

NYPIRG Sets New Agenda  
For Semester pg 5

Students Picket For Peace  
In Iraq pg 3

The Stony Brook

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# Statesman

Volume XLI, Number 35

Thursday, February 26, 1998

First Copy Free

## EMERGENCY STUDENT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES February 13, 1998

Name	Attendance
Monique Taylor	Present
Diane	
Marjorie	
Sav	
Ja	

# Angry Students:

# It Doesn't Compute

### Polity Council Accused of Lavish Spending on Computer Parts

... Marjorie Eyma.  
 rez Car... 4:35 P.M.  
 ... to exit executive session by Calvin Coleman  
 ... Carberry  
 ... will attend Council on Monday at 7:30 P.M.

#### 4.0 Computer System

The money to upgrade the system as agreed per last Council Minutes will be taken out of audit money.

Audit money \$21, 440.50

Of the \$21, 440.50, \$18,500 will go into the computer line account for the upgrade and purchase of CD-ROM and Scanner.

See Story on Page 3

CRP

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The Long Brook Statesman Thursday, February 26, 1998

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# Students Protest US Involvement in Iraq

## Group Rallies In Support of Peace in the Middle East

By **BIANCA LOBO**  
Statesman Staff

This past Monday, protesters gathered near the Student Activity Center, picketing for a peaceful end to the current dispute between Iraqi and American governments. Most of the demonstrators, which numbered between 20 and 30 people during the course of the day, were from the Stony Brook community and surrounding areas. They gathered in front of the Old Chemistry building to protest the Clinton administration's threat of military force against Iraq.

The anti-attack rally, which was co-sponsored by the Catholic Campus Ministry, the Protestant Ministry and the Universalist Unitarian Ministry received a strong show of support from other prominent religious platforms such as the United Methodists and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.

The rally, which started at 12 pm, drew the attention of students, faculty and administration officials who came out in large measure to show their support and participate.

Protesters carried colorful banners featuring slogans such as "Just Say No to Bombing", "Seek Peace Not War", and distributed fliers publicizing their belief in the need to pursue what they see as a humanitarian approach in the dispute, which rejects the use of violence. By mid-afternoon, an estimated 100 signatures were obtained in a petition urging President Clinton and administration officials to forego the possibility of a military strike if Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein refused to comply with the mandate of UN Inspection teams.

A particularly sensitive issue that was raised as a rallying pitch against the US-led sanctions and violent confrontation was the plight of the children of Iraq and the devastating consequences

that it could have for their safety and security.

MaryAnn Bell, one of the key organizers of this demonstration said, "Drop the sanctions and not the bombs. They have now killed more than 75,000 human beings in Iraq, the great majority, children and older persons. More than 4,500 children under the age of five are dying every month in this war-torn nation. One third of Iraq's surviving children have stunted growth and serious nutritional deficiencies that will deform and shorten their lives."

Gina Seyden, a senior at Stony Brook said, "It's time to act in a peaceful way because we gain nothing from punishing innocent people caught in the middle of this crisis."

The United Methodist Church along with other National Council of Churches (NC C) members drafted a letter to the President demanding a peaceful resolution of the issue. "Continue diplomacy patiently, even doggedly. Pursue a humanitarian not a military option," the letter advised.

Bob Hecherer from the Department of Environmental Conservation at Stony Brook said, "We need to raise the consciousness of the American public to the often damaging effects of US foreign policy on Iraq, Cuba and many Central American countries."

Stephen Preston a graduate student at the university commented, "The Clinton Administration seems to care more about the conspiracies to murder Vince Foster and these very same people seem unconcerned about a policy that would in effect murder a million or more innocent Iraqis amounting to genocide."

Melissa McIntosh, a student from Centereach High School who was visiting SB, said "I believe that war is wrong because it hurts innocent

See RALLY, Page 5



Courtesy of The Stony Brook Press

Demonstrators gathered to protest any possibility of attack against Iraq.

## Polity Council Faces Criticism on Spending

By **ALEXANDRA CRUZ**  
Statesman Editor

The Polity Council last night faced serious criticism from members of the campus community after it was found that they had earlier approved thousands of dollars in expenditures for computer supplies. Critics charged that the money allocated for the equipment was unreasonably high, and that the council did not follow the strict procedures that it forces on clubs which ask for Polity's budget approvals.

The Senate brought to debate the \$18,000 allocation made by the Polity Council, which was made earlier this month for computer equipment. Ryan Muldoon and Yvonne Glandville, members of the Roth Quad Regatta Executive Board questioned the allocation and proposed that any future expenditures made by the Council be brought to the Senate's attention.

On February 13, \$18,500 was approved by the council for a system upgrade, a cd-rom and a scanner. According to Muldoon and Glandville, it is absurd that the equipment could cost that high a

figure, and they wondered why the Council had not been taken to task for the expenditure.

"The people I've spoken to who make their living with computers said this was outrageous," Muldoon said. Muldoon then quoted prices from a computer catalog, placing the price of the equipment at just over \$3,400 for the more expensive models.

"In the past, when we allocated money for trophies, I made sure everything was correct and we were still called back by Polity," said Glandville, who along with Muldoon is an executive board member of the Roth Quad Regatta. She said she had to go and explain to the bookkeeping staff why they had to purchase trophies and why they had to be of a certain type or height. "The Polity Council then passes something like this and nobody asks any questions," she said.

"We're looking for quality and for something that will last longer," said Marjorie Eyma, Polity treasurer. "You want something affordable but you also want quality."

Eyma said that Polity is looking for a specific program to run their

computer systems. According to Eyma, The Merging Technologies Group was the only company who was able to provide them with the exact specifications they needed to run their office.

In a letter to the Polity council, Carol Grubel of Polity stated, "The fileserver upgrade is at a critical stage as the memory in our fileserver at present is just about maxxed out. . . The second part is the program for our new imaging system. We have looked for the companies who do this and have not come up with any that do what we need it to do. This software will be customized for our purposes. As you are aware, any archival [sic] of records is only as good as the retrieval of the records."

Diane Lopez, Polity vice president said, "The system they have shown us is not what we need." Lopez welcomed anyone with an alternative that would meet the specific software Polity needed. "We have to look for a cheaper source," she said.

Originally, Muldoon asked the Senate to reduce the allocation for the system and give the money that was left over to either the Programs

and Services Council or into the line-budget. Muldoon said that since he was not aware that Polity was looking for more than just a scanner and a cd-rom that Polity should look for bids from other companies. "I went with what I had," he said. "I used the council minutes."

The Council argued that the bidding process had already been completed and that Merging Technologies was the best choice.

"Obviously if we've sat here arguing for over an hour its because it's of concern," said Christine Sadowski, commuter senator.

Sadowski and Senior Representative Jawond Brown presented to the senate a proposal to have Grubel give a detailed description of what exactly is needed by the Polity. The Polity Council agreed to give anyone interested the information needed for the computer program bidding; anyone who can find a cheaper program will be able to present the information to the Senate at next Wednesday's meeting.

"I came here because I thought there was something that was not right," Muldoon said. "That's how I thought this government worked. That a student with a concern could be listened to." □

The Stony Brook Statesman Thursday, February 26, 1998

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\*\*\*

Presentation: Staller Center Art Gallery  
Wednesday, March 4, 1998  
12:40 p.m. - 2:10 p.m. (campus life time)

\*\*\*

Art Show: Student Union Art Gallery  
March 4-20

\*\*\*

Reception and exhibition opening  
Student Union Gallery  
March 4, 1998, 2:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

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# NYPIRG Sets New Goals For Semester

By RAYA EID  
Statesman Editor

The New York Public Interest Research Group, NYPIRG, a not for profit public organization, held its student action meeting last night in the Student Union. NYPIRG's general interest meetings are held twice annually in order to discuss issues and projects that they will be focusing on each semester. This is NYPIRG's 25th anniversary and they have helped to pass over 120 legislative laws in New York State.

This semester NYPIRG's projects include higher education, homeless outreach, environmental preservation, consumer action, voter registration, public health, and a spring organizing conference.

Each project was represented and discussed by the different project leaders at the meeting.

The project leaders for higher education Damien Taylor and Victoria Ortiz focused their talk on the 160% increase in students' tuition during the past 8 years, and NYPIRG's refusal to endorse Governor George Pataki until he makes moves to lower tuition. Taylor and Ortiz also used the forum to discuss the plight of poorer students, in light of statistics which they claim show a 90 percent reduction in the Tuition Assistance Program, TAP. As a result, NYPIRG and other SUNY student groups are pushing for a 20-25 percent reduction in tuition, which they say is but a small percentage of the projected state budget surplus of over \$80 million. According to Taylor, the \$10 million for the new stadium and the \$25 million towards rebuilding on campus is not enough. "We need tuition help today," Taylor said.

This Monday, March 2, NYPIRG, in collaboration with Polity, will be sending a delegation of students to Albany to lobby for a tuition decrease. In order to help students with their lobbying skills, NYPIRG will be holding office hours for lobby training on Friday at 11:00 a.m.

The homeless is another project close to NYPIRG's heart. NYPIRG's

agenda on homeless outreach, is going to be coordinated by Jessica Scianna. Programs for the homeless project will include a volunteer-athon, "dorm storming," "empty plates," and a children's art program.

"Empty Plates" is a program organized to collect money for soup kitchens and shelters. Fraternities, Sororities, and other student organizations will also be "storming" the dorms to collect food and toiletries to donate to the shelters. A team of students will also be venturing to elementary schools to educate children about poverty because "children are the eyes of the world," said Scianna. Todd Stebbins, Project Coordinator of NYPIRG said, "this is the most rewarding project this semester."

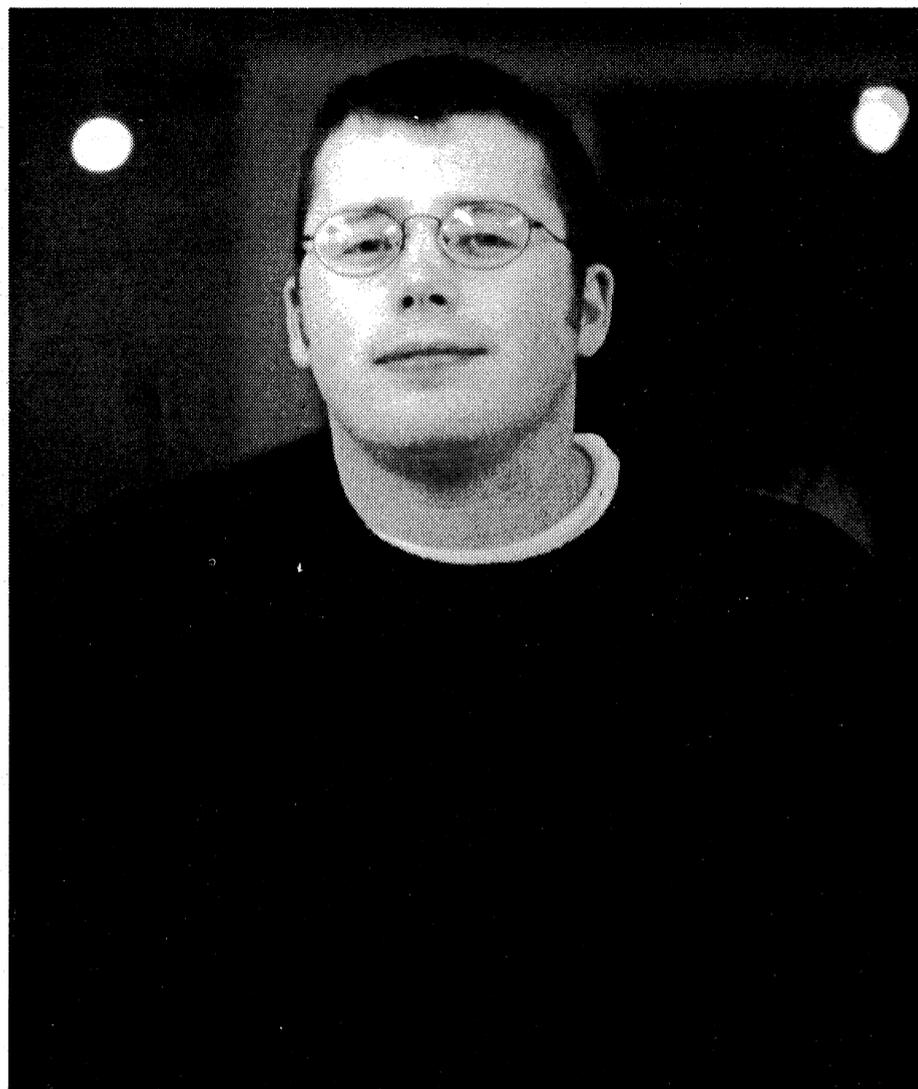
Led by John DeJesus, NYPIRG will promote an environmental project campaign that will focus on global warming and pesticides disclosure. Statistically, 1 out of every 8 women on Long Island have Breast Cancer, and 1 out of every 25 males have prostate or testicular cancer. DeJesus said there was a growing concern that the use of pesticides on Long Island may be related to the high rates of these cancers.

NYPIRG lobbied for the passage of the Pesticide Disclosure Law, mandating business and farms to report their uses of pesticides. NYPIRG's environmental campaign will include locating pesticide usage on Long Island, and alerting the area media about its use on Long Island.

Along with pesticides, global warming is another environmental project NYPIRG is taking on. On April 22, Earth Day, NYPIRG chapters will be having a Lobby Day in Washington, D.C., where students will be able to voice their opinions concerning this issue.

Other important issues that NYPIRG will be taking on include the Small Claims Court Action Center, which will provide students with procedural advice on consumer programs

Several other consumer advocacy projects will be implemented as well. ATM surveys



Statesman/Tee Lek D. Ying

NYPIRG Executive Director, Chris Meyer

will be taken to protect consumers from increasing fees imposed by banks and other ATM owners. Students and other activists can participate in this campaign to get rid of ATM surcharges.

The students with disabilities project will help to make common campus facilities more handicap accessible. In addition to the Disability Reform, a Tobacco Reform campaign will be lobbying to cut out tobacco advertisements and will try to get local legislators to raise taxes on cigarettes.

Executive Director for NYPIRG, Chris Meyer and Guest Speaker at last night's meeting further discussed the importance of NYPIRG and student involvement. According to Meyer, "it is the blood, sweat, and tears of students," that spearheaded the NYPIRG campaign.

Although they have been able to

create these programs, NYPIRG doesn't have the money or the power that most political action groups have. According to Meyer, for the past 25 years NYPIRG has been trying to eliminate this power interest because the most important thing is "to work with students about issues that students care about," Meyer said.

During the first weekend of April, NYPIRG will be holding its annual Spring Conference in Syracuse. Approximately 40 workshops will be held in order to give students the opportunity to build their leadership and interpersonal skills. Regional Coordinator for NYPIRG, Peter Lamia is interested in uniting all the SUNY Chapters and "connecting you, the student, with other students," said Lamia. For more information on NYPIRG, call 632-6457. □

## Students Rally For Peace

From RALLY, Page 3

civilians. How can we possibly go along with this?"

The protest, which continued until 4 pm Monday afternoon, was hailed a success. When reached for comment, Bell said, "We were able to get a very positive response from the Stony Brook community on this issue. At least 100 or more students signed on to a petition requesting the end to the U.S. threat to launch another prolonged missile attack against the people of Iraq. We also received a similar number of

signatures on a petition to end the 7-year sanction against the Iraqi people.

Recent developments in the crisis, arising out of a UN-brokered deal with Iraq over arms inspections, has seen the US government backing down from the use of force for the time being.

The US continues to maintain a strong military presence in the Gulf, leaving the possibility of air strikes in case Saddam Hussein fails to keep his commitment to the United Nations. □



Courtesy of The Stony Brook Press

Protesters made their voices heard during Monday's rally.

# Police Blotter

Compiled by Peter Gratton and Alexandra Cruz

**February 24 1:00 am**

A suspicious person was spotted in the Sports Complex. The person was removed by police and taken to an off campus location.

**February 24 8:31 am**

A student had parked his 1998 Chevrolet Tahoe at the Mendelsohn parking lot the previous day at 7:15 pm. When he went back for his car at the time of the report, he found that the vehicle, a four door truck valued at \$39,000, was missing.

**February 24 1:00 p.m.**

A black purse located under a desk in the second level of the SBS building was reported missing. The victim said she left purse unsecured in an office whose door was left unlocked while she was gone during the day. A Visa, MasterCard, and a JC Penney credit card were stolen.

**February 24 5:45 p.m.**

A student stated that an alumni student threw a chair and slapped victim in the face in Harriman Hall. Victim declined to press charges.

**February 24 10:35 p.m.**

A student in the Cardozo computer SINC site reports that she left her wallet on a desk and when she later returned it was gone. A Visa, Home Federal ATM card and a Mastercard were stolen.

**February 23 1:10 a.m.**

A Teaching Assistant was giving the complainant help in the room in Greeley College. The suspect got close the victim, at which point the complainant said she was not interested. Suspect withdrew and apologized. Victim thanked suspect and the suspect left the room.

**February 23 10:15 p.m.**

The handicapped door and the basement door of the Math Tower were found broken. Damage is estimated at \$150.

**February 21 1:40 am**

Police found a cord to a telephone cut by unknown suspect. The telephone, which was torn from its base, was found in elevator number one in the Graduate Chemistry building.

**February 21 3:00 a.m.**

Victim was woken up by visiting commuting student in Wagner College. Suspect told victim he was going to "F—him up." Victim described suspect as someone he knew. Victim states that the suspect was visiting someone in the hall.

**February 20 12:34 am**

A bulletin board in the second floor hallway of Keller College was set on fire by unknown individuals. The fire was extinguished before officers arrived on the scene.

**February 20 1:00 am**

While walking back from Kelly Cafeteria to Roosevelt Quad, a student tripped over a pothole in the roadway, and felt pain in his right leg. The victim was admitted to the infirmary with a twisted right knee.

**February 20 4:00 am**

A medical student in Chapin Apartments reported that he received a threatening phone call from an athlete. The athlete accused the student of having an affair with his girlfriend, because he had found the medical student's address and phone

## Blotter of the Week

**February 22 Time Unknown.**

A resident in Baruch College received a message on her phonemail that said, "You fuckin bitch, I know you're sitting there on your ass, pick up the phone." She woke up to find the individual who left the message standing over her bed. The matter was referred to Student Affairs.

number in his girlfriend's mail box. The athlete threatened the victim with bodily harm, and later threatened to kill himself and his girlfriend. The case was referred to Student Affairs for further action.

**February 20 5:30 p.m.**

A worker returned to her office in Melville when she discovered that the outer pane in window was broken. It appears that an object was hurled at the window from outside.

**February 20 5:20 pm**

An unknown person took a Shoebox Collectors Magic Cards set from the Student Union Commuter Lounge. The cards, valued at \$750, were taken from an inner office. There was no sign of forced entrance.

**February 20 7:20 pm**

A suspect was arrested by Suffolk County police detectives for activities which took place in both Ammann and Langmir colleges. The suspect was arrested for the sale of 1 gram of a hallucinogenic drug ecstasy and was

charged by police for additional sales measuring 5 grams on two additional dates, October 26 and 29, 1997. All of the sales took place at locations off campus, but were negotiated at the University.

**February 20 7:30 pm**

A student reported that his 1985 Nissan Sentra, color blue, was missing from the Tabler parking lot. He had parked the car at that location three days earlier.

**February 20, Time Unknown.**

An unknown male pulled up a chair to where a student he had previously harassed was sitting in the Commuter Lounge of Melville Library. The suspect asked the victim, "Has anything changed your mind?", at which point the victim asked the suspect, "What do you want from me?" At that point the suspect got up and left in the direction of the Graduate Chemistry Building. The victim had previously been approached by the male beginning last December when she was by the pay phones in Melville Library. Later on when she boarded a bus, the suspect said hello to her. Victim got off the bus and was walking to her car, when the suspect said "I'm sorry I'm following you." She turned around and continued walking to her car, when he said "No, wait." Victim got in her car and drove off.

**February 19 2:00 pm**

A suspect was arrested in the Sport Complex after failing to heed a letter served to him by campus police. The suspect had been arrested for several thefts at the complex, and been served notice that he was not to return to that building.

**February 18 10:50 pm**

The complainant went to play basketball at the Sports Complex basketball court, leaving his belongings on the side of the court. He later noticed that his belongings, which included a fleece sweatshirt and a Gap fleece cap.

**February 18 11:34 am**

A small fire was reported in a 3rd floor electrical panel in the Life Sciences Building. No injuries were reported.

Anyone with information about the above crimes, or the recent spate of thefts in the academic mall can call **CRIMESTOPPERS** at 632-TIPS. Information leading to an arrest in the Physics and Graduate Chemistry Building burglaries can be worth up to \$1,000.

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# Editorial & Letter

## Waiting for Facts in Polity Scandal

Normally, we've been known for playing the devil's advocate and second guessing more than a few of Polity's moves. This time, though, we're find ourselves in an unusual position of asking for calm and patience. Even though there may be good reason to question the latest moves of the Polity Council, jumping to conclusions at this point is fruitless

Members of the Roth Quad Regatta have brought forth allegations that the Polity Council was not telling the entire truth when they explained why they needed \$18,500 for a computer upgrade. Besides buying a new scanner and writable CD-ROM, the group will also be purchasing a new computer system that should be able to handle the amount of paperwork Polity sees every day.

In bringing their complaint before the full Polity Senate,

Ryan Muldoon and Yvonne Glandville found it absurd that Council dictated to them last year the exact height specifications of the the Roth Quad Regatta trophies, but a year later can allocate over \$18,000 with no debate before the senate. It was unreasonable, they believed, for Polity to think that they could pass such a high allocation without an argument from the Senate. They were right. We're glad to see that someone brought forth a debate about this money. In a time where many clubs could desperately use the funds that the Polity Council seems excited to throw away, every cent should still be regulated by the Senate.

However, we're not saying that Polity was corrupt in signing off on such a high

expenditure for computer equipment that should have been much cheaper. They very well could be using the money in a legitimate way, to buy their computer equipment. The only way for anyone to find out is to investigate the matter fully - with the blessing of both the commuting and resident students.

While it may seem that Polity is misusing some of the \$18,500 they have allocated for the system upgrade, there is nothing more that can be done at this time. Students should be patient before making any broad assumptions about the ethics of the Polity Council in this matter. Next week, members of the council, and their accountant, will report back to the Senate in order to fully explain the \$18,000 expenditure. Maybe then we will be able find the solution to where all of the money has gone.

## Fools, Simpletons, and Dullards

**To the Editor:**

I am writing in response to the letter from College Republican Michael Tschupp in the February 23 issue of The Statesman.

We've said it again and again, but we'll reiterate for the more dense members of the campus community: Trustee de Russy has no basis for a libel suit. Any "defamation of character" suit Tschupp refers to would be a libel suit. That's what libel is. He should first learn what constitutes libel and defamation of character before accusing The Press of committing these things. What The Press did in addressing de Russy's actions is a tried and true practice in American journalism: political satire. Not only is satire constitutionally protected speech, but everything we cited as fact in regard to de Russy is documented fact. There was no libel.

Once more for the College Republicans: THERE WAS NO LIBEL. Either cite where, in anything we've published on the topic of Candace de Russy, we committed libel against her, or shut the fuck up already.

The Press is, and should remain, answerable to Polity. Polity pays for our publication and they have the right to address that which they, as representatives of the student body and as guardians of student

interests, find unacceptable. What The Press bemoans are these transparent attempts at politically-motivated censorship masquerading as concern for Polity's liability. Tschupp and his ilk don't like the way we highlighted the danger de Russy represents to SUNY, so they seek to silence us.

Time and again, The Press has been called before the Polity Senate by a carnival-like array of fools, simpletons and dullards. I'm reminded of the time we had the gall to reproduce a painting by artist Pamela Sienna which featured a naked woman seated before a nuclear blast. We had to take time out to tell college-age people why we felt a painting of a nude model was acceptable for publication in a college newspaper.

We tire of answering baseless claims of wrongdoing by self-serving idiots. Such actions are foolish and a waste of our time; emblematic of the impotent infighting that has plagued the Polity Senate for years.

Tschupp also claims the "biting wit and investigative reporting" of the Press' past

are lost. Again, his assessment of the situation is somewhat less than informed. The reality is quite the contrary. The Press has won a string of awards from the nationally-competitive Campus Alternative Journalism Project two years running, (including a wit-confirming couple of nods for "Best Sense of Humor) and we've recently congratulated Press News Editor Michael Yeh for winning the 1998 Martin Buskin Award for Campus-Based Journalism. Yeh's award marks the second time in as many years a Press staffer has taken the honor.

Our staff is the largest its ever been, and we feature writing by more talented and informed contributors than we've ever had. We're at the top of our game, and we're looking forward to an even more successful future.

Tschupp and his cronies in the recently-reborn College Republicans have tried everything they could think of in a sorry attempt to discredit or defund The Press. We feel lucky and grateful that a majority of students are smart enough to see through their transparent maneuvering.

**John Guffo**  
Managing Editor  
The Stony Brook Press

# Women's History Month Calendar

Sunday, March 1: *Women's History Month, Girls & Women In Sports Day.* 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.; Student Activities Center. Some 150 outstanding high school seniors will be honored in this special Department of Athletics and Physical Education-sponsored salute that also includes the presentation of Crown Trophy Awards to 10 women. For information, call Susan DiMonda. at 516-632-7206 or Teri Tiso at 516-632-7212.

Tuesday, March 3: *Women's History Month, Breast Health And Cancer Panel.* 4:30 p.m., Peace Center, Old Chemistry Building. Kicking off Women's History Month activities at Stony Brook is a panel of breast cancer experts and activists who will discuss early detection, risk factors, nutrition, exercise, research, environmental concerns and

political activism. Speakers will be Dr. Samuel Benjamin, director for the Center for Complimentary and Alternative Medicine, Nurse Practitioner and Health Activist Doris Weisman, Clinical Specialist Rosalie Yelen, CSW, activist/educator Lorriane Pace and activist/survivor Pam Dorio. Free. For information call 516-632-9176.

Friday, March 6: *Women's History Month Lecture On "Women In Politics: Taking A Stand For Children And Families."* 11:30 a.m., Room S218, Social and Behavioral Sciences Building. State Assemblywoman Debra Mazzatelli tackles the issue in this special lecture sponsored by Child and Family Studies and the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Education. Free. For information, call. 516-632-7695.

Monday, March 9: *Women's History Month Slide Show With Author Ann Ferrar.* 5:30 p.m., Room 137, Harriman Hall. Author Ann Ferrar, who penned "Hear Me Roar: Women, Motorcycles and the Rapture of the Road," provides a slide presentation in this Women's Studies sponsored event. Free. For information, call 516-632-7378.

Tuesday, March 10: *Women's History Month Lecture With Author Donna Woolfolk Cross.* 4:30 p.m., Peace Center, first floor, Old Chemistry Building. Ms. Cross, who wrote "Pope Joan," a novel based on the life of a woman who, disguised as a man, ruled Christianity in the ninth century, discusses her work. Free. For Information, call 516-632-7378.

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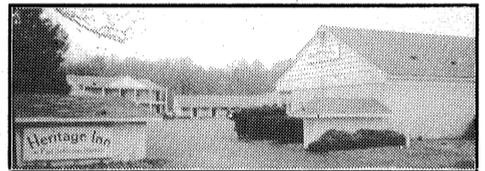
The Stony Brook Statesman Thursday, February 26, 1998

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# Stony Brook's Science Fiction Forum

## Forum from back cover

watches recorded tapes of the science fiction shows seen on television during the previous week (ranging from *Pinky and the Brain* to the "X" Files). Thursdays are the designated movie days where the club watches a new sci-fi flick every week.

Allan Peimer, a freshman, is still happy with his choice to join the club. "I first came down for the library, and now I've got friends down here," he said.

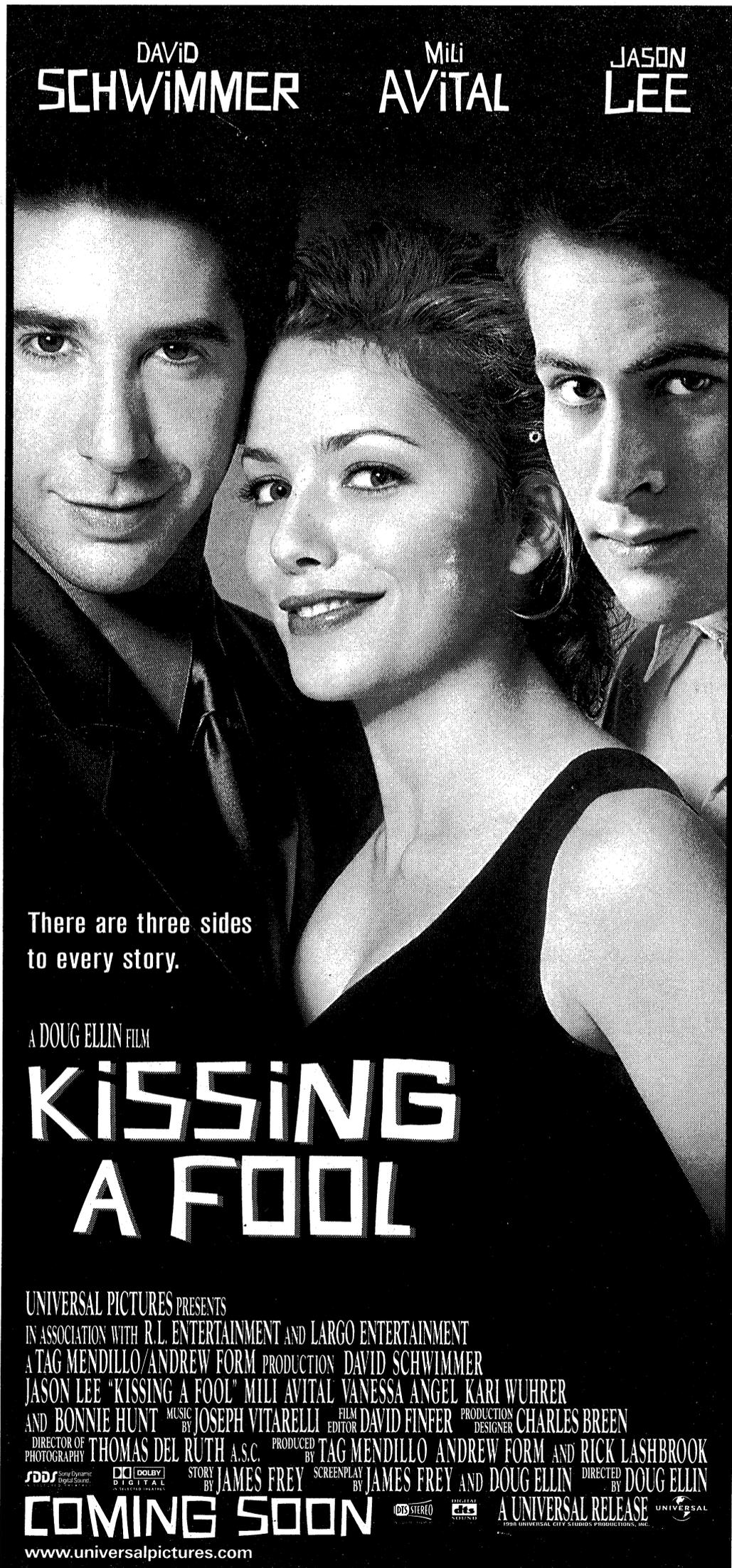
Adams has also lead the club in taking their activities to newer heights. Last October, club members went on a parachuting trip, where they were accompanied in their jumps by professionals. This

coming April 15, the forum is putting together a white water rafting trip at the Lehigh River at the Lehigh Gorge State Park, which will cost those attending \$31. The trip is open to any students interested. Registration ends on March 31.

"It's a really good group, it's not the kind of club that Polity usually funds," Adams said, "It's open to everyone, there are no racial barriers and no political agendas."

The forum's members are made up of about a 50% split between commuters and residents, and many at the open said that one of the best parts of joining was the diversity of its membership. "I came down because I was a science fiction geek, and stayed because of the interesting people," said John Cholewa, a senior majoring in computer science.

The club's offices, and library, are open each weekday from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, and anyone is welcome to take out books. □



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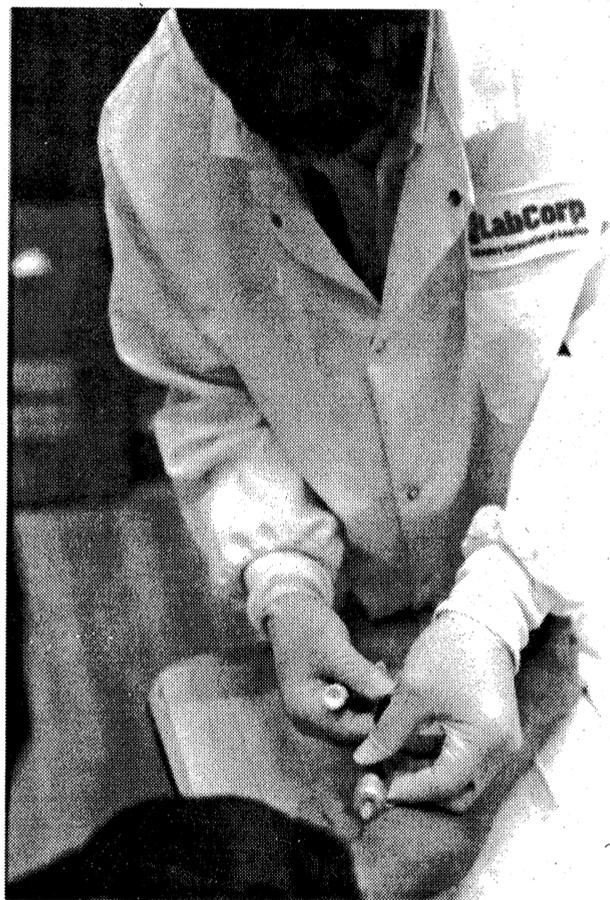
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Statesman / Tee Lek D. Ying

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# Stony Brook Provides Challenge Exams

By KEITH FERBER  
Statesman Staff

According to Murphy's Law, a shortcut is the longest distance between two points, but for Stony Brook students, Murphy is not necessarily correct.

Offered on the Stony Brook campus is a program through which students can take a final without ever attending the class. A shortcut in its most simple form, the challenge exam, as it is called, allows students to 'challenge' a course's final and get a grade for the class.

The program is offered by the Academic Advising Office. Applications can be picked up at the office, filled out, and brought to the department giving the course the student wishes to "challenge." After the department approves the challenge exam, the Bursar must be paid \$50 per credit -as opposed to the higher cost of taking the actual course at \$213 per credit- and have the form signed by an academic advisor.

Most students would tend to think it is an easy way to get through a class, but there are many stipulations that govern the taking of the exam. The challenge exam is not offered for every course at Stony Brook. The exam is generally offered for University skill 3, which is a foreign language requirement, but can also satisfy certain DECs. These DECs include E, F and G, which are natural science courses, social and behavioral science courses, and humanities courses, respectively.

Other stipulations deal generally with the credits achieved through challenge exams. Credit cannot be given to a student if: he/she has failed the course, he or she has already taken a challenge exam for the same course, or if the student has received credit for a higher-level course in the same curriculum.

In foreign languages, the rules for eligibility are a

little different. For beginner and intermediate courses, credit is not given if credit was received for the course in high school, if the student completed a higher level course in high school or college, or if the student graduated from a high school where the language of instruction is the same as the one the student is challenging.

*"The challenge exam, as it is called, allows students to 'challenge' a course's final and get a grade for the class."*

The credits that can then be earned through the challenge exams are also subject to several guidelines. A maximum of five courses can be challenged. Yet credits earned through the challenge exam cannot be used for the 36-credit University residency requirement, but credits earned for courses 300 and above can be used for the 39-credit upper division requirement.

There are also certain rules for grading and for how the exams will affect academic standing.

All courses taken through the challenge exams are subject to a grading of satisfactory or unsatisfactory, but courses other than foreign languages can be 'challenged' for letter grades. That decision must be

made prior to taking the exam. If a student fails the exam, he or she can take the course and replace the exam grade with a grade from the course. In that case, the exam does not affect a student's GPA and is not counted as part of the semester's credit load.

According to Academic Advisor Brian McConnell, the challenge exam is "most common for language skill 3 or those with background in a course. It is not common for, say, Psychology 101."

Although the exam application states that it cannot be offered for courses not given at Stony Brook, there are exceptions within the foreign language requirements of skill 3. Students who speak a language fluently may take a challenge exam to satisfy skill 3. "There is a list of professors with expertise in languages," said McConnell. "A student can satisfy skill 3 by demonstrating a proficiency in a language, if they can carry on dialogue, and know the verb tenses. A lot of students who speak another language figure by taking the exam they won't have to worry."

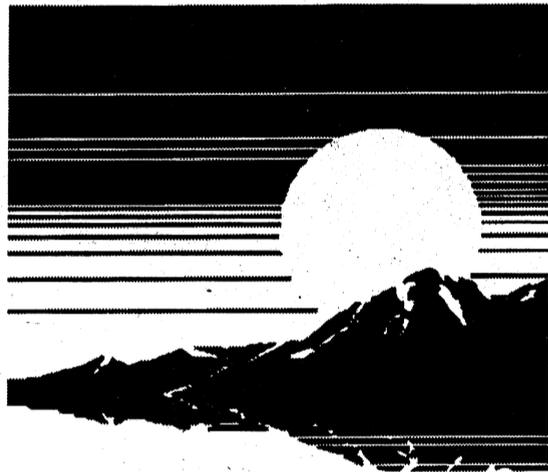
Last semester 24 students took the challenge exam for various classes. Among them were William Blaschuk, a 21-year-old ISE major who took the exam for computer science 114, a prerequisite for other classes within his major. "I got credit for the course and didn't lose a year on my major," said Blaschuk.

McConnell commented, "The challenge exam saves money and time. Some people might argue the advantage of sitting in a class and benefiting from a professor's knowledge but the challenge exam is faster and cheaper, and that attracts a lot of people." □

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## Features

## Wag the Dog--Top Dog of Movie Soundtracks

By MICHAEL KIMMEL  
Special to the Statesman

Creating soundtracks are a risky business. On the one hand, they tap into the warm glow of the theatre-goer, who wants something to take home to remember a good film even after it's over. On the other hand, most of the actual background music to a good film is meant to be that, only background, and nothing more.

For *Titanic* (Sony Music), James Homer has composed a memorable Celtic-New Age-inflected theme, which serves as the backdrop to this majestic film. As you hear the music, you'll 'see' the scenes again. (This presumes that you might actually want to.)

Of course, the 'star' attraction is **Celine Dion** singing "My Heart will Go On," which has to be the least memorable - and s-l-o-w-e-s-t - love song from a major movie that I have ever heard. It is a shoe-in for the Oscar — sloppily sentimental, vague and contentless.

The rest of the album is actually pretty good. With mournful Gaelic pipes and whispering female vocals the soundtrack sounds like **Enya** meets **Clannad** at the Irish Folk Festival. If you don't like this music to begin with - which I do - you'll be using the CD as a coaster within a month. Perhaps the best composer working in films today is Mark Knopfler. His distinctive guitar style - I still remember exactly where I was when I heard the opening bars of **Dire Straits'** "Sultans of Swing" - has created stunning albums for *Local Hero* and *Cal*, which may be the best soundtracks I've ever heard.

For *Wag the Dog* (Mercury), Knopfler has created a memorable title song, sharp, smart and bouncy, and dripping with irony. The rest of the album doesn't stray far from his success with *Cal* — Gaelic pipes and penny whistles, create an impish, yet thick atmosphere. You can actually listen to this album.

They throw in 10 seconds of about 15 pop songs in a film in which the longest snippet probably

accompanies the closing credits, then compile all the actual songs into a 'soundtrack' that bears no relation to the film. None of those gooey moments, when you hear some of the music, and say to yourself, "Oh, that was when they first kissed" or something like that. Basically another compilation album of disconnected rock and pop songs — half by artists you've never even heard of.

Two recent versions of these soundtracks illustrate the promise and the peril of the genre. The soundtrack *Great Expectations* (Atlantic) reveals everything wrong with Hollywood and movie soundtracks. Start with the cover — a naked Gwyneth Paltrow draped sedulously for your delectation continues making Dickens' masterpiece into a piece of pornography. Turn the cover over and search for the film credits — indeed for anything even about the film. It's way at the bottom right, small and unreadable, under the photo of **Robert DeNiro**, who has a rather small role in this embarrassing film. Forget authenticity; the story is only vaguely reminiscent of the original.

And so is the album. One quarter of the songs on this poor pop compilation are noted with the disclaimer "does not appear in film." That is, they're filler — dumped on you by corporate moguls who think you're too dumb to notice. Second rate songs by second rate bands are instantly forgettable, except the **Dead's** "Uncle John's Band," and if you don't already own that, this is not the place to get it. This 'soundtrack' is an insult to any conscious music consumer -which makes it the perfect condiment to a film that was an insult to anyone who actually reads literature.

*The Wedding Singer* (Maverick/Warner Brothers), however, is a surprisingly sure-handed soundtrack. The film itself is a dumb **Adam Sandler** confection, barely suitable for renting. And sure the soundtrack is just another compilation of well-known pop songs from the 1980s, but it also eloquently evokes the wretched excesses of the Reagan years with both love and laughter.

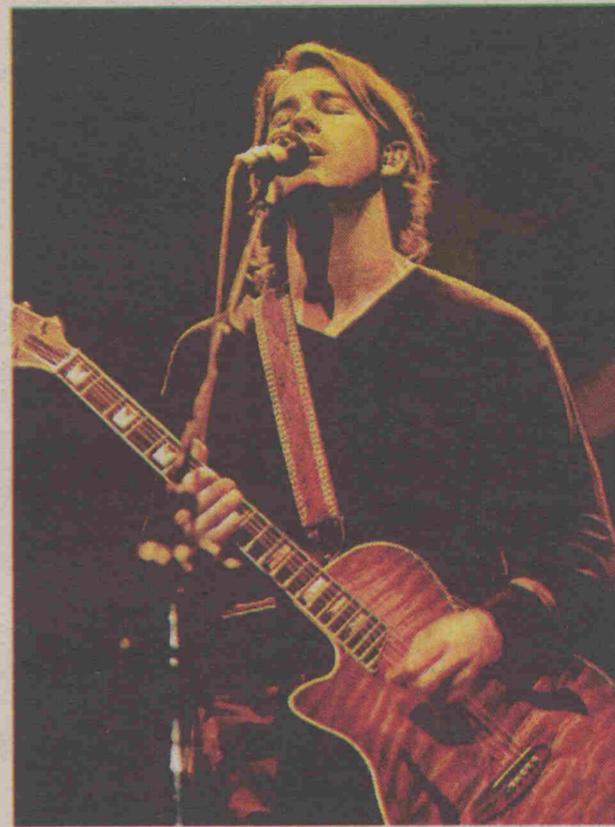


Photo courtesy of Jennifer Jefferies

Duncan Sheik's "Wishful Thinking" on *Great Expectations*

I mean, how can you listen to the mesmerizingly unthreatening **Billy Idol's** "White Wedding," and then **Musical Youth's** bouncily innocuous "Pass the Dutchie" without giggling at the juxtaposition. Or anything by the **Thompson Twins**, let alone the anthemically anemic "Hold Me Now." What were we thinking about then?

Here the film, its star, and its soundtrack all work together to remind us not to take ourselves so seriously. Fifteen years from now, we'll be laughing at ourselves again. And - given what we've learned from *Wag the Dog* - we'd better keep our senses of humor. □

## Science Fiction Forum Holds Open House

By PETER GRATTON  
Statesman Editor

Photo courtesy of the Science Fiction Forum

Leah Gustavson, Forum member taking the plunge.

Science fiction, fantasy and illusion was the atmosphere yesterday when the Science Fiction Forum held its annual open house hoping to put the word out to the community that the forum is still alive and well.

The forum, now headed by its "Presarian" (president and head librarian) Jennifer Adams, has about 75 active members, with over 100 people on its mailing list. The forum is well in its 30th year on the campus.

They moved at the beginning of this semester into an office and a lounge in the basement of Harriman Hall. Their office holds an extensive science fiction library, with over 15,000 volumes in its collection, some of which is partially donated

from sources such as the Science Fiction Channel.

"I'd like more recognition from the campus," Adams said, "We only have enough money to keep up the library." The club receives approximately \$2,000 each year from Polity, most of which is used to buy new books for the forum's expanding collection.

Despite its small budget, the forum remains a home to many members who choose to hang out at in their lounge. Each Tuesday is game day, where the members meet and play science-fiction related video games. On Wednesday, the club meets and

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**The following issue should have been numbered "38"**

