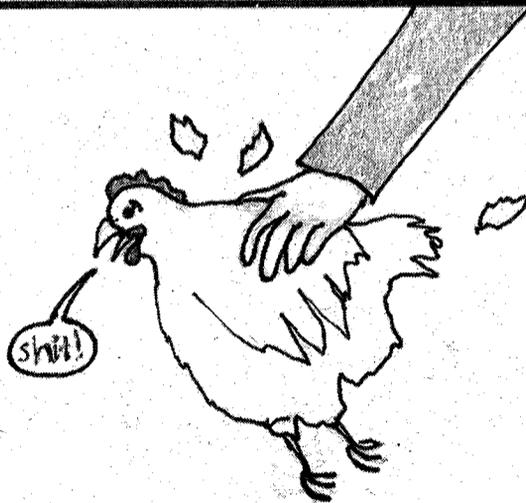
What do you have to say for yourself?



It's true!



Because of this "evidence", the judge deemed it sane for this man to enjoy accosting chickens.



the end.



... And everyone in the town lived happily ever after (except of course those hens).

Works cited

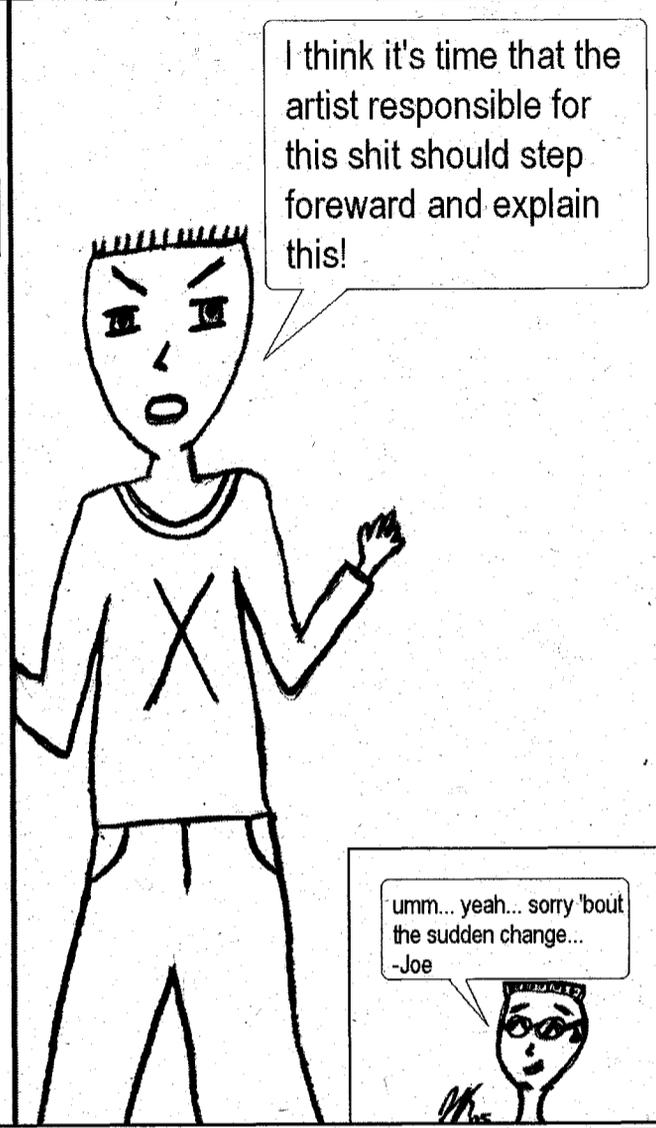
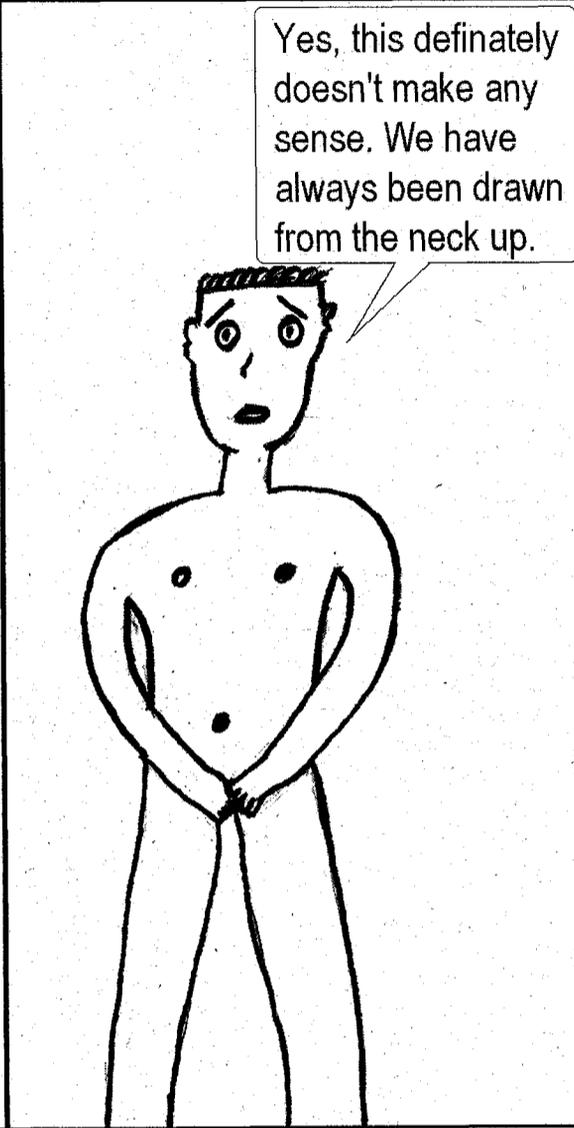
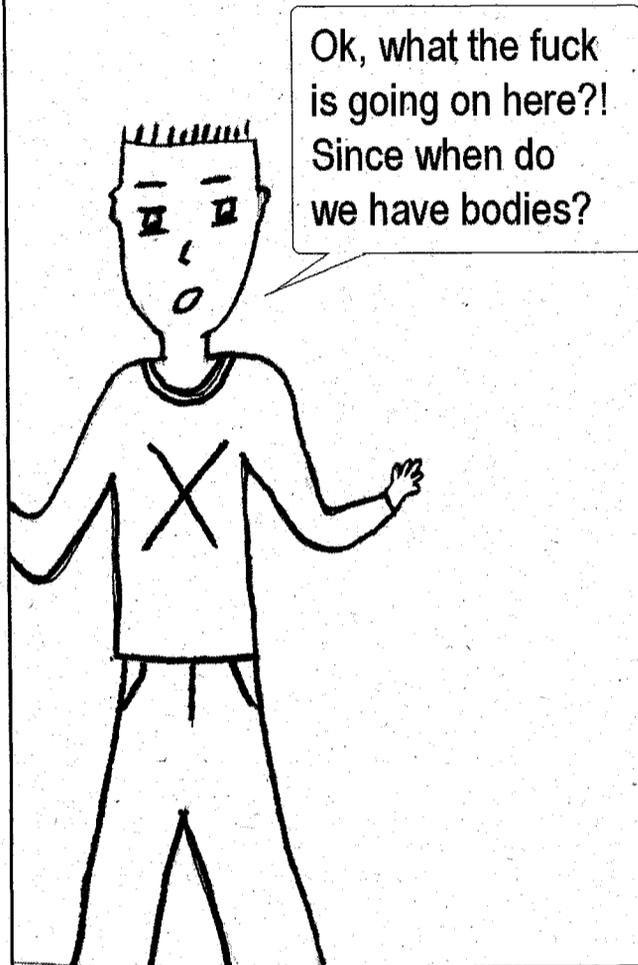
Krafft-Ebing, Richard von -  
*Psychopathia Sexualis: The  
Case Histories*. Stein and Day,  
Case # 229. p. 562

F+

# The Comics Section

College Boyz ver. 2.0

By: Joe Rios



All eyes are opened,  
And students become aware.  
Come, friends, and join the...

## Haiku d'etat

Another late night  
At *The Stony Brook Press*, we're  
Still doing layout

Son of a bitch, Tom  
Didn't finish his haikus  
That stupid asshole

So we all suffer,  
Writing haikus to fill up  
Space in the issue

My name is Tom Clark,  
I write Haiku d'etat and  
This is my Haiku

Fuck your damn haiku  
We don't give a fucking shit  
You can go slag off

Amberly-Jane threw  
A rock through *The Press* window  
Now it's really cold

John can't play Tetris  
He can't use the B button  
So he flips clockwise

The issue is done!  
Break out the champagne glasses  
Now lets all get drunk!

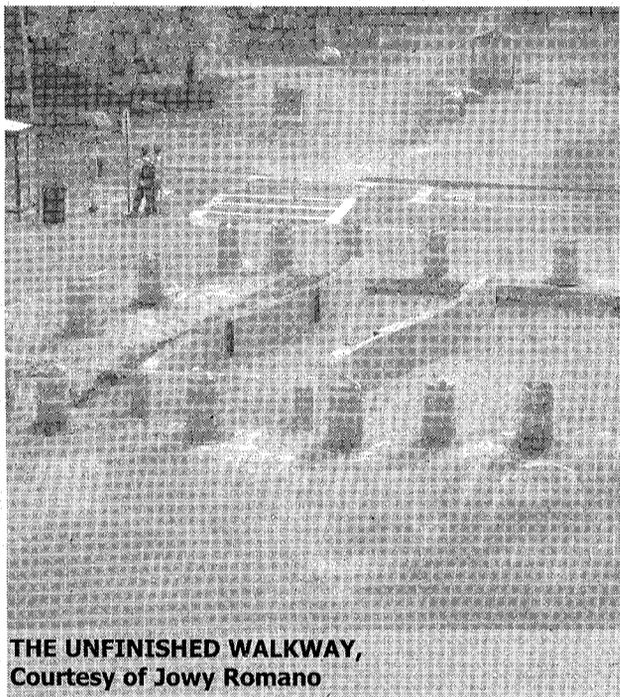
This week's edition was brought to you by Tom Clark, Rob Pearsal, Jaime Mignone, and Matt Willemain. As you have just seen, it's utter rubbish. Blame me, Tom Clark, for not writing anything until the 11th hour. Send hate mail to [whitespace@gmail.com](mailto:whitespace@gmail.com).

# What Mary Naughton Would Write if She Wrote an Article

By Tara Lynne Groth

During your time on Stony Brook University's campus you will find that those responsible for landscaping and architecture have an affinity for the not-so-straight line.

The newly constructed "Memory Walk" on the south side of the Stony Brook Union features an example of this pattern. This wavy walkway doesn't serve much of a practical purpose, except maybe an insignificant aesthetic improvement. Nah, it just generates more complications: students having to siphon through a small path, ice and slush rivers and an increase in the University's landscaping bill to maintain the flowers during more pleasant weather. What's more confusing is from a bird's eye view it looks like an Easter egg.



THE UNFINISHED WALKWAY,  
Courtesy of Jowy Romano

Another new feature on campus is the 9/11 memorial built in the cluster of trees between the Administration Building and Javits. The pathways here defy a practical straight line and make getting from Point A to Point B more of a Miracle Maze adventure.

Also near Javits are the walkways around the fountain and the Psychology Building. These are probably the most obvious example of the University's fetish with the not-so-straight line.

Even the Zebra Trail running from the Old Chemistry Building up to the SAC is painted in said animal's zigzag pattern in an attempt to make even the straightest walkway appear ziggy.

What was at first thought to be a crop circle this past fall behind Mendelsohn Quad turned out to be another University creation with wavy lines. The University spent a couple hundred bucks to mow the grass in a fancy way to form a labyrinth for students and faculty to walk around (mostly in circles).

These are just several of the pedestrian handicaps and illogical structures that illustrate Stony Brook's love of the wavy line.

Mary Naughton is a senior at Stony Brook University and provided her thoughts for the content above. Mary studies Cinema and Cultural Studies and minors in Anthropology. She also has some amazing theories regarding the dynamics of the caste system of high school.

# Don't Invite Nancy or Tonya

By Tara Lynne Groth

"There's nothing to do on Long Island" is a complaint I hear all too frequently. So lace up your skates before the spring thaw, and try ice skating outside (instead of in the confines of Sports Plus).

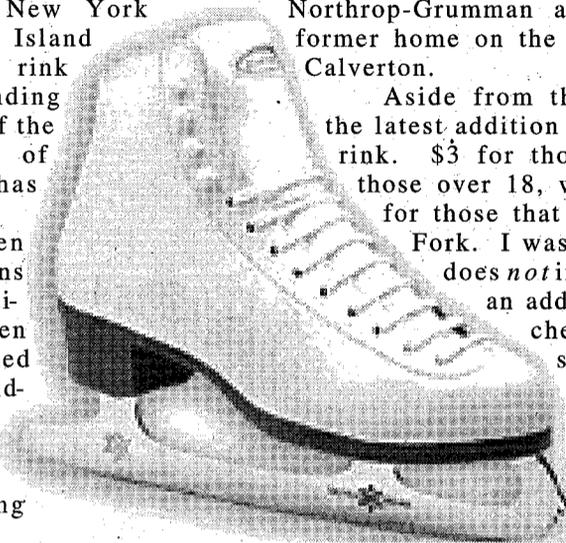
According to the New York Islanders' website, Long Island hasn't had an outdoor ice rink built without private funding since 1972's construction of the Nassau Coliseum. As of January 22, 2005 this has changed.

Greenport has been undergoing what politicians are inclined to term "beautification" over the past ten years. This has transformed downtown Greenport considerably, and those who may not have trekked out to this tiny port in a while would have difficulty recognizing

it. Fortunately, Claudio's still remains!

Several years ago, a glass enclosure for the carousel overlooking the Peconic Bay in the heart of town was completed. This carousel was donated to the Village of Greenport by Northrop-Grumman around a decade ago, its former home on the government's property in Calverton.

Aside from this year-round landmark, the latest addition is the outdoor ice skating rink. \$3 for those 18 and under, \$5 for those over 18, will buy cheap "cool" fun for those that venture out on the North Fork. I was surprised to see that this does *not* include skate rental: that's an additional \$2. So if you're a cheap skate, bring your own skates! Puns can be fun.



## LGBT Social Work Caucus To Hold Dinner Discussion Group

SUNY Stony Brook's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered Social Work Caucus, will be holding its first dinner discussion group on Wednesday, February 23rd at 5:30p.m. The event will take place at the Jasmine Cafe, located in the Wang Center.

The LGBT Social Work Caucus, in conjunction with the LGBTA and the LGBT Faculty Staff Network, hopes the event will be a forum for collaboration amongst gay and lesbian members of the university, as well as their allies. The group is driven by a desire to bring about true social justice and equality.

"The dinner discussions will be an excellent way to network, and unite the various gay and lesbian groups and individuals campus wide into a cohesive community," says Ian Lyons, a graduate student in the School for Social Welfare, and Treasurer of the Caucus.

The event will involve cooperation between undergraduates, graduates, faculty and staff. Such cooperation is unprecedented, and is sure to lead to exciting developments. The caucus views the event as a platform to begin an ongoing dialogue of gay and lesbian issues both on campus and off, and looks forward to participation by a wide variety of the campus community.

For information and inquiries, please contact  
Becky Harris, LGBT Social Work Caucus President,  
at [rharris@notes.cc.sunysb.edu](mailto:rharris@notes.cc.sunysb.edu)

# Could Gays Have Prevented 9/11?

By Joe Safdia

"You're so fucking gay." "You're such a stupid faggot." "Gay ass."

You've all said things like this before, intending to insult one of your friends or an individual that had been giving you grief. Everyone is guilty of this: accusing somebody of being homosexual or in some other way "sexually deviant" merely to insult them. Harmless comments, of course. A book you were reading for class was "gay" because it failed to capture your attention or interest. Or you said your friend was "like, so gay" because he or she was acting weird and silly, or had done something hurtful, etc. Such a comment wasn't even given a second thought, if it was even given a first. Such a comment was stated merely in jest, simply to poke harmless fun at friends, classmates, or co-workers. Well, next time you call your buddy a stupid fag, remember that it is that very mindset that allowed perhaps the greatest tragedy our nation ever endured, 9/11, to occur.

In the weeks and months leading up to September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, United States intelligence agencies had a backlog of information pertaining to the War on Terror. Mountains of evidence had been gathered on Al-Qaeda that told of plans for future acts of terrorism, including a plan to crash two passenger planes into the World Trade Center. Unfortunately, those documents were all in Arabic. At a time when more and more translators were needed ever so desperately to read the information, the military was discharging valuable specialists

for the sole reason that they were homosexuals.

Experts have identified the lack of available specialists to translate and decipher the gathered intelligence as one of the major causes for the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy. In other words, if it weren't for the homophobic nature of American culture, three thousand deaths may have been prevented.

And the military hasn't even learned its lesson yet. Even after 9/11, homosexual soldiers and officers are still being discharged merely for their sexual preference. Within a year after 9/11, nine linguists were kicked out of the U.S. Armed Forces for being gay. Six were fluent in Arabic. Between 1998 and 2004, a staggering 73 translators were discharged for not being heterosexuals.

The armed forces has a "don't ask, don't tell" policy which prohibits the military from questioning soldiers about their sexuality, as well as requiring soldiers to keep their sexual preferences to themselves. But isn't this reminiscent of the "separate, but equal" policy our government enforced after the 1896 Supreme Court case of Plessy v. Ferguson? The policy that brought institutionalized racism upon the American people until the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's? Just as "separate, but equal" brings institutionalized racism with it, "don't ask, don't tell" spawns institutionalized homophobia. But where institutionalized racism brought on protests, hate groups, and police brutality towards minorities, a homophobic

attitude in military policy has jeopardized national security.

Unfortunately, a drastic move forward in military policy may not come for many years, even decades. This is because we as a people are naturally socialized to be homophobic from the very beginning. We are put in a category of either "male" or "female" and if we in any way act in a manner that does not fit our "assigned" category, we are considered strange and abnormal. And homosexuality does not fit perfectly into those categories. When a parent tries to get their son to try out for the football team or persuade their daughter to take dance classes, when children ostracize a boy by calling him a girl, or even at more mature ages where we merely say something we don't like is "gay," we have been giving, and in turn are giving, the impression that homosexuals are inferior to heterosexuals. But don't-worry, this country will one day fully accept gays and lesbians. It took the better part of a century, but minorities were eventually given full protection under the law. And so will homosexuals.

America is a heavily gendered society with an anti-gay mindset implanted into our brains from the day we are born. Unfortunately, homophobia, as well as racism or sexism, can have devastating results, such as the tragic death of three thousand people on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Just something to keep in mind next time you decide to call your friend a fag.

## American Dad: It's The McFarlane Way!

By Seth Maggione

Super Bowl Sunday. After witnessing yet another team blow it against the Patriots, I began to see my fuzzy logic pay off; there was no way this night would end badly. I was in a no-lose situation. I thought that no matter how bad the game or commercials get, or how annoying my friend Nick would get claiming he'd been with the Pats since '96, after the Super Bowl there was going to be the premiere of Seth McFarlane's newest brainchild, *American Dad*. And beer. There was lots and lots of beer to help, as well.

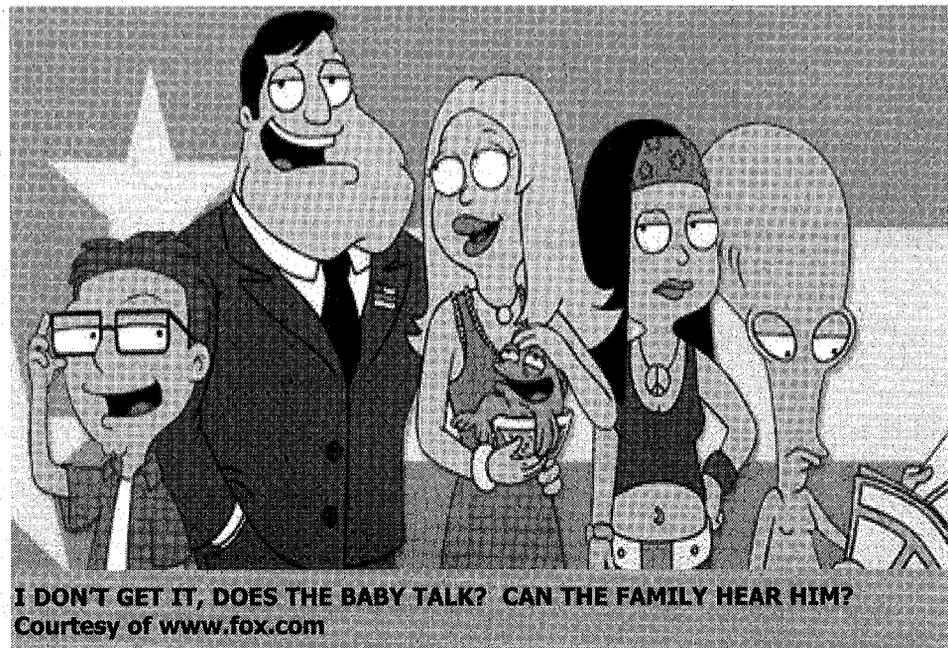
The first things I noticed about *American Dad* were the similarities to *Family Guy*. In visual terms, the animation quality is identical to *Family Guy*. But this really isn't a big deal, just worth mentioning. More noticeably, and importantly, were the characters in the show. The average nuclear family was present: CIA agent/father Stan Smith, ever compromising Stepford wife Francine, "enlightened" daughter Hayley and awkward teenage son Steve. In addition to the family are Klaus, a naughty goldfish with the brain of a German guy, and Roger, the junk food addicted alien. The cast of eccentric characters play out similar dialogue and storylines to those of *Family Guy*, too, but this is not intentional, just Seth McFarlane. Although it may seem to some as if *American Dad* was created to be *Family Guy II*, the differences are really what make the show unique and capable to stand on its own.

The show is different because it's more politically engaged and displays the pure, utter stupidity which exists in American political life. The ability to be hilariously honest about our society is where *American Dad* picks up more on than *Family Guy*. Whether it's liberal Hayley being searched every time she enters her house by her intrusive and controlling neocon dad, or Hayley making fun of her dad's misguided ultra-patriotism, we can all relate to, or have been a part of, these little fights. The

characters, no matter how they're compared, make this show different from *Family Guy*. *American Dad*'s strength also lies in its witty portrayal of contemporary issues and events. I thought I was going to piss my pants when the cartoon flashed to a scene of God telling George Bush not to publicly discuss their relationship so much. Still, *American Dad*'s strengths can unfortunately lead to its downfall as well.

Since it's based on current events, certain people (i.e. politically correct assholes) may get angry with the show's controversial subject matters. Personally, I won't be surprised if the show gets cancelled for a 9/11 joke or mocking the Iraq war. Besides that, there are other things that weren't so great about *American Dad*. Particularly, the dependency on predictably crude, ignorant jokes (Henry Kissinger: More than a Jew) that simply take away from a uniquely humorous show, even if they do produce a cheap laugh. At some points these jokes make it almost too similar to *Family Guy*, again not intentionally, but a result of Seth McFarlane's sense of humor. This factor will play a major role when the series airs in May, considering it is scheduled to appear after *Family Guy* every Sunday. If the show doesn't separate itself from that mold, the critics will do their best to blast it off the air as they did with *Family Guy* the first time around.

In conclusion, *Family Guy* fans, as well as people desperate for political comedy, will love it no matter what criticisms are drawn. Some will just watch it on Adult Swim when they're stoned and too lazy to change the channel (people always seem to lose the remote when they're high). Other soulless, joyless individuals will stop at nothing to take it down. I just suppose that's just the way of the world. Yet the one aspect that will potentially lead to *American Dad*'s success is its edginess and unabashed real view of the world around us. In a society in which political correctness is tightening, from the left and right sides, a show that allows us to laugh instead of cry will surely prove its worth. In addition, Seth McFarlane is helping the advancement of Seths everywhere by being an endless source of comedy, so thanks Seth McFarlane, you're making this world a better place for all of us.



# Million Dollar Controversy

By Sam Goldman

## ACHTUNG!

This article reveals the plot - and the ending - of the film *Million Dollar Baby*. Those who don't like their movies spoiled would do well to avoid this article.

Clint Eastwood's *Million Dollar Baby*, the film starring Hilary Swank, Morgan Freeman and Eastwood himself, is widely considered, along with Alexander Payne's *Sideways*, as one of the co-favorites for an Academy Award. Eastwood is also considered a favorite for Best Actor. But the movie has also begun to generate considerable controversy thanks to its ending, which many conservatives seem to believe advocates euthanasia.

Adapted from two stories from former real-life boxing cut man F.X. Toole's collection, *Short Cuts*, the movie centers on Maggie, Hilary Swank's character, a desperate female boxer who is so poor she takes steaks other people don't finish at the restaurant she works at and eats them herself. Eastwood plays Frankie, a boxing trainer/cut man who (VERY) reluctantly takes Maggie under his wing.

In predictable yet very enjoyable fashion, Frankie transforms Maggie into an impressive female boxer, knocking out just about every opponent she would face. However, in the story's big twist, a cheap shot from a Tysonesque German boxer leaves Maggie paralyzed from the neck down.

Frankie tries his best to keep her spirits up; trying to shield her from her money-grubbing hick family, coming to her hospital room to read Gaelic, and trying to get her to go to college with the money she has saved up. But Maggie instead begs Frankie to put her out of her misery. Frankie balks.

In an illuminating conversation between Frankie and his priest, the priest tells him, in no uncertain terms, that if he did what Maggie asked of him, he would be damned for the rest of his life. "If you do this thing you will be lost," the Father says, "somewhere so deep you will never find yourself."

Finally, however, Frankie acquiesces, sneaking in and out of her hospital in the dead of night to peacefully put her to eternal slumber.

Now, the controversy.

Proudly conservative movie critic Michael Medved has been making the rounds speaking out against *Million Dollar Baby*. Before the film opened, Medved went on Pat Robertson's *The 700 Club* to discuss the movie—and reveal

the entire plot, up to the ending. He also revealed the twist in his *USA Today* column and his weekly radio segment, and recently appeared on *The O'Reilly Factor* to further explain his position (it should be noted that Bill O'Reilly disagreed with him). Rush Limbaugh, in his radio show, also revealed the ending of the movie to their audience, then offered a half-hearted apology when confronted by angry patrons. Conservative columnist Debbie Schlusel stated on her website that *Million Dollar Baby* is an Oscar shoo-in "because it's Hollywood's best political propaganda of the year... it supports killing the handicapped, literally putting their lights out."

All three columnists claim that, by virtue of their performances, and the simple fact that two of Hollywood's biggest stars play the two most significant roles, *Million Dollar Baby* becomes an advertisement for euthanasia as a preferred choice for quadriplegics. Medved, especially, believes the marketing of the movie as a boxing flick instead of as the right-to-die paean he believes it to be is "manipulative" and "misleadingly marketed" and believes that he—and others—have a responsibility to warn the audience before they fall victim to its propaganda. On *The O'Reilly Factor*, Medved also inferred that he believes that the movie is an example of stereotypical liberal Hollywood thinking, adding that the priest is so unlikable in the movie that he is almost portrayed as a villain, and Frankie's decision to go against his advice is glorified.

"[J]ust because a movie has its characters make decisions that we disagree with, that, in and of itself, does not automatically make the movie...an advertisement for a point of view we find either morally correct or repugnant."

Leading the pack on the other side of the fence is *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Roger Ebert, who, in a recent column, accused the above people of intentionally revealing the ending of *Million Dollar Baby* in an attempt to damage it financially, and calls their actions "not justifiable." He says all this even while admit-

ting that, were he in Frankie's shoes, he would not have done what Frankie did.

In Ebert's corner, also, is *Seattle Times* and Amazon.com critic Jeff Shannon, who calls Eastwood's film "the masterwork of a great American filmmaker," and one of the better films of the year, even though Shannon blatantly disagrees with the actions and thoughts of the two characters. In fact, Shannon himself happens to be a quadriplegic who, obviously, has made a decision to live, and is productive and happy.

Roger Ebert, most notably, characterizes the controversy not in terms of political or religious ideas, but in much simpler terms. It is a controversy over whether characters in movies should do what you believe to be the morally correct decision, or whether the characters should be able to make their own choices. Although Ebert disagrees with Maggie's wish to die and Frankie's decision to grant that wish, in his opinion, the characters act believably. Maggie's entire life is based around her body; after traveling the world, and now watching her physical body disintegrate before her eyes, Maggie feels there is nothing left on this world for her, and despite Frankie's best attempts, she cannot be persuaded otherwise. Frankie cares so much for Maggie that, in the end, he sacrifices himself for her, killing her knowing full well that his decision will have lasting ramifications on his psyche (as the priest warned him).

While Ebert, Shannon and many other people reject the choices the characters make, the movie-going public is smart enough to understand that just because a movie has its characters make decisions that we disagree with, that, in and of itself, does not automatically make the movie a bad movie. Nor does that necessarily make it an advertisement for a point of view we find either morally correct or repugnant. As Ebert said, "What kind of movies would there be if we expected everyone in them to do what we think they should do?" Meanwhile, Michael Medved, Rush Limbaugh and others believe that any movie that does not espouse a morally correct point of view is bad on its face, and that the public should not be trusted to be able to view the material objectively. They would prefer a return to the 1950's, where Hollywood still had to abide by the old Hays moral code, where no one could make a decision deemed morally repugnant without being punished before the movie ended, and issues such as euthanasia and assisted suicide, actions with a moral value that is truly debated worldwide, would never be made at all.

## 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!

# MISPLACED REVIEW?

## Constantine

By Eddie Zardorozny

Let's see...the actual spear that was plunged into the side of Jesus more than two thousand years ago has been discovered by two Mexicans, in Mexico, who have been rummaging through the burnt remnants and ash of a house that has been totaled. Upon a break in the foundation underfoot, a hole is revealed where the Mexican reaches down and finds the spear of destiny [I now believe the theory of continental drift]. This spear when handled and thrust upon an undetected and unknowing woman carrying the son of the devil will bring hell onto earth. The uncovering of this spear has just launched the mission.

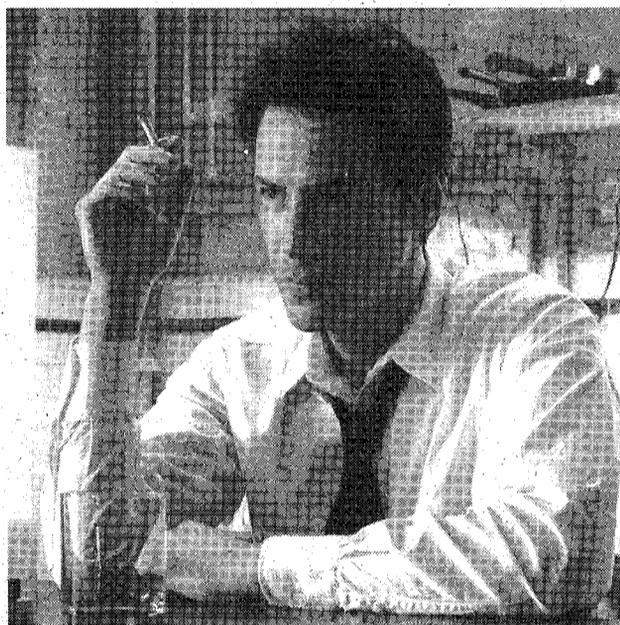
One man, John Constantine [Keanu Reeves], is a rejected servant of heaven. This, due to a suicide attempt he made at a young age because of his reluctance and resistance to deal with his power to spot demons disguised as humans that walk amongst us. He was spared the fate of hell, due to revival by doctors that brought him back from that fiery grave, but he did encounter two hellish minutes of the underworld, and the devil does not like to have to send people back. John is a suicide angel who is trying to buy his way into heaven by sending thousands of demons that walk among us back to hell by killing them. It is through circumstance, people, and scenarios, that John pieces together the events and uncovers the magnitude of what is at stake, namely the world.

The film has an interesting premise and it starts off well, the scene where John is introduced to the viewer he is about to perform an exorcism. That scene is tense and captured engrossingly by the camera. There is also the character of Angie [Rachel Weisz] who is investigating the suicide of her twin sister Isabel, which she strongly disagrees, happened. This suicide seems to be Isabel's ploy to tell Rachel that there is a purpose to her death and this should jumpstart her investigation and uncover

secrets about her self as well as the big picture here [I guess psychiatric counseling was not an option]. This suicide brings about the bond between Constantine and Angie, as they try to unravel what the intention of it was. It also sets in motion the devil and his demons of the underworld that see the connection between Isabel and Angie and how it plays into their tactics. As well as God's emissary half-breed angel, played by Tilda Swinton, who has ulterior motives of the event.

I would say that the first two thirds of this film is entertaining it keeps your interests peaked and there are some spectacular special effects, one particular is when Constantine is attacked by a demon completely constructed of bugs, the effect there is amazing. Also the imagery of the underworld is very visual, the landscape is all of fire and all objects such as buildings and cars are torched burnt and melted [of course this is from an artistic viewpoint, I will be going to church after this analysis].

It's the last third of the film that is a convoluted mess. Most of the characters are underdeveloped, and there are plot holes and instances of shake-your-head confusion, one particular is when Constantine gives Angie an emblem from a priest [I think], he tells her to wear it around her neck for protection as he goes to fight a half breed demon, she is told to wait in the car. We all know she is not going to wait in the car, but why did she remove the emblem and leave it in the car [Was it on loan from Harry Winston?]? All the characters intertwine with death, resurrection, and sacrifice as they battle for the sake of the world and with Constantine at the forefront of this fight. I was hoping Keanu Reeves would go into serious acting mode and end it all by simply saying "Um Mr. Devil dude this fighting has to stop, ok dude."



FINGER-LICKING GOOD KEANU FIGHTS DEMONS, Courtesy of www.reeves-dogstar.com

## A Fault in the X-Box? Surely This Cannot Be!

By Joe Rios

A fault in the Microsoft X-Box? Such a concept doesn't seem possible. After all, Microsoft is perfect, if you ignore the security gaps and lack of design on their products (don't yell at me for bashing Microsoft, I'm just saying they could do better!)

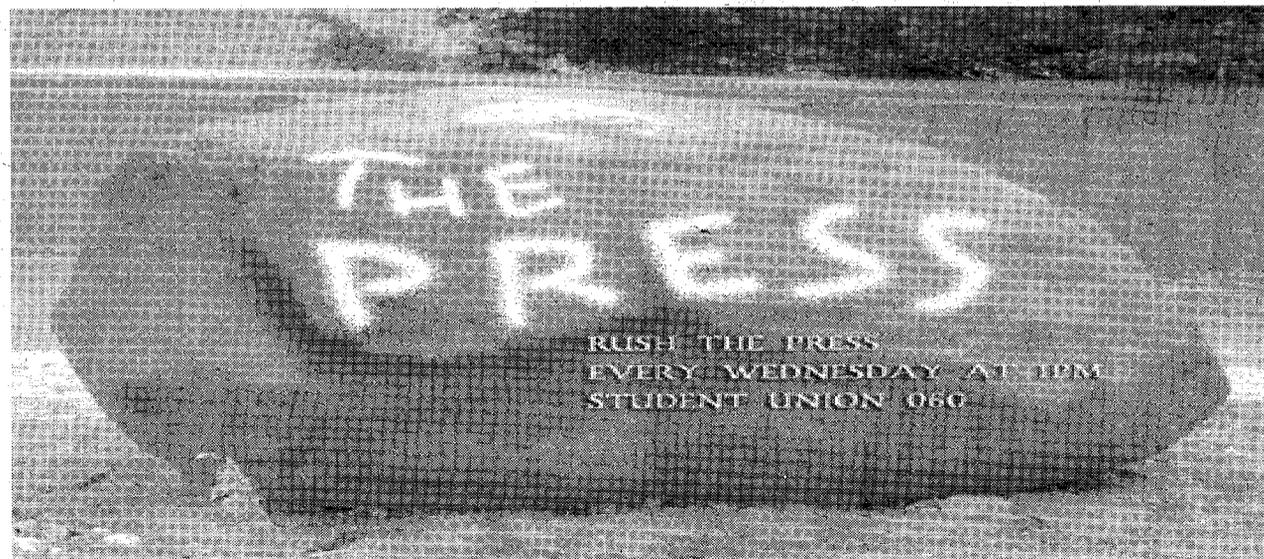
Microsoft's latest "OOPS" involves the power cord on the X-Box consoles. Apparently the power cords occasionally short out, causing overheating and smoke from the cable. Now before you throw your console out one of your Windows (ha-ha), note that Microsoft has only identified 30 cases across the globe of such events happening. In a few cases there was some damage to furniture, and seven people received burns to their hands from the overheating wires.



ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT MINUTE ELECTRICAL HOUSE FIRES! Courtesy of Joe Rios

According to Microsoft, fewer than one in ten thousand units have had this type of equipment failure, and the damage has been limited to the cables and consoles. If you are concerned about your cable, you can go to [www.xbox.com](http://www.xbox.com) and check your box's serial number to see if it has been recalled. If it is, you get to fill out a form like I just did, and in a few weeks Microsoft will have a new power cord shipped to your door. FREE OF CHARGE.

Now if you're sitting there after ordering the cable and are wondering, "Well how am I going to play Halo2 now?" Fear not! Microsoft insists that the cables are safe for regular use; they do however recommend that you turn off your console while it is not in use.



# What Did You Want for Valentine's Day?

By Dustin Herlich

So what did you want for Valentine's Day? A new car? A stereo system? A night of wild debauchery? World peace?

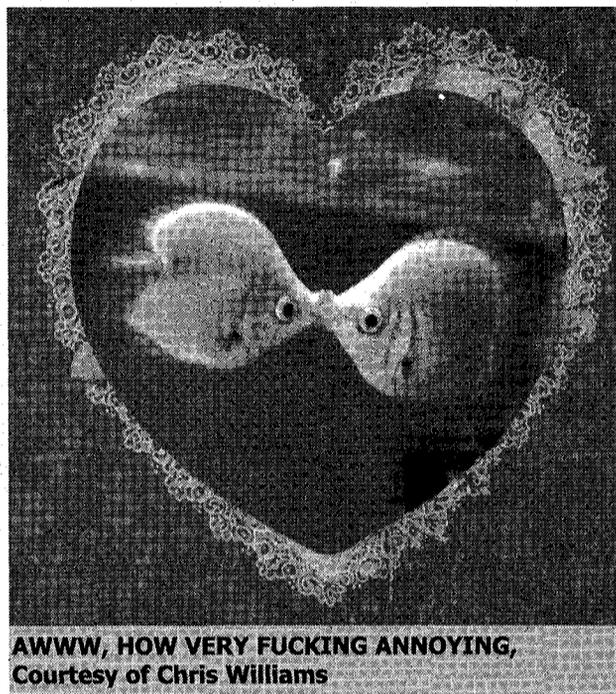
I wanted a stick. Yes, a stick. An ordinary branch of wood with a small diameter, and smallish length. How can I request a stick? Well, I'll tell you how. It all starts with a conversation I had with Jamie...

See, Jamie got a valentine's day card from somebody (no one gave me a valentine's day card...) and I told him "well, It's better than a sharp stick in the eye". This instantly sparked something in my brain that I could not ignore. There it was, staring me in the face. My perfect Valentine's Day gift is a simple stick. See, for me, a stick is more than just a stick. No, I don't worship wood or have carnal desires for bark, but I do have a close personal friendship with nature.

Back as far as I can remember, I have loved nature, camping, the woods, all that stuff. My friends even to this day refer to me as a "nature boy" and I've been known to engage in some fairly interesting activities like chopping down some small trees in my backyard and whittling spears out of them. Crazy? Maybe, but I've never hurt anyone with what I've done and it keeps me busy and away from anything really bad.

A stick is not only a useful present (I could make all kinds of things out of it, or just poke people) but it also shows that either some deep thought or true insanity went into the gift. If the escaped mental patient is giving me a stick for Valentine's Day, chances are that it's actually July, and this person is desperately trying to chew his or her way through the strait-jacket, as this is probably the only kind of per-

son that would bother sincerely asking me to be their valentine. The other scenario is that someone knows me well enough, that they understand how special something as insignificant as a stick can be, especially for me. Yeah, part of it is I am that easy to please when it comes to tokens of affection, but let's get a little deeper into the matter.



AWWW, HOW VERY FUCKING ANNOYING,  
Courtesy of Chris Williams

Aside from the things you DO with a stick, think about the stick as a gift in a more abstract way. Instead of mindlessly giving chocolate or flowers, this person sat down, and said "no, it has to be something totally creative

and different". Giving from the heart, even if it's a half a wad of chewed gum, is more special to me than buying someone a set of diamond earrings just to shut them up. Yes, I would probably have fun with the stick, and do all kinds of crazy things with it, but if you're still hung up on the material aspect of the present, either you haven't been reading what I'm saying, or you're a much more materialistic person than I am.

Showing somebody you care can come in many different forms. Gifts are a great way to show you are thinking of somebody, but give too many and they can get stale and become trite. There are a million different ways you can show somebody you care without spending a dime. I'll admit that I wouldn't mind if someone bought me a brand new Canon Elan 7NE, but even that is less money than what many I know have spent on somebody. You always hear "It's the thought that counts" and to me, that works on several levels.

Yes, the thought of "hey, Dustin's weird and actually enjoys playing with sticks" comes into play, but also "hey, this is something completely different and shows I'm thinking more than just acting" or even "yeah, this is funny and random, I'm glad Dustin will appreciate this 'cause few others will".

Maybe if more people in this world could appreciate the subtle meanings of getting a stick for a present, we would be in a much better state of affairs. If anyone out there wants to be my valentine and give me a stick, come by the office and drop one off for me. Better yet, come to a weekly staff meeting and give it to me in person. It's not about material possessions, or the act of giving. It's about the act of caring.

## Weave a Tangled Web

By Natalie Schultz

Looking for a unique extra-curricular activity? Have you ever considered learning a traditional handicraft? Ever wonder what life was like before the industrial revolution? Before all of our clothing and other items were mass-produced in some overseas sweatshop?

Why not try your hand at traditional floor loom weaving? Unbeknownst to most students on campus, the Stony Brook Union Crafts Center has a wealth of old-world looms and they are offering a class in weaving beginning March 7.

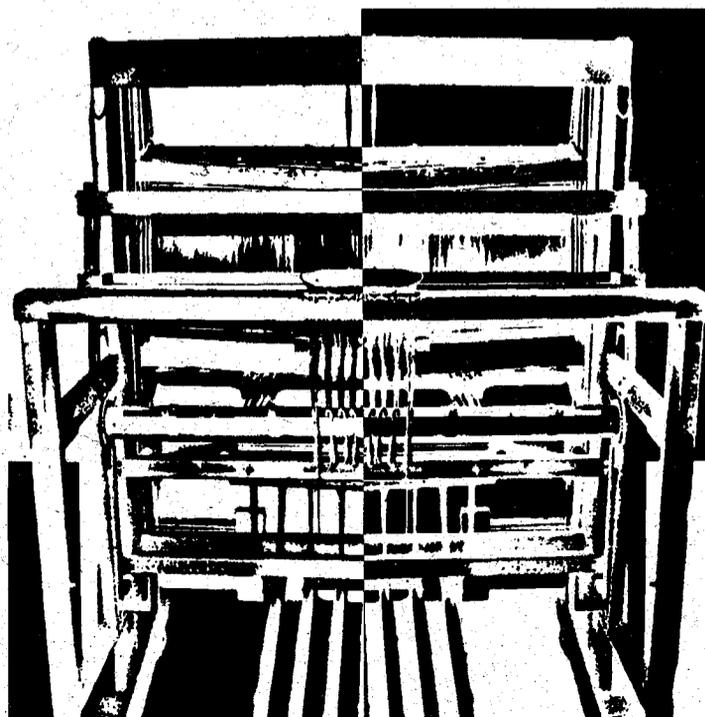
Why would I want to learn to weave, you ask? Well, there are many reasons. For starters, it is an art that very few people know; therefore it is a great conversation starter. Think about it; how many people can say "I'm a bio-physics major and in my free time I like to weave handmade scarves for my friends and family?" Hey, it would even look good on your resume; employers always like people with unique and interesting hobbies.

Weaving is also a great stress-reliever; kind of like meditation, but in the end you actually have a unique and useful work of art. It's also a way to re-connect with the past; all cultures across the globe have relied on the skills of weavers to produce the basic necessities of clothing and cloth for items such as bags and blankets. If you think about it, it's like a fun, participatory history class; but rather than learning from a book you learn by creating.

Did you know that Icelandic currency was based on ells of homespun cloth for several centuries? In fact, Icelandic woolen cloth was so valuable and necessary as both a commodity and a standardized monetary

unit in the Middle Ages that Icelandic women were the only women in Europe at that time who actively participated in the economy and were respected for it.

OK, if I haven't enticed you yet, then maybe this sad story will. As you know, weaving, like many other traditional arts, is a dying art. Unfortunately, even with a wealth of looms at our disposal right here on campus, the lack of enough people registering for the weaving classes has left these poor looms untouched for a few



THE TAO OF LOOM  
Courtesy of Chris Williams

years now. Due to this perceived lack of interest, this is the last time a weaving class will be offered at the Crafts Center. Unfortunately, even this class may be cancelled because not enough people have registered yet.

It's not too late! In fact, I have faith that it is not lack of interest that has kept ye students away, rather the fact that you didn't know that this fascinating facility even existed here on campus. So, ye bored campus dwellers, why not try your hand at traditional weaving this semester? You will help keep a dying art alive, and you will even have something interesting to bring home to your parents at the end of the semester to show that you did more than just schlep around in a drunken stupor after countless studious hours.

Still not convinced? How about seeing it as the way to fulfill that altruistic goal you set for yourself? By registering for this class, you will help to ensure that the class will not be cancelled; that the poor souls already registered will not be let down. You will not only make others happy, but you will learn a fun new skill and have something nice to show for it on more levels than one.

The Floor Loom Weaving Workshop will be held on six Monday nights 6:30-9:00pm, beginning March 7<sup>th</sup>. To register, or for more information on this and other fun Crafts Center classes, stop by the Crafts Center in the basement of the Student Union or call (631)632-6822. Email:

sb.union.crafts.center  
@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

# Twixters, I'll Have None of That

By Tara Lynne Groth

Surprised I was that there was not an article in the last issue of *The Press* responding to *Time Magazine's* January 24, 2005 issue featuring a cover story about today's youth. More specifically—those in their mid-twenties.

Lev Grossman's synopsis of this cross section of society touched upon new statistical findings and psychological research and other yawn factors that deter most people from optically consuming the entire article. For those who missed this, Grossman provided examples of indecisive young adults who aren't conforming to society's standards. Instead of bear hugging a thirty-year fixed rate mortgage, tackling the 9 to 5 and sporting a sexy Osh-Kosh diaper bag, today's youngin' aims at keeping this on *pause*—or have already decided to never hit *play*.

As much as I don't take a fancy to the addition in America's vernacular, the term "twixter" has been coined to describe the college student/graduate who has not accepted the rites of passage like parenthood and employment. We do live in a lazy society—and Jesse Gaccione wrote a piece in *Newsday* [February 14, 2005] proposing the notion that we create this inactivity ourselves. Gaccione used the new Blockbuster "No Late Fee" policy to show how our culture further induces and encourages people to hold off on responsibility. It's surfacing in more and more aspects of life.

*Time's* article debunks the stigma revolving around the college demographic's fickleness. Grossman covers almost all grounds in his article regarding twixters, I will avoid summarizing, and turns the Lazy American into a misunderstood, intellectual deviant. Grossman writes "...what looks like incessant, hedonistic play is the twixters' way of trying on jobs and partners and personalities and making sure that when they do settle down, they do it the right way, *their* way. It's not that they don't take adulthood seriously; they take it so seriously, they're spending years carefully choosing the

right path into it."

I think this may be creating an excuse for those in colleges; optimistically hoping that we will fill the shoes of those before us. A symptom of denial perhaps. What's acknowledged is the reality that our society makes it easy for the college crowd to take our time, rack up debt through loans—some destroying credit scores, nixing the ability to purchase a house if so desired, enjoying ourselves and appreciating it more knowing what the future has in store for us. I am not including myself in the collective as I don't fit the twixter stereotype, so by "us" I am referring to the twixters that Grossman has under the lens.

One problem I found with *Time* is the encouragement of parents to avoid a twixter fate for the children by not taking vacations. I don't agree with sheltering people to create a fixed future for them. Let people see what are world

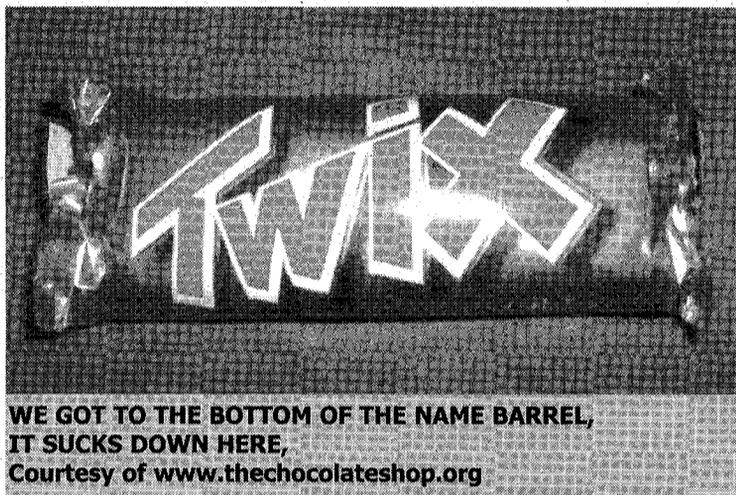
checks coming our way (due to the predicted deficit). *Time's* article grants one sentence to this possibility.

Michael Patrick Nelson wrote a satirical piece in his *Long Island Press* column addressing this new demographic, and I agree with his theory that the "twixter" label is created in a marketing conspiracy—to influence today's college group and give them a brand to include themselves in. At first I thought the candy company was trying to make Fat America fatter by prescribing the college demographic a love for Twix.

From Nelson's own experience as a thirty year old suffering from twixter symptoms I find some truth in Grossman's findings. Other than this one example, and several I know on a personal level, it all seems to be a farce. A stereotype created to describe members of society and criticize them for not striving for the American dream. This reminds me of an essay on criticism by Matthew Arnold. Arnold believes that [I'm paraphrasing] great works are produced in epochs. That a "man and the moment" is required. Aside from the patriarchal undertones, this asserts that a person requires the right moment in history [or in the future] in order to be received favorably. The only level I can agree upon is a new way of life, a way of thinking, of living, and it seems that this is the time for it.

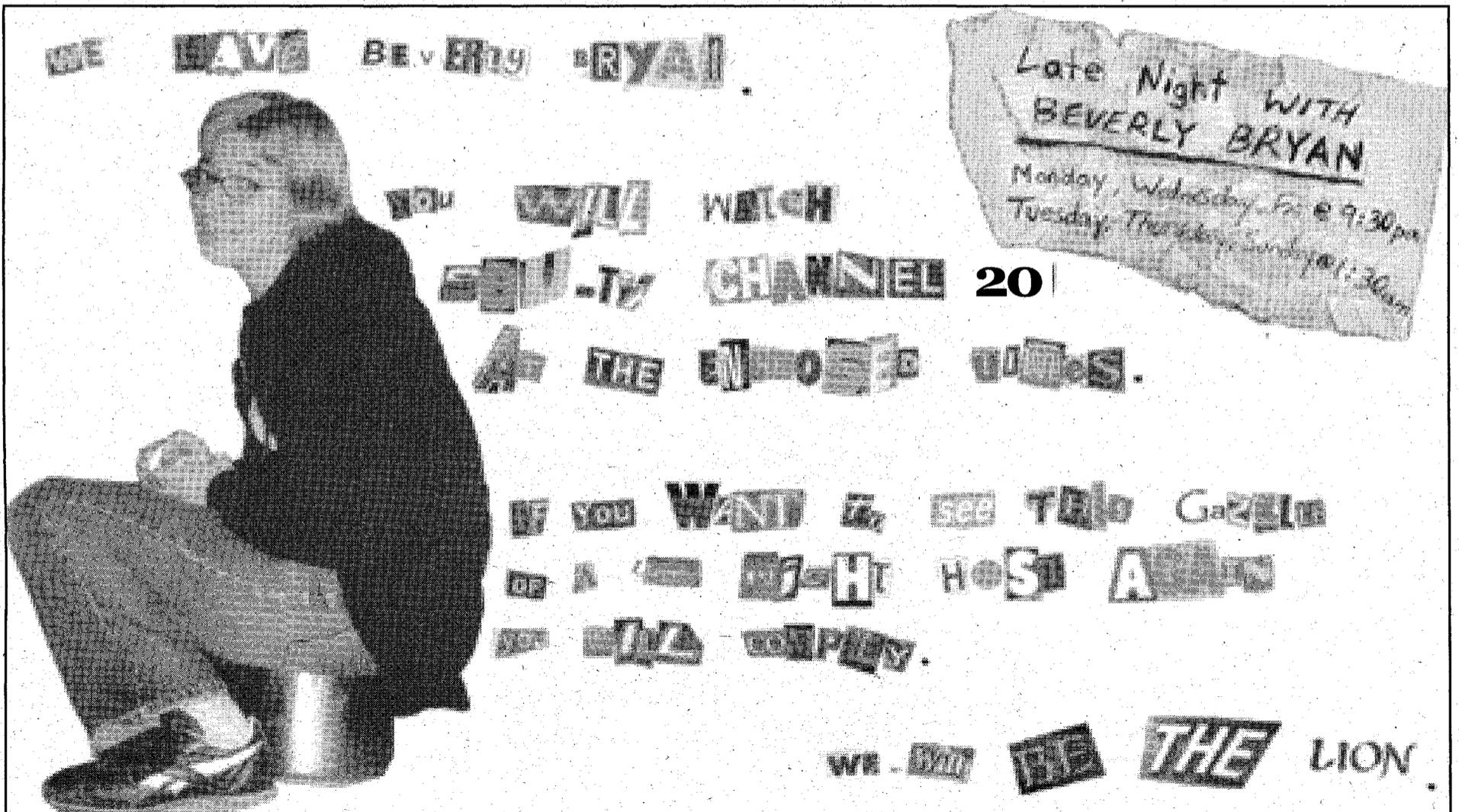
Not to continue filling the article with other people's thoughts [even though they provide a complementing discourse], but a quote from *Waking Life* [Richard Linklater, 2001] underscores the nature of the world we live: "Our planet is facing the greatest problems it's ever faced, ever. So whatever you do, don't be bored, this is absolutely the most exciting time we could have possibly hoped to be alive. And things are just starting."

Begin!



is about and let them decide for themselves.

With that aside, upon first skimming the article I thought Grossman would discuss more about our [college students'] future with Social Security—how people may want to enjoy themselves more now and detain the norms of society because there won't be any Social Security



# The Final Day

By Tom Senkus

The last days of any job are always the most incredible. It's as if a lover is moving to Europe, and getting so enraptured in the moment, you've forgotten this person was a bastard. You look on all your coworkers with benevolence. Tears envelop your eyes as you lean back into the smoke-laced seat. Passengers, even the assholes, became witty and resplendent. It's such a strange euphoria, and in the bleacher section of your mind, there's a voice saying, "Don't ever come back here again."

That, and the "Darrreeeellllll," because your mind happens to like the Mets fan, circa 1988.

The Ronkonkoma train station where I yell, "Taxi!!!" is not being kind to us cab drivers. There's simply no money. Drivers share this idea with me, along with their theories. The most popular theory is that people are STILL broke from Christmas. Another is the cold weather. I manage to avoid the annoying lease driver, Joe Happy, but I notice a familiar figure skulking his way around the pseudo-town layout of the rail station.

A homeless guy named Tony, who always tells me bad jokes, avoids me today. It's midnight, and normally he has a garbage bag filled with excess donuts from Dunkin Donuts. The reason he doesn't talk to me is for two reasons. 1. He tried to weasel a ride to Farmingville [\$15 at least] for... you guessed it, donuts, and 2. he tried to sleep in my van. I kicked him out, saying how I'd like to be alone. He protested for a bit, but then tried to weasel the cab office. If he had been looking for a job, I would have said "Sure," but all he does is ride the LIRR all day and stalk his girlfriend. No thanks, I'd rather not see his unshaved face and snagged-tooth grin.

Here's a Tony original for all you feminists: "Women: can't live with 'em, can't throw 'em in the wood chipper." I find it funny that despite all the passengers I pick up, not one makes me laugh with them. For my final night driving, it's rather uneventful. That's not to say, until it became darker.

"2:00 AM"

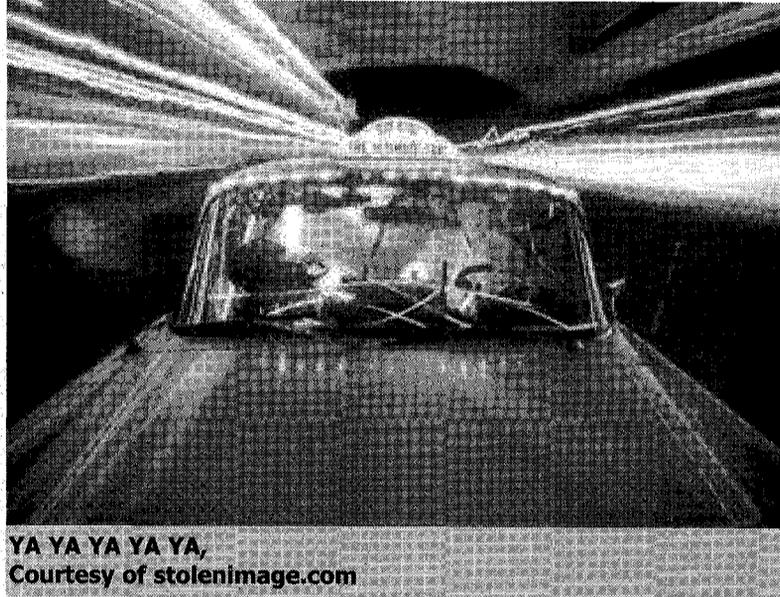
Mr. Shanahan is a character, to say the least. He speaks in short phrases, dynamically loud. The glasses on his eyes are black framed and smaller than the circumference of his eye sockets. Looking into them is pointless; there's only pupil. Somehow, he has one of the best jobs working for a certain company that distributes infrared scanning devices. On a given night, he's prone to blow \$600 on strippers. Still, he admits he hasn't gotten laid in 5 years. He makes everyone wait, but the wait is well worth it. Treat him nice, and you can have \$40, cash in hand.

But it's the wait. A "Shanahan ten minutes" is a half-hour. The perverted men look at the taxicab as if puzzled. "Why is he still here," they must ponder. I feel out of place. I look out of place, driving an Astrovan taxi, reading a book, and laying across two seats up front. I call the dispatcher; "Damn it, where is he?"

"He'll be out. Just wait."

In the meantime, I'll describe some things for you. The Scene is the classiest strip club in Suffolk County. Just off of Exit 53. While I'm not completely sure, this one has a dress code. [Damn it, where is he?] Young "suits" step out, cell phone in hand. Anxious looks, but knowing. Their eyes are titled sixty degrees south of the horizon. The focus isn't on anything but the conversation in the right hand. They pace.

Strippers in mini-skirts squat down for their breaks. Men follow. [Damn it, where is he?] They accost the strippers. What they don't know is that many are from Russia, and many have a limited vocabulary. They dance to two universal languages: Music and Money.



YA YA YA YA YA,  
Courtesy of stolenimage.com

All this time, I'm reading Henry Miller's *Black Spring*. Mentioning this would be superfluous and pretentious, but for the carpe-diem-spirit his writing induces. It makes the wait longer, and longer, and longer yet. [Damn it, where is he?!]

Here comes a man right now. Oh joy, it's Mr. Shanahan! Wait, I've just been given the sign: ten more minutes...

Thirty minutes pass. Finally, he's in the car. Prior times I've dealt with him, I've

been bulldozed. He's simply "too much." This time, I came on with the mindset of out-Shanahaning Mr. Shanahan. As soon as he opened the door, I said, "Fuck you, Mr. Shanahan!" and he smiled. That's a good sign.

I like to update him on my brother, one of his favorite drivers. On a certain New Year's Eve, I coaxed a twenty-spot that Shany gave me to give him for his weed. I kept it. This time, I tell him he's joined the Army. "He'll be dead in six months! Six months I give 'em!" he predicts, and we both laugh.

A cop pulled someone over, so I tell Mr. Shanahan that we're going to give him the finger as we go by. Even Mr. Shanahan is a bit scared when we come up to it, but I can tell he's having a good time. I slow up, he goes to it, and we're off to 55. Then I get a thought.

"We're going to make a buck," I say, translating to: We're going to hit 100 mph in a van on the LIE. Without even asking, we're up to 85, when he says, "Ok, enough," in a satisfied way.

We stop for food at an Exxon, just off of Exit 59, and as he's leaving the car, I demand that he buy me a beer. He smiles.

Again he takes his sweet time. The dispatcher gets worried. At this stage of the game, three hours left in my shift, I don't care. [Damn it, where is he?]

I go in to find that the gas station attendant is crazier than he is. Shanahan's got this guy jumping up and down, speaking in his native tongue, and trying to strike me with an imaginary whip. Another attendant is making

Continued on page 40

## Cab Driver's Knowledge

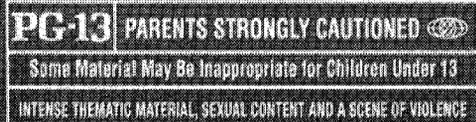
By Tom Senkus

1. You can steal from candy machines that work on a turnstile by taking a coffee stirrer and inserting it in between the gears in the clockwise direction. Pistachios taste better MacGuyver-style.
2. At night, red lights become stop signs. Illegally.
3. Gyros have the best money-to-hunger ratio. \$5 bucks is like \$8 dollars of Wendy's.
4. If you tell a story of how your previous passenger [or table, for you waiters] didn't tip you, the current passenger will tip you more or at least feel incredibly repugnant for not. It's a win-win situation.
5. It's very rare that you'll ever meet someone of substance, and if you do, you have to hope they're in a good mood. Then you'll have to factor in if you're in a good mood and if you're a person of substance. Not good odds.
6. If a person tries to make a deal on something less than \$5, they are a scumbag!
7. The quality of food goes down before closing. Calling in a large order anytime is worse.
8. If, by some chance, you go the Bronx and leave for Long Island only to end up in Yonkers, then you have no knowledge of New York. Take it from me.
9. A good excuse for being late is to say that you were pulled over by a police officer. Not only do you make your problems look more significant ["I almost got a ticket," all flustered] but you get an unarguable defense, especially from employers. They'd dare not mess with the law, especially when they're paying you peanuts.
10. Don't tip the gas station attendant. They make \$15 per hour.
11. If a stripper wants to have sex with you, say "No!" Think about it; if she'd had sex with some schlub like you, then imagine a paying customer's chances. Herpes isn't just a bad pronunciation of Hercules anymore.
12. Despite the sob story, if a poor person happens to be fat, don't feel sorry for them. Where do you think that money goes?
13. Fast food stores are usually staffed by half-way house members. Don't say I didn't warn you about that burger.
14. Bilingual people are better than you, despite what the racists will have you try to believe.
15. Those "Support Our Troops" magnets on foreign cars have a sweet, metallic taste of irony to them.
16. Even the homeless can have cell phones. If you're wondering, they charge them on the waiting rooms of the LIRR.

ASK  
THE MOVIE TRAILER VOICE-OVER GUY  
ANYTHING

BY THE MOVIE TRAILER VOICE-OVER GUY

THE FILM ADVERTISED HAS BEEN RATED



Dear Movie Trailer Voice-Over Guy,

There's this girl I really like, and I don't think she even knows I exist. How do I approach her, and if I do how do I get her to like me?

- Nervous in Ontario

Dear Nervous,

A man, plagued by fear. A woman, out of reach. And between them: an adventure you will never forget. This summer, the journey continues for one man, against all odds and obstacles. Experience the magic, the mystery, as one Canadian loser makes his biggest mistake: talking to a girl who thinks he's dogshit. The thrills don't stop, and the humility never fails. *Almost Not a Loser*. For everyone who ever thought they had a friend, and for all of us who like to laugh at them. *Almost Not a Loser*. Coming this July.

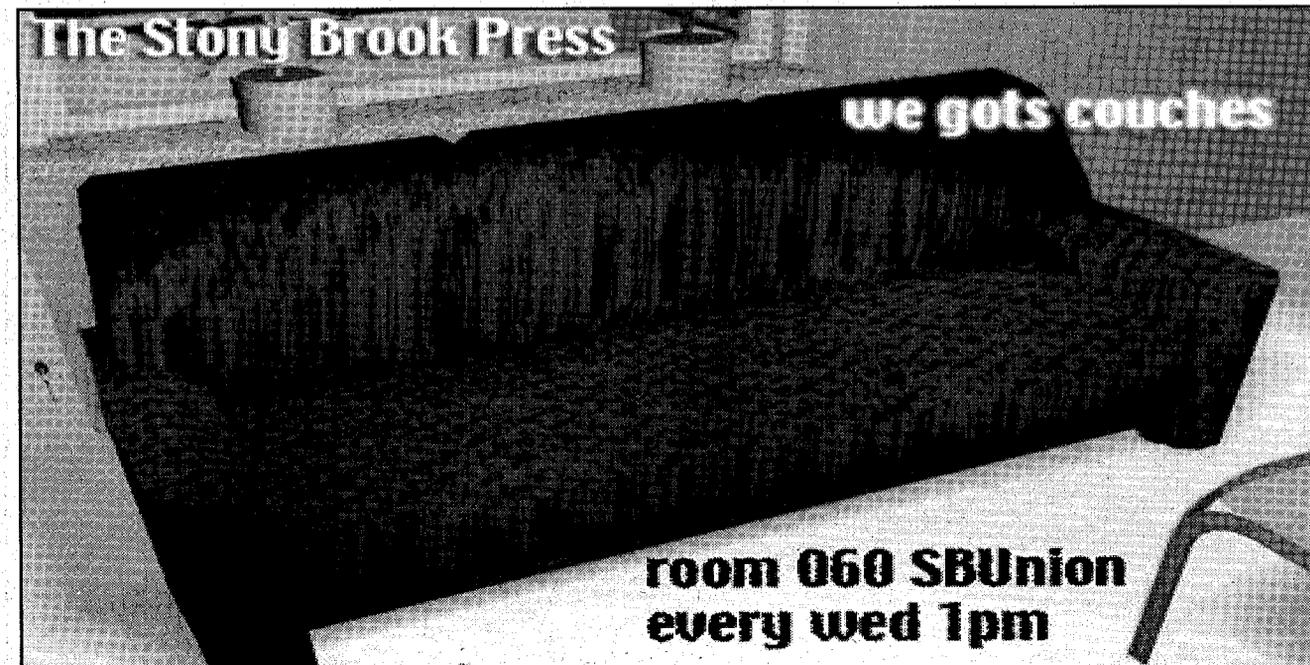
Dear Movie Trailer Voice-Over Guy

I want to do something nice for the community, but I don't know where to start. Is there a way for me to become more involved in my town or with any charity work at all? All I want to do is help people. Please let me know.

- Wanting to Help in Milwaukee

Dear Wanting to Help,

Come see the person critics are hailing as "...the stupidest fucking dipshit alive" (William Crowe, *The San Antonio Journal*). Edie McKaven of *The New York Venue* says, "Never before has a person come around with so much heart-wrenching idiocy and ass-fucked idealism. It's a must-see." Everyone agrees *Wanting to Help* is the saddest excuse for a wannabe pussy, and critics everywhere are hailing him as "...the cause of mass depression in the northern hemisphere." Come see what the world is talking about. Come see *Wanting to Help*. There will never be an asshole like it again.



# Dude, Where's the Originality?

By Sarah Cassone

Have filmmakers completely run out of original ideas? It would seem so. Today, there are three kinds of films made:

- 1) Formulaic mainstream films catering to teenage girls/boys in the form of simplistic comedies or horror films.
- 2) Various independent ventures A.K.A. The Good Stuff
- 3) Remakes of films that were made not too long ago.

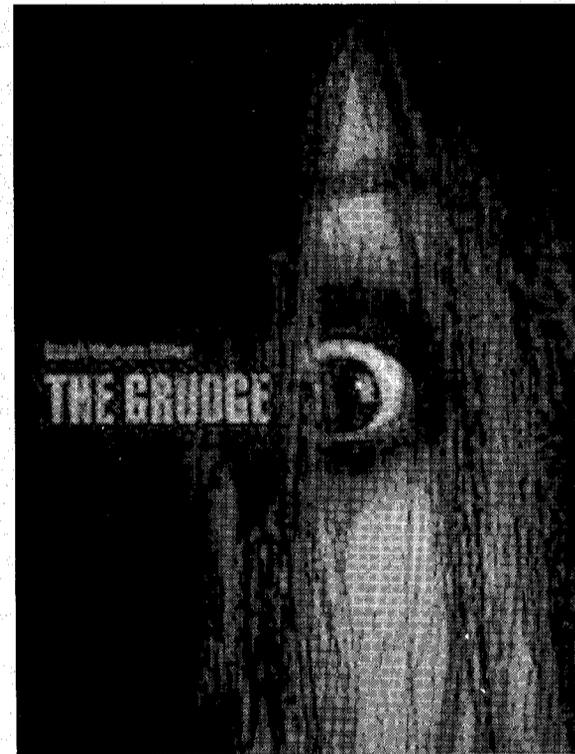
In the first category, one can already speculate on the loss of originality. These romantic/teen comedies are all cut from the same mold, rarely straying from convention and made for one sole purpose: to make money. The third category is a recent trend I've begun to notice. There have always been remakes, since film was old enough to be "remade," but it's only as of late that films less than a decade old are being remade. Constantly.

Another interesting fact is the films in question were all originally foreign films. *Wicker Park*, *The Ring*, *The Grudge*, the list goes on. This leads to the obvious assumption that Americans want to take something foreign and make it their own, but better. It's that last part that never seems to occur. Take for instance America trying to out-do the British [really, people, they brought us *Monty Python*. Why are you even trying?]. First, there was *Queer as Folk*, the quick, witty, clever show that America of course had to invert and turn it into a soap opera-ish melodrama. Then came the *Coupling* remake, which lasted about five minutes on NBC. Now, with this spectacular track record, they are attempting to re-do the Brit smash hit, *The Office*. Uh, good luck with that.

This mediocrity can be applied to some of the films being remade, as well, but in this area, it's more a question of "why?" Why remake a film that is only a few years old? Where is the originality in that? Where, even, is the passion to remake or re-imagine a classic story you've always loved?

Martin Scorsese's next project is based on the Hong Kong success *Infernal Affairs*. A film made in...wait for it...2002, and released widely *this past year* [it recently played at The Stony Brook Winter Film Festival]. Scorsese is following this

film with yet another remake, but the next was originally made in the 60's—usually the standard norm for a remake—30 to 40 years old. Moreover, it's a Kurosawa classic. The latter is easier to understand, given the length of time and the classic cinematic history Kurosawa carries. When one remakes a film that's only a couple of years old, where's the passion? The beloved following? Does a film even have time to age; grow into its own, before Hollywood comes along to create its own telling?



ONE GRUDGE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH, Courtesy of thegrudgemovie.com

If all of these remakes were like the Kurosawa one, I probably wouldn't be writing this article, but the short time span gives me pause. Remaking a three year-old film is ridiculous. *The Departed* [the title of the *Infernal Affairs* remake] will probably be wonderful given its director, but why? Where's the originality in that? In addition, why, oh why does Hollywood insist on remaking Japanese horror films, one of which got awful reviews, and then follow them up with sequels?

Well, money, of course. A sequel to 2004's *The Grudge*, a movie panned by critics, is already in the works [it should be noted the Japanese original was made in 2003]. Not only does the commercial success of these films allow for the sequels to be made, but it further contributes to the amount of mediocre formulaic films being made that have no artistic value except for the mindless entertainment of their target demographic.

However, there can be upside to this lack of originality. Perhaps Hollywood players are running out of their formulaic film ideas and so they need to borrow from foreign films that were made 1 to 10 years ago. At this rate, soon there may be nothing [recent] to remake. We can only hope the pitchers of those generic comedies and horror films will suffer from the same problem, leading to an increase of films from the above-mentioned Category 2.

# An Interview with Web-Novelist Andrew Pernick

By Chris Williams

The balance between epic battles and homework can be difficult. However, Andrew Pernick, former *Press* editor and current staffer, still pens the online serial novel *Crashworld*. New chapters are available at [www.andrewpernick.com](http://www.andrewpernick.com) every other weekend. Chapter 16 has risen from the creative ether for your reading pleasure.

*The Stony Brook Press:* So, what is *Crashworld*?

Andrew Pernick: *Crashworld* is the story of Gana, a medieval world that is NOT Earth. 350 years before the action of the novel, an incredible, world-shattering event occurs, but no one notices. This medieval society is forever changed by the introduction of Devices, pieces of electronics about four inches tall by three inches wide with a full-color screen and a keyboard. Devices are like Palm Pilots on speed – they're linked to every library on the planet. All of the sudden, virtually every citizen of Gana has access to the sum total knowledge of the planet. 350 years pass and this medieval world suddenly has 18th century (Earth-standards) technology. But the society of the world remains deadlocked in its medieval ways – swords and sorcery, noble royal houses, catapults and crossbows, that sort of thing. A medieval society that has advanced exponentially in terms of technology but has remained pretty much where it is socially. It's the story of six people trying to save that world from an evil technophile out to remold the world into a technocracy.

*TSBP:* I notice many themes in your response. First, it is a medieval world that is not Earth. Why is it situated in a planet that is not Earth?

AP: If this were Earth, I'd be having all of the Harry Turtledove [alternative history writer] fans screaming at me for being a rip-off. Second, I couldn't say what I want to say using the existing historical monarchies of medieval Earth – they wouldn't fit into the story I'm trying to tell. Third, making it my own world gives me complete, total, absolute control to make each and every society and country involved exist exactly the way I want it to; to make the sociological and historical and other elements interact exactly in the way I want them to. In short, it's not Earth because by making it not Earth, I have the freedom to do exactly what I want to do to tell the story, to make the story work. By making it not Earth, I get to craft a world in which what I need to be true for my themes and my plot IS true.

*TSBP:* Absolute control, freedom, and truth. Will these concepts be key to your plot?

AP: In a sense. The villain, who hasn't been introduced yet, will try to remake the world in his own image, with himself in absolute control over it. He wants to be the supreme dictator of a technocracy. As far as freedom goes, yes. The kingdoms and countries of my world are freedom loving, peaceful lands. There hasn't been a war in centuries due to mutual respect between the nations and mutual respect for the freedoms of the citizens of Gana and the several nations recognize certain inalienable rights inherent to all. Truth? There are certain fundamental truths that will be key themes throughout the novel. One is that love, not necessarily in the romantic sense, is required for stability in friendship. Another is that common purpose can unite enemies. For example, the common

goal shared by the protagonists unites two of the protagonists who would otherwise be at each other's throats. There are other truths, but those are up to the reader to discover for themselves.

*TSBP:* A little bit of mystery early?

AP: Not exactly. It'd be impossible to go into detail on every element of truth in any book, and I have a bit of bias where *Crashworld* is concerned, for obvious reasons.

*TSBP:* You mentioned earlier that a world-shattering event occurs but goes unnoticed. How so?

AP: All I'm going to say, as I don't want to spoil anything, especially this, is that something happens one afternoon 350 years before the novel begins and it happens in such a weird way, and has such weird side-effects, that it quite literally weaves its way into the minds of every sentient being on the planet. They don't notice because the event causes them not to notice.

*TSBP:* I take it that it's weird.

AP: Yeah. Very, very weird. That's all I can say on that.

*TSBP:* No juicy tidbits for your fans out there?

AP: Just keep reading. You'll find the answer in time and you'll see why I've been so "hush-hush" about the reason no one noticed the event 350 years before the action of the novel.

*TSBP:* The number 350 pops up often. Does it hold any special significance to you?

AP: Only in that it's when the really, really weird event occurred. To be honest, I picked it to allow the technology on Gana enough time to evolve to where I want it to be while making the readers wonder why the society has remained so stagnant for so long.

*TSBP:* How is *Crashworld* different from other online and printed sci-fi/fantasy novels?

AP: Well, all of the print sci-fi novels tend to be formulaic or too novel in the sense of the word meaning "new." They're just all about space travel and aliens and ray guns and federations of planets. The fantasy novels are all Tolkein rip-offs.

*TSBP:* So you're kind of an iconoclast, then?

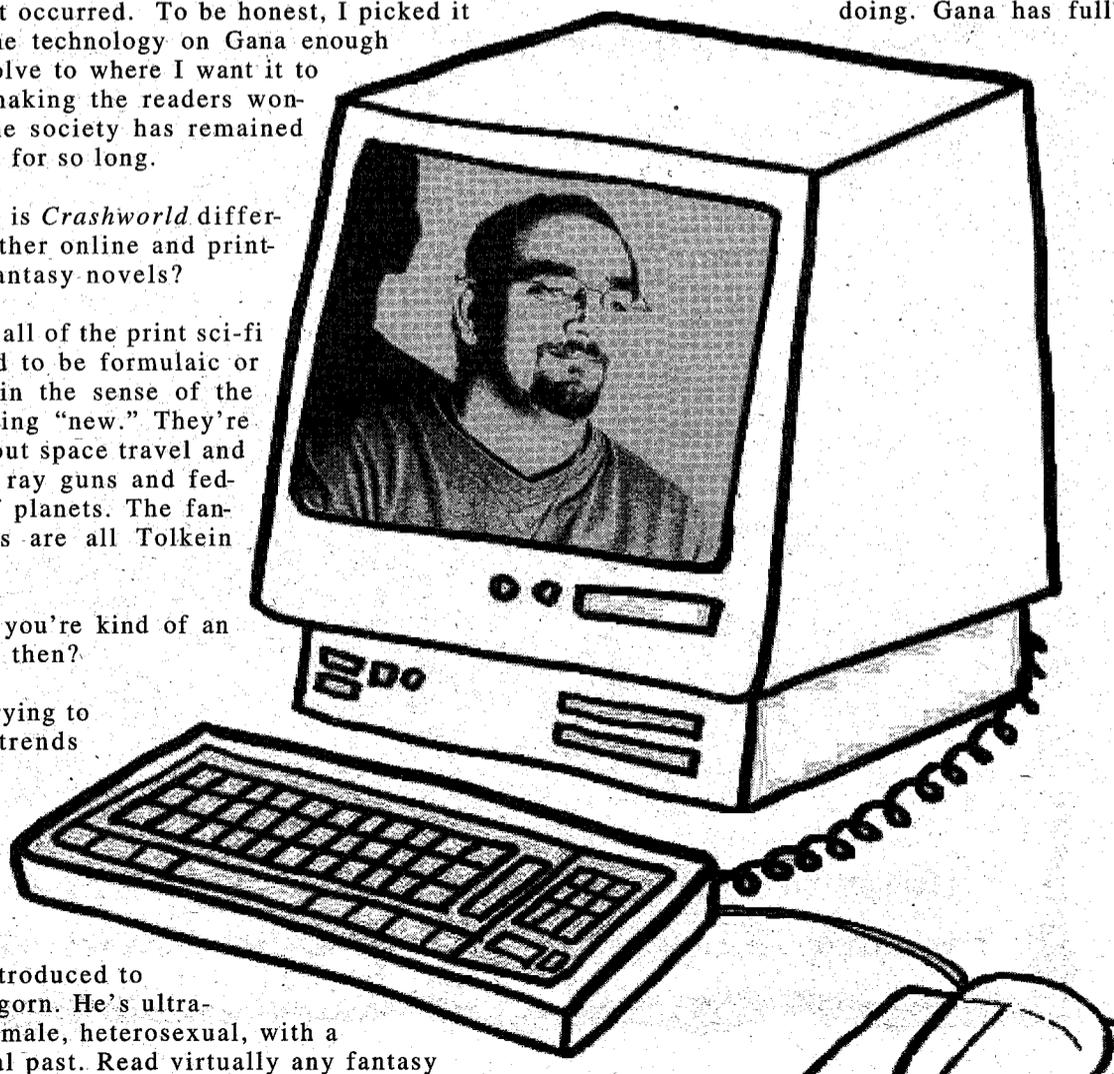
AP: I'm trying to break the trends into tiny pieces. Take, for example, the "ranger" character Tolkein introduced to us via Aragorn. He's ultra-masculine male, heterosexual, with a secret royal past. Read virtually any fantasy

novel. The "ranger" character is an ultra-masculine, heterosexual male with a secret royal past. The "ranger" character has become too much of an archetype that is set in stone.

*Crashworld*, on the other hand, takes that role and turns it on its ear. My "ranger" character, Lady Jamie, is very feminine, a woman, a lesbian, and, as her name suggests, very obviously royalty. She is the polar opposite of the archetype.

*TSBP:* Set in stone? So how will you disturb the bedrock? How will you make your society of Gana different?

AP: First, I've made most of Gana very liberal, politically speaking. Mildwood, the country the six protagonists are from, is very much a liberal country. The heir to the throne, Lady Jamie, is a lesbian and is engaged to a commoner, who is also a woman – Sarah. Instead of the royalty/peasants class struggle of medieval Earth, Gana has a middle class, especially in Mildwood. Those who try to improve the Devices are called "tinkers," which brings us to the very shy, but very competent Sally. The knights of the world are not the sons of royalty. No one is born into their job – except for the royalty, every one is free to choose their career via an apprenticeship. Every citizen chooses which apprenticeship they wish to take at age 12, and they are free to switch apprenticeships at any time. So, if you want to be a knight, you apprentice to be a knight. That brings us to Jack, Sally's lover. There is magic on Gana and anyone can train themselves to learn to focus their body to use it. Zarathud, the mage, is not an old man, unlike Gandolf, and he's a widower, and he's not the answer to every question. That brings us to the last of the six protagonists, Em, Sarah's twin. She's a librarian. That's hardly a job you'd find a character in a fantasy novel doing. Gana has full



# An Interview with Web-Novelist Andrew Pernick Continued...

By Chris Williams

gay rights, it has a thriving system of job choices, it has a great many things that fantasy novels, by and large, lack, including Devices. As far as the set in stone aspect, the villain will be looking to repeat the event of 350 years ago and, in so doing, transform this still-medieval world into a technocracy.

**TSBP:** Is there a supporting cast?

**AP:** The two major supporting cast members come in during chapter 16. Their names are Seika and Sonata, twin sisters who also work for the Mildwood crown. They'll be an on-again, off-again set of characters, used to advance the story by explaining what is going on in Gana in areas of the world when the six protagonists are not in that part of the world. They're also great fighters and will be very useful in advancing the back-story regarding Em after she left Sarah's side. Seika, by the way, is a very fiery young woman, a real firecracker, and her name is the Japanese word for "sacred flame." Sonata, on the other hand, has a very melodic personality, very flowing and sweet and calm. I've also got Mark and Lily Hawkins, a husband-and-wife pair of generals in the Mildwood army. They're both very devoted to each other and they also balance each other. Mark is headstrong and stubborn while Lily is a brilliant tactician who prefers to study her enemies and strike at the perfect opportunity. Their names come from the fact that Route 97 nearby has three roads in order named Mark Trail, Lily Road, and Hawkins. The names just hit me while I was driving to campus one day.

**TSBP:** Clever. Very clever.

**AP:** I'm evil sometimes.

**TSBP:** You mentioned that love was important, not necessarily romantic love, yet the protago-

nists are a pair of heterosexuals and a pair of lesbians. Is there a reason why everyone seems to be in a romantic relationship? But then, not everybody is, exactly.

**AP:** Well, there isn't enough love in the real world. There just isn't. I decided a long time ago that my world should be, on some levels, very much better than Earth. So, since I've not been in a romantic relationship in my lifetime, I figure that my characters should have the benefit of a shoulder to cry on, a warm body to curl up with at night, and a partner to share their heart with. If you notice, all of members in the romantic couples in *Crashworld* are equals with their partners. It is the true sharing of heart and soul, two halves coming together to form one complete whole. As far as Seika and Sonata go, well, I've just introduced them. Give them some time. I want my characters to have the benefit of something I have yet to have, to make them more universal to my readers and more complete as characters. Plus, it does allow me to play around with the psychology of love and romance.

**TSBP:** So you're a romantic?

**AP:** In the sense that I want romance, yes. In the sense that I like the 19th century Romantic poets, yes. In the sense that the world could use a lot more romance, of the true halves becoming wholes and sharing themselves to become something better than their individual parts, yes. In short, yes.

**TSBP:** Poetic.

**AP:** Thanks.

**TSBP:** What styles inspire your writing? Do you try to write more from a novelist's perspective or do you prefer lyricism?

**AP:** I try to write a very descriptive, almost cinematic form. It's all prose, with some lyric elements. But I prefer the novel in that I can enter the character's heads at will and then jump to dialog or to straight description. It's a mix of novelist's perspective with lyricism, all with a cinematic level of detail in that I've spent entire chapters detailing a character's personality elements and I've also spent entire chapters detailing the action of a specific event. It all depends on where I want the chapter to go and how I want to go about doing it.

**TSBP:** Do you follow a specific process?

**AP:** I have this blue binder at home. In it is a sheet of paper with chapter numbers and chapter names (every chapter is numbered as well as named - for example, chapter seven is also called "Naughty"). Also in this binder is a collection of pages. On each page is a complete outline of a chapter; what the time of day is, what the location is, what the weather is like, which characters are involved, the action of the chapter, and quotes and possible language to use in that chapter. I try to have a "buffer" of about a half-dozen outlined chapter pages in that binder so when get into "writing mode," I can freely consult the outline. The problem is that I wind up with many drafts that are just absolutely horrible. I mean literary-crime-against-humanity bad. Those I throw out, physically wipe from the hard drive, walk outside and curse myself for having so little talent. After a few of those, I wind up with something I can live with. That's what I edit - the something-I-can-live-with version.

**TSBP:** "Literary crime against humanity?"  
**Brutal.**

Continued on page 41

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# The Final Day Continued...

By Tom Senkus

Continued from page 36

Shany a sandwich, so I know this ordeal's almost over.

He comes back, and I drop him off at the Courtyard Marriot. When he pays, he does so arbitrarily. There's no rhyme, or even favoritism, unless you were memorable. He just pulls bills from a large, steaming, juicy, awe-inspiring, crime-inducing, envious, beautiful wad of cash. I end up getting a whole bunch of fives and ones; clearly, I got the crumbs from the strippers. He leaves, and I say, "Fuck you, Mr. Shanahan." *Damnit, I'll miss him.*

"4:00 AM"

Pick up at Tobin's. A young guy comes out, dragging his drunken body. A good drunk litmus test is to see if they can hobble into raised van seat. If not, they're drunk. I ask where he lives. "Take me to where the niggers live." Great, a racist. "5th Avenue."

The problem with drunks is that they're a grab bag. If you ask them to repeat something, especially specific directions, they most likely will get offended ["Tweeeffour" translates to "Two Twenty Four"]. This guy turns out to be one such douchebag. I bring him to Motor Parkway, then I ask my dispatcher for better directions.

The damn passenger misinterpreted that I was 1) a taxi driver ["Are you a cop?"] and 2) that I was picking up another passenger. I was trying to drive him home. He tries to show me the way home, and considering the numerous 5th Avenues of Long Island, I drive him all the way back to where we started. Then after going down Old Nichols, based on my dispatcher's new directions, we end up on Sunrise Highway. Bear in mind, the entire time this ordeal is going on, I've been racking up miles and listening to drunk prattle. He tries to give me life advice. "Don't try to impress the girls, and don't—where the fuck aaaaaare we?" At this point, my dispatcher is getting angry that I'm not following his directions, my passenger is getting lost, and I have no idea where exactly he lives. Frustration ensues, and remember that euphoria I was talking about? Right in the first paragraph? Go ahead, read it. Read it now, because it's certainly gone.

Finally, and such a relief, we're almost there. In an odd way, he asks, "Do you have a gun?" Thoughts of robberies, and especially a sawed-off shotgun decapitation on Rotten.com surface in my mind.

I get to where he lives, and I just need to sigh. "Why you mad? *You* wanted to pick up another passenger! Fucking nigger'll rob ya," he says. "That'll be \$24," I say in such a pained voice. I want to kill the bastard, and at the same time, I just want the money. Thoughts of a tip are already gone. He hands me two twenties, and when I hand him back the change, he counts it with an air of suspicion. There's no tip.

I'm relieved, but as all egotists need to do, they must have the final word.

"Why are you giving me an attitude?" I drive back, lost in suburban shithole Brentwood. My favorite dispatcher got fired, so now I no longer had a decent hook-up nor a good direction-giver. The new dispatcher pestered me for location. I didn't know, but I was just outside of the LIE. This went on every minute. I found myself getting angrier. "I'll turn you into a cab driver yet," he quipped, and all I could think of was "Now why would I want to become an absolute failure like you for?" I held off.

"5:00 AM"

Mike, a regular. He has a way of telling jokes that simply aren't amusing. Inebriated, he

spews them out, one after another, thinking that our silence is just an indifference to his superior humoristic talent. "What do you call Buckwheat after he converted to Muslim [he meant Islam]? Kareem of Wheat." [Sigh.] He doesn't even crack a smile, but stares at a face with these feminine eyes. They're the cold, feminine type, such as when she feels slighted. His eyes scare me the most because we know he's a coke addict. Mike offered me a line of coke. I used my last excuse of "heart murmur." "I've got one, too," he said.

Already he had paid for his fare by my deft negotiations [a "forty" of Corona for \$5], but there's something about drugs and community. Despite the bloodsucker nature, I don't think there's a single druggie who fits the description of loner. Thoughts aside, he offered a few times again. "Thanks, but I have to drive," I said, and hoped his house would come up quicker. He kept pushing and I settled it by saying I have to drive to the train station to try to get laid. That shifted his mind to vicarious pleasure.

As a side note, this guy Mike holds one

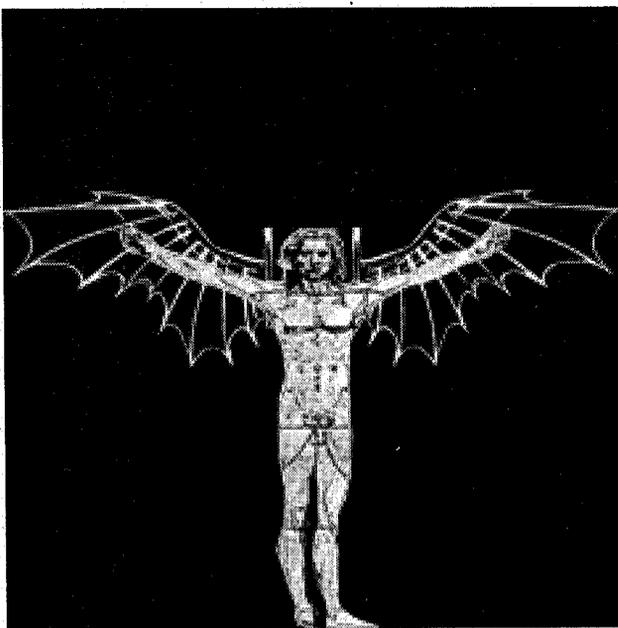
"A good drunk litmus test is to see if they can hobble into a raised van seat."

of the funniest stories in my anecdote gallery. The old dispatcher, Danny, was popular in the bar scene, so many people would take to his magnetic personality. One such attraction was Mike. Mike, walking in from Morabito's, a bar down the street from the office, came in at 2 AM to hang with Danny. This was looked down upon severely by management, and in hindsight, I see why. In his normal fashion, he'd tell his stupid jokes and just stare off into space. Danny's shift ends at 6, and he leaves. Mike's still there. The next dispatcher, John Ryan, comes in and is left with this odd man who's perfectly content to stare into space. Imagine doing your job, which really consists of nothing, while a coke addict just...sits there. Considering that the taxi business was so slow, John Ryan had no good reason to really kick him out. Apparently, Mike didn't leave until 11, just sitting there, staring.

"6:00 AM"

The only highlight formed as I came to buy the grease-soaked institution of modern American dining: the egg sandwich. As soon as I came to order my egg sandwich, the bagel lady's eyes lit up. She didn't make a complete word, but more of a hybrid between an excited "Ooohh" and "Hello." I suddenly had this odd image of living in the Swiss Alps Heidi-style and her making dinner as I stand on the edge of a cliff, axe in hand, red flannel shirt with beard and suspenders, knowing that here—oh yes—here was a woman [a *real* woman] to care for every simple need, most especially, to make love with a woman as only a Romanian can in the Swiss Alps, regardless of geographical concerns until passing out in our self-made cabin, smelling sweetly of rosemary, ginger, and lovemaking... We exchanged simple greetings, and I noticed a benevolent off-white smile in between the questions like, "Do you want anything on it," spoken in such a lustrous Romanian accent. It was hard to leave.

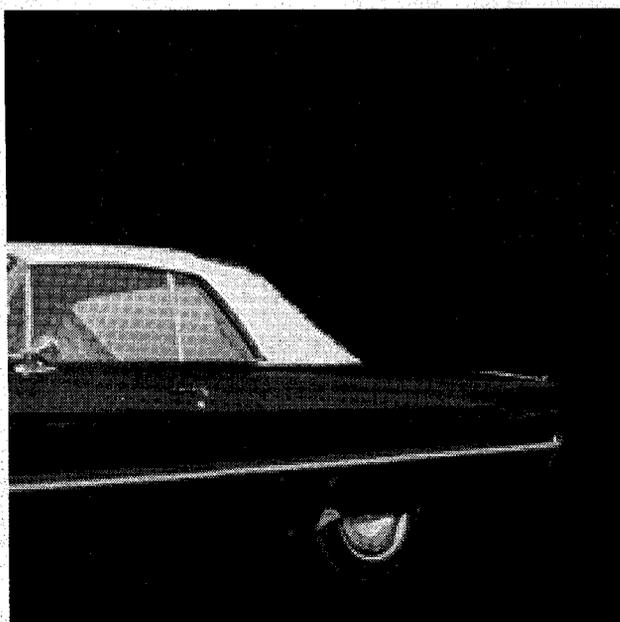
I had called one of my friends with my new cell phone, but she seemed standoffish about something or another. Perhaps she couldn't possibly imagine what this night was all about, but Corona, cigarettes, and egg sandwich in hand, I certainly did.



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# An Interview with Web-Novelist Andrew Pernick Continued...

By Chris Williams

## Continued from page 39

AP: You should have seen the first draft of the first chapter. It would have made you cry. There are things I write that are quite literally the "suck" portion of my brain taking over the creative centers of my brain. It's not harsh. It's the truth. I've written parts or entire chapters that would make the most jaded reader cringe. They really are crimes against humanity. That's why I burn them and wipe the hard drive - that way, there's no way they'll ever see the light of day. It happens about once every three chapters or so. Then again, I am my harshest critic.

TSBP: I tend to have a strong stomach.

AP: Not for this. It really is that bad.

TSBP: Since it's now in oblivion, I'll have to take your word for it.

AP: That's the whole idea of the hard drive wipe - permanent deletion.

TSBP: How do you keep your fans interested?

AP: Well, the first thing I do is try my best to make sure there's a new chapter on-schedule as often as possible. I also, from time to time, put up something on the "Goodies" page - a map of the world, an analysis of an anime, something cool for them to enjoy. I try to make sure they have fresh content that pushes the sci-fi/fantasy envelope and that is designed to keep their attention for as long as possible. It's why I edit so much - to make sure that what I give my fans is what the story demands and what the fans will enjoy.

TSBP: How did you go about getting your fan-base off the ground? With all of these goodies, are you often found through Google?

AP: I have indeed been "Googled." My first fans were my six closest friends. After that, I made a post to a Wiccan newsgroup on USENET. I also told people in *The Press* office. *Crashworld* spread to the point where it is now, 225 regular readers, through word of mouth. I get maybe 5% of my readers through Google, the rest through word of mouth.

TSBP: Have you received international acclaim?

AP: Do I have readers outside the US? Yes. I have readers in the US, Canada, England, Scotland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand, Iceland, Holland, Germany, The Philippines, and Argentina.

TSBP: No Africa?

AP: Not yet.

TSBP: Do you advertise?

AP: Only the free ad *The Press* puts in the bottom of some pages in their issues, and this interview. I'd love to interview on MegaTokyo.com or SomethingPositive.net, but they both cost \$150 for 7 days of advertising, and that's out of my price range. \$300 for one week of advertising? I'd love to advertise, but I just can't afford it.

TSBP: Have MegaTokyo and Something Positive inspired you?

AP: MegaTokyo has inspired me in a way that readers will not see for many chapters. In chapter fourteen, Sally is described in Jack's mind in a way that sounds very much like Piro's affinity for "Sad Girls in Snow." Something Positive's Aubrey and PeeJee have kind have molded their viciousness into Sarah's dark side, especially where her hatred for her sister is concerned. You'll see more of that as things progress. The MegaTokyo inspiration isn't a one-time thing, either. By the way, if anyone knows Piro or R.K. well enough to get them to give me free advertising...

TSBP: Are fans of MegaTokyo and Something Positive usually fans of *Crashworld*?

AP: My fan-base comes from fans of role-playing games (tabletop, pen-and-paper, and the Square Soft style), anime, fantasy novels, web-comics, that sort of thing. So, yes, MegaTokyo and Something Positive fans probably would love *Crashworld*. As far as whether there is any actual crossover, I don't know yet.

TSBP: Has anyone famous read your novel?

AP: Two, in fact. Carrie Savage and Zarah Little.

TSBP: Really?!

AP: Do you know who they are?

TSBP: No.

AP: They're both voice actresses famous for doing the English-language dubs of anime series. Zarah Little emailed me out-of-the-blue one day since her name is mentioned in the Author's Introduction. She and Carrie Savage were drunk one night and Googled themselves one night and found my page. They're now regu-

lar readers! Carrie Savage voiced "Rakka" in *Haibane Renmei*, she voiced my favorite character in my favorite anime series! Zarah Little voiced "Kana" in the same series. They both are regular readers! They absolutely rock!

TSBP: You're dedicated to your novel. Does *Crashworld* interfere with your academics?

AP: No. I make time to write, usually on weekends at night. Once the schoolwork is out of the way, I write. Unfortunately for my readers, schoolwork takes a priority to my novel. It hasn't interfered yet and I don't see it interfering in the future.

TSBP: What future do you see for *Crashworld*?

AP: Well, I'm saving up to advertise on MegaTokyo and Something Positive. In the future, I see many readers, emailing me and all having a great time reading the novel and looking forward to new chapters. In an ideal future, the novel will take off and become popular and I'll be a guest at conventions. But in the real world, I just see *Crashworld* growing slowly but surely in popularity and eventually the novel will end. Who knows what will happen? I just hope that I'll always be able to keep the fans interested and looking forward to new chapters.

TSBP: Do you want to see *Crashworld* in print?

AP: Depends on what is involved. If it entails changing even one aspect of one character, making even one thing PC, then no. If all that is involved is some polishing up, sure. But this is still very unlikely, if not impossible. No one in the publishing community would take a chance on it, I bet. Plus, I love the instant interaction with fans the Internet allows. In print, I'm removed from that. For now, I prefer it being online.

TSBP: Well, there is delayed gratification in book signings.

AP: Yes, but it isn't the same as being able to chat with fans for as long as you want the email to be. A book signing is like a deli counter - stand on line, get the book signed, talk for like five seconds with the author, and leave. With the Internet, it's far more personal, hard as that is to believe.

TSBP: I'll have that answer with a pickle. Thank you, Andrew.

AP: Thank you, Chris.  
Special Thanks To Chris Lonardo.

Swords

Sorcery

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# CRASHWORLD

- A NOVEL -

[www.AndrewPernick.com](http://www.AndrewPernick.com)

# Cock-a-SBU, or Year of the Rooster Lion Dance

By Chris Williams



**QUICK! HIDE!**  
Courtesy of Chris Williams

Amid snow, sunlight and cymbals, a shimmering pair of lions lay dormant. They align themselves next to a large, metallic drum and await awakening. People circle them as a soft breeze rustles their hairy feathers. A smiling face tells an ancient story.

The day is Chinese New Year 2005. Outside of the Student Activities Center, the lion dance team stretches. Students mill around in anticipation. Winston Liao, the lion dance team coach, approaches the large drum. With that cue, dance teammates enter the elaborate skins of the lion costumes. The costumes shake and rise. Then, the drum is beaten. With each pound, the lions rise higher and dust off the remnants of sleep. They rear with a silent roar. Their eyes snap to life.

The crowd slows as the lions march. The deep bass of the drum follows, and the twang of cymbals floats. Donning a traditional, smiling Buddha mask, a figure waves a bamboo thatch fan and dances before the lions. A crowd watches, and camera phones capture the spectacle.

The lion dance team advances. Teammates push the drum. As they step, the lions stomp to the rhythm. The white lion is shy. It strolls with softer steps as it bobs through the throng of students. However, the black is bold. It whips its head. It throws glances. It rises to meet others face-to-face.

Danny Ng, the president of the Stony Brook Lion Dance Club, was fascinated with lion

dance as a child. He wants to use lion dance to promote Asian culture.

The story of lion dance overlaps many cultures. It is a story about empires of antiquity. In his book *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, Edward Schafer describes the tumultuous relationship between the Chinese and their surrounding peoples during the Tang dynasty (618 C.E. – 907 C.E.) Although foreigners were often met with resistance, exotic gifts from foreign lands were readily accepted. According to Prof. Sucheta Mazumdar of Duke University, the lion was a gift from Persia (Samarkand) to the Tang royal court in 635 C.E. The lion was so well received by Emperor T'ai Tsung that he ordered the scholar-poet Yü Shihnan to compose a rhapsody in its honor.

In general, the lion captivated the imagination of the Chinese of the Tang period. The lion commanded an awe-inspiring presence. It was a West Asian animal spiritually akin to the tiger, the emblem of the West Asia. Its opposite was the dragon of East Asia.

The power of the lion extended beyond the physical and the spiritual. Its aura made it the muse of artists and the treasure of collectors of the ninth century. It became a religious symbol, also. Similar to the elephant, the lion, in China, conjured images of India and Buddhism. According to Schafer, its roar was symbolic of the voice of the Buddha instructing beings of all universes in his law. In some versions of the lion dance, there is a Buddha figure, as portrayed by a masked actor in monk attire. This Buddha figure dances in front of the Lion and teases it with a head of lettuce, a symbol of good fortune. The lettuce would be eaten by the lion during the dance. The exact origin of this version is difficult to determine. During the Tang Dynasty, many types of public performance developed. Lion dance was one type and assumed many forms. Although the lion possessed many forms as a dance, it was one unifying symbol of royal power in West and central Asia. It gradually emerged as a symbol of royal power in China. Eventually, the magnitude of the lion symbol grew. According to China Central Television (CCTV), the symbol of the awakened lion is a metaphor of the Chinese nation. (CCTV is China's largest national TV network.)

Through lion dance, Danny Ng also promotes Asian awareness. With assistance, he started the official lion dance club last semester. However, the start was its own journey. Winston Liao already owned a lion head and costume. A second lion was required. After weeks of searching, a handful of determined individuals found their second lion in Chinatown. Lions don't come cheap. They pooled their money together and bought it, and the accompanying equipment. Danny mentioned that the team has shown camaraderie and dedication. Regardless of the stress involved, they enjoy performing, too.

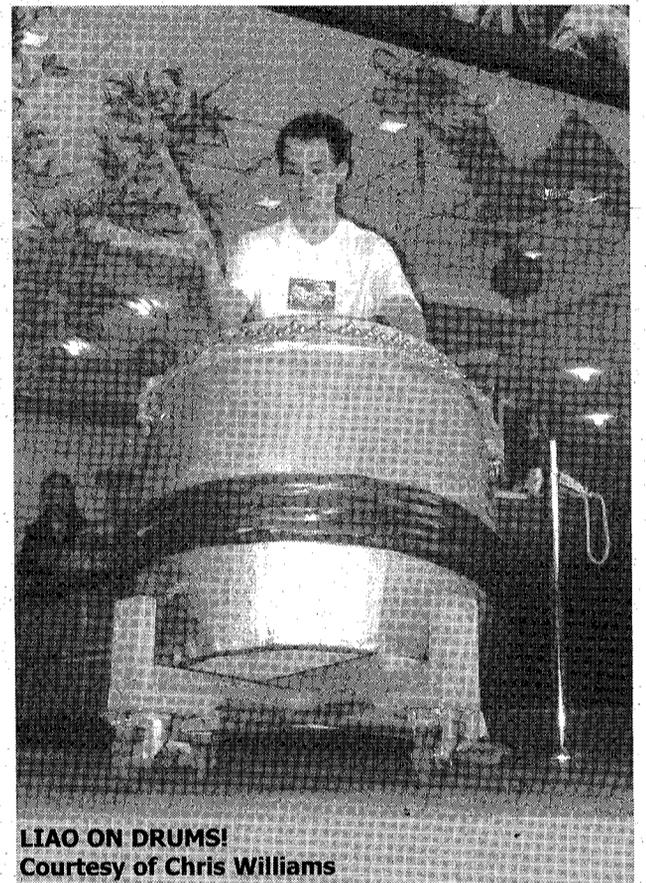
They performed at an elementary school in Flushing, Queens in January. Shortly afterward, they performed for a campus sorority. Chinese New Year 2005 marks their third performance. They will perform at China Night 2005.

For Chinese New Year 2005, as the lion dance team

marches, a parade develops. Crowds of people flow around them and ripple into onlookers. Some people swim through the crowd behind the team.

The team proceeds. They descend the stairs. The lions pulsate with life as they await the drum to motivate them. Danny later describes the drum as the "heartbeat" of the lions. The lions go forward. The crowd wanes. The drums boom. The cymbals resonate. The destination lies ahead: the Charles B. Wang Center.

The lions finally reach the Wang Center. They stir to a stop. The music ends. The illusion dissipates with applause. The teammates leave their lion skins and enter the Wang



**LIAO ON DRUMS!**  
Courtesy of Chris Williams

Center. They are visibly tired.

The time of rest for some is a time of practice for others. In the restaurant Jasmine, Winston instructs a teammate in the rhythm to be played. They alternate in tapping the large drum. Ali Mehrabian, a sophomore, briefly saw their next performance. He said, "People were into it. They were dancing with them [the lion dancers]."

The occasion ends with a solo drum performance by Winston Liao. Some people scream, "Go Winston!" He goes into a strong opening. Among the General Tsao's chicken and the channa masala, he pauses. The audible void is filled with the response of "Oy!" Patrons pause in their eating and watch. Winston throws his drumsticks in the air. Each successful catch leads to the conclusion and applause.

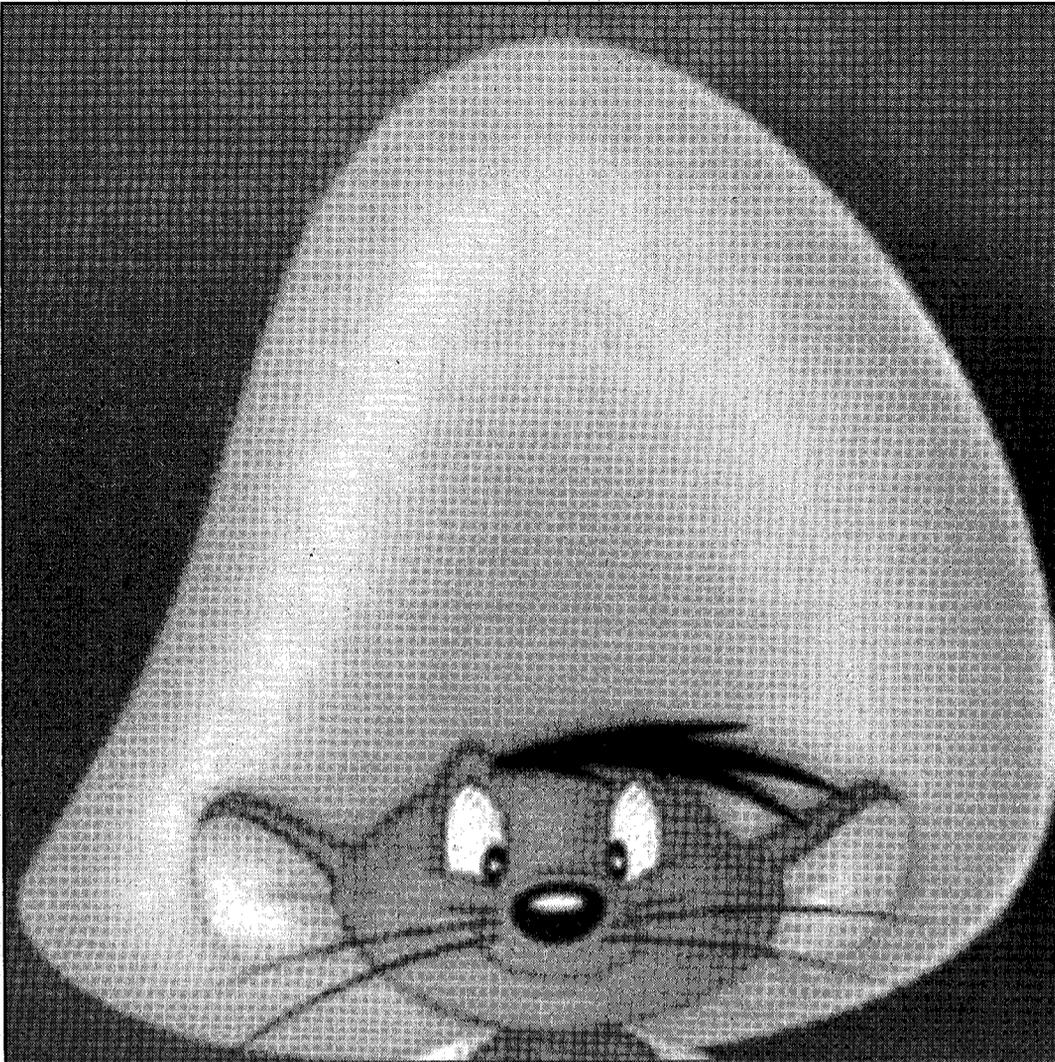
Winston later mentioned that the theme of the occasion was "mixing past and present." For Chinese New Year 2005, the lion dancers introduce a tradition centuries old to an unsuspecting people. Their memorable spectacle helped people to smile.

Lion dance is available to men and women as dancers and spectators. The Stony Brook Lion Dance Club always welcomes new members. For more information, Danny Ng can be e-mailed at [dannng@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:dannng@ic.sunysb.edu).

Happy New Year!



**YOU BUSY FRIDAY?**  
Courtesy of Chris Williams



Last Name: **GONZALES**  
First Name: **Speedy**  
Also Known As: **The Fastest Mouse in All Mexico**  
DOB: **1953**  
POB: **Mexico**  
Nationality: **Mexico**  
Height: **0'3"** (w/o hat) **0'6"** (with hat)  
Weight: **0.5lbs.**  
Hair: **Black**  
Eyes: **Black**  
Complexion: **Brown**  
Sex: **Male**  
Scars/Marks: **Unknown**  
Occupation: **Unknown**  
City and State of Last Known Residence: **Burbank, California**

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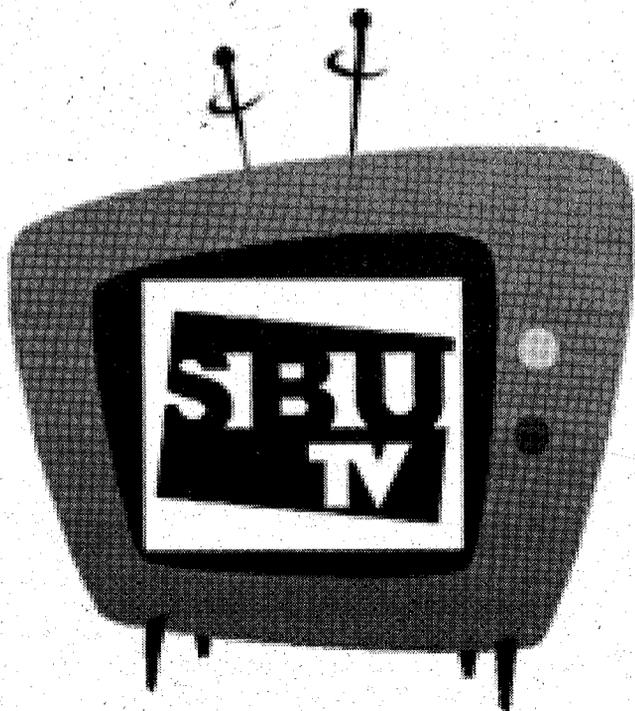
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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

By Chris Williams



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**KATSUCON 11**  
 MANY CULTURES • ONE CONVENTION  
**CONVENTION REPORT** By Jowy Romano

**Convention Report: Katsucon 11**

**Overview:**

This past weekend, February 18th-20th, I attended Katsucon 11, my first anime convention of 2005. This time around, two hotels in Arlington, Virginia hosted a three-day gathering of Otaku, gamers and other sorts of freaks and geeks from all over the globe. The main attraction of this convention seemed to be the musical performance by the Japanese rock band, Psycho le Cému. This musical group is particularly popular amongst the cosplayer crowd at these conventions because they actually perform in elaborate costumes. Unfortunately, I was unable to check them out for myself because of some poor programming and last-minute schedule changes. In fact, there were a few bad decisions on the part of the directors that took away from the overall fun-level of the con. I'll get into this in more detail in my convention questionnaire.



PSYCHO LE CEMU,  
 Courtesy of yoshidayachyo.ed.jp

**Convention Questionnaire**

**Best Part of the Convention:**

The people.  
 Katsucon would have definitely been lacking in fun if it wasn't for the many cool attendees.

**Worst Part of the Convention:**

The asshole, power tripping staff and smelly people. Everyone I spoke to had the same problem. The convention staff was continuously rude, and unaccommodating to the convention goers. The whole time they were just yelling at people for blocking traffic in the narrow hallways of the hotel. This made everyone bitter.

**Best Day of the Convention:**

Saturday. It was the only day of the convention when there were always somewhat enjoyable events going on.

**Worst Day of the Convention:**

Sunday. Hands down. There was absolutely nothing to do, so I left early.

**Best Event:**

I actually don't have a favorite event. Maybe the concert would have been my favorite if I had made it there.

**Memorable Quote:**

"Shit Donkeyyyy!!!"  
 Just say it out loud a few times, come up with a few possibilities of what it could mean. You'll enjoy it as much as we did. ...Shut up! You had to be there.

**Bizarre Neighbors**

It all started Thursday evening, before the con, with a knock on the door conjoining our room with the one next to us. "Can we come in, it sounds like you guys are having fun," said a voice coming from behind the door. After a quick approval nod from my roommates I decided to open the door—a decision which I regret, now. In the beginning, the couple that walked through the door seemed fairly normal...or at least as normal as anyone that attends an anime convention could be. They sat down, asked us questions about our costumes, mentioned that they are engaged, spoke some general anime-geek talk with us...nothing too out of the ordinary. My only hint at this point that something was funny about them was a slowly emanating shit-smell that I had first thought to be my imagination. But alas, the odor got stronger as time passed.

Not making much of it, one of my roommates hung out with them on and off throughout the next day. Lunchtime came Friday afternoon, my roommate joined them for a car ride along with another person they met to get some grub. The seating arrangement was as follows: the new friend driving, my roommate in the passenger seat and the couple in the back. Halfway through the ride, to his surprise, and utter disgust, my roommate noticed some backseat-felting going on. These people actually got mad when my friend yelled, "Not cool!" He got away as quickly as possible, came back to the room to tell us this, and the fact that they have only met each other twice. Yep! You guessed it, an online relationship.

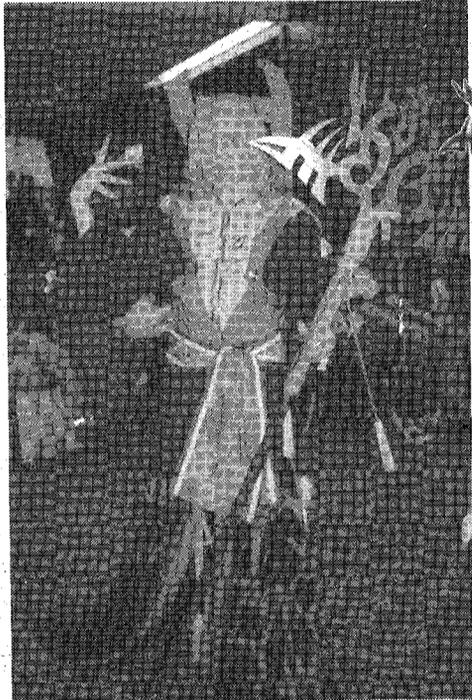
After hearing this, we attempted to avoid them at all costs. Of course, somehow they managed to disgust us one last time. After one of the

costume groups I was in, I came back to my room to relax on the bed for a while. What better way to massacre the silence than the sound of these two moaning and groaning next door. I attempted to put an end to what was going on in that room by letting out, very loudly, one of my patented elephant trumpet noises. Freakishly, and somehow, expectedly, the sex sounds just got louder and faster after the animal sounds. I got the hell out of there as fast as I could and didn't re-enter my room for another hour.

So, why are these people such shit-donkeys? Some of the people who show up to anime conventions cannot separate fantasy from reality (i.e. my next door neighbors' fantasy internet relationship). It just goes to show how crappy our society really is. When people would rather live a lie than live life to its fullest, there is a big problem.

# Anime

## Costume Comparisons



Seymour from Final Fantasy X



Geddoe from Suikoden III



Highlanders from Suikoden II



Serge and Harle from Chrono Cross



Duke and Elaine from Suikoden III



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# Journalistic Ethics: Reporter's Privilege and Conflict of Interest

By Dustin Herlich

We are at a very serious and frightening moment in American history. Americans have no concept any more of what journalism really means, who is a journalist, and just how difficult and dangerous the job can be. I'm not just talking about correspondents in Iraq, I'm referring to the guy who writes a story about an influx of drug dealers in a small town, and suddenly turns up dead in the river. The Committee to Protect Journalists [www.cpj.org] is an important organization. I wish you all would take a moment to visit, so you can see the facts regarding the dangers of journalism. We think that Bill O'Reilly and Al Franken are journalists. Even worse, we attack actual journalists whenever they print material that doesn't sit well with what we think we know and wish were true.

D.C. Federal court ruled recently that two reporters in the Valerie Plame case were not protected by the First Amendment, and must reveal their sources in a court of law or go to jail. Many news sources are reporting both on the Plame case itself, and the court ruling regarding reporter's privilege. If you want more information on the Plame case, Google News is a fantastic place to start. It's also got a good selection of pieces written regarding the reporter's privilege ruling.

What I'd like to mention here is the fact that there is hope for journalists. Right now in Congress, there is a bill sponsored by the RTNDA [www.rtna.org] would actually implement a federal shield law. For those of you who didn't read my last piece about shield laws, they are the laws that many states have enacted, protecting a journalist's rights, and the right to not reveal confidential sources. More information on that can be found here: [www.rcfp.org/privilege/](http://www.rcfp.org/privilege/).

While I would like to see the people who exposed Plame punished for their actions; I do not believe that a reporter should be held in prison for doing his job. We have the freest press in the world, and I'd like it to stay that way.

Moving on to the topic I had originally intended to write about for this episode, we have the concept of conflict of interest. It's been the

case time and time again in history that powerful figures gained power through their use of the press; either by directly controlling it (as in the case of Mussolini), or by simply being artful enough to garner the right kind of publicity like the "Governator." Conflicts of interest can be a serious issue on all sides, and it should not be taken lightly.

"While I would like to see the people who exposed Plame punished for their actions; I do not believe that a reporter should be held in prison for doing his job."

It is unethical for a governmental official, especially if this person is elected, to have any hand in the American press and the reporting of news; particularly if the news story deals with an issue the official is working on, or in some way involved with. No stories about yourself either. If said official wants to have special shows or columns where the official gives his commentary and opinion, that's allowed, but don't try to pass it off as NEWS. Bill O'Reilly is not news; he's a pundit, a commentator, and a poor journalist who lives up to no standard I have ever seen. If he called himself what he is, I would respect him more.

In the microcosm of Stony Brook University we often find that the only students actually involved are the same ones, who are part of many different organizations. This is a problem because there simply are not enough people to go around and fill all the spots equally. The Co-Host of my show is both a member of student media and student government. Ideally, you could only be a member of one of these organizations at a time, but again, we are not under ideal or even truly real world conditions at Stony Brook. It then becomes paramount that the person separates his or her actions from within one organization to the actions in another. The more hats you wear, the harder this gets.

In the "real world" a reporter must stay out of any conflicts or demonstrations he or she may be covering. As I had said in a recent Student Media Council meeting, if a reporter is imbedded with a Marines patrol unit in Afghanistan, and suddenly picks up a rifle and starts shooting, this person is no longer a reporter, but a combatant. The rules change, and they would be instantly be stripped of any rights as a member of the media.

This is especially difficult for college students who may be covering protests, because chances are that if you are covering a protest at this level it's because you really want to be there alongside these people in the first place. You can absolutely report on your experience as a protestor or combatant, etc, etc; but if you are identifying yourself solely as a journalist, you must remain a journalist and simply record. Again, this is the ideal. Reality is often different, and many journalists have been beaten and arrested alongside protestors, even if they have clearly marked themselves as being there simply to observe.

Conflict of interest is usually not hard to identify. If you feel you may be in a position to have a conflict of interest, try and look at it from an outside perspective. If you were a victim of horrible rashes because of tainted aspirin, would you really be the best person to write a story on the case, or are you better off contributing to someone else's story? Sometimes a person is able to be objective and add insight that might otherwise go unnoticed to a piece, but other times personal bias really does detract from the piece.

Is what you are involved with directly interfering with, or somehow affecting your ability as a reporter? There are times when a story hits too close to home to cover. You're better off passing the story on to someone else in this case, and contributing as a member of the public. Knowing what a good interview should sound like, you may very well become one of the star witnesses in a case. Use your skills as a reporter at all times to your advantage, but remain neutral and always seek absolute fact in your own work.

## Answers to Last Issue's Puzzle!

W	I	N	K	L	E	R		K	I	N	G	D	O	M				
A	N	O	N	Y	M		L		H	E	T	E	R	O				
S	A	T	I	R	I	C	A	L		A			E	N				
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B	E	S	O	I	N			L	O	O	K	I	N					
				D	O	L	C	E			Y	A	N	K	S		E	D

## Answers to that Dang Cipher!

Z	T	A	I	D	O	G	O	F	X	M	C	S
Y	U	H	W	J	B	V	P	R	N	E	L	K

## Answers to the Word Pentagram!

Counter clockwise starting from the top the words should read:

Rant,  
Reel,  
Bead,  
Beat,  
Leer  
and Land

