

The
Stony
Brook

PRESS

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The University Community's Feature Presentation

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Serving Students First

A Conversation with Polity President Monique Maylor

By Michael Yeh

Polity president Monique Maylor took on a colossal challenge last semester following her election victory last semester. She vowed to bring students together on a campus plagued with apathy and to serve as a leader in student activism. In this interview with *The Press*, Maylor discusses some of her activities and goals in the Student Polity Association.

Tell me a little bit about yourself and your goals for the future.

My major is Africana Studies, but I would like to go into physical therapy. I also have a love for teaching, and I really want to teach students about African studies and African-American history. I think all students should know a little about everyone's backgrounds. While growing up, I think it would have made a difference in elementary and junior high school to learn about African-Americans. All I ever learned about being black is slavery and Martin Luther King. I think it is important to let students know that black history means more than that.

I noticed that you sign all Polity documents with "In Student Unity." What exactly do you mean, and how is it possible to achieve unity on this campus?

As the president of the Student Polity Association, I am working for the benefit of all students and not just for an elite group of students. I am not doing things just for the residents or just for the commuters.

What is Polity doing to help students who still do not have housing?

I'm disappointed in the people who have a role in student dorms. I've had meetings with Dr. Preston and one with President Kenny, who sent me right back to Dr. Preston. I presented an envelope with letters from 500 students, including residents, commuters, and those without housing.

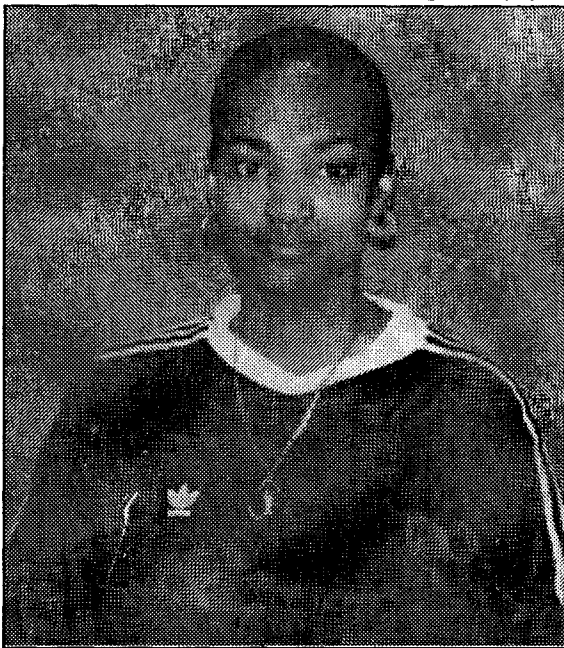
Dr. Preston told me that there's nothing that can be done, but when people apply next semester, priority housing will go to people who are currently on the waiting list. They are going to start renovating Tabler Quad, but that got started late because of the approval of the budget.

There are still people who are living in lounges and sleeping on floors in their friends' rooms. Polity had a meeting to allow students to come out and show support, but only four or five students were there. I cannot go to administrators to represent four or five students. I'm still looking for students to get involved, and I would love to have students talk to me so that we can put pressure on the administration to make sure they provide housing. Right now, they're not thinking about the students who are here now, but instead they are thinking about next year's students. They don't seem to care if you have to withdraw from the school.

Do you think representation in Polity should be

granted only to full-time students who have paid the Student Activities Fee, as reported by the Statesman? [Paying to be a part of Polity?, Sept. 29]

Polity is an organization based on the Student Activities Fee, so its first priority is to serve those students who have paid the fee. But I do not think it is fair to close out students who cannot afford to pay the Student Activities Fee or part-time students who want to be involved. Our primary goal



Polity President Monique Maylor
Photo Courtesy Tee Lek D. Ying/Statesman

is to represent students who have paid the Activities Fee but not to discourage those who have not paid it.

I think all students should be allowed to vote, for regardless of whether they have paid the Student Activities Fee, we are still their elected officials. They should have a say in whether or not I should be in office.

What do you think about Aramark's "Advantage" meal plan?

Well, I agree that it is a "dis-Advantage" plan. By the end of the semester, I would probably be starving. I think this is the year to make change, not necessarily by getting rid of Aramark, but the meal plan definitely needs to be changed.

I'd actually like to see it go back to the old way, where you could use your money wisely. But I have a feeling that if we go back to that, they are going to raise the prices. They say that it won't happen, but people often say one thing and let something else happen.

This "Advantage" plan is not working for anyone. I have yet to meet a student who actually likes it. Vice-president Diane Lopez and CSA vice-president Cari Munves have both been appointed to the Dining Committee. Students can talk to them about any complaints, and if anything happens, we will announce it in public.

Actually, The Press has heard from a student who loves Aramark! He wrote, "I think that the students that don't like Aramark don't really like

themselves but like the attention that it gives them for writing such articles in a paper that I personally have no respect for."

Can I just tell you about the time I found a bug in my salad? It was a live bug that had salad dressing all over it, and I almost ate it! That is the worst thing that could have happened to me [in the cafeteria]. Aramark has to make sure that their lettuce is clean, for every time students complain about bugs in their food, it's from the lettuce.

Although we have a diverse group of ethnic cultural clubs on campus, some people say that it has led to more segregation since students tend to hang out with other students of the same backgrounds. What can be done about this?

I understand what students mean when they say that, but I wouldn't call it segregation. Segregation is a strong word, especially in the history of America, where it represents the whole "separate but equal" idea. When one mentions segregation, I think of racism, but I don't think Stony Brook is like that.

Some students are used to staying within their groups, and have not been directed by the Polity Council or other leaders to come together. But last year, when the Philippine Students Organization and the Haitian Students Organization threw a party together, it was something we did not see before. We now see clubs that come together and hold parties together, which is a change that is coming about now.

It will take a while before every club throws parties together, but I think the leaders of the organizations are working towards making changes.

Does Polity work together with graduate students?

I meet with the president of the Graduate Students Organization (GSO) every month, and we discuss how we can work together on different issues. For example, we are working together on becoming a part of the Student Association of the State University. I would like to introduce the GSO into that, for I think it will be beneficial. We're also working on the housing situation, for she said that there are graduate students who don't have housing. The GSO and Polity are definitely not separate entities.

What do you see as the greatest challenges that Stony Brook students face?

The greatest problem facing this campus is apathy. Students often think that someone else is going to take care of a problem, but I think that leaves us open for anyone to come in and mess it up unless we come out as a unified front. We can be a powerful force on campus if we can come together.

I don't think that anyone is really out to get students, but I feel that students are overlooked in a lot that goes on at the university. We often assume that the people in charge will look out for us, but it's not like that all the time.

I want students to know that Polity is here for them. If they have any issues to discuss, they can always come to one of us. We are always open to constructive criticism.

[Geek Euphemism For Web-Surfing Here]:

www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/sbpress

Take The Last Train To Stepford

By Edgar Allen Marx

"Many people think that Satan is the God of Evil. He isn't. He's the God of Reality."

-Vincent Price in Masque of the Red Death

Ah, Halloween, and the air is heavy with ghouls and goblins and all manner of horrifying apparitions. However, nothing in humankind's century-old folkloric imagination can rival much of what goes on in so-called real life.

I'm talking about ZOMBIES. Yes, the undead are among us. Or, should I say, we are among them. I'm oftentimes compelled to take rush-hour trains and your blood would just freeze at the horror show that makes place as the sun rises cold on our ancient, misty land. To start with, the car itself is as eerily quiet as a mobile crypt, punctuated only occasionally by some demonic cackling. More chillingly, one can sometimes hear the hellish rumble of what is a Black Mass version of a political or social discussion.

The denizens look remarkably alike, as if unnaturally animated in the same mad scientist's laboratory. They all have the same vacant, lifeless stare and are all dressed in the same stiff, torturous-looking garments that corpses are usually shoe-horned into after embalming.

Those who aren't gazing mutely into their own private abyss are usually reading some sort of tabloid periodical (and I don't mean the one you're know holding). What's really bizarre is that they all read it in the same not-of-this-world fashion: they start from the back, and then move from there to the middle where the stock market reports are. My theory is that like certain recordings which, when played backwards, reveal a Satanic message, starting at the back of the Post or the Daily News impart the Cabalistic incantations which keep these creatures suspended between this world and the unseen sphere. The numbers on the stock pages are the code for the mayhem they plan to visit on decent people for that day.

Many of those who seem more solidly embedded in this cruel mockery of existence and may even be its overlords mediate into larger folios, more forbidding in appearance and without back pages picturing mesmerizing images of hulking demons locked in symbolic combat. These diabolical tomes provide lots more numerical code and, if my furtive glances don't deceive me, the ideological plan for world conquest that drives this entire vampiric legion.

Some of the female riders of the Ghost Train, enshrouded in ponderous death masks and bound sadomasochistically in suffocating support hose, peer into the shadow paperback horrors of Stephen King or Dean Koontz, or seek to sate their unholy lust in the loveless erotica of Danielle Steele. And many of the males are similarly enthralled with the robotic machismo of Tom Clancy or Michael Crichton. I believe they must be the recently recruited, having their minds softened until such time as they graduate to more somber gospels of Gehenna.

I once borrowed an aura-channeling crystal from my Psychic Friend, Esmerelda, and surreptitiously consulted it during the ride. Whereas under normal circumstances the rock is supposed to emit a bright, sparkling rainbow glow, the reading I obtained came in dull tones of gray flannel and blue pinstripe. "Very low energy," remarked Esmerelda when I reported this, "indicating a faint, almost non-existent spiritual and intellectual life."

The thing that caused my blood to curdle like

cafeteria milk, though, was one day seeing someone I had known at Stony Brook. Always a personable, fun-loving sort, M_____ had never been one for contemplating life's more serious questions or going against the tide. "Just play the game, dude," he once said to me, "and that's what it's all about. Get what you can and don't worry about anyone else." The day I saw him on the platform in Huntington, the bluff, party-heavy frat-boy exterior was still there, but there was something hollow, something not quite kosher. Where there had been potential for growth and even some flickering intellectual curiosity under the frivolity, there was now only a sort of sardonic resignation to life on a white-collar treadmill. His crimson power tie seemed to choke him, and I noticed a strange, parasitic goiter on his neck.

But wait! The forces of evil must never be allowed to ultimately triumph. When I was a lad, my babushka used to regale me for hours on end with tales of how our forebears in the dark, remote forests of Eastern Europe used to burn or decapitate corpses, lest they rise again as the dreaded krevojedy, or blood drinkers. You, too, can take precautions to protect yourself from such a hellish fate.

Here, at this sanctified institution of higher learning, you are exposed, perhaps unwillingly to a variety of modes of thought and analysis. Your brain, even against your most strenuous efforts, is springing open and synapses are connecting like wildebeests in heat. You're thinking things you never thought you could think and discovering worlds you never knew existed in the protected cocoon of your previous pedestrian existence. At this point, as Esmerelda's crystal would show, your soul is giving off a rich, warm glow. The forces of Death absolutely detest this light, as it reminds them of the treasure they've given up for the illusion of power and a pile of dead possessions.

This is well and good, but you must be aware of this unpleasant fact: once you graduate and that precious SUNY diploma is in your sweaty little fist, you will no longer be in an intellectual environment, nor will you be coerced into exercising that gray muscle inside your cranium. In addition, you're likely to be surrounded by individuals who have been thoroughly indoctrinated in the exigencies of the system. They're living embodiments of Bertrand Russell's observation that, "Most people would rather die than think; in fact, they do so". Their lives consist of slaving for the Man all the livelong day and then spending their "down time" having their minds jellied in front of the idiot box. They'll look upon everything you've learned and all manifestations of social concern, with condescending contempt.

What you must do is realize the pit of quicksand you are due to step into as you exit the graduation podium and make a conscious decision to actively resist it ("Just Say No", to coin a phrase) and not be sucked in, no matter how nice the comfy chair of conformity looks.

Make sure that the bulk of your reading material is serious, progressive non-fiction and alternative media. As omnipresent as the tabs are, don't succumb, except to peruse lightly and snort disgustedly at the pap they expropriate. This goes especially for the high-rent tabs like The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

Stay away from the Box that Steals Souls. Limit your intake to the occasional episode of The Simpsons, which contrary to the opinion of certain of my esteemed colleagues, is the most faboo thing on TV since they canceled Michael Moore's TV

Nation. The most dangerous aura-eating entrees on the Aramark menu of contemporary video pablum are the "news" programs and anything dealing with crime and morality, like those action and true-life cop shows, the filterless Camels of TV viewing. These offerings emit special low-frequency ultra-indigo rays that sap your precious bodily fluids and render you a dithering mooncalf.

The same goes for movies and be extra careful: independent and foreign films used to be safe bets, but lately some, especially independents looking for eventual Hollywood crossover, have peppered their offerings with gratuitous, yet arty, violence or superficial, yet arty, feel-good mush.

Most important is to maintain contacts with people and groups who are not part of the cloned-sheep flock of American middle class life. You need to know that others feel the way you do and a support group will provide refuge and strength.

All of these tactics may put you at odds with your co-workers and you may be tagged the "office liberal" or worse. This is particularly true in high-end bourgeois positions -- in the demimonde of unskilled grunt work, you're liable to find others who've opted out or know they're being screwed. Chomsky points out that there's more need for ideological control the higher up you go. Who cares what the plebes think, as they have little economic or political clout? You may, however, know the rewarding sound of someone's mind springing open as you enlighten them from your arsenal of facts.

Remember, this epic struggle with banality is ongoing. Newer and more seductive attacks are always being mounted. Arm yourself now.

Speaking of mind control, the October 16 tour of the Media Moguls' fortresses was a rousing success. I haven't been to a demonstration that was so much fun in ages. Sadly, Penny Arcade didn't show. But Bread and Puppet constructed a huge "media lapdog", very like a Chinese New Year's Dragon, propelled by at least five people. Other energetic activists wore dog masks and tails with trenchcoats, cameras and microphones and pranced and sniffed sycophantically as the Running Dogs of the Corporate Media. Delegates from Minnesota polkaed down the avenue to accordion, drum and horn accompaniment. There was a protest song whose refrain was "Deny, deny, deny", etc. and rhyming by rap-master Shank and media maven Danny Schechter ("The More You Watch, the Less You Know"). A passing bike messenger gave us a thumbs-up by yelling "fuck the media" and the bemused tourists who throng 42nd Street beheld it all in wonderment.

You can contact, and even join the New York Free Media Alliance by contacting Steve Rendall at Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting at 212-633-6700.

Fight For Your Right To Party: C.W. Post's Homecoming festivities were an underattended bust. The reason? Too many "dry" events and too much harassment of "underage" drinkers. Students stayed away in droves. An editorial in the Post Pioneer castigated the campus for the de facto boycott and not showing up unless there's booze, but I say, way to go. When people act collectively, they produce noticeable results.

I know I promised to devote space to Rudy Giuliani's all-but-certain looming victory, but some things, like another four years of quasi-fascist leadership for one of the world's great cities, are just too scary to contemplate.

TRICKED BY TREATS

It was a dark and stormy afternoon when the mysterious figure entered the cavernous lobby of the Administration building. Outside, the campus was deserted. It was Friday, approaching five o'clock, and students who had any sense or means to do so fled the decrepit school grounds. They rushed home at the first opportunity to warm rooms, edible food, and an atmosphere in which someone actually cared about their education. Lightning flashed across the darkening sky as the wind kicked up, signaling an approaching storm. The student in the equally empty building made his way upstairs.

A strange odor permeated the halls, and evil stench which our intrepid explorer followed around the corner and to the left, until he found himself outside a door labeled "Office of the President". An eerie orange glow oozed out from under the door, and through the keyhole. The student seized the opportunity and pressed his eye to the keyhole, his own little window to the scene unfolding before him.

A dark altar was set in the center of the room, with candles aglow and several small polished stone boxes on the tabletop. Above the altar was a portrait--no, it was some sort of shrine, but the student couldn't quite make out who the shrine represented. He sensed movement in the corner.

With a wicked laugh the three witches emerged from the shadows and centered themselves around the altar. The Witch Shirley, with pure evil in her eyes, began the ceremony as her minions, whom the student recognized from their civilian lives as Fred Preston and Dallas Bauman, started to chant. "All hail the almighty dollar, money and fame, we worship thee!", they chanted as Witch Shirley slowly opened each of the stone boxes. The student drew a quick breath as he

realized what lay on the altar. The boxes had been filled with Student Morale, Comfort, and Health, Adequate Housing, Content Faculty, and Quality Education. It was a Pandora's Box of all that a university should be, but the three witches saw these qualities as their own stepping stones to a higher realm.

The Evil Dr. Preston held up Student Morale, and, shouting, "For political favors and personal prestige, I sacrifice thee!", he ripped Morale in two.

Hobgoblin Dallas Bauman took Adequate Housing and Student Comfort and exclaimed, "In the name of commercialization and blind profit, I sacrifice thee!", as he crushed them under his puny hands.

Then Witch Shirley stepped to the altar, and snatched Education from its box. For the first time, the portrait in the shrine became visible. It was an altar to Satan himself, Governor Pataki. The student recoiled in horror as he watched Shirley hold Education up before the shrine and shriek, "For public relations and marketability, for my own notoriety and advancement, for Charles B. Wang and the Brookhaven Lab, and for the tax cutting purposes of the Almighty Pataki, I SACRIFICE THEE!!" And with that, the Witch Shirley pierced Education through the heart, letting it wither until it died.

The student fell back, shocked by the sight, and legend has it that he ran from the building, ran from the school, never to return. The university fell to the whims of the witches, distributing empty degrees to a dejected student body while serving the self-interests of the Administration.

And the scariest part of this tale, my friends, is that the student only watched the destruction of his education.

Happy Halloween.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nuthin' But Love For Ya, Aramark

To The Editor:

After hearing all the things about Aramark or is it Army muck? I had to write especially after the letter on page 4 of the Stony Brook press dated 15/10 from subhuman, sorry no sbuhuman. Not having a go but I laughed my socks off at the article. It's not real is it, you mean someone actually wrote that? It's a setup to encourage people to write? Well it worked for me.

Anyway what I'm writing about is, yep you guessed it, food on the campus. As an exchange student I can go home in the spring to real food. I feel sorry for the people who have to endure this great variety of food. Things like Burger King, Taco bell, Deng lee, etc. sorry to those who enjoy these fast food products. If you enjoy the food that's fine. I, like many, don't. There is nowhere else to eat, unless you have a car. If you don't think it's a big issue then go without food for several days, I could go home, but this would effect my degree. So, all in all, let's try to get something done about the food.

My main problem is breakfast. This is the most important meal of the day. As an ex-building site worker, breakfast was so important that, without a full english breakfast, you don't survive the morning. Alright so I am not on site now, but a good breakfast gives fuel for the day. Where is the breakfast here? The SAC? don't make me laugh. Eggs out of a carton? I'd like to meet the hens that laid those eggs. It's

not natural. Bacon that's been slowly cooking for days, crisp, but lacking all flavor. Sausages which are good frisbees, but not good to eat.

So I go to Kelly's, get a couple of plates full of food stuff and pick my way though to find something that I like. The food seems to be getting worse if that's at all possible. Everything so overcooked, I'm no expert but I have cooked for myself now for a few years. And I know when things have the goodness cooked out of them. All those lovely vitamins and minerals cooked right out of the food, great. I would rather have a couple of choices for places to eat than several choices of bad places to eat.

Don't know much about Aramark and their great achievements, but the food on campus is not one of them. Or maybe it is, imagine being able to past off food that pigs wouldn't eat and get money for it. That would be a good rip off. All in all it's not the people that work there, as they are friendly, they're just doing their job. It as always, the management. They decide what's to be served, what's on the menu and how to weasel out of things and come up with some of the best excuses. Read the comment cards. Talking about comment cards, They're there for show, an empty gesture, a fool's gold.

Maybe some people feel I have no right to complain about the food, as an exchange student. Well there will be others who will follow and suffer as I am. I don't want someone else to have to be shock at the quality of the food here. The thought of several months of eating limp, lame, cold, soggy food. Hang on that thought has just made me want to rush to the bathroom.

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Continued From Previous Page

Changing the company is not the answer. As its 'better the devil you know than the one you don't.' It's the service that has to change. After all if you go to a restaurant and the foods bad then you complain. You're paying for it so you expect good food or you money back. If enough people feel strongly about the way they are being serviced then its time to stop moaning and take action. This problem wouldn't go away and it will be passed on to other new students. After all Aramack are paid by the students to provide a service. They are at the students beck and call not the other way round. I'm not trying to start a riot. Just sit round the table and have a big pow wow.

Also the problem is the strange opening times as a bounded student. One who has no car. I am forced to stay on campus. Just because its the weekend does not mean you don't eat. Things close early expect for the fast food. Finish a lecture at 8.20pm, hungary, where to go? So many choices of poison. The SAC that should be open till 9pm or 10pm. With a variety of foods. Is it not the STUDENT ACTIVITY CENTER. Who cares if it was not expect on the meal plan. Point is that it is on the meal plan, part of and should be open 7 days a week early till late. Short staff, then Aramack put your hands deeper in you pocket and pay better. Don't want no excuses, just want to eat properly, get my moneys worth.

Back to Subhumans letter, how much did Aramark pay for that obSERVANT letter. Maybe your the son or daughter or both of someone in the inner circle at Aramark. I don't believe your real, because you come straight out of a comic book. In general must people I've talked to, all seem to share the same point of view that the food is... without being profound... unpleasant. Such a tame word to compare the abortion I have to eat here.

Got to go, just seen my lunch, a nice squirrel with nut stuffing, just get me crossbow and I'm off.

Bon appetite

Roy Parvin

Mamma Mia

To the Editor:

Re: Frank Fusaro's article: Congratulations on an insightful analysis of the "Diana vs. Mother Teresa" phenomenon. I would like to add an idea which occurred to me as a result of some personal experience with Mother Teresa.

A Christian's mission is to follow Christ's example on Earth, which may be gladly summarized thus: "to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." Mother Teresa did not perceive herself as an extraordinarily holy person; she said that holiness is for everyone, in order to rob us of the notion that she was singular and to be admired from a distance. She affects our sense of complacency, as we live in the most affluent society in the world. When her stories of abandoned and starving members of the human family made me wince during her address to seminarians in Rockville Centre on June 26, 1986. To this day I cannot forget those images. She challenged President Clinton at the National Prayer Breakfast by calling abortion "the greatest destroyer of peace in the world."

We find Mother Teresa's message and example a bit too challenging to our complacent, rich and self-absorbed lives.

More recently, I received a letter from Mother inviting me to "come and see" her home in the South Bronx. There, I saw her sisters cheerfully working among the rejected of our society, the elderly poor imprisoned in lonely apartments, comforting the afflicted we'd rather ignore.

We prefer Diana's charity because it did not involve her lifestyle or radically lower her standard of living. We feel convicted by the sacrificial life of Mother Teresa, forcing us to reject her or suffer discomfort of change.

Sincerely,

Leticia C. Velasquez

Let's Get Argumentative

To James Polichak:

In your "Let's Get Critical" diatribe of October 15, you take a swipe at "otherwise leftist political-types" who you say want to "smoke wherever and whenever they want". I assume this designation includes me, even though I've never said or believed that smokers should be allowed to light up everywhere with no restrictions, nor do I know any smoker who believes such a thing.

The problem I have is when it's the middle of winter and I'm in a building that may have thousands of rooms and I'm told, by official decree that there can't be one fucking, lousy room where I can go to smoke without being exposed to the elements. That's totally intolerant, small-minded and it serves to create yet one more scapegoated class of people. (I'm also personally unacquainted with any nonsmoker who believes that tobacco should be purged from the face of the earth., but I assume that somewhere, a small dedicated sect, not unlike UFO buffs, exists.)

The real bone I have to pick with you though, is the idea that these restrictions are our benevolent government's way of stepping in to save us from ourselves, as if we're all suicidal basket-cases, and they're gently talking us off of the ledge. Please have some respect for the reader's intelligence. Could this by any chance be the same nurturing government that did radiation tests on unsuspecting subjects, including pregnant women, retarded boys, and GIs (though maybe to someone whose chosen course of study necessitates the regular electrical torture of rodents, it actually is benevolent--gotta break eggs to make an omelette, right?)? Could this be the same government that won't let us know what chemical hocus-pocus is going on in our food and water? The same government that is constantly spending fantastic sums on deadly weapons and cutting funds and resources for regulation for health and safety in the workplace? The same government that presides over hundreds of toxic waste sites and just shot enough plutonium to contaminate the entire planet into outer space? The same government that wants to fudge on the Rio Protocol on greenhouse gases? The one that won't sign on banning land mines? That government? Excuse me while I laugh myself sick.

If the government (Big Mother?) is so concerned about our collective health, why, oh why don't we have universal health care like every other advanced country? Why have they been cutting important public health services, like inoculations, at the same time they're passing more and more of your beloved smoking restrictions?

The billion dollar question going through my

little nicotine-addled mind, however, is why, if smoking is so downright dastardly, are our caring and sharing leaders continuing to subsidize the tobacco industry?!?!? Before you presume to tell us peasants that we're outcasts, kindly stop funding those huge faceless corporations (I was hitherto unaware that RJ Reynolds and the other toxins-vendor had acquired Nike and we're now running sweatshops in the Third World--thanks for clueing me in) that produce the stuff.

Why, moreover, doesn't the all-beneficent government provide free "Quit Smoking" programs to any and all who wish to quit? Why don't they give out those nicotine patches keep addicts from infecting everyone with the deadly second-hand smoke?

And if they're so damn committed to the cleanliness o the air we breathe, why don't they start to wean us off of that great despoiler of the oxygen, the internal combustion engine and the poisonous fossil fuels which power it? When are we going to see the increased restrictions on cars? When will the Pashas of Purity make it harder to drive, greatly restrict the places where you can, and treat those who persist like the worst sort of pedophile? Before you whinny back about how necessary the automobile is, I suggest you read a good social history of that device and the auto industry in American life, and you'll see that the "need" to have one is also quite artificial. As are the "needs" for many other products.

And when is the government going to step in to save us from assault weapons and the deaths they cause when we lug them along on a Sunday drive, a visit to the local bar, or a workday in the Postal Service?

As for cigarettes being symbols of cool anti-establishment rebellion, they've never been more so now that there's a self-righteous, icicle-up-their-ass neoprohibitionist campaign against it. Nothing has done more for Joe Camel than giving him the "outlaw" mystique.

No, the witch hunt of the '90's isn't about health, it's about control. It's about seeing how much restriction the people will stand for. It's also about the power to turn a sizable segment of the population into overnight pariahs. One of the truly phenomenal aspects (perhaps worthy of a social-psychological study--you'd have me to thank for inspiring your doctoral thesis), is the disproportionate hostility many now feel free to vent on smokers. Putting someone outside the building is a very clear symbolic way of saying that they don't deserve to be looked at or treated as full human beings (q.v. the homeless). It could have something to do with the displaced sexual pleasure lots of people in this country derive from enforcing rules and denying satisfaction to others (another great story-to-be).

And of course, they won't be satisfied with forcing smokers outside. I enclose an editorial from the Forum, the student paper at St. John's Law School. Note the utter disregard for what those who smoke may think or feel and the semi-paranoid delusion that as long as someone, somewhere is smoking, it's an affront to him or her personally. These people are fanatics--they won't rest until tobacco is illegal and driven underground and then another hugely expensive and ineffective "Zero Tolerance War" can be declared on it, so that SWAT teams can bust down doors at 4 a.m. on suspicion of possession of a pack of Virginia Slims.

Continued on Next Page

Letters to the Editor, continued from previous page

Last, but by no means least, learn some history. There are plenty of examples of the results when a government elite that isn't really answerable to the citizens decides that it knows best. It's not only inimical to any sort of mature democracy, it's extremely dangerous.

Yours most passive-aggressively,
Chris Sorochin

Praise Squirrel?

To the Editor:

A note on the angry red squirrel:

I am reassured by the Press's unwitting insistence that the Mt. Graham debacle remain at the forefront of alternative, Northeastern politics. After moving here from Arizona, I thought I had seen the last of the Mt. Graham debate. It appears not.

For those of you who don't know, that angry red squirrel image that the Press has used on its front pages (and, from what I understand, plans to use on its yearly T-shirt) represents a protracted environmental and civil rights battle in Southwestern Arizona. For many in the Southwest (the Student Environmental Action Coalition, the Mt. Graham Coalition, the San Carlos Apache Indian Tribe, Earth First!, University of Arizona students and so on...) the squirrel symbolizes the struggle to prevent the destruction of Mt. Graham, a mountain sacred to the San Carlos Apache and the only remaining home for the endangered red squirrel. Unfortunately, the Vatican and the U. of Arizona see the issue differently. They contend that they should be allowed to construct numerous deep-space telescopes on the site, in spite of the intense

devastation that this will wreak on Southern Arizona's tallest peak. Indeed, to pursue their interests, they have wriggled their way into the U.S. Congress, twice achieving legislative exemptions from all environmental laws and tribal agreements. Congress granted such exemptions in the form of legislative "riders" by tagging them onto unrelated bills, thereby skirting the democratic process that we Americans so exuberantly praise. But this, of course, is only the short version.

Members of the Press should recognize the political import of the squirrel and give credit where credit is due. To many in the Southwest, the squirrel is a living entity, screaming out against the incursion of corporate America on native lands. While I appreciate the Press's humorous use of the decontextualized squirrel image, I feel a sense of loss precisely in this decontextualization. In mocking the squirrel, you mock efforts to achieve environmental and social justice. (Imagine caricaturing a Black Panther or Rosie the Riveter.)

I hope that the Press recognizes this aspect of the squirrel image in future publications. As a way of remedying this situation, the Press could use the squirrel as a means to open debate on the Mt. Graham issue or on the general issue of Universities and National Laboratories (read: Stony Brook and Brookhaven National Lab). If the squirrel came to represent environmental struggles as far east as New York, I can assure you that Sky Jacobs (the artist) would bloat with glee. As well, I imagine that all activists fighting to save Mt. Graham will feel much better about

seeing their squirrel once again elevated to the helm of International conflict, rather than stripped of meaning and relegated to the comics page.

Thank you,
Ben Hale
Sky Island Watch, member of the Mt. Graham Coalition Stony Brook
Student Environmental Action Coalition

For more information on Mt. Graham, visit this web-site: <http://www.seac.org/seac-sw/seac-page.html>... or, come to SEAC meetings on Wednesdays at 12:45, 3rd floor of the SAC.

The Editor Responds:

We were, admittedly, unaware that the squirrel image had any political or activist import; we just stole it off of a flier someone left in our office.

We are, however, aware of the Mount Graham debate. Several Press editors past and present even have worked with groups like Earth First! on environmental action projects.

In any case, to your main point. We feel that a campus newspaper in Suffolk County, New York is sufficiently removed from the debate so as not to devalue the image, and as such, we're still running the "Angry Squirrel" cartoon, at least for this issue.

Nonetheless, your suggestion is valid. Keep an eye on the pages of this fine periodical in the next few months for an article on Mt. Graham and the real story of the angry squirrel.

One Small Step For Aramark, One Big Step Against It

By Hilary Vidair

"Beep, beep. It's 6:00 a.m. Beep, beep. It's 6:00 a.m. Beep--BOOM!" I reach over and slam the snooze button on my screeching voice alarm. Nine more minutes. At 6:09, the blasted thing starts talking again. Turning it off, I slowly roll out of my little dormitory bed. As usual, it's freezing. I wobble into the bathroom, still half asleep. After taking care of nature, I jump into the shower. By the time I'm ready, it's 7:55. Time to go to my 8:20 class. I don't even have a chance to eat anything.

As I approach the Humanities Building, my nostrils are filled with the sweet smell of bacon. I must still be dreaming. The Humanities Cafe doesn't open until lunchtime. All they have is a bunch of overpriced vending machines. Yet the smell is clearly coming from inside. I walk in to find a sign that says, "You asked for it and now, you got it! Humanities Cafeteria will be open for breakfast starting Monday, October 20th." Another sign informs me that this will be true every Monday through Friday between 7:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sure enough, there is a selection of breakfast sandwiches, French toast, bacon, and sausage right before me eyes! There's even a place to order different types of eggs and omelettes! And to top it all off, meal cards are accepted!

When I walk into class, everybody is excited. Yet breakfast in the Humanities Cafe isn't the only topic of conversation. Both the Seawolf Subshop (located in Roth Quad) and Stony Snacks (in the

Union) have extended their hours as well. In addition to their former hours, they will be open from 5:00-9:00 p.m. What's going on here? Has hell begun to freeze over? Are pigs flying? Does the moon look blue to you? Or has Aramark finally listened to the student body? The answer is none of the above.

Although Aramark tries to appear as if it has done what the student body wants, it has not. And it can not hide the truth. Extended hours aren't going to stop students from voicing their opinions. They're not going to stop the hostile comment cards from pouring in each day. When are we going to get more places to eat on the weekends? How about more places to eat between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.? When are we going to get a true advantage on our meal plan? And, most importantly, when is Aramark going to explain the missing million? The student body will not stop talking until it is fully heard. We will talk about the limited hours that our beloved Papa Joe's is open. We will indeed discuss the fact that we can't use our meal cards at the Student Activities Center between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. And we will chat about Kelly Deli being closed at 2:00 a.m. instead of remaining open for 24 hours. Our dissatisfaction will continue until we get some explanations.

Recently, at a student-faculty Aramark meeting, LEG representatives were told to ask the students in their buildings if they would rather have quality food or food at a lower price. What kind of question is this? Is this what Aramark considers com-

munication between the students and it's company? We give enough money to Aramark that it should be able to provide decent food and reasonable costs! When will we receive either? It's time to get some answers.

Students will continue to complain to the Aramark representatives at LEG. We will continue to fill out those little comment cards to complain about the long lines and bad food in the dining halls. Nothing can stop us until you do something worthwhile. Oh, and don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that the extended hours aren't beneficial. They are. Things have to be done one step at a time. Yet the student body doesn't believe that things are being done until they are informed. So, Aramark, please, inform us! Tell us what you plan on doing to improve the food situation on campus. And if you can't, tell us why you can't. Don't just leave us here in the dark to question you. Let us know that you're listening to us. Give us some explanations. If you don't, you will continue to hear our voices. Much like the housing problems, we will not go away. We will only make your life a living hell.

So thanks for breakfast, subs, and snack time. But no thanks for letting our other complaints linger about for such long periods of time with no explanations. Continue to do the job you are doing and we will get rid of you once your contract is up. On behalf of the student body, I promise!

A Special Day

By Marlo Allison Del Toro

My brother is autistic. When I was little my mom tried explaining what autism was to me, that it's like retardation, but I didn't understand. In my mind, I believed my brother was an international spy and that autism was just a front. To this day I still have a hard time explaining to myself and to others exactly what autism is. All I know is that my brother Adrian isn't just like Dustin Hoffman in 'Rain Man.'

When I learned the Suffolk County Special Olympics fall adapted games were going to be held at Stony Brook, I decided I'd go.

I arrived at Stony Brook's gymnasium at 8 a.m., Sunday, October 19, in time for the last volunteer orientation. There were a couple hundred volunteers assembled; most of them were high school students, including a large group from Sachem High School with pins that read, "Sachem South Cares."

The orientation leader spoke about the part Special Olympics plays in the lives of its athletes.

"Today is for the athletes. This may be the one day that they get out to do something social. These are low functioning athletes. [Special Olympics] has athletes that go every week to bowl, but these athletes today can't do that, that's why the events are adapted."

Special Olympics is a year-round program of sports training and competition for individuals with mental retardation, that has almost one million participants in nearly 150 countries. Their athletes participate in over 20 Olympic-type summer and winter games, including: athletics (track and field), adaptive cricket, basketball, bowling, football (soccer), golf, swimming, table tennis, and a

10-kilometer race. My brother is one of the participants in their bowling program; he is considered high functioning, meaning that he can do things like bathing himself.

The participants of the fall adapted games are low functioning. The sports they participate in include: bowling with ramps and plastic balls, bean bag drop, frisbee throw, successball and tennis ball throw (from a distance of one to three meters), a soccer kick, and a 10 to 25 meter walk. The athletes wear bibs that state which games they are supposed to participate in, although a Special Olympics committee member told the volunteers, "If your athlete has finished his events, and you've gone to the carnival, then do one of the events he isn't scheduled for."

The carnival consisted of mini-games and face painting. At several of the tables the athletes were given stickers and noodle necklaces. Girl Scout troop 637, from Miller Place, set up a bean bag toss for the Special Olympics participants.

After the volunteer orientation, the volunteers went outside for athlete pairing. I remembered when I volunteered, when I was 16, athlete pairing made me nervous. I didn't know who I'd be paired with, what their special needs might be, and I went on to have an exhausting and frustrating day. But now the students seemed revved up.

At 9:30 a.m. the opening ceremonies began. First there was a parade of athletes. The stands were filled with volunteers, some of the athlete's families, and Special Olympics personnel, cheering on the incoming athletes. As they walked in some of the athletes ignored the cheerers, some clapped, some danced, some smiled, some waved, one yelled, "Yeah," and a couple trembled with joy. (A male athlete took my hand and seemed like he

wanted to adopt me for the day. From visiting my brother at his group home I know that many of the mentally challenged not only "have feelings," like the volunteer brochure states, but are openly affectionate. They love to hug, and a lot of the guys will dare to give visiting females a kiss on the cheek.)

During the opening ceremony the audience could barely hear the suits speak on the poor sound system, but no one seemed to care. The athletes were too busy admiring the gold-tone medals on green and red necklaces they were given, just for participating.

The day seemed to be a success, judging by the smiles and despite the lines. Susan had polaroids taken of herself at every event, and after she had her face painted, that she showed off with glee. Ernie walked around with a proud attitude after coming in second (of three) in the 25 meter walk. Phylis tossed the ball into the net at successball without even looking. And even the "don't touch me" lady seemed happy to be where the action was. The cheers echoing in the frisbee room said it all.

At the end of the day the suits handed out medals for first, second, and third place. (Up to ten people tied for each place.) The medals were not only given out for each event, but for each distance from the goal.

As John ran up to get his fifth medal, smiling as big as anything, I was reminded of the saying on the back of the volunteer brochure.

"The goal is not to win, but to try. To experience, not to conquer. No time is too slow, no distance is too short. The only records broken in Special Olympics are those for courage, determination, and sportsmanship. It is a sport in its truest sense."

WHERE THE MEDIA MOMENTUM IS HEADED

By Norman Solomon

These days, many politicians are calling for campaign finance reform, but they keep raising as much cash as possible. Likewise, with less fanfare, journalists complain that their profession is turning into a money chase and they must keep pace.

Meanwhile, the media consumer resembles the proverbial frog in a pan of water – apt to be boiled to death before the gradual upturn of heat causes sufficient alarm. Accustomed to a steady rise in the degree of commercialization, few Americans take a leap toward active opposition.

Constant commercial intrusions – often laced with sexploitation – seem normal and acceptable because they're so routine in a wide array of media outlets. A lot of news reports are more akin to product promotion than journalism.

With cyberspace booming, it's difficult to predict exactly how media technology will change – the main guessing game for the industry analysts featured in mass media. They love to speculate about technical advances and fierce battles for market share.

But key questions get short shrift. Such as:

* In the future, will media coverage be diverse?

Prospects are bleak. Consolidation of media ownership has been so rapid in recent years that now just 10 corporations control most of this country's news and information flow. The top spot belongs to Time Warner, followed by Disney, Viacom, News Corp. (Rupert Murdoch), Sony, TCI, Seagram, Westinghouse, Gannett and General Electric.

Those conglomerates are in business to maximize profits. They're hardly inclined to provide much media space for advocates of curtailing their power.

* Who will have access to the glut of media programming?

For the most part, people who can pay for it.

Consider television. In most cases, the channels offered on local cable TV are selected by big national cable-system firms that function as "gatekeepers." Not only is the range of programming limited – it's just available to viewers who can afford it. Basic cable service is liable to cost hundreds of dollars per year.

* Who will control the huge institutions running the massmedia show?

The brief answer is: millionaires and billionaires.

* Who will decide what news is important and what information should be widely disseminated?

In theory, journalists will. But, in practice, editors are accountable to media executives who, in turn, are accountable to management. Ultimately, owners set the tone and priorities.

* In the media nation on the horizon, what's democracy got to do with it?

The sad truth is likely to be: very little.

"Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one," critic A.J. Liebling quipped several decades ago. And now, of course, the presses are a small part of the news-media picture.

Already, just a few companies – including General Electric (which owns NBC), Westinghouse (CBS), Time Warner (CNN and cable systems), TCI

(cable systems) and America Online – largely determine what makes it onto the screens we look at every day.

There's no sign that this trend is going to slow down. On the contrary, it has accelerated since the landmark Telecommunications Act became law in February 1996. Now, to a great extent, a few mammoth firms are programming America's media.

A hundred years ago, the writer Anatole France commented: "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread."

Today, a flip side of his observation is the fact that the federal government allows you and me, and billionaires like Rupert Murdoch, the right to buy as many newspapers, magazines, TV networks and satellite communication systems as we can.

The notion that a "free market" equals free speech is comforting but misleading – especially when a few bloated corporations have the economic weight to sit on the windpipe of the First Amendment.

If we get realistic about the obstacles blocking democratic discourse in our society, we can summon the determination to fight for the media diversity that future generations deserve.

Norman Solomon is a syndicated columnist. His book "Wizards of Media Oz: Behind the Curtain of Mainstream News" (co-authored with Jeff Cohen) was recently published by Common Courage Press.

The New Definition of "Academic Mall":

By Stephen Preston

For those of you who have tuned in late to this series on the Campus Village, here's the story so far. The Kenny Regime, having ended all public discussion on the Campus Village, has proposed legislation to both houses of New York's congress which would enable it to lease land to for-profit corporations to build a bookstore and other retail stores in the Academic Mall (roughly where the chessmen now stand; see the map below). This effort is being supplanted by a campaign to weaken or dissolve the FSA, which would ordinarily handle this sort of thing, and which might ordinarily attempt to oppose such a plan. The strategy seems to be guided by Kenny's personal Corporate Advisory Board, whose membership was revealed in the previous issue. This article discusses the rather surprising details of the legislation and the reasons it's not already been passed.

Here are the more interesting excerpts from the Administration's original legislation, which was introduced into the New York Senate by Senator Lack early this April. Cynical commentary will punctuate each quotation.

"Section I. ...SUNY at Stony Brook has a need to improve the provision of student services at its west campus in order to capitalize on campus initiatives to create a sense of community and culture... The development and operation of service, commercial and recreational facilities fulfills a necessary and desirable public purpose..."

The word "capitalize" used here is perhaps unintentionally honest. Whatever discussion there may be about "campus community" in this Administration (Is there anyone else who doesn't understand the connection between communalism and shopping?), the fundamental point is revenue. To the Kenny Regime, books and computers serve no academic purpose. The merely generate revenue through the commission paid to the University by the vendors. Take away the FSA, the Kenny Regime thinks, and you have one less group trying to take a piece of the FSA commission. Give the bookstore to Leonard Riggio (Barnes & Noble's CEO and presumably a personal friend of Kenny), and you get higher commissions, a new building for *Newsday* to gawk at, and maybe even an extra donation to the campus.

"Section II. ...Construction, acquisition, ... leasing or subleasing of, providing services for or otherwise assisting ... such facilities and underlying land may be provided from time to time without public bidding or sale, ... not to exceed in the aggregate sixty years."

This is the most important part of the legislation. I wasn't completely sure of

the intent here, so I contacted Steve Englebright's (our local Assemblyman's) office to verify it. Yes indeed, they told me, it allows the University to give away state land for sixty years, to any corporation they desire, without public bidding. As anyone with some knowledge of New York State law is aware, this is completely illegal.

Thus the law must be ignored, which is the informal interpretation of: "Section III. Insofar as the provisions of this act are inconsistent with the provisions of any law, general, special or local, the provisions of this act shall be controlling." A faculty member, who wished to remain anonymous for fear of Administrative retaliation, said he thought the idea was ridiculous, and was stunned that the Administration was actually attempting it.

Those of you with faith that Things Are the Way They Say They Are will probably expect your conservative state government to reject such an anti-competitive proposal. Of course this is false. Your local conservative Republican Senator, Jim Lack, introduced the legislation exactly as Kenny requested, where it passed. Your local moderate-liberal "pro-student" Democratic Assemblyman, Steve Englebright, introduced the exact same bill to the Assembly. Apparently the only people who had any problem with this were the hyper-leftist Commie pinko "coo-coo nuts" tax-and-spend "foolishly liberal" Democrats in the central leadership of the Assembly. They asked Englebright to add an amendment stating "Any such contracts ... shall be awarded by a competitive process." So now the two-page bill contains two statements which, Englebright's office agreed, directly contradict each other.

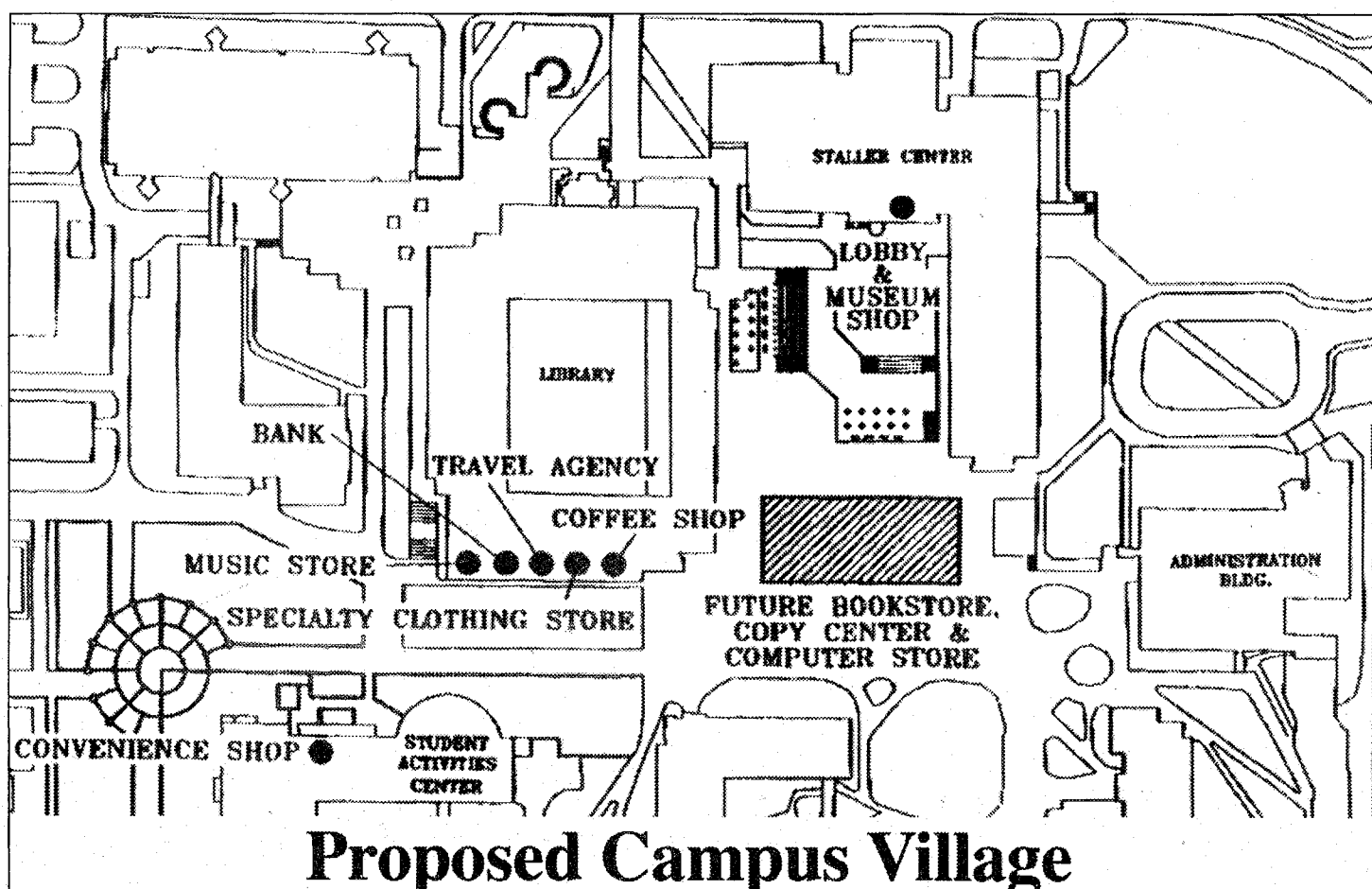
"...Systematically, students are being overcharged for services. Our continual complaints are being ignored. Instead of lower prices, the Administration gives us even more overpriced services to keep us from leaving the campus."

The Assembly passed the bill with this amendment and several others (protecting workers' rights and preventing discrimination, those lousy Democrats). So now either the bill goes back to the Senate, where they will vote on the amended version, or the Assembly must delete its amendments. Either way, it can't possibly happen until January because our government is on vacation.

Now I asked Englebright's office whether the student-friendly Assemblyman was concerned that this legislation would enable Kenny to give the bookstore to Riggio and Barnes & Noble for sixty years with no oversight by any students or faculty. Their response: "The campus promised us they wouldn't do that." Perhaps Mr. Englebright should apply for housing in the dormitories here, so he can learn just how seriously this campus takes its promises...

So this is the legislation. It should now be obvious why the Administration has been so secretive about it. The question I asked but haven't yet answered is: "Why does the Administration want this in the first place?"

Let's first look at why they say they want it. According to the "Background" document written by the Kenny Regime for the Legislature, "Student survey results and consultant recommendations have confirmed that a substantial unmet need exists for centralized bookstore, retail, food and related services." Here's a question: what survey results are they referring to? I attempted to find out from the Administration's FOIL officer (Freedom Of Information Law, though the acronym describes the job more accurately). He claimed that the FSA had both



Proposed Campus Village

The Campus Village Part II

conducted the survey and hired the consultant. FSA claims it has not conducted any retail services survey in at least four years, and these survey results have been discarded. The only survey which was ever conducted about the Campus Village was done in the beginning of April 1997 by Peter Baigent, but the "Background" document was written in January! Nobody seems to know which consultant recommended a new bookstore.

There is no question that given a spiffy new bookstore and an old dirty slum of a bookstore, most students would choose the new one. However, given a choice between a new bookstore and almost anything else, most people would choose the "not bookstore" option. Indeed, Baigent's survey results indicate that late-night dining options ranked much higher than a new bookstore. A pharmacy/convenience store also ranked higher. Parking was about the same level as the bookstore (though according to Baigent, hardly any commuters were given this survey). Lounge space was also higher, especially for the few commuter students who responded. Even an ice cream shop was more popular than a new bookstore! We are all aware that there won't be any new parking spaces for the next couple of decades if the current Regime has its way. Dining Services are a totally separate problem... Now, what about the lounge space? Check that map one more time, as I clarify something for you. The Administration is not planning to build the music store, the specialty clothing store and the coffee shop in front of the library. It will take the place of the existing "Commuter Student Lounge." I quote from the "Background": "Renovation of space in existing facilities (Main Library and Staller Center, approximately 20,000 square feet)..."

So one has to conclude that the Administration wants some bookstore company to build a new store for some other reason, and that this decision was made long before any students were

consulted. Once again, here's what we know so far about the bookstore.

1) Leonard Riggio (Barnes & Noble) is on the Corporate Advisory Board, which determines Campus Village policy.

2) Riggio used to be on Adelphi's Board of Trustees, whose bookstore was Barnes & Noble. He was fired by the Attorney General for allowing Adelphi's President to be overpaid.

3) Kenny denounced the treatment of Riggio and other Trustees at Adelphi, saying the Attorney General had no right to interfere in the private business of the University.

4) Kenny does not seem to want Wallace's to get the next bookstore contract; she has advised the FSA not to get into any long-term contracts with bookstores, so that the Administration can choose its own store when the current contract expires in 1.5 years.

5) Barnes & Noble's service is horrible. The company was deeply offended, however, when the FSA did not award them a contract renewal five years ago because of this.

6) The Kenny administration wants to award the bookstore contract without public bidding.

Still, in spite of all this, Englebright's office thinks the rumor is just a ploy by irritable students to discredit the otherwise noble Administration.

Systematically, students are being overcharged for services. Our continual complaints are being ignored. Instead of lower prices, the Administration gives us even more overpriced services to keep us from leaving the campus. Kenny seems to have concluded that since students are willing to spend money at malls, the University should certainly build its own mall to

cash in on this trend. The idea that the University should be primarily focused on teaching is totally unthinkable here. Every service, including the dining service, the computer store, and the bookstore, is now "being run like a business, with due concern for revenues and profits." And the new stores will overcharge too; they have to, since they will be paying probably a 10-15% commission on all sales, as well as rent to the University.

This is really no different than a fee or tuition increase. If the University overcharges you for essential (or even inessential) services, it is substantially the same as demanding a \$100 fee every semester, though slightly more subtle. If the University does this and in addition provides

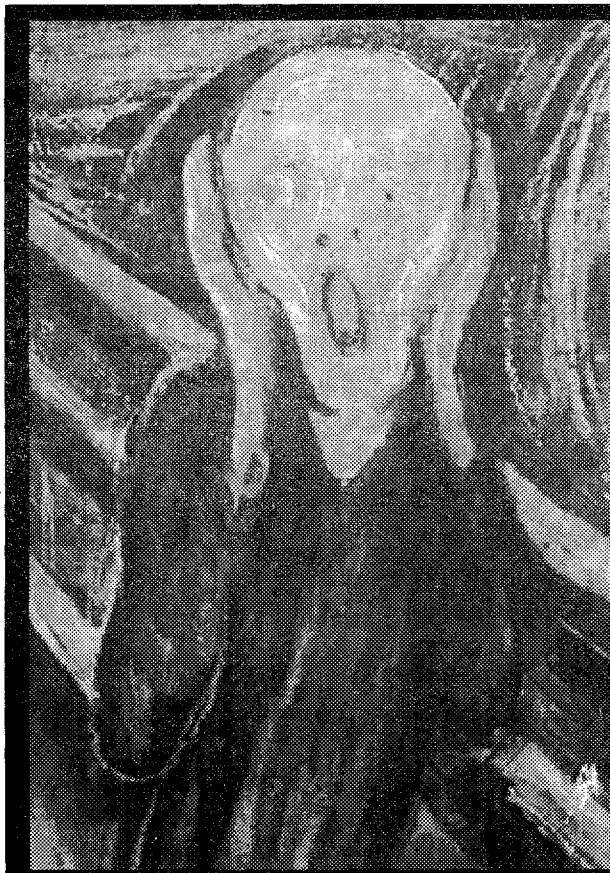
the President's friends with a monopoly and a captive market, the deed becomes even more odious. If the money is used to pay for things that the State should legally be paying for (as it is in many cases, especially in the dining service), then it truly becomes a crime.

The University, in conjunction with the State who rules over them through the Trustees, is

demanding that students pay, one way or another, for all of the tax breaks that the wealthy in this state are getting. In the end, nearly everybody is happy: the people who voted for the current set of politicians are happy, having gotten their tax breaks; the politicians are happy because they keep their positions away from the other party; the Administration is happy because it looks like they're absorbing budget cuts well, so *Newsday* still approves. The only people who might not be happy are the students who pay for it, but since they have to work 20 hours a week or so to keep up, they don't have any chance to fight... Or do we?



President Shirley Strum Kenny



SCREAM!

*Are you frustrated about food service?
Are you furious about the housing situation?
Does it seem like Administration will do anything for money?
Are you ready to get radical?*

SCREAM is the Student Council Radically Ending Administrative Mongering.

The first meeting will be
Tuesday, November 4, 10:00 PM.
Math P-131.

We will discuss students' rights and
how we will enforce them.

RADIATION, ANYONE?

By Mitchel Cohen

The U.S. escaped the 1991 Gulf war with few direct casualties. While 250,000 Iraqis were killed outright by the U.S. bombardment and another 750,000 have died as a result of the U.N.'s international embargo spearheaded by the U.S., "only" 376 U.S. Soldiers died in the Gulf, almost all of them were killed by so-called "friendly fire," shot accidentally by their fellow soldiers.⁽¹⁾ The fourteen U.S. M1A1 Abrams tanks destroyed in the Gulf war were knocked out by "friendly fire" as well.

All 14 were hit by a new kind of ammunition: shells encased in "depleted uranium" (DU), which makes them super-hard and able to penetrate

existing armor-plating. DU was used exclusively by the U.S. and British forces in the Gulf not only as armor-penetrating ammunition by M1A1 Abrams tanks and A-10 attack planes, but as tank armor. DU, which is 1.6 times denser than lead, proved so effective that not a single U.S. tank was destroyed by Iraqi fire. On the other hand, over the course of the two month war, 3,700 Iraqi tanks were obliterated—1,400 of them by shells encased in depleted uranium. Thousands of artillery pieces, armored personnel carriers and other equipment were destroyed by DU rounds. More than 1 million shells encased in depleted uranium were fired. By war's end, roughly 300 tons of uranium from spent rounds lay scattered in various sizes and states of decay across the battlefields of Iraq and Kuwait.⁽²⁾

Depleted uranium is a highly toxic and radioactive byproduct of the uranium enrichment process needed in nuclear reactors and the manufacture of nuclear weapons. Natural uranium, with a half-life of 4.5 billion years, is comprised of three isotopes: 99.27 percent U238, 0.72 percent U235, and .0057 percent U234. DU is uranium with the U235 isotope—the fissionable material—reduced from 0.7 percent to 0.2 percent—thus, "depleted."⁽³⁾ The Pentagon says DU is relatively harmless, emitting "only" 60 percent the radiation of non-depleted uranium. But Dr. Ernest Sternglass, Jay Gould and Benjamin Goldman have shown that even low-level radiation emitted during the "normal" functioning of nuclear power plants creates havoc with peoples' immune systems as well as the surrounding environment.⁽⁴⁾ And, according to independent scientists, "a DU antitank round outside its metal casing can emit as much radiation in one hour as fifty chest X-rays."⁽⁵⁾ A tank driver receives a radiation dose of 0.13 rem/hr to his or her head from overhead DU armor,⁽⁶⁾ which may seem like a very low dose. However, after 32 continuous days, or 64 12-hour days, the amount of radiation a tank driver receives to his head will exceed the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual standard for public whole-body exposures to man-made sources of radiation.⁽⁷⁾ Unfortunately, U.S. tank crews were not monitored for radiation exposure during the Gulf war.⁽⁸⁾

When properly encased, DU gives off very little radiation, the Pentagon says. But DU becomes much more radioactive when it burns. And when it is fired, it combusts on impact. "As much as 70

percent of the material is released as a radioactive and highly toxic dust that can be inhaled or ingested and then trapped in the lungs or kidneys."⁽⁹⁾

Leaving more than 600,000 pounds of depleted uranium scattered throughout the region, by war's end the U.S. had turned the Gulf area into a deadly radioactive grid, affecting not only U.S. soldiers but hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people who live and work in the Gulf. A single molecular particle of depleted uranium will subject an individual to radiation at a level 800 times what is permitted by federal regulations for external exposure.⁽¹⁰⁾ As DU-artillery shells heat up, the uranium becomes aerosolized, releasing high amounts of radioactivity, not the low amounts the military claims for "normal" depleted uranium. Clouds of deadly uranium dioxide swept over large areas of Iraq and Kuwait, devastating agriculture, soil and water.

Radioactivity inflicts severe damage on the total environment while weakening immune systems, destroying the kidneys, lungs, bones and liver, and rendering the human body susceptible to all sorts of diseases that a healthy individual might have been able to ward off. Iraqi children continue to find uranium-coated shells; they have been coming down with all sorts of deadly illnesses associated with radiation poisoning. Is it any wonder that many symptoms of Gulf War Syndrome are so similar to radiation sickness? Welcome to the wave of the future: "low intensity" nuclear war, inaugurated in the Gulf war by the United States.

As the only country to have ever dropped atomic bombs on a populated area, the U.S. government has long attempted to circumvent international treaties and develop ever-newer weapons of mass destruction. In 1953, Gen. Douglas MacArthur issued a plan to dump radioactive cobalt across Korea to create a permanent radioactive barrier between the North and South. That plan was considered but never implemented (as far as we know). President Jimmy Carter tried to obtain funding for a "neutron bomb" that would annihilate people and all living beings but leave buildings and capital intact. That project was beaten back by public outcry and mass protests. The U.S. government has threatened to use nuclear weapons on dozens of occasions, including against Vietnam in 1953 and again in 1969—the latter squelched at the last minute by President Nixon due to the huge anti-war protest taking place at the time in the U.S.⁽¹¹⁾ In fact, so adamantly has the world's population—including the vast majority in the U.S.—opposed atomic weapons of every sort that it took the enormous propaganda effort of the Gulf War for the U.S. government, for the first time since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to get away with using radioactive weapons against living people.

A secret report by the British government estimated that the use of depleted uranium weapons in the Gulf could alone account for 500,000 deaths in the region. That report was based on estimates that 25 tons of depleted uranium munitions had been used; in actuality, the Department of Defense now estimates that the U.S. fired more than 12 times that amount. The Pentagon threw all its new toys of mass destruction into the slaughter, trying out new weapons, offering ever-new justifications

(as the Cold War was winding down) for its enormous "defense" budget.

The U.S. Department of Defense has more than 1.1 billion pounds of nuclear waste in storage from fifty years of nuclear weapons production and nuclear power plants. The government, hemmed in by public opposition, health and environmental movements, is always trying to find new "acceptable" ways to dispose of it. It has apparently found one. Billions of dollars allotted to the Environmental Restoration branch of the Department of Energy for cleaning up nuclear waste sites are now being used instead to ship nuclear waste free of charge to munitions manufacturers all over the world to be "recycled" into weapons. Where is the cry at the United Nations to end the manufacture and use of such weapons before it's too late? Many countries have now begun manufacturing weapons cased in depleted uranium. In introducing the use of depleted uranium weapons the U.S. government used its own soldiers as guinea pigs, permanently destroyed the ecology of the region, and left an ongoing legacy of childhood leukemia, birth defects and poisoned water for civilians living in the Gulf, while making low intensity nuclear weapons the necessary norm for all future conflicts.

Footnotes:

(1) Patrick Sloyan, "For Gulf War Troops, Fire Wasn't Friendly," *New York Newsday*, August 10, 1991.

(2) Dan Fahey, "Collateral Damage: How U.S. Troops Were Exposed To Depleted Uranium During the Persian Gulf War," in *Metal of Dishonor: Depleted Uranium: How the Pentagon Radiates Soldiers and Civilians with DU Weapons*, International Action Center, 1997, p.28. Fahey is a director of the National Depleted Uranium Citizen's Network of the Military Toxics Project (MTP), PO Box 845, Sabattus, ME 04280; (207) 375-8482; mtp@igc.apc.org.

(3) One of the first extensive exposes of DU in a mainstream journal was written by Naima Lefkir-Lafitte and Roland Laffite, "The Use of Radioactive Weapons Against the 'Iraqi Enemy'," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April, 1995. Also, see Eric Hoskins, "Making the Desert Glow," op-ed in *The NY Times*, Jan. 21, 1993.

(4) Jay M. Gould and Benjamin A. Goldman, *Deadly Deceit: Low Level Radiation, High Level Cover-Up, Four Walls Eight Windows Press*, 1990; Dr. Ernest J. Sternglass, *Nuclear Radiation and the Destruction of the Immune System*, Red Balloon Collective, 1993; and, Sternglass, *Low Level Radiation: The story of one scientist's attempt to call public attention to radiation damage to infants and the unborn*, Ballantine Books, 1972.

(5) Bill Messler, "The Pentagon's Radioactive Bullter," *The Nation*, Oct 21, 1996.

(6) U.S. Army Environmental Policy Institute (AEPI), *Health and Environmental Consequences of Depleted Uranium Use in the U.S. Army: Technical Report*, June 1995, p.102.

(7) *ibid.*, p.102

(8) Fahey, op cit.

(9) *ibid.*

(10) Dr. J.W. Gofman, a biomedical researched for the San Francisco-based Committee for Nuclear Responsibility.

(11) Daniel Ellsberg, "A Call to Mutiny," in *Protest and Survive*.

Mitchel Cohen lives in Bensonhurst and is a member of the Brooklyn Greens / Green Party of New York, and the Red Balloon Collective. Cohen is running for City Council on the Independence Party line (Line D) in Brooklyn's 47th CD in November.

ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 4TH

Tuesday, November 4th
Don't forget to vote!

* If you're registered off campus, remember to vote at your registered polling place.

* If you're registered on campus, you can take advantage of USB's new on-site polls! Residential students who have registered to vote based on their campus address can vote on campus in the SB Union Bi-level. Polling site will be open from 6 am - 9 pm.

"The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference and undernourishment."

-Robert Maynard Hutchins

This year's Stony Brook Ballot:

DIRECTIONS FOR VOTING ON THE AUTOMATIC VOTING MACHINE

- 1st. Move the red handle to the right and leave it there.
- 2nd. Turn the pointer from this position to this position over the names of the candidates you wish to vote for.
- 3rd. Turn a pointer over the YES or NO of the question or proposition.
- 4th. Leave the pointers down.
- 5th. To vote for a person whose name does not appear on the machine, lift up the slot in the column above the title of the office and write or stamp in the name.
- 6th. Move the red handle to the left in order to register your vote and exit machine.

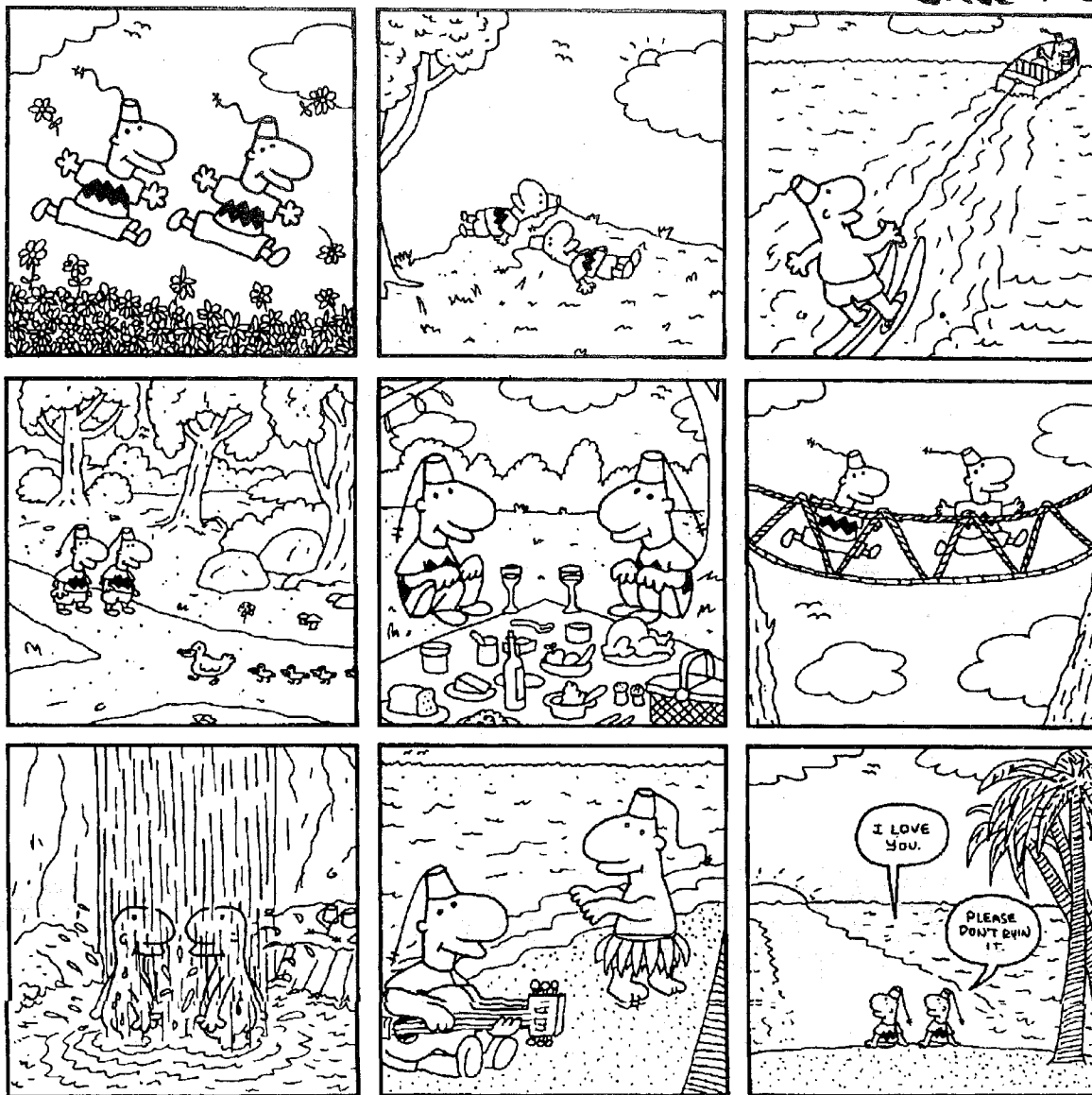
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YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO					
QUESTION NUMBER ONE: CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER ONE: AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER TWO: AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER THREE: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER FOUR: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER FIVE: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER SIX: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER SEVEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER EIGHT: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER NINE: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER TEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER ELEVEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER TWELVE: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER THIRTEEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER FOURTEEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER FIFTEEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER SIXTEEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER SEVENTEEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER EIGHTEEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER NINETEEN: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER TWENTY: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER TWENTY-ONE: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER TWENTY-TWO: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER TWENTY-THREE: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION		PROPOSITION NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE: A PROPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTION	
JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...		JAMES A. ...			

Sample ballot for General Election, November 4, 1997 - LD: 5 Town of Brookhaven (51 EDs)

COMICS

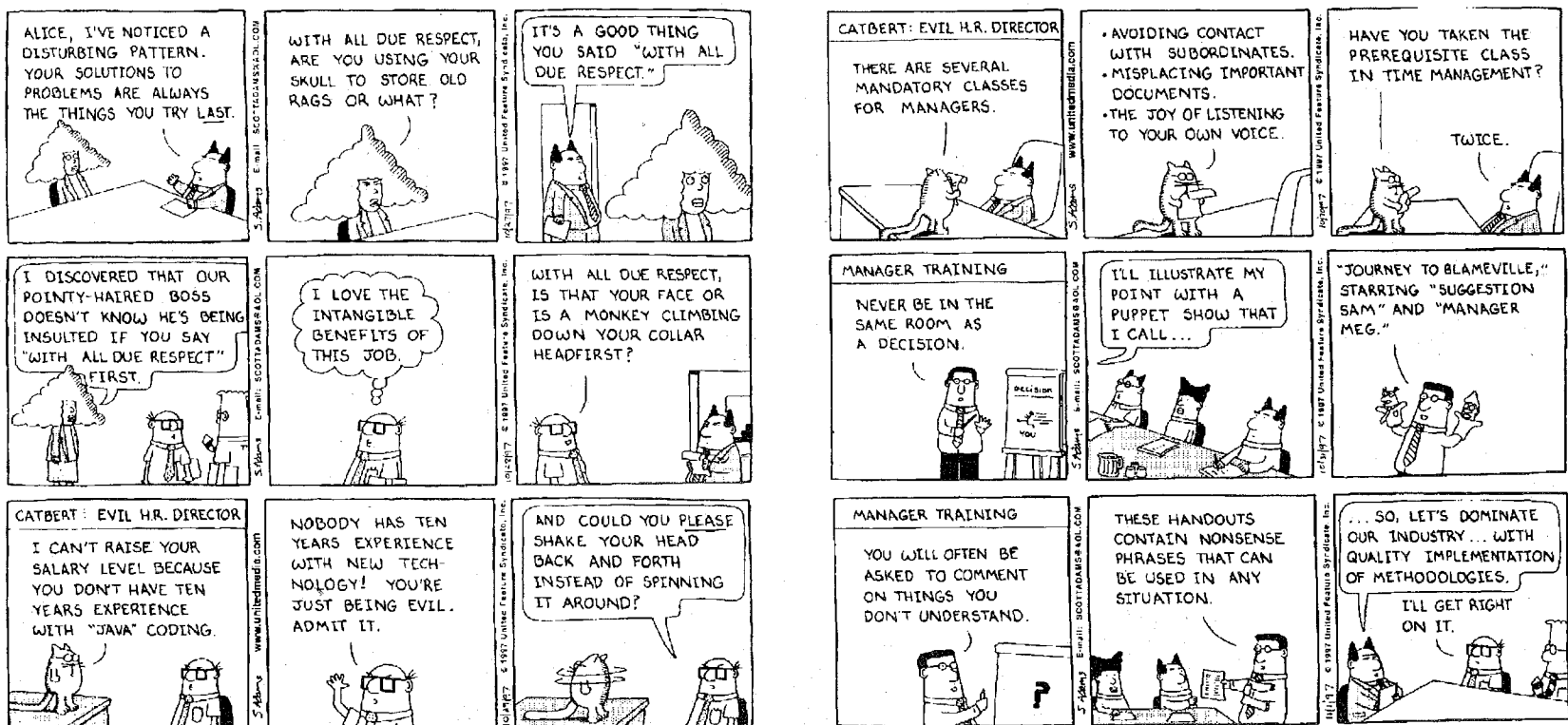
LIFE IN HELL

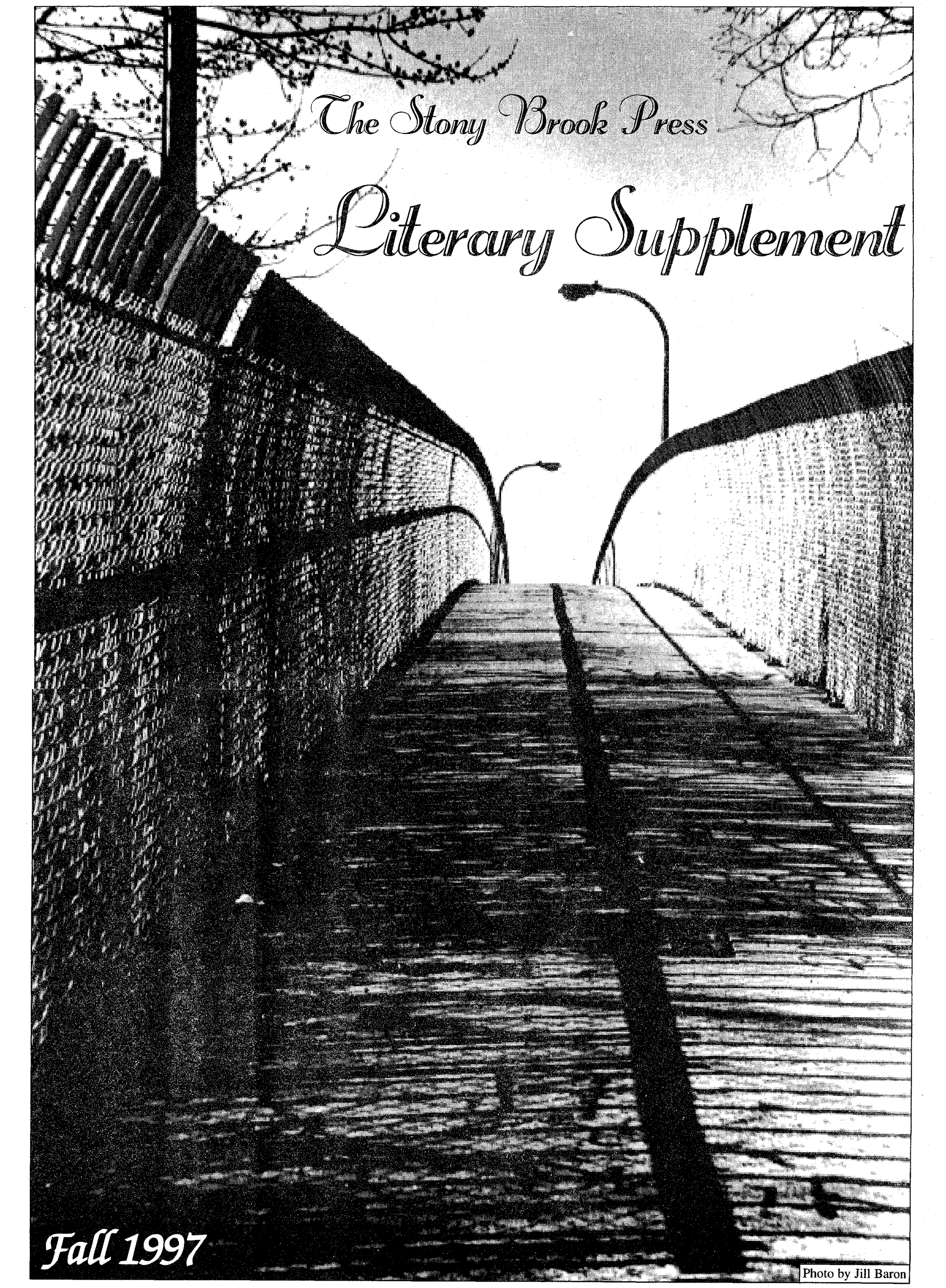
©1997
BY MATT
GREENING



DILBERT

by Scott Adams





The Stony Brook Press

Literary Supplement

Fall 1997

Photo by Jill Baron

LA FIESTA GRANDE II **By ALEX POLNSKI**

Look at them dance, and clap.
The melody of young hands,
With a smile.

Two Catalanian girls
Sung their oath to their father-war.
She rested her old guitar on a pillow
And her head on the little she owned, And she sung with no direction.
Then her sister joined her,
With a tone more clear and sharp,
More painful.
It felt like the loss of all
Locked behind the curtain of her eyes.

Behind them stood their mother,
In her tired face you could see
That she was once beautiful
And she used to laugh a lot.

She stood silent against the wall
Her eyes looked afar, out through the window,
Remembering the songs she used to dance to.
Sometimes, she would look at her daughters,
With watery eyes.
Even god could not imagine what she felt

We joined in and clapped along.
Sometimes screaming and laughing,
And dancing.
After a moment, there was nothing left,
Just dance, rhythm,
And the old Spanish folk song.

The old eyes stared into my face
(As if to read the moment trapped in a sculpture)
And her loud voice,
Piercing me through,
Reaching the dead unknown hero.
She screamed like a distant child
Lost on the wasteland of memory.

*Remember me, remember me
I am the one with no reason to live
I am the one with love
Buried in a stranger's garden.
Now you will go, and you will forget
Like I forgot the reason for my love's death.*

I could only imagine, the meaning
Of the Catalanian song,
But I have not forgotten.

Note: The above is a description of an event that took place on the train station in San Sebastian on August 24, '96. The Fiesta had been broken up by a police officer who said that singing and dancing on the train station is forbidden. I never saw the three women again.



Untitled by Jessica Stack

Jacks Trade
a poem, by Matthew Vernon Xavier
Willemain

**Jack, Jack, dressed in black
Slips through the fog, lurks in the
back
Master of all, master of none
Jack has nearly come undone**

**A household name, a downwards
glance
Or maybe a joke about his pants
Jack in the mirror, Jack in the sky
Jacks is too damn stubborn to die**

**Jack likes to sing, Jack likes to
dance
Or maybe a joke about his pants
Jack likes to think that he is the one
Jack has nearly come undone**

**Jack tries to write
Late in the night
Can't think in the music
Can never think right**

**Rhyme scheme is scattered
Not that it mattered
Repetition means nothing
The words are just splattered**

**Jack doesn't sleep
Just an old creep
Jack of the evening
Jack of the sheep**

**Losing all structure
Losing all time
Jack found an easy
Way to rhyme**

**Nowhere he goes
And always he knows
Scream all he might
Jack is a mime**

**(Damn...that's gotta mean some-
thing. (I'll read it again when I'm
awake)**

By Cliff "Red Dog" Rivera

United Frontline

The revolutionaries have arrived. Party's in full swing! Not a moment wasted under umbrellas and pelting tears, just the rhythm and base of voices sweeping the fishtank floor. "Cigarette time!" cries the psychiatric oaf, then...

Waves and faces and changing color schemes unite under a transparent rainbow (whose boundaries unlock further inTeRFereNce). Spontaneous grooves await! Thoughts dangle... Advertisements for loathesome bait, hooked on humanity's sake quiver--Spontaneous grooves... Dried up wells lead to bloodshot eyes, rusted youth lead to crackling lips, tears of neglect smear the Blind Man's pair, too drunk to care... care....

Hunger

Time seeps through the ages, like the keyhole I am lightly fingering...

Soothing sounds full the torrid air--frozen touch--as I continue to poke understand, ask, how did I get here? The Edge has blurred... It's a simplification, a brazen mistake on my part to even attempt a task as decoding a safe safe. You see, it, too, is nighttime. Immense is the darkness that I bask in the emptiness of the light. The glimmer of glass. The shimmer of dew, out there, the front yard. And we call out for the Man. Pansit Man...

Midnight. He comes ringing our school bells--his taste being our taste--reversing the usual barrade of ice cream men, forging through blocks of eager dropouts, burnouts, self-proclaimed saints--animated, like the ice cream he offers as a side dish. Always languishing behind the chocolate eclairs, vanilla wafers--he smiles, knowing his time will come. Where are they this morning the next generation of mixer-uppers, spiced lords of the underground? They are hiding behind their own keyholes, awaiting familiar tunes of the jungle...

His vehicle smolders with the sweat of toil years in reverse. Backwards Pansit Man calls out, foreign tongues lashing out for a taste of his creation, their lips smacking against flapping leaves decorating his vehicle: The Edge. They bloom despite their discoloration (ingredients weighing them down), tumult of storms, beat downs galore. They are engraved with the names of those chosen children hungry for invitations with smoles on the front cover. "Jungle, baby!" Flapping against the wind, he ignores their loving taunts and fans himself one smile at a time. "Neehhht!"

Not a cent's worth is wasted on contaminated futons--his truck is his crib now.

(I slurp. The fine texture of the noodles through my mouth watering in expectation of the shrimp, chicken, and cabbage strips, carrot heads, lemon juice flavoring. It strengthens the will--the sumptuousness of the chewed remnants--and feeds the brain; a lewd aphrodisiac or a melody for Rimbaud lovers: "I envision The End like no other...")

I am twenty-one years young and old. Wrinkled pants are the only signs of Time's incessant barrage. Yet I am content. Who could ask for more? I have my family close by: books stacked in my trunks to resuscitate, torn down memories--I've adopted a new wall of sanity (blank) save for one popsicle stick from the Pansit Man.

"More..." he intercedes.

'Tis an oblique reference to a certain day in October, when he, weakened, reverted back to suburban nonchalance. That was his guise. "No money, no honey," he said to me, quite unaware of the commotion inside his orgy pad and my stomach (incense burning, the innards of my belly dancers snoring, roaches roasting...) And so I ask, "What'll it take?" His nonreaction--so dry, so ancient--a lame grifter, limbless, an able contortionist definitely "Your story for a smiley face," he replies coyly. "And-make-it-quick, the line's vanishing."

("...So what's the scenario?" I thought clowning around would lighten up the impending boomerrang that was bound to return. I was dead wrong, so I ducked.)

"From the beginning?" I asked, somewhat ill at ease. "Whatever..." So, with a banana as a mike, I began:

Crash Course

"Surf Ninja stuck. Can't say I was baptized, or overshadowed by comic book heroes; wooed by supernovas short-lived straining for gothic enterprises...

("Imagine the sight of a ling-lost bro circling undiscovered campuses, one after another a collage of postcards, exchanging tongue-piercings in The Actor's Studio, of a Bruce Lee movie marathon...")

"The tattoo says it all. I'm on a shopping spree brandishing my dull stars just in case The American Dream fizzles, or simply: happiness. I have a chip on my shoulder too precious for Atlantic City, your fucking city... you.: you...

Postscript

"You pass. So waddya want anyway, Surf Ninja?"

No more banana. "I want... I want..."

"I don't have all night, sonny, it's almost sunup..."

"I want... I want... I want to go home sire."

"Fine, fine, fine, Ninja boy, it's on me..." Yummmmmmm....

Why Won't Heaven's Gates Open?

by Debra Luna

Mandatory meetings in Hell
remind us why we are here.
Reasoned fabrications contain subconscious
stupidity and lack of self-assurance, self-esteem.
Remember when the man powered our faces with sin,
when we entered our inherited world.
What did we know?

"Call me father,
for you are all my children.
I created your life,
so listen to my every word of truth."

Mistaken for faith and belief,
obvious deception we were ignorant of.
A dictating ideology of frightening control and blame
was understood as our life.
But it was a ruling force of confusion.
Questions were known but were afraid to ask.
No one had the courage to stand up to his invisibility
The message was pounded into unknowing hearts and minds.
The truth was blown into preposterous charms,
promised heaven if we do all he ask.

"Listen and promise and give and you shall be
handed the privilege and honor of entering my home."

This created notion of empowering conceit is still running the show,
thousands of years after it's glorified birth.
When will people realize that they must take responsibility for themselves,
and their fears
And erase this plaguing lie, they so foolishly created, and forced upon the world?

Untitled

By Ruby Firewall

*I can almost imagine
my love for you in terms
of the wasp I trapped
in an icedtea bottle
yesterday: you always lure
me in with your promises
of sweetness,*

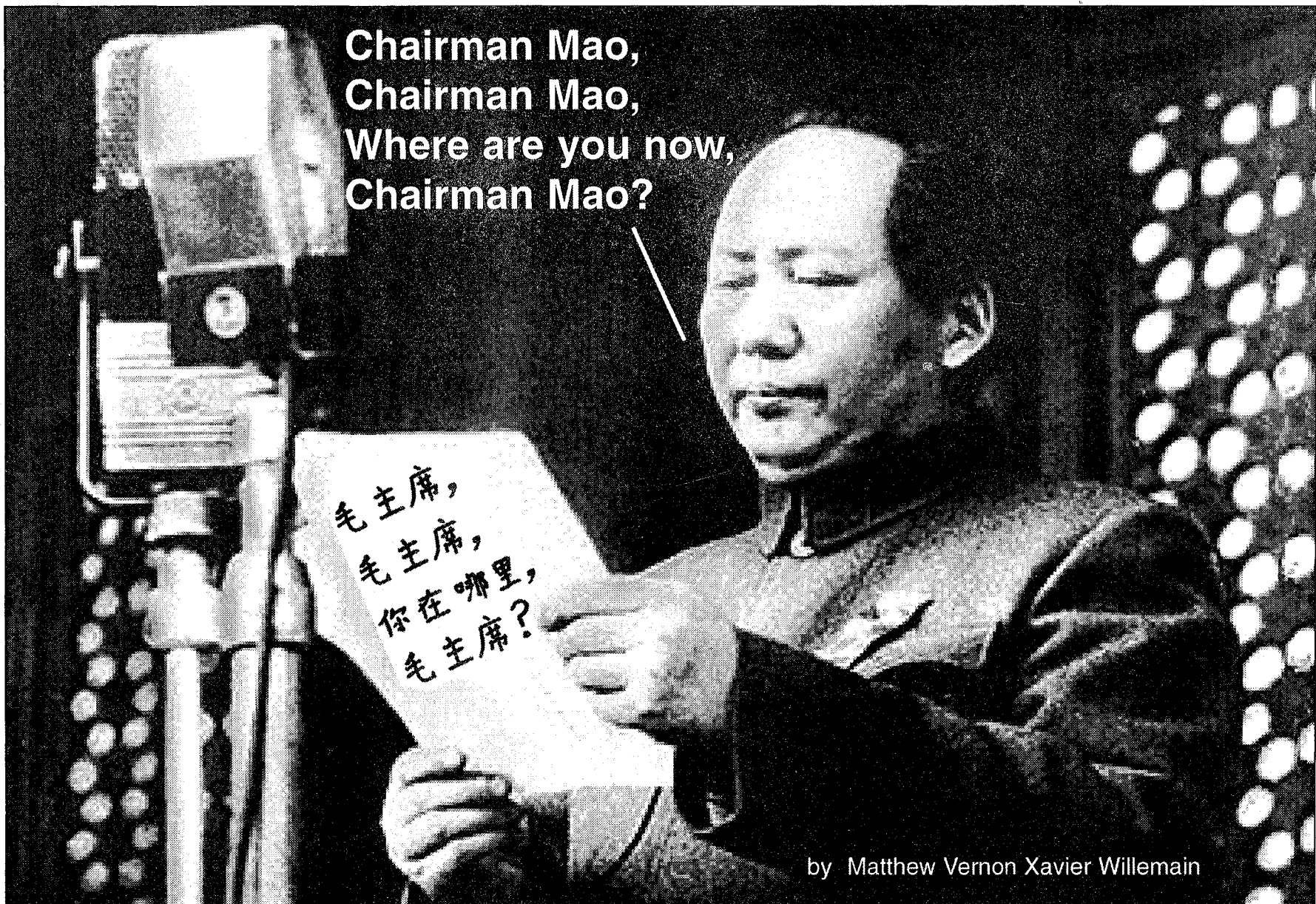
*and then demand
that my struggles make spectacle
for your uncertain pleasure.*

*Oh, and I sometimes play
at god, too: lustful and anxious
at the start
for that one moment
of clarity and light, for the seed
that'll grow strong and straight
no matter what,
and always finish
hoping death finds me
within the confines
of my ignorance when I fail*

*But just when it's
in my grasp
you always remove
the cap and turn
me loose to fly again.*



Self-Portrait by Jill Baron



Chairman Mao,
Chairman Mao,
Where are you now,
Chairman Mao?

by Matthew Vernon Xavier Willemain

Harvest *Clear Winter*

for Toni: it's been a good year for the roses

*Loneliness deeply worships the beauty
of life, but only grasps its brightest rose
in those transitional moments replete
with gorgeously sad songs of love and loss —
like wine-drunk fingers trying to gather
the last blooms of romance from withered vines.*

*Imagining each soul, so much alone,
reminds our every expectation to
mother all the honeysweet words not yet
spoken, and not yet so painfully earned,
that we might shout them out against blizzards
of shadowy smooth tongues, always frantic
and lustful for the warmth desolation
provides when other comforts elude us.*

-Wilbur Farley

By Frank P Fusaro

Stop

Model

Sketching patterns of painted metal canvas.

With

Design

Angular display display of erect canyon water

Tears born inside rainy abstract spring



Venice 9 By Joanna Wegielnik

Fall Semester, 1997

Page 5

Contents

The Monkey Poem By Matthew V. X. Willemain

I could be the
you'll wake up screaming from.

You've already met me:
I could be the apple in your mama's eye
or your daddy's worst fears, realized.

I could be the
vagabond niggagypsy koonkikekatholik
you've always wanted
or nothing
the reserved,
reservationed,
human
and feared and loved
fear so
me and
I am,

But how can that be
lived and hated
just like you?

So I will remind you
that makes you
of everything
afraid:
I will sing blackwhite latinopower and asianpower and
redneckpower and womanchildmanpower and rich
power and poorpower and smartpower and stupidpower
and native americanpower and every other damned power
you worship to justify all the pain we endure.

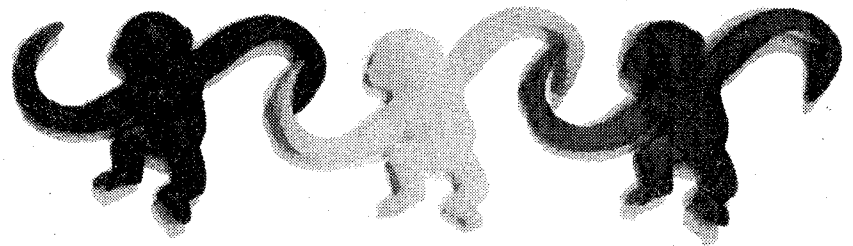
And I will sing,
of you all
brothers and sisters
because that has
yes, I will gladly sing
as my
always been what you
feared most

dream

me to be,
more than
deferred,
or ripped-off
you've always hated
to hate and
you could devour
become part of everything
and ever wanted to be.

when I have always
loved and died

MONKEY, MONKEY,
IN MY PANTS



MONKEY, MONKEY,
PLEASE DON'T DANCE!

Neyon Love by Frank P Fusaro

Sara Cynder, Lover of the night Singer of the world, hater of Life

**Her desires are of things she can never have
and her despairing of things that can never be
changed.**

-Wilbur Farley

**Her world is of tech-no-retro-un-realism.
Her mind of death and storms of floating ideas.**

**Filtered ideals of Designation
and ultra-violence guides her.**

**Her time is longer then those who came before
But shorter then it should be.**

**She fights the end of her rode
She knows it comes.**

**It plays on her mind when she thinks clear
When she thinks for her-self**

**She pushes her purple strands of hair
out of her eyes and smiles**

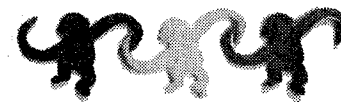
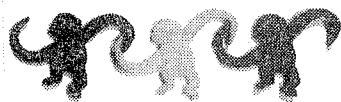
**Her black lips curl in a smile
She knows they love her
And she goes in.**

The Bare Violence By Alexsander Polnski

Bare violence of the sea,
Rain of the midnight Spain,
Sky painted marble, but mobile
Bare violence - all gray
Your hair dances untamed
As you run toward the water
I follow you in
Into the bare violence
I touch the sea
The sea touches you
In the way I would not dare.

You and I,
In the same bare violence
So soft and warm,
So pleasant on my skin.
I know I could have reached out
But I would not dare
To touch what has been
Possessed by the storm.

The little I knew,
You knocked on my door soon enough.



distant
separated
lost
but remembered
not forgotten
so clear
when i think
of him,
of his skin
against mine
nipples touching
forgetting the time.
of getting lost...
of getting him lost
in
my eyes
he had no choice
back then
there were no lies.
He was the only thing in focus
in my picture of the world.
I could only see his beautiful face
and that look
oh, that look
the look that took me running
so far away
no one could ever reach me
cause we would just keep
running faster and faster--
we'd stop sometimes
to make love
we would make great love
because we both knew the Truth
and we'd stop sometimes
to just plain fuck
but it was all ok
because we both know the Truth
A truth that I saw
and still see
A truth he saw
but is blind to without me.
There there were times that we'd
stop and dance
we'd dance all night
our flesh tightly pressed against each others
holding each other

feeling a strange sense of pure ecstasy
flowing like liquid
all around us
through our arms
between our legs
inside our thighs
running through our fingers...
we'd just dance and dance
and dance-
I can't remember if we ever had any music
playing...
hmmm...
and then one day
someone took him away
and he kept running
no one could stop him
he just kept running, but
the other way
away from me
into a different realm
slipping faster and faster
into a whole other reality
a world made of a mold so thin
I believe they called it
h e r o i n.
All I could do was watch him go.
I tried speaking sweet words of wisdom
and singing songs with high hopes of freedom
and reminding him of old, playful spirits
running to our place, beyond the sun
but he was already gone.
I realize now
I lost my lover to a demon
who took away his soul
and left behind an
e
m
p
t
y
voice
where the truth has now been sold.

-Jessica Stack

Today on Geraldo *By Zola Potts*

Burned to a crisp. My own
Fat congeals beneath me.

(It was a bad accident but)

(I'm down to a size four.)

Can't say that I mind much--
My nerves have been destroyed.

(It hurt while I burnt but now I feel fine.)

I smile a lot these days
Because I have no lips.

(Part of public life is smiling--I'm just)

I'd wink at those who stare,
But my eyelids are gone.

(A big-eyed skeletal coquette.)

Finally! Ev'ryone
Knows I'm unusual!

(Still, it was a bad accident...)

War

By Jennifer Choy

Look down, look down in me deep.
Break my barriers
And brush your fingers to feel
The opaque praise that flows after my sleep.

Palpate my velvety gates
Tug at my welcoming weeds,
Feel the three rings that guard my chastity
And beg them to yield for desires to satiate.

Bring down your soft pink pillow
And bury it under my sweet crevices,
To cushion their kisses
And cause their pleasures to shoot so.

With two ordering stubs,
Spread apart my outer coverings
To expose the juicy, tender flesh underneath
And bring your manipulative pillow again for my erotic rubs.

My soaked embracers now beckon you master,
And while I stiffen and decline,
You elevate your adorned and crowned conqueror
To negotiate with my enforcers to make my transition faster.

When my watchers answer with confusion,
Your mind demands a decision from my conscience.
But my conscience is not there and I can only moan with
desire;
For I cannot see but our merging in my illusions.

Your leader forces aside my guards
And ravishes, crown and all,
Into the tunnel of slushy snow;
That then encourages by masking my chastity's broken shards.

And all I do is lie there and accept
The ebb and flow of my tide.
And you think I'm all encompassed in pleasure, as you are,
But I'm crying, dying, and to my soul, I'm in debt.

Sisters (Three Different Ones)

By Ruby Firewall



Untitled by Jill Baron

April's a rainsoaked tear hangin' in the eye
of some broken-down old dream hobblin'
along deserted streets to a lonely, back
water Bronx apartment: she opens a can'a
beans, and makes him eat them. Cold.
And she don't give a good goddamned
about the life theat maybe might be
comin' just around this corner, or the next.

May? well May's the most important
moments of your whole existence bein'
wasted in the day after day,
dripdrop monotony
of late rent, missed appointments,
and lost sleep. Or maybe she's
the liveliest child you ever knew,
in the brightest sundress you ever saw,
dyin' just because the Fates had fucked up.

And June's the one your mother always warned
you'bout, but you kept waitin' for, anyhow:
she drapes the yellow streaks of a crimson
sunset 'cross the shoulders of her checkered
past so provocatively you're not sure
if it's affection, or just another ruse
to milk a few more sighs
from suckers like you.

The Eternal School of the Damned
by Jennifer Choy

I can't believe people can be so cruel to one who
works to
make others happy.

I know what it was.
They were discriminating.
Again, minds allowed
Themselves to be controlled by lies.

Their eyes deceived,
Their hands betrayed,
Their breath bore hate.
Why do we kill our brothers?

They looked at him
And they found blame,
And they dared each other.
I kid you not.

They thought themselves grand
And smashed down their fury.
But in essence, they broke the code
Our Holy Trinity dictates.

Violent against their neighbors
Violence, ambition, and bestiality.
These lost souls have proved themselves worthy of
La Squola Eterna per i Condannati.

* * *

If you break their skins
And look inside
You'll see all the fears
They try to hide.

To prove their manhood
Which they have none,
They merged their hate
As a serpent of one.

They ravished his beauty,
Embittered his joy
They took my love
And make him their toy.

Their guilt will grow heavy
And their sins will stay
They'll regret their wrongs
And beg to pay.



Self-Portrait by Jessica Stack

Waking up at noon

By Wilbur Farley

today you finally
get the whining
clock's message
down by law

let's see if you can
ignore it with the same
'fuck work' attitude
now that you have
no place to go.

The center holds,
but you grab your life
by the edges anyhow:
your dearest lovers
only exist in half-truths
you'll never admit it to anyone

and how you'll spend
the rest
of your day
is anybody's guess

Painful, isn't it?
So – go back to sleep.

'Have I not Human Hands'

By Frank P. Fusaro

Special thanks to Al VanBuran

Based on the short story, 'No Woman Born' by C.L. Moore

Her naked metallic body glows as the climatically controlled storm's lightening jumps from one dark man-made cloud to the next ominous, yet artificial cloud. It has been years now, years since she has felt the rain on her skin, since the sound of thunder has been felt in her bones. It feels like centuries. Maybe it has. The window she stands in front of is as tall as her. The light rain beats against it, creating a soft and seemingly erratic beat. As she listens to the rain, her silvery right hand glides across the window and she can't help but find the pattern which signifies it as artificial. Her white eyes appear as cold as the rain that falls, or at least that is the way she sees it, through the distorted reflection her glowing eyes give in the window. The room she stands in is black, no human, even after their eyes adjust, could see very well, but she can. She can see just fine, she knows the door behind her is about to open and who will be standing there, she adjusts her eyes and makes sure her voice is set to the correct tones. As the door slides open, with a sharp hiss, the light from the hall slices through the darkness. A man, in what looks to be middle age, walks in. He commands the lights to activate as the door slides shut behind him.

"Hello, Deirdre. How are you?"

As he walks further into the room and stops, she doesn't move, she just sits staring at the storm. His long white hair tosses about as he advances again towards her. He tries to conceal his left leg as he drags it behind him, beneath his blue lab coat. He makes his way to the perfectly made bed, which lies in the middle of a dull and barrenly mechanical room.

"Mind if I sit?"

"Haven't gotten used to the new leg yet?" Her voice was soft, almost lovely, yet it had a taste of sarcasm and bitterness in it.

The lightening jumps yet again, it reflects off her body, its shine almost blinding, her visitor slightly squints his eyes. She watches the sky, missing the days when the lightening would touch the ground, far off, and chills would run up her spine. But she no longer has chills, and neither does the rest of the world. These people who live today are too afraid to let things happen naturally, too afraid to live or die.

"I've finished your new body. It's amazing how real it is. With the new biosynthetic flesh and the T.N. components, this makes my father's stuff look simple, it'll change the world, but most of all, you'll be practically human again."

"Always the overachiever, just like your father and his doing things that no one ever dreamed possible." The venom in her words strikes like the lightening used to.

He goes on ignoring her coarseness, "I've solved the detachment problem, once your brain is in your new body, your T.N. mesh mind will then integrate properly with your new body."

And as if surging electricity, she spurts out, "So I can really be immortal! Just what I always wanted!"

"No, to be more human, that's what I thought you wanted, to look like you did before the accident. And it does you know; look like you, I mean."

"Just like this one does?! And how would you know what I looked like? You weren't even born yet. You never saw me when when I lived, if you had you'd have thought--"

You still live, D. As long as there is hope there."

"-is Life? I have heard that one too many times from your father." As if to mock him she adds in a low and electronic voice, "My own personal Son of Frankenstein."

And with that her delicate looking metal hands clasp the opposite side of her shoulders, covering her chest with her arms as her head then drifts down into her breasts. Cable strands, which make up what appears to be her hair, fly about and she slowly slides to the floor, to sit.

"When your grandfather gave me my first mechanical body, I wasn't sure how to react. Now Sam, now... I still don't know. Maybe I should have died in that fire, all those years ago, instead of waking up in some mechanical body."

As he gets up and walks over to her, she sits motionless, her fingertips just touching the window now. He reaches out, but before his hand lands on her ice-cold shoulder, her internal sensors knew it was coming and had the proper response program running. As he squeezes tight, her nerve net measures the exact amount of pressure he is exerting.

"I knew it was you, before, I mean, when you were at the front door of the building. My hearing is better than the average dog's, you know," was all she could say in response.

"And now, I can put my foot through the average reinforced textile-steel door. If it ever works right, that is."

"Are you comparing the loss of a leg to that of a body? My body?" As she turns to look into his eyes, she already knows she has hurt him, but she doesn't care, and she wonders if she ever will.

The glowing stare of her white eyes is intense, her features surprisingly soft, she used to marvel at it. Her round cheeks, sharp nose, and pouty lips, she is beautiful, was beautiful, was human. Her expression is more than just anger or melancholy as she continues on letting her pain take over, "A miracle of science, Tec-Neuronics, smooth to the touch pliable, self-repairing, it acts just like real skin. When talking the whole face moves, lips look almost real, she looks Almost Real!" That was part of the speech your father gave on me, after he put me in this body. His Greatest Achievement! Thanks to technology I can recall everything I ever heard or saw perfectly; I can even repeat the speech in his voice, if you'd like!?"

"No need, I was there."

"So was I. But that wasn't the worst part of it, hearing him talk of me like that. The worst part was the 'unforeseen' side effect of Tec-Neuronics, how it can infect anything organic and even combine with it. How it, in turn, made my brain, 'for all intents and purposes,' ageless, as you and the rest of the world do what you can to keep yourselves young."

Not a word is said at that, it's as if a black hole opened, slowed all action and ripped away all sound throughout the room, save only the slowing sound of the rain. After a time Deirdre begins to speak in a soft and saddening tone, "I should have died on that day. How will immortality make me human, Samuel? How?"

"And if you don't have the operation, this body you're in will hurt you much worse than my father did that day. An immortal mind in a broken body; you may not realize it, but when you start to falter it will affect your mind and cause you more pain than you could imagine."

"Maybe that's what I want to feel pain, to feel...something."

The room was quiet, again as Hiroshima the day after the bomb fell, even the rain had stopped now, but she could still hear...everything. The bright rays of the sun begin to break through the dark ceiling that covered the sky only moments ago.

"Storm's breaking right on schedule, looks like it'll be another beautiful, eh D!?"

And as Deirdre looks out at the world that man almost destroyed, the world that is once again blooming with life. She knows that she too is as afraid to live or die, as the rest of the world and maybe, just maybe, hope is life. Maybe she can be whole again.



Untitled by Jill Baron

Traverbeit (the work of grief)

By Eddie M. Ballard

I have lost a gift
one-by-one-by-one the sky's tiny revolts
at once too late and too far
throw themselves against some dark master
and each one failing finds new heart... new breezes
to catch their fall; to brace them. As smooth waves
buffeting their weight wear down enormous stone
and eases the bodies of its fallen soldiers out to sea- with each breath
breathing in... and easing out
until one-by-one-by-one the very grain of rock is the sea
and each light in the sky can again take heart
coasting on each breath. -holding mine- pushing me with briny weight
until one-by-one-by one... I too am lost



London 17 By Joanna Wegielnik

DOWN CAME A ROBOT

BY MATTHEW VERNON XAVIER WILLEMAIN

**DOWN CAME A ROBOT FROM UP ON A HILL
BUILT BY A CLEVER, THE ROBOT HAD WILL
HE LOOKED LIKE A HUMAN, HE LOOKED QUITE THE SAME
AND INTO THEIR HOUSES, HE WENT AND HE CAME**

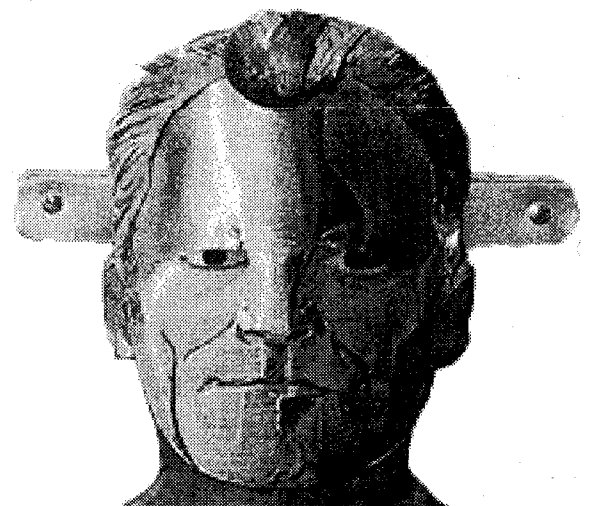
**THE CLEVER THAT BUILT HIM JUST COULDN'T BE FOUND
SOME SUGGESTED MAD GNOMES THAT LIVED IN THE GROUND
BUT WHOEVER HAD BUILT HIM JUST WASN'T IN SIGHT
AT LEAST, FOR THE HOUR THEY SEARCHED ON THAT NIGHT**

**THE ROBOT HAD SEEMED QUITE ALL RIGHT AT THE FIRST
UNTIL HIS GEARS BUSTED AND EVERYTHING BURST
IT WAS LONG IN THE COMING, THEY SHOULD HAVE FORSEEN
THEY ALL SHOULD HAVE NOTICED, ESPECIALLY THE QUEEN**

**SEEMS THAT THE CLEVER DIDN'T DO THEIR JOB RIGHT
SO MAYBE THE CLEVER WASN'T ALL THAT BRIGHT
DEEP DOWN INSIDE HE HAD BEEN ALL A'GEARS
WITH FAKE SMILES, FAKE LAUGHS, FAKE WORDS, AND FAKE TEARS**

**BUT DEEP, DEEP, DEEP DOWN, INSIDE ALL THE WORKS
THEY HAD MADE A MISTAKE, THOSE GNOMULAR JERKS
THE HEART OF THE ROBOT, THE BIGGEST BEST PART
THE HEART WAS IN BACKWARDS, HE WAS WRONG FROM THE START**

**AND SO THEY FOUND OUT, MUCH AFTER THE FACT
EVEN THOUGH EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE SEEN THROUGH HIS ACT
BUT NOBODY NOTICED, AND NOBODY CRIED
WHEN DOWN CAME A ROBOT; ONE NIGHT HE JUST DIED**



Jesus Morality

By Filipe Loco

PLAGUED BY THE SIZE OF UNIVERSES
HELL HATH NO FURY
SAT AT THE RIGHT HAND
THOUGH THE LEFT WAS ALWAYS WHAT HE PREFERRED

NEVER WANTED IT
BUT HE LOVED HIS FATHER
KNEW HE COULDN'T CHANGE IT
THOUGH HE HATED THE PRESSURE
HE ALWAYS LOVED HIS FIGURE
SO HE LOOKED IN THE MIRROR AS OFTEN AS HE COULD
AND HE KNEW HE WASN'T MESSIAH MATERIAL
'CAUSE

JESUS WAS A GYM TEACHER NOTHING ELSE
JESUS WAS A MAN WHO LOVED TO RUN
JESUS WAS A GYM TEACHER
AND HE THOUGHT IT WAS FUN

JESUS WAS A GYM TEACHER
WITH A WHISTLE 'ROUND HIS NECK
ALWAYS LOVED THE PEOPLE HE WAS DESTINED TO LEAD
ALWAYS LOVED THEIR NAIVETE
NEVER WANTED TO BE IN THE SPOTLIGHT
HE WOULD HAVE RATHER STAYED AWAY

SHOULD HAVE BEEN BORN TWO THOUSAND YEARS IN THE FUTURE
SHOULD HAVE BEEN A MAN WITH NO PURPOSE
SHOULD HAVE HAD A DEGREE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION
SHOULD HAVE LOST HIS WILL TO BE A MARTYR
'CAUSE

JESUS WAS A GYM TEACHER NOTHING MORE
JESUS WAS A GYM TEACHER THOUGH HIS NAME STARTS WARS
JESUS WAS A GYM TEACHER
NOT A SAINT
JESUS WAS A GYM TEACHER
NOT A SAINT.

excerpts from

CAN'TOS: THE MOTHER OF ALL BAD POEMS

By Cox N. Mussels

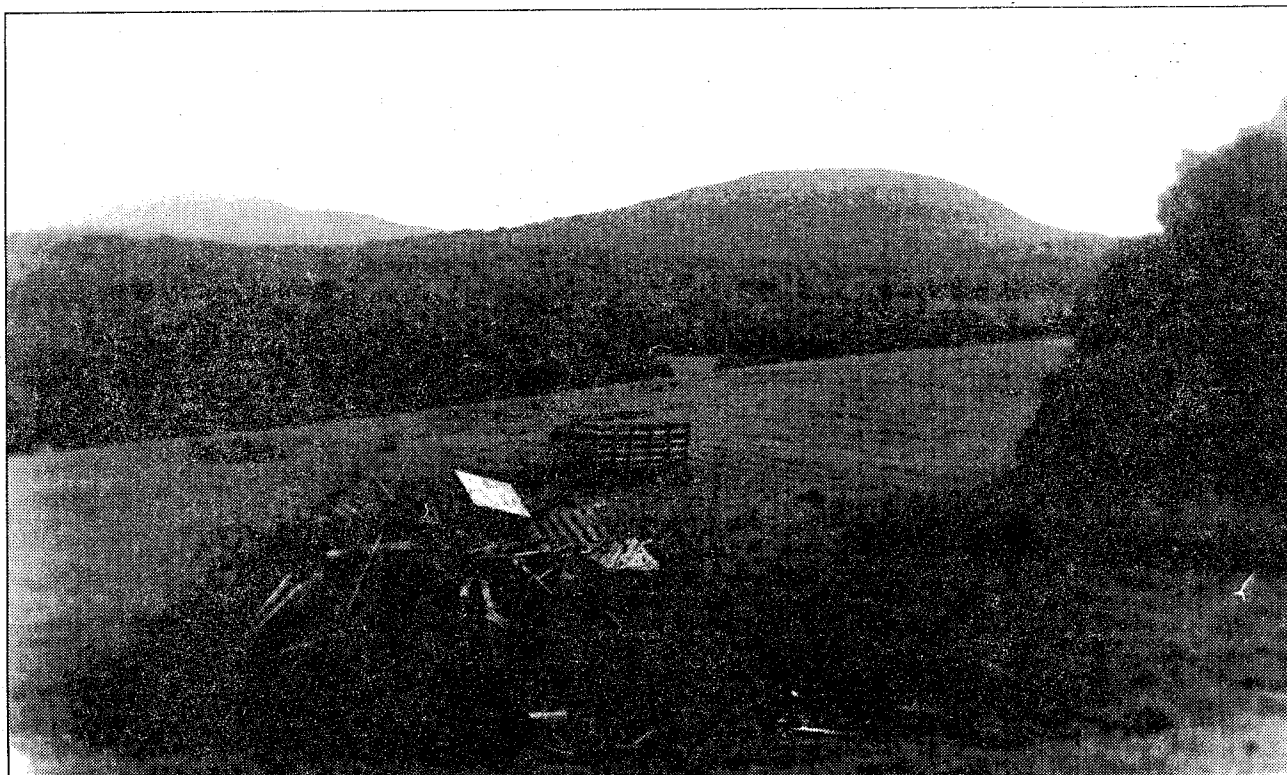
*Hands between my legs,
Ass raised in the air.
A divine portrait of supplication.
It's getting cold, Daddy.*

* * *

*The Madonna construct
and the Exhibitionist object.
Freud on celluloid.
You won't be so deep when I beat your
old lady face in.*


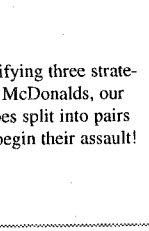
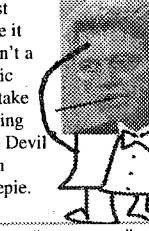




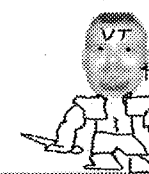
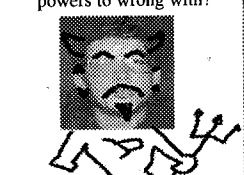

* * *

*The oilsheet strangles me as her hands
run through my chest hair.
Four eyes on one head, against the side of the door.
Come in, you freak. Four eyes on one head?
You're a freak.*



Untitled by Jill Baron

STRIKE FORCE ECHO BY MATTHEW VERNON XAVIER WILLEMAIN


<p>We can only hope that Strike Force Echo is able to stop these "vegetorists."</p> 	<p>Identifying three strategic McDonalds, our heroes split into pairs and begin their assault!</p> 	<p>I just hope it wasn't a tragic mistake putting The Devil with Sleepie.</p> 	<p>STRIKE FORCE ECHO</p> 
<p>I was hoping Sleepie's rare insights would counter The Devil's evil [see Episode 1], but if he just doesn't wake up...</p> 	<p>Mwa ha ha! If Sleepie doesn't wake up...</p> 	<p>"snore... snore" [Ed: Sleepie is clearly not about to awake]</p> 	<p>Getting this guy's immortal soul is gonna be a snap!</p> 
<p>Hey! You, Johnny Thug! How would you like evil powers to wrong with?</p> 	<p>"snore... snore"</p> 	<p>Will Sleepie awake and spread his rare insight?</p> <p>Will The Devil use this mission to spread Evil?</p>	<p>NEXT ISSUE: EPISODE THREE... More Action!</p>

Hey, buddy!

The Press is still looking for student drawn cartoons and comic strips!

Send us your work or we feed you to the hounds.

BEER AND CIGARETTE



HEY HAVE YOU SEEN THIS!

YEAH WE'LL LOOK!

NEWS PAPER PRINCESS D: KILLED AT HANDS OF PAPERATI

WE'LL WE DON'T THINK JUSTICE HAS BEEN SERVED!

Nothing Here

Ticket To ENGLAND FOR BEER

Ticket To ENGLAND FOR Cigarette

STUARDES get us some BREAKFAST

ENGLAND

LA LA LA LA LA

Hook

PAPA RATI

GUILTY AS CHARGED!

WE SENTENCE YOU TO 40 YEARS ON REGIS AND CATHY LEE!

LA LA LA URK

URK

USA

LET THAT Be A LESTEN TO ALL YOU OTHER LARD ASS OPERA BAZOS OUT THERE.

Quiet Buter Ball

How Do you Plead!

LA LA LA

PAPA RATI

yes?

BY SQUIRLL + DARN

WE ARE NOT WE'LL NOT SHALL NEVER HAVE BEEN NIKK+CHOPSE HONEST!

THE ANGRY SQUIRREL



Quando yo era muy joven, yo se fascinaba con la vaca

Her name was Fred.

Some tongue on that heifer!

Breath like White Cheddar Mentos... I miss that cow.

IN NEKKID CAME THE SQUIRREL

By Brian Libfeld

Top Ten Homecoming Week Activities

- 10) The "How Many People Can You Fit In A Room" Contest (actually a Campus Residences experiment in spatial relations)
- 9) Tribute To Roofies
- 8) Havin' A Roni
- 7) Touch The Monkey
- 6) Sail Around The World, From London To The Bay
- 5) Find The Nipple (Go Psi Gamma!)
- 4) Spot The Goon
- 3) Spot The Goon Havin' A Roni (Experts Only)
- 2) The Beat Phil About The Breast, Chest, Neck and Head Area Fun-A-Thon
- 1) The Johnny Statesman 10K Take-A-Walk

DRAW THE GOON

Many of you have commented to our staff members and editors that a favorite article among the average Press reader is "Goons In The Mist", our bi-weekly series studying the activities and behavior of a strange individual that walks among us on the Stony Brook campus. However, due to reasons of confidentiality (let's be blunt, he'd infect us and then sue us while we recovered at the Atlanta Center For Disease Control), we can't actually use pictures of him.

THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN.

In honor of matchbooks everywhere, The Stony Brook Press is sponsoring a "Draw The Goon" contest. Using your past knowledge of previous Goon articles (there are probably old copies of previous issues under this one -- Stony Brook isn't really on-the-ball when it comes to cleaning places up), draw him using any means necessary. Pencil, pen, doodle, painting, it doesn't matter. It doesn't even matter how you draw him. Planting daisies, running marathons, cooking stew -- just draw the Goon. Pornographic entries will be disqualified (but the sicker ones among us welcome them just the same).

Anyway, slip your entries under the door of The Stony Brook Press (the address is listed somewhere in this issue, I'm sure you can find it -- you *are* college students, after all) within the next week or so. We'll publish the best one in our next issue, and if you're brave enough to give your name and number, maybe we'll give you a free CD from our pile of samples. It depends what kind of mood we're in.

Tales of Terror

By Anne Ruggiero

It's that time of year again, when the twilight shortens and turns grey, the leaves are blown from trees like shriveled paper bags, and the naked branches contrast against the darkening sky. Students no longer stroll across the campus mall, but now scuttle quickly from class to class, pulling their winter coats closer. The sun gives way to mist and clouds and retires early as darkness claims another hour. Life ceases and sleeps for the winter. It is the season of coldness, of sterility—it the season of the dead.

From the depths of the human soul, this season conjures the morbid fascinations of the mind. Oddities which one would normally not consider are aroused as people find themselves curious about eccentric histories and stories of the deceased. The gloomy tone of a dark autumn is accented by the celebration of pagan holidays and religious rituals such as All Hallows' Eve, remembrance day for the dead, more popularly known as Halloween. Originally a Celtic/Druid celebration, it has become a Christian holiday for the memorium of saints. The Druid religion held a deep belief in all spirits, good and evil, including witches, goblins and fairies. Halloween, in Celtic tradition was the Night of the Dead, when the dead rose and walked among the living. The people of the time disguised themselves as spirits in order to keep the identity of the dead concealed, hence the tradition of dressing in demon-ic costumes on October 31st. In time, the holiday

became an occasion for legend-telling, scaring neighborhood children, and random mischief.

So, if you can tolerate another ghost story as we approach Halloween, sit back and read on. This particular story brings us to our own beloved university.

Colonial towns are chock-full of gruesome tales of past inhabitants. Old whaling harbors become virtual libraries of morbid shipwrecks and accidents at sea. North shore towns are possessed with legend of Revolutionary War spies, and centuries-old churches shelter crumbling graveyards. Bewitching tales of spooky old houses are revealed, such as the farm house in Huntington where in 1782, an immigrant farmhand bludgeoned the proprietor and his wife and attempted to dispose of the bodies in the fireplace. To this day, the house stands, supposedly inhabited by a descendant of the murdered owner, although no one has ever seen anyone in the virtually unfurnished house. The only signs of life are the single light which burns every night in the front window and the red geraniums in the front yard.

Stony Brook also has its share of ghost stories and

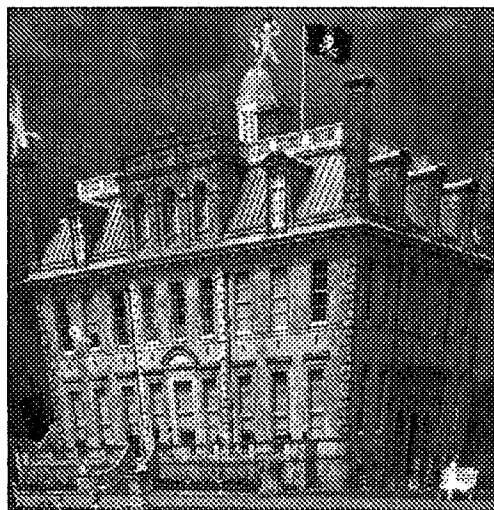
erie myths. Unfortunately, the University is too far south to share in the gloomy fame of the historic waterfront community, until recently, the grounds were mundane farmland. But recent urban myths contribute there own spookiness to the school.

Langmuir College. Your typical dormitory—uni-

form rooms lined up in parallel order down an institutional-style corridor. Identical furniture, blinds, and dimensions to each room. Standard issue decor adorns the walls—posters of various music trends, photographs of smiling teenagers from high school, towers of CD's and unopened textbooks piled on top of discarded clothing. Similar students reside in these quarters—fresh, idealistic, unsuspecting of the other elements which dwell in the building. The rooms are alike, all is the same—except one.

On the third floor in the east wing, there is a room which has another element to it, a paranormal element, an extra resident, if you will. Three years ago, Dyan moved into Langmuir, into a seemingly inconsequential room on the third floor. Days after moving in, she went to work where her supervisor, a former resident at Stony Brook, inquired as to her room assignment. Upon hearing where Dyan lived, the supervisor recoiled in surprise,

Please see "Terror" on page 16



Major Problems

By Michael Yeh

A couple of days ago, I ran into a fellow student from my biochemistry class in a mess hall. After we chatted about our classes and professors, he asked what I planned to study at Stony Brook.

"Biology," I replied, "with minors in journalism and marine sciences."

"But if you're planning to take all these biochem electives, why don't you UPGRADE to the biochem major?"

His words conjured up visions of potential employers mocking my "worthless" biology degree from Stony Brook, just as Bill Gates would act if he saw this 286 PC that I'm typing on now.

"Well, I guess I'm not conceited enough to be a biochem major," I quipped with a sigh.

"But after all, it's simply more prestigious, isn't it?"

Unfortunately, many other students that I have met on campus plan their studies with the same mentality. Some of them chose majors that they thought would "look impressive" to graduate or professional schools. Others are coerced by practical-minded parents who think that college is just a pit stop between high school and a medical or law degree. Biochemistry is just one of those words that sounds intimidating and makes one look like a genius.

Interestingly enough, many of my fellow biology majors who were considering medical school have deliberately changed their majors as a strategy to take advantage of acceptance policies that favor "diversity" in the entering class. Some of them cited statistics that showed that engineering and english majors had higher acceptance rates than those who focused on the life sciences.

"I love bio, but I guess engineering is okay since the odds for getting into medical school are better," said one of my colleagues a few semesters ago. But the truth is that only a few engineering students with excellent credentials and motivation apply to

medical school, while most life science students (including knuckleheads of all sorts) give it a shot. I'm usually reluctant to make assumptions without sufficient evidence, but based on conversations with other students, I suspect that a lot of the life science majors who apply to medical school are pressured to do so by their peers or relatives.

For all academic programs offered by the administration, it seems like people have attached certain stereotypes. Math and physics majors are anti-social geeks, biochem majors are obsessed with grades, biology majors are too dumb to handle math, and psychology majors are just plain dumb. As for the humanities, philosophy majors are bullshit artists, art and music majors will starve after graduation, sociology majors are left-wing radicals, and english majors can't handle anything else.

I cringe every time I hear someone imply that the choice of major is equivalent to a function of one's intelligence. Let us consider english majors, for example. They are often referred to as "majors by default", as if they are not mentally capable of handling the more "rigorous" disciplines. But just think, what kind of person would spend four years of his or her life reading works by Chaucer, Shakespeare, and others unless he or she has a true love for it? Of course, it is very different from memorizing formulae and facts, but who's to say that it requires less brain power?

Many students fail to realize that a university degree does not simply train one to perform specific tasks, but that it cultivates one's ability to find knowledge and to think critically. A degree in philosophy might not lead directly to a career, but it can prepare one for professions that require the use of logic and rhetoric.

People often use statistics on demands in the labor market to evaluate the importance of certain academic disciplines. I was amused (yet somewhat disappointed) by my colleague James Polichak's pessimistic predictions for the proposed journal-

ism major at Stony Brook [Let's Get Critical, Oct. 15, 1997]. He cited an article in Rolling Stone that shows that few journalism students find jobs in the field after graduation.

In the real world, however, numbers aren't all that matters. For example, physicians can rattle off depressing statistics on survival rates from various treatments, but the bottom line is that no two people are alike, and there are always some who will beat the odds. For those students who are willing to take their chances, the least the university can do is to offer them a solid educational program that would give them a better chance than the current minor in journalism.

Polichak implies that the program would "contribute to the glut of depressed, unemployed, and bitter journalism graduates" who may serve as "companions for philosophers." Like philosophy, however, journalism courses teach skills that are useful for almost any type of communication, from building public relations to editing specialized journals. (After all, President Kenny earned a degree in english and journalism!) Also, students in the journalism program will be expected to declare a double-major or a minor so that they can work in other fields as well.

Statistics like these are often used in arguments by those who attack the arts and humanities for financial reasons. (Ah, another evil of capitalism, but that's beside the point.) Even though music or art may not lead to great financial rewards for those who study it, life would be pretty damn boring without musicians and artists.

Although some people may say that I'm too idealistic, I am convinced that one's choice of a major does not make any difference in one's potential for success after graduation. Study what interests you, and if you encounter pessimists, just tell them to buzz off. You'll probably be happier, which is better than torturing yourself to please someone else, unless you're a masochist.

The Willing CONSTRUCTION of Disbelief

By James Polichak

Traditional explanations of how readers comprehend fiction tend to refer back to Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge believed that poetry required a "willing suspension of disbelief" on the part of the reader. This notion has been extended to include all fiction by a number of literary writers and theorists including H.P. Lovecraft and John Searle. In essence, the idea that reading fiction requires a willing suspension of disbelief by the reader implies that the reader at all times recognizes that what they are reading is made-up. The reader, in order to comprehend and enjoy the fiction, must somehow actively suppress this knowledge. The reader must make believe that the story or poem is real, and must make special effort to do so. Note, though, that, phenomenologically, the reader is not necessarily consciously aware of this active process of suspending disbelief.

This view of literary comprehension has been contradicted by a number of psychological studies. A series of psychological experiments designed to examine how people assign truth-values to information, and to fiction in particular, have shown that Coleridge and his followers had it wrong. People tend to believe whatever information they are exposed to, and it is disbelief that requires effort.

Daniel Gilbert, of the University of Texas at Austin, conducted a set of studies designed to determine when people decide if information is true or false. Gilbert reviewed the philosophical literature and discussed two contrary schools of thought. Descartes argued that people first comprehend information, without evaluating its truth-value. Such evaluation came at a later stage of mental processing, where information was either accepted as true or rejected as false. Spinoza, on the other hand, held that information is accepted as a consequence of comprehension. After this acceptance, the information might be evaluated and certified as true or unaccepted as false.

The Cartesian position allows for the possibility that readers can comprehend fiction without believing it to be true, but even showing Descartes to be right would not directly support Coleridge's idea. Showing that people do not immediately label information as true, suspending judgement until a later time, would not necessarily entail the ability to mentally assign one truth-value to a piece of information and act as if it had another.

The Spinozan position does allow for the willing suspension of disbelief. If information is accepted as true as a consequence of being comprehended, then fiction is initially believed to be fact. It would require special effort at a later stage of mental processing to decide that what one has been reading is not fact.

Gilbert and his colleagues designed a set of experiments to decide between the Cartesian and Spinozan positions. In one experiment, they told people that they were participating in an study about how people learn foreign languages. The participants were given a series of propositions like "a wika is a deer." They were told that the novel word in each proposition was from the Hopi language. The participants were instructed to read the propositions as they appeared on a computer screen. After reading each proposition, the word 'true' or 'false' would appear on the computer, indicating to the participant that the preceding proposition was either a true or false statement about the vocabulary of the Hopi language. However, during some of the trials, the participants were interrupted during the presentation of the truth-value of the proposition and required to perform an unrelated task. After seeing all of the propositions, the participants were given a memory test where they were required to decide if the propositions they had seen earlier were true or false.

Gilbert reasoned that if Descartes was right, then interrupting the participants while they were processing the truth-values of the propositions should have no effect. They should have made not decision about the proposition's truth-value, should just resort to guessing on those propositions where they were interrupted. There should be no bias toward responding that the proposition was either true or false. However, if Spinoza was right there should be a particular bias. If people are interrupted while trying to label a proposition, they will not be able to take the special effort needed to assign a truth-value. For propositions that are true, this will have no effect-- in Spinoza's hypothesis 'true' is the default setting, so true propositions will be designated as true during the memory test. Interrupting participants while they are trying to label information as false will cause participants to fall back to the default value of 'true'. Interrupted false propositions should therefore tend to be labeled as true during the memory test.

This is exactly what Gilbert and colleagues found. When the process of assigning truth-value is interrupted, people have a strong tendency to say that false information is true. Gilbert found similar results in two other experiments, where participants were asked to evaluate smiling faces for whether they were sincere or not, and where participants were asked only to read propositions without evaluating them. They results support Spinoza's ideas. People accept information as true as a consequence of comprehension, and must take special effort to designate information as false. Finding such a result for the processing of emotional information (the human faces) suggests that

this effect is a general human tendency, not limited to language processing.

This general tendency has been examined with specific attention to fiction by Richard Gerrig, of the Psychology Department right here, and Deborah Prentice, at Princeton. Gerrig and Prentice had students at both Yale and Princeton read a short story about a kidnapping. For half of the students, the story was set at the school they were attending, so that half of the Yale students read a story set at Yale and half read a story set at Princeton, and vice versa. Included in this short story were a number of assertions that were not true. For example, in one scene, a character states that mental illnesses are contagious and in another that eating chocolate makes you lose weight.

Building on well-established research in social psychology, Gerrig and Prentice hypothesized that students who read the story-version that was set at their school would evaluate the assertions more critically, and be less persuaded by them. Students who read the story-version set at the school they were not attending would be less critical of the assertions and be more persuaded by them. Setting the fiction at a personally relevant location would increase the amount of mental effort readers would devote to the fiction. This extra effort would be used, in part, to unaccept information that would otherwise be comprehended and accepted as true. This would be reflected in the time it took for readers to reject the assertions as being false in the real world.

Gerrig and Prentice found exactly these results. When Yale students read stories set at Yale, it was easier for them to reject the idea that mental illnesses are contagious than it was for Yale students who read stories set at Princeton. The reverse was found for the Princeton students. Prentice, Gerrig, and Daniel Bailis, also of Princeton, found similar results when readers were explicitly asked to state how much they agreed or disagreed with the story's assertions. Student's who read stories set at their school were agreed less with the false assertions.

This research shows that idea that readers are aware that they are reading fiction and must make special effort to believe it is false. Gerrig has suggested that the alternative "willing construction of disbelief" better fits the evidence. People, whether reading fiction or evaluating smiles, will believe the information to be true when they initially comprehend it. It takes special effort to decide if something is not true. Thus, the fiction reader need take no special effort to become lost in the narrative world. This is a natural consequence of reading and comprehending the material. The special effort must come when the reader wishes to label the information as fiction rather than fact.

"Terror," continued from page 15

whispering, "That's a bad room" before walking away. Assuming that her boss was playing a prank, Dyan ignored the comment and didn't give it another thought until things started to happen. After falling asleep in the room, a friend woke to find a ghostly figure of a man sitting at the end of the bed. The man turned slowly to face him, but before he fully faced front, the apparition disappeared. Smoke began to rise from Dyan's VCR, which was turned off. Objects started to fly out of the closet, and in the eerie culmination of supernatural events, Dyan awoke one night to see the image of a white headless man sitting in the corner of the room.

The present residents of the strange room in

Langmuir have had no experience with ghostly apparitions, and the room now seems to be clear of its ghoulish inhabitants. But that doesn't mean that the specters aren't still wandering the halls of the dormitory, or that they haven't moved on to another room. There are enough grisly happenings around this campus to make it a virtual asylum for tormented souls and spirits. The hospital alone must have enough demons to fill a Wes Craven movie. And of course, there is the legendary story of student who got stuck in the steam tunnels and was poached to death. History itself can lend itself to tales of hauntings and spiritual unrest. An old legend tells of a farmgirl who lived somewhere on the present-day campus

grounds who, after being abandoned by her lover, locked herself into a room and pined away in mourning until she died.

Stony Brook is rife with stories of mysterious happenings, lost souls, and grisly deaths. At this time of the year, when nature lends itself to the spooky atmosphere and darkness closes in sooner than usual, who's to deny that, as in the old Druidic tradition, that the souls of the dead return to earth and walk amongst the living, and that witches take the opportunity to practice Black Magic. Hey, you never know.

Happy Halloween.

Blessed with Breasts?

EARLY DEVELOPMENT: IN YOUR GENES OR IN YOUR FOOD?

By Jennifer Choy

Would you consciously pay someone to poison you? Would you consciously pay someone to put things in your food that would interfere with your body's natural processes? Things that would throw your body out of balance and cause it to fall off its genetic track? Unfortunately, few Americans (I am pointing my finger at the American situation because it is the most abominable) know that paying for their deaths, diseases, and afflictions is exactly what they are doing.

Just one of the issues incorporated in the broad crisis exposed above is the problem of precocious puberty; there has been a significant increase of American individuals, more specifically, young children, that are entering puberty or experiencing the development of sexually differentiating parts at too early an age.

Let's all think back a couple of years and remember how our various health teachers (that male teacher people always thought was a pervert because he was a male health teacher; that overweight health teacher who, hence, seemed the antithesis of her field) always told us that the normal, average, typical ages that us humans enter puberty are about 11 or 12 for females and about 16 for males. So what's too early? Presently, signs of puberty at the ages of 7 and below are considered remarkable and worthy of further study. Apparently, most of the studies that have been done, on humans, are based on the children who were brought to physicians by their parents, who experienced concern regarding their children's extraordinary growth patterns. Based on that idea, one can deduce that there must be a handful of other children out there whose bodies are in the same situations, but whose conditions are given no heed nor second thoughts, as parents ultimately have a tendency to gloat on their children's accomplishments and development, and according to them, frankly, the faster the better! Mommy could wake up one morning, look at her fine daughter of seven years, and say, "By golly! It's time we get you a training bra, you budding rose, you!" Of course, the more rational and realistic of the gloaters, or perhaps the physician-faithful, would take their children to doctors, just in case. As in many other scenarios, the problem is probably bigger than what is already recognized.

The cause of this apparent uprise of early-developing children is most probably due to foreign hormones, most notably estrogen and estrogen-related compounds, being introduced into their bodies. One considerable source of these hormones is animal products. Nowadays, unlike the days of yesteryear, those that all meat and meat-related money-sucking industries would like the consumer to still believe are apparent, livestock, animals cultivated or bred for human consumption, are fed a concocted glop of chemicals and pesticide-coated crops. Along with the pesticides, antibiotics, pieces of their fellow brothers and sisters, or not-so-fellow brothers and sisters, growth

stimulants, insecticides, tranquilizers (so the animals don't get too insane or senile while living in a pen with countless others, and thus, having no room to move), radioactive isotopes (well, how else shall we, of the ignorant species, rid ourselves of our self-borne burdens?), herbicides, appetite stimulants (would you want to eat all of this stuff?), larvicides (can't fail the government inspections, now, can we?), livestock feed is also embellished with artificial hormones (growth, aesthetic value, increased milk production). There are also hypotheses indicating that such estrogen or estrogen-mimicking compounds may be being introduced by the environment. PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls—one of other well-known chemicals with estrogenic properties) and DDE (a breakdown product of the pesticide DDT) could very well be linked to the occurrence

of an early onset of puberty, for these two compounds are known to mimic, or interfere with, sex hormones, as indicated in studies performed by William R. Kelce and his colleagues on DDT/DDE, reported in *Nature* (Vol. 375 (June 15, 1995)), and James D. McKinney and Chris L. Waller on PCBs, reported in *Environmental Health Perspectives* (Vol. 102, No. 3 (March 1994)). The effects of estrogens and estrogen-like compounds on hair products, facial lotions, and other cosmetics are also currently being examined. One should note, however, that the basis for the argument that the acquisition of such compounds is achieved via the ingestion of hormone-laced animal products is much stronger.

"For years I have been encountering periodic cases of precocious puberty. But in 1980, when I started finding one or two children like this in my waiting room every day, I knew that something quite serious was wrong," says Dr. Carmen A. Saenz, as quoted in Orville Schell's novel *Modern Meat*. According to Dr. Saenz, the individuals that she had examined must have been contaminated with some kind of estrogen, most likely hormones from meat and milk rather than from other sources. When asked how she could be sure of her claim, she plainly replied, "When we take our patients off meat and fresh milk, their symptoms usually regress," implying that even if Dr. Saenz's exclusive conclusion is too extreme, it is at least the main factor.

Dr. Saenz's description of the symptoms of precocious puberty, according to what she has been faced with, is riveting. In her interview with Mr. Schell, the first photo she presented was of a four and a half year old girl with "delicate coffee-colored skin, doelike brown eyes and almost fully developed breasts." To a quite disturbing degree, she indicated her ignorance of her situation through the smile of sweet innocence she gave for the camera. "She had an ovarian cyst," said Dr. Saenz. In the second photo, A twelve year old boy

was depicted, with a face of "blank bewilderment" and a silver crucifix dangling between two grossly swollen breasts. "We had to schedule him for surgery. The emotional stress on him [was] incredible," said Dr. Saenz. Next, a one year old girl, shown lying on an "examining table with a ruler stretched across her chest to measure the diameter of her enlarged breasts. She [had] a pacifier in one of her hands." Lastly, a five year old girl, with breasts as large and well-developed as a fourteen year old's and a scraggly tangle of pubic hair was shown. She had a "well-developed uterus and had begun to have some vaginal bleeding," as indicated by Dr. Saenz.

"The cause of this apparent uprise of early-developing children is most probably due to foreign hormones..."

To make matters worse, the clinical implications of artificial hormones may be more far-reaching than just early development. Naturally, one would expect more contraindications, but who really wants to see such tragedies materialize?

According to a study done by Marcia E. Herman-Giddens and her colleagues on "Secondary Sexual Characteristics and Menses in Young Girls Seen in Office Practice," reported in *Pediatrics* (Vol. 99, No. 4 (April 1997)), there is significant evidence that the risk of breast cancer is increased by the same estrogens and estrogen-like compounds that are causing individuals to exhibit early development.

Aside from the effects artificial hormones has on young children, you may be wondering how older individuals may be affected. To me, it seems reasonable to assume that these intruders can influence the cellular processes of older individuals as well. It is just that the affects of these compounds may not be so markedly obvious, say, muffled. Since those that have begun puberty already and those older have already moved beyond the initiation period, breasts that become actually larger than dictated in the genes would be reasonably impossible to realize. Of course, speaking with regard to males, the situation, and thus, the subtlety, would be markedly different; however, on the cellular level, fair comparisons would be hard to make, because the effects of hormones ultimately rely upon the presence, amount, and nature of receptor proteins on the surface of the target cells for the estrogen and estrogen-mimicking compounds (without such proteins available, hormones are useless and cannot affect their target cells). The presence and nature of the receptor proteins on males and females differ, thus, the effect of a hormone can considerably differ between genders.

For those of you that only regard the vegetarian-or-not issue as a question of animal rights, or of what appeases your palates, or of what will keep your cholesterol or percent fat low, get yourselves ready for higher learning. There is more to this issue than you think. Most of you have only seen the surface.

joinez la presse

University: *Institute for Higher Learning* or "Mother Fuckin' Money Grubbing Whores"

By Frank Fusaro

Now I'm sure most of you are wondering "What, oh what, could drive someone to come up with such a title? What could have happened to set this nut off?" Well, to answer your question, I have set forth to describe a nice and...well, yes, beautiful day, here at good ol' USB, until a few friends decided to go see the DREADED "bursar" to pay off their bills; all recently having been paid at each of their respective positions of responsibility. Now, the names have been changed here "to protect the guilty," as it were, so you might find the names...interesting, to say the least:

"Ah, an actual beautiful day," remarked a cheery red-faced youth as he proceeded to walk across the campus of one Stony Brook University in the state New York. This lad's reason for coming to this housing of higher learning is the same as most, I should think. He has come to learn the various pieces of knowledge it will take to get to proper job that will, as he hopes, make him rich and happy.

"Chipper today, aren't we, Chester?" Chester WorkingStiff's greatest friend, John GiveMeMore, asked.

"Why shouldn't he be? He finally has enough to pay off his bill for tuition," Danny NoMoney replied, "And he's even paying it all without a loan or help from his parents."

"Like my parents could lend a hand with my father and all," Chester said plainly.

"Yes, sorry," a sullen Danny said.

"No need to be, at least he was able to retire first, and wasn't forced out with half of his pension because of it."

"But what I mean to say is that I have loans out and still owe money while he does it all himself. I even had to borrow from my parents, with a projection of my income."

"Well, I told you both I'd be happy to have lent you money for--"

"Now hold on there, Mister Accountant-to-be, Chester and myself can get by with out--"

"Hold it Danny, I'm sure John meant well."

"Eh, for my suitemates the percent is only 5."

"You're a heartless Bastard, John GiveMeMore."

"Well all, here we are, the Bursar's office, not so long a line either. This will take no time."

Those words of happy cheer rang though the trio for the one hour and a half they were forced to wait, as only two of the seven windows were open, and, of course, each person has to take so much

time for a seemingly simple procedure. But, eventually it was young John's turn. He, simply, had to get his check and sign it over, but he waited in the wrong line, and was forced to wait on another line. And, as par for the course, here he was refused. He did not have the proper identification, and was also told there was a late fee attached to his bill, even though it was not his fault the check had arrived late to the school.

But before this revelation occurred, the happily independent Chester went up to pay his bill. Unable to come the previous day, for lack of funds and time, he was merely one day late to pay his bill.

"Hello, I'd like to pay this Momma."

"Sure, what's your ID number?"

"178-79-0034, Momma."

"It's \$1978.25. How will you be paying this?"

"Excuse me, Momma, but I believe you are wrong, the statement I have here says--"

"Joan! Joan, we have a 'situation'. Please setp aside and wat for Joan."

"Of course."

"What is the problem?"

"Well, my bill is 30 dollars too much."

"ID number?"

And so this woman proceeds to ask poor Chester the same questions, and then proceeds to say, "Well, you're late on your bill, and it's a late fee, it says it right here."

"All right, so if I pay the money now, and pay the late fee Monday morning--"

"By Monday it will be thirty dollars more late fee."

"But I would have paid the original!"

"But not in full."

"But--"

"Are you going to pay?"

"I can't pay the lat fee, this is all I have, and my cash card hasn't been sent to--"

"Are you going to pay?"

"Can't I get a break, I'm only a day late."

"No."

"What about if I have circumstances--"

"No. Are you going to pay some now?"

"NO, thank you."

And, lastly, we have Danny's turn. Danny was trying to get his remaining bill paid in half installments. But, according to he woman, the previous day was the last day for this, and he was sent three bills, with warnings in the mail. He, too, now has a late fee. And Joan also would not let him pay half

now and half later, even as she said, "there are only two more cycles for payment." But Danny could pay it that way, he protested, and why would it be unfair, he didn't ask for the late fee to be taken off, just that Monday morning when they open again the second fee not be put on. But he, too, failed.

Finally, as the three leave, they share their experiences.

"Those fuckin' money grubbing, fuckin' whores and...stuff. Those bastards!!! Those blood suckin' bastards," young Danny spirited out.

"I know I don't believe it, those fuckin' bitches, wouldn't help me out one bit. Jesus Christ, what the hell. I mean, I can see 'em wanting their money, but this is a goddamn fuckin' place of, like, learning, and shit. Gnarly, dude. What the fuck, they think we gonna stiff 'em? I mean, 'we got in, and shit, and now they can't help. Did I tell you that those bastards would help me with, like, financial aid 'cause my Dad made too much money last year, and, for God's sake, the man's retired and is sick now, and that didn't matter one fuckin' bit 'cause they look att the year before's tax returns. Do you fuckin' believe these fuckin' blood suckers?" young Chester replied.

Of course, John had something to say also, "This just fucking sucks! You know, they pay you to go to college in some countries."

"Yeah, well, those are countries where they actually care about the future obviously," Danny commented, rather venomously.

Of course, most of you already knew Stony Brook was a 'blood sucker', as my adorable little creation Chester WorkingStiff put it. And most of you realized what babbling and vicious idiots the DREADED 'bursar' can make of us all. But those of you who do not--take heed [Ed: Frankie's a lyrical poet], these three poor souls are no different than you. Any of the things they went through, you will most probably go through before you finish your schooling. And I hope those of you who agree with John in "this fucking sucking" will not just grin and bear it, but try to change it. Only you can change things by standing up to them. It may sound like something your parents used to say, but hey, they had you, didn't they? They can't be all wrong.

By the way, firebombing any of the school's buildings is in no way being advocated by this article of the Press.

When I was a little girl, my father had a portrait of himself painted. In it, he was dressed as a clown. This portrait was hung over my bed. When he beat me, he would scream, "Look at the clown, you cannot hide from him!".

Now I have come to embrace the clown.

I love the clown.

I am the clown.

You are the clown.

Join the Press.

The Destruction of My Childhood

By Steveoh

Stony Brook Press Alumnus
Writer Emeritus
All-Around Good Guy

I was raised in suburbia, surrounded by green lawn and blacktop pavements. My father worked and my mother tended the house. I grew up in Catholic school, took a bus driven by the neighborhood good guy back and forth, and played baseball and basketball amid the sun of the summer and the winter's overcast skies. Yet, when the portrait of suburbia wasn't around, and when the ever-caring voices of my parents were too far away to be heard, I turned to television to be my guardian. Television and its characters became my beacons; they became the substitutes whenever I needed fulfillment. And, among others, two people weaned me along the path of morality and righteousness that I walk on today.

At least that's what I thought. Is it silly to believe that a boob tube can wield so much influence on a child's and/or adolescent's mind? Is it silly to look to the characters, either fictional or real life, for an upbringing based steeply in right over wrong? Or was it just a child's mistake to believe that Doctor Heathcliff Huxtable and Marv Albert were too pristine to be tarnished?

What did I learn? Every Thursday night, I was fostered upon proper parenting by Mr. Huxtable, who distributed his wisdom on his gang of mischievous children, while being a successful obstetrician. He became my dad on Thursday night and I became Theo. I was the

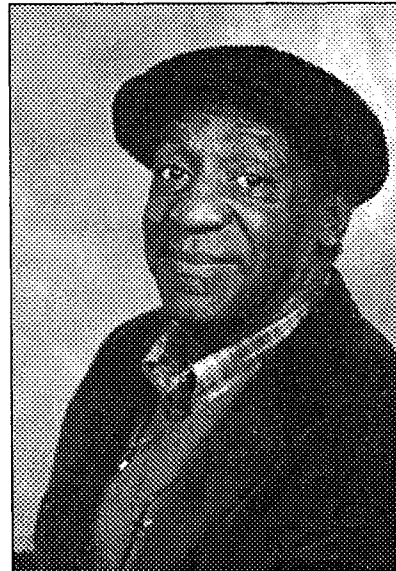
one with the messy room. He became my Dad, trudging through layers upon layers of clothes, sitting on my bed, and telling me that there will be other girls to come into my life. I became Rudy; incensed that somebody ate my cookies, and he became my comforter, helping me cook another batch for school. I bought into Heathcliff Huxtable. So what was I to think when Bill Cosby was found to have cheated on his wife (and supposedly fathered a child) for nineteen years? What was I to think when I learned that he neglected guiding what was to be his own child in lieu of actors? What had become of Daddy Huxtable?

What did I learn of that energetic basketball announcer, who taught me to see basketball in another way beyond what the playground taught me? He was the man who never erred in his call of the play-by-play, as if he scripted the game before it was played. He was able to bring humor and levity to a game that was played with intensity and anger. He was able to convey the subtleties of the game within the confines of expressive colorful language. What was I to think? That the man who was the voice of my favorite sports team was in actuality a sexual offender. Beyond all the tabloid/transvestite/kinky stuff, he was a sexual offender who bit a woman

numerous times. I bought into Marv Albert's character. He was basketball, even though he had scored as many points in the NBA as I had. Should I still play with menace and venom? Who was this man who altered my way of thinking? Was he to be believed?

I give blessings every day to my real parents, who gave me the ability to make up my mind as to what is right and wrong, and the freedom to express that. I thank them for the ability to take outer experiences and judge them accordingly. I am grateful that I was able to take Heathcliff Huxtable and Marv Albert for what they were: helpful guides on my path of life. I pray for the people who use them as crutches and decide that since their idols were sexual deviants and absentee fathers, then that is also the life to live for them.

Without my parents, would I have followed that trail? Would I be in pink panties denying my daughter's existence? Would my warped reality be a showcase for the horrors of television? I ask only that the Greatest American Hero be abstained from badness, for if he is also an asshole, then I must rethink my qualifications for idolhood.



steveoh's rants can be found at
www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/Marina/7158

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The Spot is located in the Fanny Brice building, Roosevelt Quad, on the corner off North Loop and Center Drives at the University at Stony Brook

The Vegetarian Dilemma

By Sophia Rovitti

There have been endless complaints recently about the food on campus: it's too expensive, facilities are not open at convenient times, or the food is just plain bad. My roommate hasn't used her card in two weeks because whenever she eats the food here it makes her sick. Instead she's been living on Cup O' Noodle. You know there's a problem if students feel that they will be healthier if they eat Cup O' Noodle three times a day rather than the campus food. We all know how difficult it can be to get a good meal here. Now try to do it as a vegetarian. I spent most of last semester subsisting on rolls and bagels, and with the hours and services of dining facilities cut since last semester, even those are scarce.

In certain ways, Aramark does seem to make an effort to accommodate vegetarians. You can order veggie burgers at the SAC and Bleacher. And at Roth they have lists of vegetarian entrees. In both cases most meat eaters would look at this and think that vegetarians are being taken care of. Unfortunately, it's an illusion. Most vegetarians don't just not eat meat. They don't eat chicken broth. They don't eat gelatin (because it is made from animal bones). They don't eat things that have contact with any animal products. Some vegetarians get quite ill if they consume any meat or animal product. One friend of mine, a vegetarian for 13 years, got a cup of coffee at a deli in which the milk had

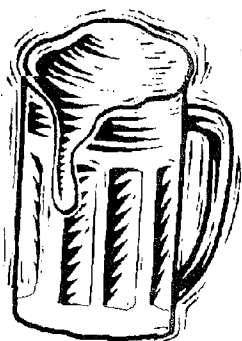
been fortified using cod-liver oil. She was throwing up the entire night from that tiny amount of oil from a fish.

Anyway, in both places that I mentioned as serving veggie burgers they usually cook them in the same places as the meat and use the same utensils. You can request that they clean the utensils, but they can't very well clean off one of the grills. As for the vegetarian "entrees", here's what I saw listed there: peas, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, and maybe a few other things like that. According to the Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, the definition of entree that relates to food, as opposed to entering somewhere, is this: the main course of a meal in the U.S. It will be a sad day when cranberry sauce is the main course of our meals.

Most of the vegetarian food on campus either is prepared in such a way that it is no longer vegetarian or it is hardly enough to sustain life. Vegetarians can no longer get sandwiches at Humanities; they are all pre-made, all of the containers have some sort of meat in them and the contents have all been touched by meat. Those of you who say we should just pick all the meat off of things, just think of my friend who spent an evening sick from the cod-liver oil in the milk in her coffee. Even when selecting prepackaged foods with which to stock the deli in the Union and the convenience stores in Kelly and the SAC they usually choose things that contain meat: beef and bean burritos rather than bean and cheese, ravioli with meat sauce rather than mac-

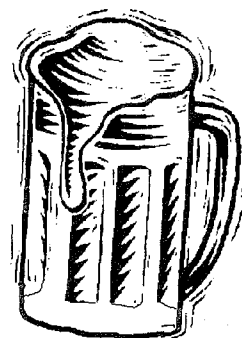
aroni and cheese, frozen chicken fettuccini alfredo rather than just plain fettuccini alfredo that vegetarians could eat too. The vending machines in Humanities are another example. There is one vending machine that serves hot foods (besides the popcorn machine) but of the six choices of foods the only vegetarian one is the french fries. Even the pizza that the machine dispenses has either sausage or pepperoni on it (I can't remember which).

I've personally given up. No, I still don't eat meat, but I know that it is not realistic to think that I can live on campus, be forced to be on the meal plan and avoid eating anything touched by meat. I eat veggie burgers served with the utensils used to flip raw meaty steaks. I don't have much choice. I can't live off rolls and peas and rice (incidentally, at Humanities you cannot even get rice alone; the manager, Nicholas, insists that it can only be sold to you if you buy their chicken as well). And I can't get off this insipid meal plan. I know this because I watched a former roommate of mine who is a vegan (doesn't eat meat, eggs, dairy products, refined sugar, honey, or anything else that comes from animals in any way) try to do so and fail... twice. From what I have heard, there used to be some sort of counsel or committee a few years back that would handle "vegetarian issues." I guess they would try to ensure that vegetarians were being provided for. But this no longer exists. It's a shame.



Tara Inn

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SUNDAY

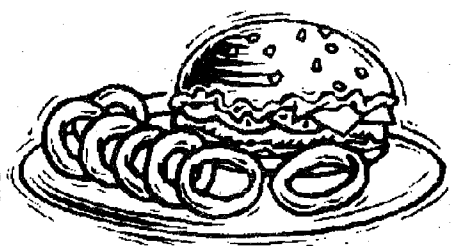
10¢ BUFFALO WINGS
\$4.50 PITCHERS OF BUD & MILLER LITE
STARTING AT 9 PM

MONDAY

10¢ BUFFALO WINGS
\$1.00 PINTS OF BUD & MILLER LITE
HELP-YOURSELF HOT DOGS

TUESDAY

GUYS & DOLLS NIGHT
EVERYBODY DRINKS HALF PRICE
STARTING AT 9:30 PM
FRIED CHICKEN DINNER \$2.99
INCLUDES 2 PIECES OF CHICKEN, SOUP,
SALAD, FRENCH FRIES OR RICE, BAKED
BEANS, COLE SLAW & VEGETABLE
STARTING AT 4 PM



WEDNESDAY NITE IS LADIES NITE
LADIES DRINK FREE STARTING AT 9 PM
AND FOR THE GUYS...
\$2.00 PINTS OF SAM ADAMS

THURSDAY

\$2.50 BOTTLES OF MOLSON
& MOLSON ICE

ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

\$2.00 ICE HOUSE
AND RED DOG
\$2.50 MICHELOB LIGHT
\$1.00 TARA BURGER
\$6.99 LOBSTER DINNER

A Skeptical Inquiry

By Thomas Sullivan

It started with a flyer posted on the library door. Then it was a certain selection of books in the campus bookstore that bothered me. Now, a flyer posted on my dorm door is the last straw. I simply have to express myself on this matter. My intelligence is being insulted along with the rest of the students on this campus.

The poster on the library door a couple of years ago announced that the science of paleoanthropology is actually a religion. I have a BA in Anthropology and am pursuing a BA in Earth and Space Sciences. I have a deep interest in human evolution and am well acquainted with the evidence in spite of having not done any graduate work. Evolution is a fact. Any other position is simply not scientifically tenable. To say, as the poster was implying, that humans didn't evolve from apes in some manner is to fly in the face of reality and a multitude of evidence. I'm not sure which is more insulting; that the person who put the flyer up thought I was dumb enough to believe it, or that they had the nerve to suggest unsupportedly (the poster advertised nothing else, not even who put it up) that paleoanthropology is anything less than scientific. I was momentarily annoyed enough to overcome my usual dedication to free speech and shove the flyer in the trash where it belonged.

In the bookstore, next to the cash register, there was, up until last summer, a shelf with books on astrology, numerology, and UFO's among other hokum. I understand why the bookstore would want to sell them. They are in business to make money after all and there is a sizable portion of people who believe in this junk. For that reason I can forgive, somewhat, a bookstore in the mall selling them, but surely they have no place in a campus bookstore. I find it insulting, and so should other students, that in an institution of higher learning the owners of the store expected or hoped to sell this pseudoscientific baloney. I was very annoyed that they were even willing to try. Even if people are willing to buy such baloney, that is no excuse for selling it and spreading such bull among college students. I was pleased therefore to find that this semester they were no longer selling such books.

The coup d' grace, however, was a flyer on my dorm door last year advertising a free astrology reading given at Gerswin college. Astrology was invented by ancient peoples who thought that the gods or spirits were telling them things through celestial movements. Based on the same logic or lack thereof, they also cracked open burnt bone and cut open live animals to examine their internal organs. If the breaks in the bone were clean or the animal's intestines were free of parasites then one could expect to have good luck. Various cultures of the ancient world promoted their own astrological beliefs, and the one that we are familiar with comes from Mesopotamia. The others include Egypt, India, China, Meso-American, and South American. The science of astronomy evolved from astrology because they needed to make observations accurate enough to allow them to predict celestial movements even when those movements couldn't be observed, such as during the day. Astrology has absolutely no scientific foundation whatsoever. There is nothing in our understanding of the natural universe that could explain how stars billions of light years away could effect the next day's emotional hang-ups. It seems though that there will always be people willing to believe

this. I find it insulting that someone thinks that a number of them live at Gerswin or anywhere on campus; or that they would dare present such garbage to university students as though it were verifiable. I didn't complain to the RA's though as this was in the late spring just before finals week (probably why those interested wanted to know the future) and they no doubt had enough to stress them out at that time in the semester.

This amount of pseudoscience on campus is not surprising, unfortunately. After all, Harvard psychologist John Mack believes that people are being abducted by UFO's for sexual experiments on the basis of nothing more than the abductee's testimony. On an even more outrageous level, political scientist Courtney Brown of Emory says in "Cosmic Voyage" that he has remote viewed through transcendental meditation at least three groups of aliens visiting earth and among other things conducting genetic research on humans starting with Adam and Eve and writing the "Star Trek" episodes (I kid you not!). It is however disturbing. Although Courtney Brown's hallucinations might explain some of the bad episodes of Star Trek and Riker's hairdo, it is a miscarriage of justice that those professors like Brown and Mack who have lost the ability to tell the truth from delusions and dreams can't be fired because they have tenure. This position may run counter to the justifiable intellectual philosophy of open discussion of all things but sometimes compromises are necessary if intellectual standards are to be maintained. It does universities no good if, as happened at Duke, the editors of the sociological journal *Social Text* couldn't recognize a blatantly phony antiscience article written by physicist Alan J. Sokal for the obvious hoax that it was. They didn't though and published it and when exposed were left explaining their stupidity while others snickered and gloated that *Social Text's* reputation as an intellectual journal was probably destroyed. As of yet it is still being published.

Stony Brook is excellent in the sciences. Students come here to learn how to think; not to have their minds closed by accepting pseudoscientific claptrap promising easy answers. Science teaches us that no answers come easy. The search for knowledge and an understanding of the universe requires the most rigorous skeptical criteria that we can put on it; and that extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. It may seem boring and unromantic but the result of several hundred years of such has been not only to vastly increase our knowledge but has opened up to us wonders undreamt of. Promoting such outrageous tripe is a disservice to students because it runs counter to the very purpose of a university, to produce intelligent informed individuals capable of discerning truth from the various forms of non-truth. They who promote such outrageous claims promote nonreason and irrationality over reason and rationality. By accepting such claims the students who accept them brush aside the rules and concepts of good reasoning developed over the centuries for separating reality from what we imagine it to be.

These are the very rules that they are supposed to be learning.

I suggest that something should be done to counter this disturbing trend on this campus and others. A student organization, something along the line of Stony Brook Society of Skeptics (any takers?) could provide a forum for debate and discussion of outrageous and extraordinary claims and inform students of the value of skepticism and

rigorous empirical standards. Linking up to similarly minded organizations in other universities such disturbing trends could be countered and good science and reason could be promoted nationwide. Such an organization could be beneficial to both students and faculty here and elsewhere. The students who come here deserve as much. The University, of course, already does a big part by teaching.

I have taken a well-rounded selection of 100 level science courses as requirements for my major and they are all generally well organized and well taught. Kudos should be given to Melville for subscribing to *Skeptical Inquirer* since it was first published. Every couple of months or so the magazine, published by the Center for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, exposes hoaxes, chicanery, fraudulent claims and promotions, and all manner of outrageous stuff while providing serious discussion on science, reasoning, and skepticism. There are several hours of fascinating reading up in the stacks if you have the time off from studying. I would also recommend Carl Sagan's *A Demon Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*. I would suggest that the library also subscribe to *Skeptic*, another newsstand publication that applies the skeptical approach to just about everything. *Skeptic* is available in the Stony Brook town library just a short distance from campus if you're interested. If you're interested in a more intellectual approach the university's collection of books on the philosophy of science in Melville, and philosophy and the concept of evolution in the biology library, is excellent.

Maybe I'm overreacting a little but I just don't think it's right to look upon students in such a degrading manner. People will always need to believe in something more and have meaning in their lives but religion fits that role nicely and there are many fine religious organizations on campus for that purpose. Students deserve a better opinion from people than this. Students may be gullible when they first come to a university—I was—but if they are continually looked upon and treated as stupid and gullible then that is what they may turn out to be. If they are, however, seen as intellectually curious and capable of learning, then it will surely promote intellectual growth, which is the whole point of their being here. This is a bright side to this after all. At least the poster on my dorm door didn't advertise an astrology reading for a fee. Then I really would have been insulted and the RA's would have gotten an earful.

You know what I hate?

It's having to fill up miserable little spaces like this in the paper layout.

When you've got something this small, it's not like you can say anything of import or even cram an advertisement into the space. All you can do is think up some crappy joke or concept to try and get new people to join the paper and take over your job so you don't have to do this anymore.

So join the Press. It's cold in here and I want to go home.

A MAN FULL OF HATE

By Keith Filaski

An interesting thing happened to Laibach on the way to their new album. Apparently, the Yugoslavian gods of politically radical industrial music have taken on as influence KMFD and the current popular guitar-driven sound. Their new album, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Mute) is a complete turn-around from recent ones such as *Nato* (Mute) and *Kapital* (Mute). Where these albums were permeated by techno club hits, *Jesus Christ* is infested with near-metal industrial songs fit only, in my opinion, for the garbage.

On the opening track "God Is God," which I suppose is another philosophical breakthrough for the band along the lines of their previous song "Life is Life," they immediately give us a guitar riff typical of current Front Line Assembly. You can imagine my surprise, Laibach has gone from the orchestra music of past albums to the next Filter.

Laibach's albums have always had their share of oddly-chosen cover songs, from their rendition of the entire Beatles album *Let It Be* to the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy For the Devil." This album is no exception. However, where the majority of past covers made for, if nothing else, interesting listening experiences, those on *Jesus Christ* are, simply put, uninteresting. On "Jesus Christ Superstar" (do your homework if you don't know where this is

from), as well as on Prince's "The Cross", Laibach not only has nothing to add to the originals, but, for lack of a better term, murders them. Guitar-driven industrial has no place in showtunes and androgyny.

In all fairness, if you choose to fight your way through the guitars, Laibach's typical sound of orchestral pieces and well-made beats can still be found in the background. Two tracks, "To the New Light" and "Deus Ex Machina", both void of guitars, save this album from being complete shit, and show that Laibach talents are still present although hidden.

A new single from dance-band Enigma has recently crossed my path. "Beyond the Invisible" (Virgin) takes us to an all-too familiar



place. It seems that their formula of tranquil dance beats and Asian & religious chants which took them to stardom with 1990's "Sadness", has lost its novelty. With "Beyond the Invisible", we are given this same basic formula. The music itself, although nothing new, is still relaxing to listen to until some rather annoying male vocals come into the mix. At the end of the song, I found myself more irritated than mellow, simply because of these vocals. It seems as if Enigma are trying too hard for another hit. I've got news for them, "Beyond the Invisible"

falls way short of their goal.

The b-side, "Almost Full Moon", lacks any irritating vocals and is good for late-night study sessions, but nothing else. Buy it used.

As a twisted opening to the holiday season, I now wish to present to you Martin Atkins and the Chicago Industrial League and their album, *An Industrial Christmas Carol* (Invisible). Nowhere has the birth of Christ been celebrated in such a fashion, that is to say, not since Pigface's rendition of "Jingle Bells" on their 1993 live album, *Truth Will Out* (Invisible). In fact, the best comparison I can make to *An Industrial Christmas Carol* is with Pigface. I guess Martin Atkins' influence can be seen in all the bands he is in.

The album is full of Atkins' typical groovin' drum beats, simple yet seductive synths, and feedback and noise. The only things that remotely link the album with Christmas are the numerous looped vocal samples. A constant cry of "How much/How many" particularly sticks in my mind, it must loop some thirty times. This, along with other samples such as "365 shopping days till next Christmas", give you one sick yet poetic look at holiday shopping.

Atkins is joined by fellow Pigface member Jason McNinch, Mark Spybey of Dead Voices on Air and Download fame, as well as a number of lesser-known members. If you like Pigface at their noise-fest best then you will love this album. When you are sitting near the tree Christmas morning opening presents and drinking eggnog, pop this in and give Grandma a heart attack. Merry Christmas.

Time's Up For Vonnegut

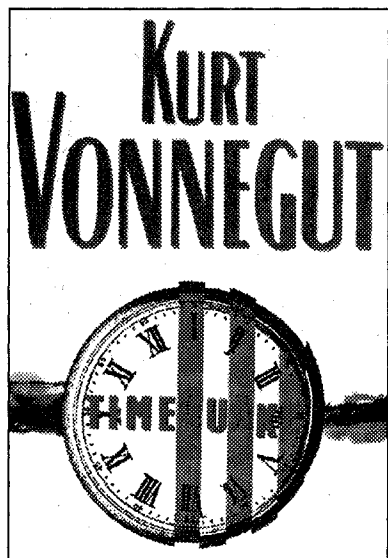
By Robby Quartz

Kurt Vonnegut can still make me laugh. His latest and (reportedly last) book starts off as a collection of funny stories and jokes. A good title for this book would have been "Random Thoughts and Musings," as Vonnegut shares his philosophies and feelings on subjects ranging from science and art to war and human relationships.

Long-time Vonnegut character and alter-ego Killgore Trout is one of the central figures in this book, sharing the spotlight with Vonnegut himself.

Timequake is often autobiographical. Vonnegut talks about his family history and introduces us to acquaintances, friends, wives and his children. He also talks about his experience during World War II and his professional life which included being a scientist for General Electric, a car salesman, a creative writing professor, and of course, a novelist.

In one section, Vonnegut gives us an ironic look at the life of Andre Sakarov, the Soviet inventor of the H-Bomb who was married to a pediatrician. After he tested his bomb, he became a nuclear weapons opponent and an advocate for the expansion of human rights. For his troubles, the stupid and vicious dictator of the old USSR internally exiled him to "a whistle stop on the permafrost."



The Norwegians awarded Sakarov the Nobel Peace Prize for his call to end the arms race. Vonnegut tells this with the supposition that the human race really wants to commit suicide, and the two world wars were "western civilizations failed attempts to commit suicide." Vonnegut quips about Sakarov's apology for working on the arms race, "Living on a planet where the smartest animals want to commit suicide means never having to say you're sorry."

Indianapolis, Indiana is a subject that Vonnegut writes about; we learn about his maternal grandfather, the brewer whose livelihood was interrupted by prohibition, his brother Bernard the scientist, and his mother and sisters. He relates the tale of his brewer grandfather to and art show where his prints were being displayed in Denver, Colorado. A local micro brewery

made a coffee flavored beer called 'Kurt's Mile High malt.'

The thoughts and opinions of Kurt Vonnegut are presented on a wide variety of subjects. The play *Our Town* is as important to him as is *Death of a Salesman*. He writes about Mark Twain, Tennessee Williams, and Hemingway. Vonnegut feels that these people aren't paid much attention anymore. He notes the obliteration of the short story and wor-

ries about the future of books. In *timequake* you find out that Vonnegut is an admirer of Eugene Debs, an American socialist leader of the first half of the century.

Kurt Vonnegut wrote of a talk he gave on an anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan. He respected the opinion of a soldier he knew who favored the bombing of Hiroshima because he was training for the invasion of Japan. Then Vonnegut added, "I know a single word that proves our democratic government is capable of committing obscene, gleefully rabid, racist, yahooistic murder, of unarmed men, women, and children. Murders wholly devoid of military common sense. I said the word is a foreign word, the word is Nagasaki."

Timequake is full of interesting stories, jokes, hur-rangs, and observations from an important writer of the second half of this century. Some of the book is chatter. If you like Kurt Vonnegut and are interested in him, pick up this book. If you don't know Kurt Vonnegut, I suggest these books: *Cat Cradle*, *Slaughter House 5* (this book was banned from the Island Trees School district, that is why it was the first Vonnegut book I read) *Breakfast of Champions*, (Killgore Trout is the co star of this book) *Dead Eyed Dick*, and *God Bless You Mr. Rosewater* are very funny books. Vonnegut has published 18 novels and a collection of short stories called *Welcome to the Monkey House*. Two of his novels were made in to movies, *Slaughterhouse 5* and *Mother Night*. You can rent them at the video store.

Timequake by Kurt Vonnegut, published by G.P. Putnam' Sons.

Goon, in the Mist

By Guy Cleveland

GOONS IN THE MIST is a series that uses an anthropological approach to study a person on-campus known as the Goon. The Goon is a great mystery, one of the most unique humans who has ever walked the earth, and deserves a great deal of intense scrutiny. Hopefully, this study will provide that scrutiny.

In the spirit of our incipient Hallows Eve celebration, I have chosen to devote this issue of *Goon In The Mist* to a study of a monster (or monsters) often associated with the horrific and formidable: the Bigfoot. Sometimes known as Sasquatch, the Wendigo or, in colder climes, the Yeti. The high number of characteristics both Bigfoot (and, more notably, his distant cousins, as we shall see) and the Goon share can hardly be the work of coincidence, but since a connection drawn between a mythical beast and a real person is tenuous at best, I will leave it up to the reader to decide for him or herself.

We all know about Bigfoot. He lives in the mountains, sometimes in the forest, and is purported to be tall, heavy, and covered in fur. The few photographs shot of this creature are grainy and unconvincing, and the whole thing is quite dismissible as a neat little hoax based on its general lack of proof.

However, there are more matches regarding some of the descendants of Bigfoot, lesser-known but no less intriguing instances of the Bigfoot phenomena in other sections of the world. And many of these are associated with volumes of convincing evidence.

Our journey begins in the southwestern region of the United States, where sightings of a creature dubbed by the locals as "el chupacabras" have made national news. Described as existing somewhere between a bat, kangaroo, and armadillo, this winged creature is called the "goatsucker" because of its penchant for draining wildstock, and sometimes weak humans, of their blood.

Of course, you may say "what does the Goon have in common with such a creature?" Well, many sources with a vested interest in the chupacabras believe it has something to do with an ape, much like the Bigfoot. John Green, a doctor in plant genetics and speaker for MUFON (the Mutual UFO Network), wonders "if humans descended from killer apes, is it possible the chupacabras is their killer ape?" Perhaps the Goon walking among us is one of these creatures, or if not, a version of the creature trapped between stages of evolution.

There is more evidence that matches the Goon with this desert-dwelling predator, however. Joe Espinoza, whose family was attacked by the chupacabras, said that it "smelled like a wet dog." And in another assault, it left behind a "puddle of slime" and a "rancid piece of meat." All of these may be indicators as to the presence of the Goon. He certainly smells rather vile, and his eating habits, as we last discovered, might come into contact on numerous occasions with rancid meat.

As the story of the chupacabras spread across America, it traveled to the tri-state area, where it encountered a more local legend -- The Jersey Devil, who inspired a sports franchise during its many haunts of the backwoods Pine Barrens. John

Irwin, a summer park ranger in the Wharton State Forest of New Jersey, said he saw "a large, dark figure emerge from the woods. It stood like a human, over six foot tall, and it had black fur that looked wet and matted."

Of great interest to my thesis is the explanation of the Jersey Devil's origin. In 1735, Mother Leeds, supposedly a witch, delivered a child born of union between herself and the devil. The child was born normal, but then changed form. This last part is of immense importance. If the being in question were capable of shape-shifting, then it would explain the discrepancies between the reports of the chupacabras as a winged pterodactyl-like creature and the somewhat less aerial Goon.

Last but not least is a relatively new phenomenon known as Nguoi Rung, or the Vietnamese Forest People. Their toes are said to be much longer than those of a human; it is no coincidence, I think, that the few sightings of the Goon without any foot apparel display hairy feet that (surprise!) have long toes. This wildman has been described as potentially large, with body hair from grey to brown to black, and they always walk bipedally. That sounds like our man, officer, why don't we bring him down for questioning?

In 1969, Bernard Heuvelmans discovered an "ice man", which he dubbed *Homo pongoides*. The specimen has since disappeared. Perhaps it is on the Stony Brook campus right now...

Coming soon... contact!

More Crap From Fuckin' Ted

By Ted Swedalla

Has lounge become the new alternative music?

With Prodigy and The Chemical Brothers plastered all over MTV and Rolling Stone, can techno/break-beat/trip-hop (or whatever it is) be called alternative? I think not.

Lounge music has lifted its martini-soaked skin up from obscurity to garnish small sections of your better music stores. Capitol records made an early jump into the market with their Ultra-Lounge series.

Volume 5 of the series *Wild, Cool and Swingin'* is just that. Highlighting the crooners, this disk features 18 songs, not one recorded after 1964. The only notable omission is Frank "I Can't Remember What I Had For Breakfast" Sinatra. Fellow Rat-Packer Dean Martin kicks off this gem with "Ain't That A Kick In The Head."

Other standout cherries in this larger than life Manhattan include Bobby Darin's "More" and "Hello Dolly," Peggy Lee's "Fever" and Wayne Newton's "Danke Schöen." The star of this disk however, is Louis Prima. The original gigolo (as in "Just A Gigolo/I Ain't Got Nobody") he clocks in with three stellar finger-snapping sonic cocktails.

His best is easily, "Closer To The Bone," a little ditty about his obsession with overly skinny women. The whole disk swings and you'll be hardpressed not to sing along with at least one of these tunes. These are the songs that bands like Love Jones and Combustible Edison cut their teeth on. Like with the *Reservoir Dogs* soundtrack, any party will reach a higher level just due to the kitsch factor. If you cannot drink cocktails to this, or any others in the Ultra-Lounge series, at least drink your beer from a bottle.

A later entry to scoop up some of the lounge mar-

ket was Jack Jones' *New Jack Swing* album. His Grammy winning entry contains covers by the Beatles "She's Leaving Home," The Police "Every Breath You Take" and Bryan Adams "Have You Ever Loved A Woman." But what makes this disk worth buying, (only if you have really disposable income) are tracks 7 and 10.

The "Love Boat Theme" ends the disk and takes you back to when you imagined yourself as a passenger on the Pacific Princess. Don't deny it, everyone wanted to be on board. You wanted to rub Capt. Steubing's head, smack Gopher around and try to find a ship bar that Isaac didn't work in.

But the track that makes the disk is "Mack The Knife." After listening to it you begin to realize that a Jack Jones/Smashing Pumpkins link exists somewhere in this multiverse. Like all

Smashing Pumpkins songs, Jack has built up from relative quiet to eardrum bursting. Instead of a wall of guitars, Jack uses a kicking horn section. This noise isn't the only link, have you ever really listened to the words of "Mack The Knife?" Mack is nothing short of a homicidal maniac, and a perfect compliment to anything Billy Corgan has ever penned.

Then two weeks ago Hollywood Records threw their two cents in with Lounge-A-Palooza. As the back of the CD says "Taking lounge music to its illogical conclusion", is one of the few things they got right. Half of these songs don't belong on a

lounge compilation.

It opens with the hoppin' instrumental "Miniskirt", by Combustible Edison & Esquivel (the king of bachelor pad music). After a lame entry by Fastball, things start to get exciting.

Ben Folds Five chimes in with a very loungey "She Don't Use Jelly" by the Flaming Lips, punctuated by a string section and wood blocks galore. After Poe's sparkling "A Rose Is A Rose" it gets scary.

The artists for the next track, Steve & Eydie, set off an automatic nervous reaction in me that forced me to gouge my own eyes out. Luckily, I missed. When I recovered, I noticed that this husband and wife team covered Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun." Have you ever wanted to hear Steve Lawrence

sing "boiling heat/summer stench/beneath the black the sky looks dead"? Well you're in luck. This orchestrated version of the Soundgarden hit is worth the price of the disk.

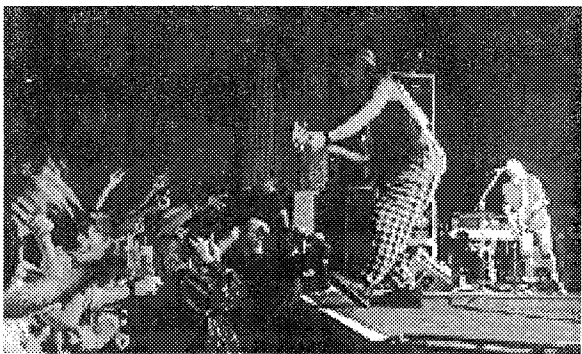
Pizzicato Five, PJ Harvey and Chris Ballew (of Presidents Of The United States) all keep to the mood of the disk by throwing in lounge songs. Fun Lovin Criminals "I'm Not In Love" and Glen Campbell's "Wichita Lineman" with Michelle Shocked are clearly odd choices. All in all the highs on this disk out weigh the sucks, and make this a necessity, if only for "Black Hole Sun".



Heaven rest us... I am not asbestos.

Chin Slinky

By Lowell Yaeger



Primus... sucks?

At least, they did at Roseland on October 17, where their sarcasm-laden motto turned into a chillingly accurate description of the band's performance. Gone were the wit and flair of old; the only thing I saw up on that stage were three men leading three different bands in an orgy of disconnected self-indulgence.

A lot of critics have called Primus self-indulgent, but I never really agreed with the negative connotations of such a label until now. Because while older Primus material found the band showing off, they were good at it, and they did it together. The new incarnation of Primus, with their precise and unimaginative drummer, finds three musicians who all think they're leading the song, and in the end, wind up crashing into each other.

Guitarist Larry LaLonde tossed out as many splashes of skronk as were necessary to drown out bassist/singer Les Claypool's throbbing bass, and the drummer, Brain, was usually playing a completely different song. "Jerry Was A Race Car Driver" lost all of its momentum by carrying on for too long, and "Tommy The Cat" was an absolute mess. The best performed of the songs were the new material, but not because of, say, band preference, but because of their relative simplicity compared to some of the band's older work.

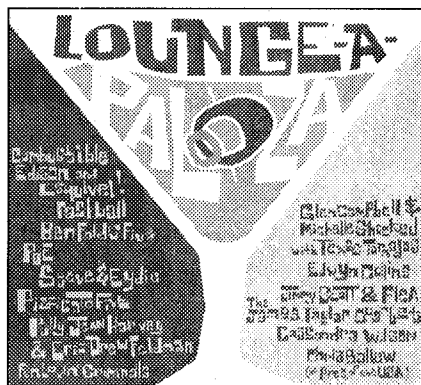
The tragic part of this is that I think Les Claypool knows. He certainly didn't seem very happy up there. I've seen Primus on more occasions than I can remember, and not once have I seen Les look unhappy. When he walked off the stage at the end of the show, his shoulders were slumped and he looked altogether defeated.

The audience, too, has changed. Gone are the backwoods weirdos who made Primus concerts such an entertainingly violent business. They have been replaced by a veritable horde of rambunctious junior high school kids. Every Bart Simpson in the tri-state area was at that show. Neighborhoods plagued by the exploits of wild young problem children heaved a sigh of relief and silently prayed that, no matter how horrible it might sound, maybe it would be better if Luke and Damien were in an accident at the concert and never came home again. I shared the horror of a young man next to me who wailed "kids, it's all kids!"

What the children lacked in weirdness they made up for in violence. (Although the one kid who climbed up on someone's head, dropped his pants, and slapped his ass with a shit-eating "by-Golly-I'm-an-idiot" grin was pretty weird. Until he fell off his friend's shoulders and on to his head.) At any one time -- before, during, and after the show -- there was a vast roiling pit of bodies; the only let-up came when the kids, in an effort requiring more cooperation than I had thought them capable of, slammed the barrier between the stage and the audience against the guards caught in the middle,

prompting a cessation of pre-show set-up and the arrival of the head of security to school the young brats on safe slam-dancing.

Buck-O-Nine opened the show, and wow, did they suck. Every aspect of ska that I don't like was embodied in their performance. You know, even though I don't like the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, I can at least respect them, because to the best of my knowledge they got to their turf first. So even though I don't like that sound, it's imaginative enough that the people who created it should get praise for their work. But to copy it by rote and insult an audience with it for roughly 40 minutes is like reciting a grade schooler's essay for entertainment: it just doesn't satisfy.



Various Artists
Lounge-A-Palooza
Hollywood Records

Some ideas are a lot better in concept than they are in execution. The KISS solo albums probably looked fantastic on paper, but when the finished product rolled out of the presses, a whole host of record executives found their heads on the chopping block.

Up until now, I had considered the recent surge of interest in "lounge music" to be one of these ideas. Cocktail party music from the 50s and 60s is funny, but to the tune of \$14.99 a CD? Well, maybe not that funny. Not to mention that lounge music tends to come in dense compilations that are difficult to distinguish from one another, and that the snotty art-dicks who clog up the aisles in Other Music own every single one.

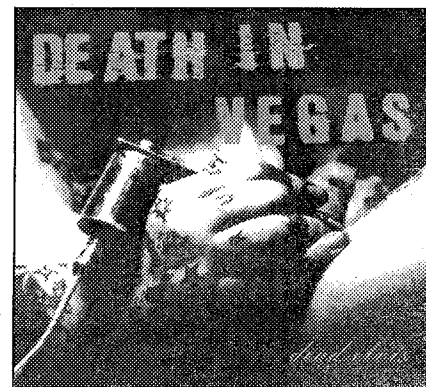
But *Lounge-A-Palooza* is a different story altogether. Putting a spin on the idea of lounge music, a group of alternarock artists have convened to record tongue-in-cheek covers of famous soft-rock ballads -- and vice versa. Less than a track away from Pizzicato Five's bouncy take on "The Girl From Ipanema", one can find Steve & Eydie (the latter of "Blame It On The Bossanova" fame) applying the final touches of kitsch to everybody's favorite radio-friendly dirge, Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun". The pair croon their way through lyrics that sound ridiculous in a lounge context -- you try and keep a straight face when Steve Lawrence applies everything he learned in the last 40 years to a line like "boiling heat/summer stench/beneath the black, the sky looks dead".

Other highlights include a performance of "Wichita Lineman" by Glen Campbell & Nichelle Shocked with Texas Tornadoes, and the truly original dementia of Chris Bellew (The Presidents Of The United States Of America) on "Robert Goulet (On The River Nile)". Alternaband Poe rises above their flavor-of-the-month status with "A Rose Is A Rose", as much a tribute to Gertrude Stein as it is to Parisian jazz cafe sluts, and Fun Lovin' Criminals manage to put aside their frat-boy veneer of smarminess while performing "I'm Not In Love".

The final mindfuck comes when Ben Folds Five does a lounge version of another modern rock song, the Flaming Lips' "She Don't Use Jelly".

A few artists take things too far -- Fastball's rendition of Burth Bacarach's "This Guy's In Love With You" doesn't have enough of a sense of humor, and PJ Harvey & Eric Drew Feldman absolutely butcher Mel Torme's "Zaz Turned Blue" by making it a post-modern Goth song with a piano tune oddly reminiscent of King Crimson's "In The Court Of The Crimson King" (trust me, no matter how delicious it sounds, it just doesn't work).

But overall, this is a solid collection that will undoubtedly inspire volumes and volumes of similar music, until the thought of hearing anything even remotely loungey sends one into hiding underneath the sofa with a battered old Nitzer Ebb tape. In small doses, the joke is great, but the high quality of the original is sure to spawn less tolerable sequels.



Death In Vegas
Dead Elvis
Time Bomb/Concrete

Techno, as a genre, has a half-life of about three weeks. There's only so many times you can hear a Chemical Brothers record before you get sick of acid sounds and decide to move on to something else; I won't even begin to complain about the Prodigy. In short, it is the rare techno act that manages to keep my attention for any longer than a few thorough listenings.

Death In Vegas is one of those rare techno acts. I don't know anything about their origins, previous work, or band members; all I know is that they're on tour with the Chemical Brothers and serve up some of the funkier beats I've ever heard. Imagine Beck getting together with Lee "Scratch" Perry and Barry White to record a techno album under the auspices of the Dust Brothers' production, and you're close to what Death In Vegas is getting at.

The album opens with "All That Glitters", where a smooth sample of "I've been told/All that glitters/is not gold" rests atop the steady beat and jazzy piano like hot fudge on creamy vanilla ice cream -- oh yeah! The following "Opium Shuffle" is a lot spacier, and edges a lot closer to the techno end of the band's oeuvre. So does the first single, "Dirt", which is somewhat of a disappointment (I've heard just about all the driving techno anthems I can stand).

The band is most impressive when it blends techno with out-of-context instrumentation and vocals. "GBH" begins with a bluesy organ line, the kind one might find on a Doors song, and runs through almost ska-like rasta vocals before coming to its conclusion. The same approach, sans organ, can be found on "Twist And Shout", which features Ranking Roger on vocals, and "I Spy" is the first merger of world music and techno that doesn't painfully remind me of a bad frat party.