

# THE STONY BROOK PRESS

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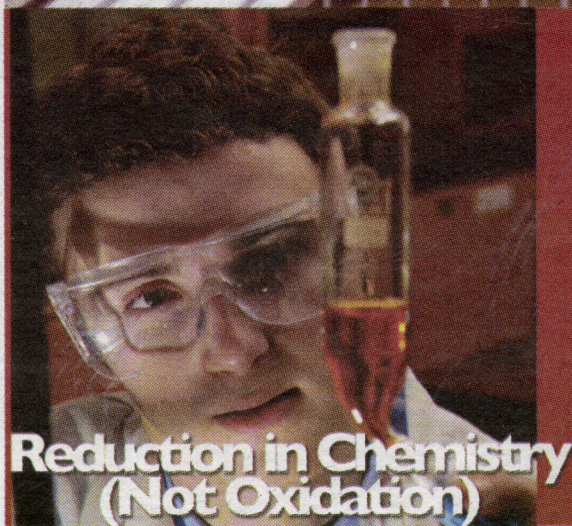
"FEATURING BILLY ZANE  
AS THE ICEBERG"

APRIL 22, 2009

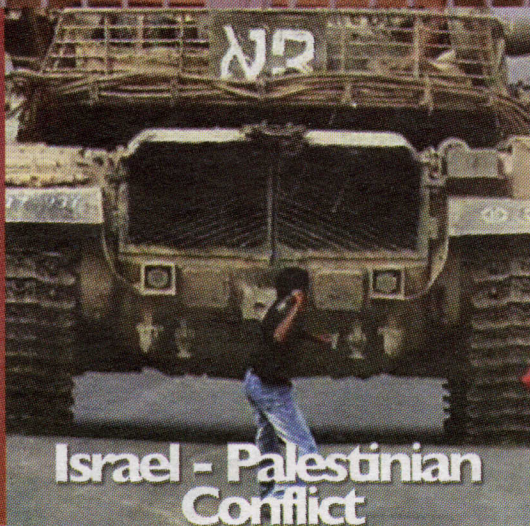
For Your Safety This Is  
Not An Entrance

For Your Safety This Is  
Not An Entrance

## THE MEAL PLAN: IT'S A TRAP!



Reduction in Chemistry  
(Not Oxidation)



Israel - Palestinian  
Conflict



Men's Lacrosse



# Brookhaven Making That Money

By Caitlin Ferrell

The Brookhaven National Laboratory, a world-renowned research facility located in Upton, New York, will soon receive \$184.3 million in Recovery Act funding. The new transfusion comes from \$1.2 billion of Recovery Act funds to be disbursed by the Department of Energy's Office of Science.

"Leadership in science remains vital to America's economic prosperity, energy security and global competitiveness," said Secretary of Energy Steven Chu in a March 23 press release. "These projects not only provide critically needed short-term economic relief, but also represent a strategic investment in our nation's future."

The Brookhaven National Laboratory plans to use the funds primarily to aid construction of the new National Synchrotron Light Source II (NSLS II). The NSLS II is a \$912 million project approved earlier this year.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and N.Y. Rep. Tim Bishop visited the Brookhaven National Laboratory on Friday, Apr. 17. "This is great news for Brookhaven National Laboratory and for all of Long Island," Gillibrand said last month. "Brookhaven is a major economic engine for Long Island. This funding will help create jobs and keep Long Island at the forefront of scientific

research."

Brookhaven's current light source is the National Synchrotron Light Source. The National Synchrotron Light Source consists of two electron storage rings, an X-ray and a vacuum ultra violet (VUV), which provides light that spans the electromagnetic spectrum from infrared

rays to X-rays. This allows for a wide variety of experiments to be done at the Brookhaven lab that cannot be done elsewhere. It is used annually by over 2,000 researchers every year. Researchers come from 400 universities for research in biology and medicine, chemistry, environmental sciences,

physics and materials science.

The new NSLS II will be a new medium-energy electron storage ring of three billion electron-volts, and will produce X-rays more than ten thousand times brighter than the current National Synchrotron Light Source.

The NSLS II will be a world first – its rays will be brighter than any light source in existence or currently under construction. Its properties could lead to new advents in solar energy, faster and cheaper electronics and higher-efficiency electricity.

In Feb. 2009, the Brookhaven National Laboratory announced its chosen contractor to be Torcon Inc., a New Jersey firm with many New York based projects. The project team estimates that some \$91 million in materials will be bought from Long Island and other NY suppliers. The NSLS-II Website estimates that the project will create 1,000 jobs over the next few years. Construction is expected to continue until 2012.

"We are very pleased to mark this significant project milestone," said NSLS-II Project Director Steve Dierker. "A great deal of work on the part of many talented and dedicated people has led us to where we can begin construction of this state of the art machine."



The Empire...mwahahahahahaha

## Students Have No Chemistry

By Erin Jayne Mansfield

The Stony Brook University Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Mark Arnoff, reported at last Monday's University Senate meeting that SUNY budget cuts will cut hundreds of seats from introductory science courses.

Classes are being cut or reduced in size due to the university's loss of funding from the State of New York, which will receive 80 percent of the 2009-10 tuition hikes.

"We will have a 20 percent reduction in Teaching Assistants next fall compared to fall 2008, and the capacity reductions fall most heavily in the TA-intensive laboratory courses," chemistry professor Robert Kerber said of his department.

According to Kerber, the introductory chemistry courses CHE 129, 131, 133 and the upper-level CHE 327 will lose 30, 96, 322 and 60 seats, respectively.

Science-based majors, including

health professions, laboratory sciences, psychology and engineering, account for at least 48 percent of undergraduate degree tracks at Stony Brook University, according to College Board statistics, and students are skeptical about what will happen to their educations.

"I definitely think it's a shame," Elizabeth Scisci, a senior biology major and member of Women in Science and Engineering from Farmingdale, N.Y., said. "It's just making it more difficult for students to graduate in four years. She went on to explain how important graduate and undergraduate TAs are in large laboratory classes in which there is only one professor.

"An attempt is being made...not to affect students' graduation," Mark Arnoff said about all university departments.

He mentioned that one strategy to maintain high quality is to target classes in which not all of the seats in the room are being filled and make them larger. The other is to minimize how many seats in each section are reserved for

specific groups of people—such as majors and minors.

Kerber said that students who need these classes to graduate can make up for them in the winter or summer sessions.

"We've done the best we can to buffer the effects of the TA cutbacks so

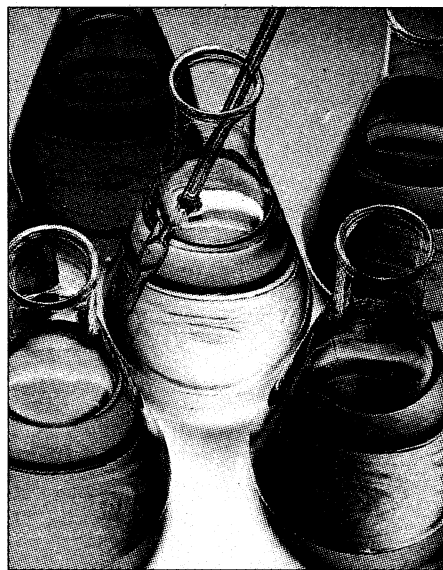
that students will not be excessively affected," he said, "but there's a limit to how much we can do."

"If cutbacks and confiscations of tuition and other revenues continue, SUNY as a whole is going to have to reduce the student population by limiting admissions."

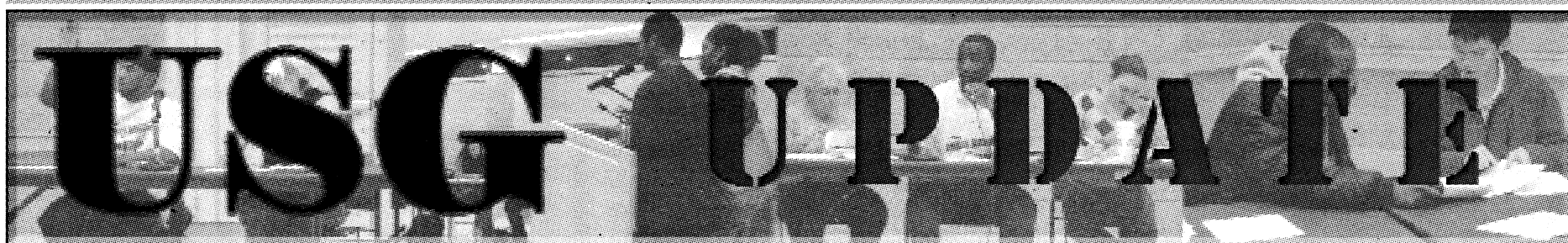
With regards to admissions, one of the concerns that University Senators—each of whom represents his or her department—voiced was how they were supposed to explain to prospective students that they were unsure of the future quality of the university.

Professor Barbara Selvin, who represents the School of Journalism in the University Senate, said, "All colleges and universities are wrestling with the same problem," and that the major selling point for Stony Brook will be its price tag in comparison to private institutions.

Arnoff said, "I'm not sure what to say to a student who is here on the last freshman orientation and wants to take CHE 131."



Dubious solutions to complex problems.



## SAB Gets a \$10,000 Shot in the Arm

By Natalie Crnosija

The Undergraduate Student Government Senate granted the Student Activities Board \$10,000 in response to their request for emergency funding.

USG Treasurer Vanessa Cheris said that the SAB's planning of BrookFest required the additional funding. BrookFest, a carnival and music performance for students, occurred for the first time last year. The event is currently projected to cost up to \$120,000.

"They could not function with less than \$10,000," Cheris said. "The budget cannot be finalized until closer to the event. The expenditures were more than expected."

The SAB currently has \$103,000 left of their 2008-09 budget, which totaled \$250,000, to put towards BrookFest. Cheris attributed the SAB's budgetary shortfall to unforeseen costs accrued over the year and the change in the SAB chairmanship midyear, which affected the event's planning.

Former SAB Chair Anthony Curry graduated in December 2008 and was replaced by Mojibola Adeshuko, who was approved by the USG Senate at the beginning of the spring 2009 semester.

Senator Shammell Forbes also recognized the change of leadership midyear as being problematic and costly to the BrookFest planning process.

"A big issue was that chairs were changed midyear," Forbes said. "When you have a chair until December, that person was not thinking of BrookFest. They tried to fix it. They can fix it with better planning and better SAB spending with a consistent chair."

BrookFest itself exceeded projected costs with the requirement of fencing for the event and the variable adjustment of artists' fees, Cheris said.

The artists scheduled to perform at the event have not been revealed by either USG or SAB.

Unlike Nas' BrookFest performance last year, multiple artists will be performing at the 2009 BrookFest, said SAB Treasurer Melissa Bedminister. Each artist has a contract valued between \$15,000 and \$25,000 as compared Nas' contract, which cost the SAB \$60,000.

The artists were chosen based on the polls taken in the SAB's body and research on the artists' availability.

Bedminister added that the SAB's budgetary deficit was put into sharp relief by the need to pay for event space

and event security.

"Athletics charges us for the use of the space," Bedminister said. "Most of the unforeseen costs come from security, which is a large expense."

In spite of the expenses incurred, Forbes emphasized the importance of establishing BrookFest as a SBU tradition.

"BrookFest is growing along with Roth Regatta," Forbes said. "It should be elevated to a staple event. There needs to be more events like this. People look for it."

Senator Blake Wind also highlighted the importance of establishing BrookFest as an annual SBU event balanced against the cost of the event.

"My overall philosophy is that every dollar [of the Student Activities fund which makes up the SAB budget] that [the SAB] has is for student use," Wind said.

Even with the \$10,000 emergency funding, SAB's balance falls \$7,000 short of their projected need. Cheris, who said that SAB financial shortfall occurs every year, explained that other clubs and organizations usually contribute to the event in some way.

Wind remained faithful in the SAB's management of their budget and



BrookFest and said that they are doing the best they can with what is given to them.

"We have to realize that [the SAB] are just students and they can't handle the event on the level of a full time administrator."

## More Candidate Statements...

**Sean Moore**

*Running for Senator*



*Why are you running for this position?*

I am running for this position to make a difference in my campus community. Many students are unaware that \$95 of their money is collected and then allocated by a paid student government.

Some students only have a vague idea of what USG does, if they know it exists at all. I hope to improve this, be it by encouraging students to attend meetings or visit their senator's office hours. I also hope to make USG a more professional and approachable organization, though it is a task I cannot do alone.

*What changes do you plan to make if you are elected?*

As I said previously, I hope to make USG a more professional and approachable organization. I realize it is a student government, but it is a student government directly accountable for \$3 million of the student body's money. I intend to also investigate further, and encourage my fellow senators to, any upcoming legislation or budget-related material. I feel at times the senate acts as a rubber stamp, passing items worth thousands of dollars without much inquiry. The senate, and USG as a whole, could use more accountability and transparency.

**Katie Schultz**

*Running for Senator*

*Why are you running for this position?*

I am running for re-election to the Senate because as a member of clubs, someone who pays the student activity fee every year, as one who is interested in starting up a club, and as a student who is impacted by the budget cuts, I represent much of the undergraduate student body. I want to be part of an organization that is at the crux of the undergraduate government, making administration smoother and more available to students. Everyday, I run into people that have no idea who the USG is, or where to go to start up a club. I also believe that there is more to the USG than just clubs, so I want to increase awareness of the other organizations that the USG supports and that the Senate provides money for, such as the PASS tutoring program and the various budget cuts over the past few months.

*What changes do you plan to make if you are elected?*

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The *Stony Brook Press*  
Suites 060 & 061  
Student Union  
SUNY at Stony Brook  
Stony Brook, NY 11794-3200  
(631) 632-6451 Voice  
(631) 632-4137 Fax  
Email: sbpressnews@gmail.com

## editorials

## A Letter to the FSA

Hello, members of the FSA and the bid evaluation committee. Currently, you are heading down a path that we—not only at *The Press*, but on campus in general—are all too familiar with. This is the bid selection process for a new food service provider on campus. We went through the process a year ago when the beverage provider's contract for renewal came. Coke was replaced by the slightly-more-acceptable Pepsi, but the contract was essentially the same. We were there—and partially responsible—for the messy end of Aramark's contract. When Chartwells replaced Aramark eleven years ago, people wondered what had really changed. The answer is: not a lot. These exclusive contracts with major multinational corporations allow for huge profits for these companies, often at the expense of the students' well-being, options, convenience and wallets. When students are running out of points weeks before the semester's end, it does not matter which food service provider is in place.

This endless cycle of indentured consumerism has to stop somewhere, and the best place to stop it is with you, members of the FSA. We urge you to consider the following when evaluating the current proposals for a new contract:

## 1. Avoid long, exclusive contracts.

We usually try to push a communist agenda, but in this case, we prefer healthy competition between vendors. Free market economics, with healthy regulation provided by overseeing organizations—in this case, the FSA—tends to keep prices reasonable, which should be the FSA's top concern. Another option would be a food co-op, operated by and for students, that works independently of whatever company gets the exclusive contract. Several members of USG proposed this a few years ago. Whatever the options, please keep any company that gets the contract from having a monopoly on campus. They are unwelcome in the Stony Brook community.

2. Don't force students to pay for plans. If we do wind up with another exclusive 10-year contract, don't force students to pay for them. If they are desirable, for example a food service provider that offers a reasonably priced plan for students, the students will want to buy it. If it's undesirable, like the current meal plan, you can't expect students to be eager to pay a \$318 overhead fee for unreasonable prices. We're not children, and we shouldn't be forced into these unfair meal plans. We should have options. This idea that we college

students aren't responsible enough to provide for ourselves or manage our own food budgets is bullshit.

3. Give students options. If you're going to ignore the first two considerations—and we have a strong suspicion that you will—and at least provide more options to the students. This includes but is not limited to: buffet-style eateries in addition to à la carte (this is available at many colleges in SUNY and on Long Island); allow meal points to work off-campus (again, this is implemented in lots of places, including here ten years ago); don't separate our money. The endless division of our spending cash—meal plan points, campus cash, bookstore points, etc.—are all very inconvenient and arbitrary. Combine it into one plan that works everywhere.

We thank you for your consideration. We urge you to give these proposed solutions some thought. These aren't radical proposals. These are reasonable requests, and many are available in colleges around SUNY. Buffalo, for example, runs their food service directly through the FSA on campus.

We're not suggesting a change as extreme as that, but some improvements greatly improve the quality of life for students on campus.

## Too to Care

One day before former Republican presidential hopeful Tom Tancredo stepped foot onto the Stony Brook University campus, he faced a wild amount of opposition from students at the University of North Carolina.

Tancredo is known for stirring controversy due to his extreme views on Islamist fundamentalism and immigration issues. He had campaigned on the idea of bombing the holy Muslim sites of Mecca and Medina if the U.S. were to be attacked again.

Additionally, Tancredo went as far as to call Miami a third-world country because of the diversity specifically among the Spanish speaking populations. He has pushed for a bill making English the official language of the U.S.

But on April 14, Tancredo attempted to give a speech at the University of North Carolina in room 103 in Bingham Hall talking about his opposition towards the DREAM Act, Amnesty and in-state tuition for illegal Americans.

To his chagrin, a number greater than those in attendance at Stony Brook protested by vocally chanting "shame on you" as Tancredo walked into the lecture hall and positioned a banner in front of Tancredo during his speech that read, "No

One is Illegal." At that point, Tancredo appeared fed up, calling the protests of the students unfair and grew angrier in tone.

"That's not fair. You don't like what I have to say," Tancredo told a student.

"I don't like what you are doing," the student shouted. It was only after a brick was thrown, merely seconds later, that Tancredo left amidst the cries of one visibly hysterical student near the shattered glass. "OK, that's enough," Tancredo said after the brick was thrown, leaving the lecture hall.

While he was leaving Bingham Hall, students were shouting "Shut it down, the racist in our town."

One day later, Mr. Tancredo stepped afoot the Stony Brook campus to no hype, little support and, to his delight, no protests. Even those who may be in support of Mr. Tancredo did not turn out to the event.

One could argue the College Republicans do a terrible job in advertising for their events and host racist speakers. A similar event could be compared to letting students know Ann Coulter would be on campus only days before her speech.

But that is an argument unimportant at this venture. The bigger problem lies in the unbelievably high level of student apathy, a subject of far too many editorials. Students

reading this should ask what was it that made students join together and protest Mr. Tancredo at UNC and what it was that hindered a similar event from happening here or following that same point. What was it that perked student interest to attend and listen to him speak?

The protests UNC students pursued in expressing their opposition towards Mr. Tancredo were fair and are a faint reminder of the successes students could achieve. However, that line was crossed when a brick was thrown.

But having that level of emotion rile up a campus, either in favor or against a speaker, is part of what the university experience includes, that search for finding what causes to support or fight against and stepping up and taking whatever action one deems necessary.

That is impossible to do when these speaker events are rare if not nonexistent, poorly advertised, and heavily ignored by the student body. It would probably take a figure paralleling Hitler to have students join together and protest. But even then more than half the campus would still not care.



## And I Thought Tea Was Supposed to be Calming

In 1773, a rag-tag group of over-taxed, under-represented Bostonians dressed up like Native Americans and dumped heavily-dutied crates of tea into Boston Harbor.

In 2009, a highly-organized group of fiscally-irresponsible, credit-challenged, conservative Americans assembled in cities across the country to angrily brandish tea bags at President Obama and his economic recovery plan.

If conservatives think there is some sort of analogy to be made between these two groups, they must be as stupid as they look—swinging Cozy Time Camomile tea bags at effigies and screaming about the abuses of the federal government.

The Boston Tea Party was a protest against the British government and their series of taxing rampages on the colonies during the 1770's. The British were trying to recoup the financial losses sustained during the oft-forgotten French and Indian War and could find no other way than to place numerous tariffs on frequently purchased items manufactured in Britain but sold in the Colonies.

These taxes were levied by British Parliament without the representation of colonists, pushing the Colonists up against an economic wall with no chance to contest the tariffs piercing their pockets. The Bostonians eventually rebelled through vandalism and the destruction of property, instances which escalated to skirmishes and warfare between the

colonists and the British oppressors.

Does this seem analogous to the current situation where economic stimulus is being distributed to people on the verge of losing their homes after already having lost their jobs? No. It does not.

Citizens have every right to assemble and protest their government as per the First Amendment. Conservatives have perfectly legitimate concerns vis-à-vis the economic recovery package which should be voiced. They should question and promote dialogue with the legislative branch which passed the

dent Obama's economic recovery efforts.

The colonists were not represented in government. We are, which should be a tip-off that this movement has little precedent. But little hang-ups like actual events cannot stop "true conservatives" like Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck.

If "Tea-Party" promoters like Beck and his faux Tom Paine sidekick had a firmer grasp of history, they might have pointed to other events in American history where the government previously intervened in the private sector.

Conservatives could have breadline parties to commemorate the New Deal but that would not further their agenda or truly capture the spirit of the fight against big government.

We applaud the conservatives attempt to create massive historical reenactments to show their profound grasp of historical themes and illustrate the cyclical nature of history, but "tea-bagging" plus big government is not a "thing."

It is, in fact, a farce. It is the piracy of a watershed moment in American history by hysterical conservatives attempting to dishonestly draw popular support. Their efforts and tea would be better spent if it were given to the now homeless and jobless people who are relying on the stimulus plan to survive.

If conservatives want to stage historical reenactments of the Boston Tea Party, they might well try it abroad by spreading freedom and liberty, because we all know how well that works.



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# Tancredo Speaks Immigration...Qué?

By Najib Aminy

Hours after conservatives across America wound down from a day of tea bagging in opposition of tax increases, former Representative Tom Tancredo (R-Colo.) spoke to a small group of students about a large issue: immigration.

On April 15, an audience of around 20 people attended Tancredo's lecture hosted by the College Republicans in conjunction with the Young Americans for Freedom, including four police officers standing in the back of the room.

Tancredo gained national attention during his run for presidential candidacy on the Republican ticket before withdrawing his name from the primaries and pledging his support behind former Mass. Gov. Mitt Romney. During his short time running for president, Tancredo brought immigration to the forefront of the presidential election and along the way has stirred up some controversy.

Just one night prior, to a much larger audience, Tancredo attempted to give a similar speech at the University of North Carolina. To his chagrin, a number greater than those in attendance at SBU protested Tancredo's appearance. A brick was thrown into the lecture hall Tancredo was speaking in which resulted in his leaving and not being able to speak.

During his speech at Student Activities Center Ballroom B, no bricks were thrown, and no protests occurred, but Tancredo delivered his message on immigration, which he cites back to Sam Huntington, a Harvard professor who specializes in a range of governmental topics including American identity.

Tancredo answered the question Huntington asked, "who Americans are?," as a people linked through language. "Language is one of the most important things that makes us Americans," Tancredo said. "It's the way we communicate so that you, who thinks you have a difference of opinion about what Americans are about, can tell me about it."

When it came to immigration, Tan-

credo feared the meaning of citizenship was disappearing with what he said to be the increase of immigrants in America. "Citizenship is a term, by the way, that is fast losing any relevance whatsoever," he said. "It's of no significance of the lexicon of the left of this administration in particular."

At one point, Tancredo, a former high school history teacher, linked President Barack Obama to both Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler because of his role in the firing of General Motors CEO Rick Wagoner and also called the former senator an ideologue.

The former Republican residential candidate said he was afraid of what was

zens."

The solution? Tancredo proposes to have 100 marines patrol per every 100 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border, which serves two purposes: monitoring illegal traffic and training for the Marines. Secondly, Tancredo said he would like to see stricter laws enforced on employers who hire illegal aliens as a means of ending the lure of employment.

If his plan were not to go through, Tancredo said there would be nothing left to do. "If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. You either win or you lose," he said. "If we do not employ that solution, we will lose, the system will not work, and we will continue to have massive

porating the U.S. Constitution, their ideas, absence of civil liberties, women's rights and rule of law.

At one point during his presidential campaign, Tancredo addressed a group of Iowa voters of his intentions to deal with radical Islamism.

"If it is up to me, we are going to explain that an attack on this homeland of that nature would be followed by an attack on the holy sites in Mecca and Medina," Tancredo said.

Nonetheless, he concluded his hour-and-twenty-minute-long speech by stating that Americans are confused as to who they are and who their enemies are.

Jonathan Pu, president of the Stony Brook College Republicans, said that he was disappointed with the attendance but pleased with interaction between the audience and Tancredo during the question and answer portion. His interpretation of who Americans are runs parallel yet more specific than Tancredo's response of language.

"We are all united in the hope of finding something better," said Pu, who came to America as an immigrant. "We should embrace our diversity but focus more on unifying factors than dividing ones."

Michael Rosenband, who traveled from Setauket to listen to Tancredo speak, because of what he said is a polarizing issue. Rosenband said he agrees with Tancredo that multiple business interest deter any progress from happening.

"There are too many extreme sides and views," said Rosenband, who describes himself as a leftist-center liberal.

In terms of dealing with immigration, Rosenband said he thinks it should be handled in a way that does not compromise American ideals.

"I believe it should be conducted in a way that is respectful of human rights and dignity but all sides should be heard," Rosenband said. "I believe those are the important principles in which our society is based on and would like to see a very effective dignified answer to these issues."



Mr. Tom Tancredo.

Al Esposito

happening with immigration and how some consider America to be a continent and ignore the boundaries of the U.S. itself. In fear of amnesty, which Tancredo called a slap in the face to all current legal immigrants, he felt that if Americans were to continue this complacency, there would be no sense of being an American.

"If we do not have anything that connects us to each other as Americans, then we are simply residents just as the Obama administration would like us to be," Tancredo said. "Residents, not citi-

immigration. We will continue to dissolve into a tribalistic system society."

Tancredo also presented another question from ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu: Who is the enemy? According to Tancredo, it is not the war on terror, rather on radical Islamism.

"You cannot have a war on terror. Terror is not a thing in which you cannot be at war with, he said. "It is a tactic used by people with whom you at war with." Tancredo points to radical Islamism as the enemy against America due to, what he said is, its lack of incor-

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# New Loan Program

By Krystal DeJesus

Beginning this summer, Stony Brook University will be participating in a new loan program for federal student loans that allows students and parents to borrow money directly from the federal government.

The new program, the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan program, will replace the Federal Family Education Loan Program, which required students and parents to borrow federal loans through private banks and credit unions.

The switch was to ensure that students still have a secure resource of funds for their education during a time when many banks and financial institutions are pulling out of federal loan programs, according to a press release from the university.

Comments from the university's office of financial aid were not available as of press time.

Federal Stafford, GRADPlus and Plus loans are still offered under the new program and the same eligibility rules apply, but loan fees and repayment

plans are different from the FFEL program.

All students borrowing federal loans, for the 2009-2010 school year will be required to sign a new master promissory note when they accept their loans

for the 2009-2010 academic year, according to the university's financial aid website.

Although students will no longer be able to participate in the FFEL program, there are some perks to direct lending.



People that graduate and work in public service sector will be eligible for the public service loan forgiveness program, which means after ten years as a public service employee, the remaining balance on one's loan will be paid off.

There are also different repayment plan options, from a standard plan that pays off the loan in ten years to an income contingent plan, which bases one's monthly payment of one's adjusted gross income, family size and loan amount. There are a couple of additional options which can be found on the Department of Education website.

For those with loans through the FFEL program, the option to consolidate all loans through federal direct loan program is also an option. Consolidation makes it easier when it comes time to repay the loans, and under the direct lending program the borrower pays the back the government for the life of the loan, according to the department of education website.

All federal loans through the FFEL program will continue to be deferred until six months after a student drops below half-time status at school.

# You Can't Bite This Bus

By Caitlin Ferrell

Stony Brook University is trying to go green. At April 17's Earthstock, the university unveiled its first vegetable oil-fueled bus. The bus, which is a normal SBU bus, was converted to use vegetable oil for fuel and is still unnamed. Students could enter their name nominations on slips of paper and slide them into an empty oil drum.

The bus will use vegetable oil from on-campus dining facilities. It will rely solely on Kelly Quad, but when more buses are converted, Both Quad may become another source for fuel.

"Our goal is to use the bus in service on-campus at Stony Brook," said Jim O'Connor, the director of Transportation and Parking Operations. "We are the forefront transportation group of the SUNYs."

David McAvoy, the transportation fleet manager, said, "It's a project we've been working on for awhile."

By switching to vegetable oil, SBU hopes to decrease the costs and environmental harm of diesel fuel, and increase the sustainability of the campus.

A fueling station will be built at the

South P Lot for the vegetable oil bus where the diesel buses also refuel.

There are 20 buses on-campus and about 350 other campus vehicles, according to O'Connor. The university hopes to gradually switch over from diesel to cleaner fuels. Besides plans for vegetable oil-powered cars, there are currently electric, flex-fuel and hybrid cars.

"Our goal is to grow," O'Connor said.

Hundreds of suggestions for the veggie bus' name had been entered by midday Friday. The winner will be chosen at random and announced May 4.



Names added to the pool included "Mazola", "Pam", "Vin Diesel", and "Stephen Colbert".



# "I am Unhappy Because I Eat."

By Raina Bedford

"That'll be \$4.50 please," said the Kelly cashier in her usual drab monotone.

Not for a box of cookies or for a pound of coffee, but for a single 8 oz. package of apple slices.

Although the label reads "Stony Brook Farms Produce," the apples are not produced at a farm in Stony Brook. They are grown at a large agrifarm in upstate New York, and are shipped to a food packing plant in Holtsville, Long Island where they are sliced, packaged and sent on a ten-minute journey to Stony Brook University.

J. Kings Food Service Professionals Inc., located in Holtsville, Long Island, packages the apple wedges and sells them to Stony Brook University in crates of 12 for \$21.75. The university buys packages of apple wedges for \$1.81 each and sells them for \$4.50, a 148 percent markup over the original price.

And it's not just limited to apple wedges. Across the board Stony Brook University purchases food items at discount prices and marks them up similarly.

"Campus Dining pricing cannot be compared to a supermarket or to discount bulk stores like Costco or BJ's," said Lisa Ospitale, director of marketing and communications for campus dining services.

"Grocery stores and discount bulk stores purchase items in a much bigger volume than campus dining can," and this accounts for the lower prices at super markets.

According to Ospitale the price increases are needed to cover the cost of packaging the item, the labor it takes to make particular items and various overhead costs. However, students already pay \$318 per semester to campus dining as an overhead fee on the meal plans they purchase.

And the markups are a headache for many Stony Brook students.

"I definitely feel as if there is a vast initial mark-up on the food here," said Dylan Mead, a junior undergraduate

student from Staten Island. "It makes it hard for anyone to last until the end of the semester."

Adding to the already bloated food prices is the fact that the meal plan has not been correctly adjusted to account for the inflation of food prices in the Long Island area.

Every April, the FSA renegotiates the food contracts on campus. During these negotiations the food prices on campus are set. According to the FSA the prices will normally not be increased by a percent greater than the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for the Long Island region.

According to the Consumer Price

Tuesday Apr. 14, Laura Valente, a theatre professor, told the crowd that the theatre department had set up a food pantry for two theatre students who had run out of meal points and did not have enough money to feed themselves.

"I brought it up to prove a point," she said later in a phone interview. "It shows the larger issues of the meal plan."

Alexis Anagnostopoulos, an economics professor with a P.H.D. from the London Business School, compared the situation to the relationship between real income and inflation. When real income, adjusted for inflation, fails to keep up with the rate of inflation on

of transactions per semester and these couple of pennies can add up to real dollars.

To illustrate this, let's take a look at the apple wedges once again. Four percent of the \$4.50 apple wedges is 18 cents. 2.7 percent of the same \$4.50 package of apple wedges is 12.15 cents. Here, the difference between the real buying power of the meal plan and the actual price is approximately six cents. While small in an individual transaction, this same principle applies to every single purchase made from campus dining through meal points by every student on the Silver Plan. If a student makes only 100 transactions and the average

loss is six cents every time, that's \$6.00 right there. But not everything costs \$4.50, full meals with a beverage range from six to ten dollars on average, which means that the money lost on these larger purchases is even greater.

On top of the initial markup on food, the current meal plan does not have as much buying power as it should because it hasn't been correctly adjusted for inflation.

Having problems budgeting your meal plan? Go to the campus dining website and check out their budgeting expectations for students on the Silver Plan. They want you to spend just 84 meal points per week.

Even with meager expenditures of \$6 on breakfast, \$7 on lunch and \$9 on dinner, students eating three meals a day find themselves spending around 154 meal points per week.

Most other SUNY colleges have a buffet style meal plan system. Students eating buffet style get a certain amount of meals per day instead of a declining balance. The FSA at Stony Brook said they did not choose the buffet style system because the declining balance system allows campus dining to offer a more diverse selection of food and allows students to eat at their own pace.

However, many students don't often find themselves with a choice when it comes to the end of the semester. It's either add more meal points or don't eat.



Where's Waldo? Probably getting ripped off by the FSA.

Roman Sheydvasser

Index for Food and Beverages for the Long Island area, inflation rose 4 percent from Sept. 2007 to May 2008. The next year, the FSA approved changes to food prices based on this figure for food and beverages provided by Chartwells, Pepsi and J. Kings Food Service Professionals.

However, the FSA only increased the amount of meal points students received on the Silver Plan by 2.7 percent, despite witnessing and implementing a 4 percent increase in the price of food and beverages.

This means that the meal plans have not kept up with food inflation, and students are feeling the pinch.

At a University Senate meeting on

food, "obviously people would lose purchasing power," he said.

Here real income is represented by the university's meal plan, which can be understood as income solely for food.

For the fall 2007 and spring 2008 semesters, students had 1311 meal points on the Silver Plan, including flex. For the fall 2008 and spring 2009 semesters, students have 1346 meal points on the Silver Plan. Students paid 61 dollars for the 2.7 percent increase, and only have 35 more meal points this year than last, the equivalent of 35 dollars.

Although the difference in the actual buying power of the meal plan and the price of food in individual transactions is small, students make hundreds



# When Monopolies Turn Bad

By Andrew Fraley

Every student wages the war between hunger and the shrinking meal point balance.

For the past twenty or more years, the food service contract at Stony Brook has been an exclusive contract made between large, specialized food service corporations and their subsidiaries.

Chartwells is just the educational division of Compass Group, a UK-based multinational food service conglomerate. Before Chartwells, Stony Brook had a contract with Aramark, a US-based competitor of Chartwells. The contract ended in the summer of 1997 when, among other things, a number of *Press* articles detailed how the new meal plan was effectively gouging students. On the new "Advantage Plan," it was mathematically impossible for students to have two meals a day, everyday, and not run out of points within the first ten weeks of the semester. After these articles, and the student outrage that followed, Chartwells was chosen as the exclusive food service provider for Stony Brook University. It was a 10-year contract; before, the contract was continually up for renewal. In addition, The Wang Center's Jasmine food court is separately run by Café Spice, and utilizes only a portion of the meal points, called "flex points." Flex points are also used at the SAC between noon and 2pm, and when a student runs out of regular points.

The process by which a food service provider is chosen has also changed over

time. The Faculty Student Association sends out a Request for Proposal, which is answered by companies looking to fill the role specified by the RFP. A bid evaluation committee convenes to determine which company's bid is best suited for the position. The committee, which was once open to all students, is now a closed process, and only open to a select few students. Currently there are five undergraduate students and one graduate student on the committee, according to Joe Antonelli, who sits on the committee.

Chartwells contract was supposed to expire in the spring of 2008. The committee decided to extend it by a year to determine the feasibility of changing some of the food courts to buffet-style food courts. Similar to Kelly and Benedict for weekend brunch, the food courts would be a dine-in area all the time. Kelly and Benedict used to be buffet-style years ago. Buffet-style offers flexibility to students, and is commonly used by many colleges, including Hofstra, Dowling and various other SUNY schools. This was ruled out in favor of the points system and hasn't changed since. The committee had also deemed a change back to this style as unfeasible, claiming it would be too large a waste of food and resources, according to Geeta Malieckal, Executive Vice President of the Undergraduate Student Government senate, and FSA board member.

But where Chartwells, like its predecessor, falls short is in its failure to adequately provide students for the entire semester. More and more students are finding themselves running out of meal points earlier into the semester. Only the

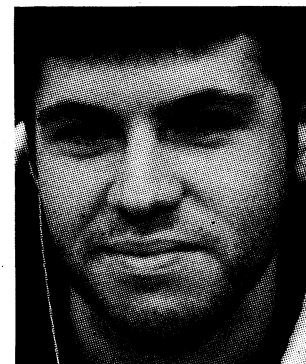
students who go home often find themselves with extra meal points at the end of the semester—one of the reasons the committee investigated the possible implementation of the buffet-style food courts was for the international students and students who don't go home on the weekends. The meal plan is required for students in non-cooking buildings, forcing them to purchase from the exclusive food service provider (excluding Jasmine's and the ever elusive "flex points"). In addition, every option of meal plan—from bronze to platinum—has a \$318 overhead fee, which goes directly to Chartwells for labor, facilities, etc. This surcharge has inflated over the years; there used to be no overhead charge, it was amended after a year into the contract.

Higher prices on campus are also to blame for Chartwells' failure. Most notable in the packaged foods, which can be up to three or four times the price at a supermarket, the high prices make it impossible for students to follow the budgeting charts provided by the FSA and still maintain a full and balanced diet. "Our dining facilities are not set up with a large storage capacity, as a supermarket has, to store packaged goods to sell to customers," Representatives from FSA have said in defense. Chartwells doesn't have to worry about remaining competitive due to this forced monopoly on the students, however.



Steven Bruckman, Buffalo, NY, Sophomore

*"I ran out of points early last semester. I had to spend an additional \$250 to cover food."*



Vito Arena, Queens, NY, Freshman

*"If I didn't go home on the weekends I would definitely not have as many points as I do now. But towards the end of the semester I am still conserving and being frugal with my points."*



Amy Patel, New Hyde Park, NY, Freshman

*"I feel that the campus should be a little healthier. I dislike that the packages of cut up fruits comes with only 5 pieces but costs \$5."*

## Let's Do the Math

By Najib Aminy

Imagine spending \$12 a day on food for roughly fifteen weeks. It may sound like a challenge on some health and fitness reality show, or the lifestyle of an aspiring fashion model. But this is the plan the Faculty Student Association (FSA) has recommended that students follow over the course of a semester; this is the limit students must meet to avoid having to renew meal points, under a standard Silver plan.

The average American spends \$7 a day on food, while low-income Americans spend \$4, according to a University of Washington study completed in 2007 and published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. To follow a healthy diet, consisting of less calorie-dense foods, one

would pay \$36 a day—compared to \$3.52 for a 2,000 calorie-diet, comprised of junk food (according to the same study).

But Stony Brook students are asked to spend from \$11.14 to \$18.71 (corresponding to the range from the Bronze to Platinum plans FSA offers), which includes flex points. Never mind that the recommended range falls far short of the average daily spending of Americans pursuing healthy choices, when one considers the inflated prices on campus, limiting spending to \$12 a day is difficult. The difficult choices which result threaten the nutritional value of one's diet.

Simply buying three meals in a day on campus, disregarding nutritional value, can easily require spending above the FSA's recommended plan. One scenario begins with purchasing a bagel with cream cheese and a large coffee, for \$2.30. Eating breakfast leaves one with plenty of points left to spend

for the day.

Come lunchtime, a quarter-pound cheddar burger meal with fries and a drink rounds to \$7. Having breakfast and lunch out of the way, students with the standard Silver plan are left with \$2.70 for dinner.

It might so happen that hunger will overcome one's modest taste for bagel and coffee the following morning. One might sneak in a slice of pizza and a drink, at \$3.01, or end the day off with a sandwich and a drink, costing roughly \$7.

Most students below the Gold plan would find themselves over their recommended budgetary diet. Depending on what the Platinum or Gold member chooses, they may also have exceeded budget suggestions.

Though this may be far from a day of well-balanced meals, or even a scenario which any student would follow, one would have spent around \$12 to \$16, leaving even

Gold members in the red, depending on the dinner chosen. Only Platinum members, who pay \$534 more per semester than Gold members are left with roughly \$2.70 to spend.

Choosing the sandwich dinner, this \$16 a day scenario would leave most students out of meal points weeks before the semester's end—from one week to four on plans ranging from bronze to gold.

On top of the pressures already addressed by this example, the \$16 a day scenario excludes commodity purchases such as pints of milk, cereal, bread and other foods a resident might have in their room. A half-gallon of milk sells for \$3.30, and a box of cereal can sell for more than \$6.

Not even a mile from campus, Waldbaum's sells a half-gallon of milk for \$1.62 and competitive cereal brands starting at \$4.70.



# Food for the Soul

By Erin Jayne Mansfield

When theatre arts professor Valeri Lantz-Gefroh raised her hand at the end of a University Senate budget meeting, she wasn't worried about her department's course offerings; she wanted to know why her students were going hungry on campus.

Earlier in the semester, she learned that two of her students had run out of meal points and were unable to feed themselves. After she and another faculty member started bringing bags of groceries to them, they decided to start a pantry to keep their students fed and healthy.

This is just one example of what has become a growing problem for Stony Brook students.

"I think both the economy and the cost of meals at Stony Brook was the reason they ran out," Lantz-Gefroh said. "I'm not exactly sure of the details, but one student lost her job...and hasn't

been able to find another in this economy."

Geeta Malieckal, Executive Vice President of USG, said she thought that high food prices could be a result of an increased cost of living on Long Island.

Among Malieckal's jobs is to work with the Faculty Student Association, the organization that controls meal plans on campus, but she said that the bid committee to hire next year's food supplier is working more closely with the meal plans than she is.

"I do generally feel that prices on campus are higher than they are in the rest of New York," Marina Jabsky, a senior from Brooklyn, N.Y., said, adding that it is more difficult for her because she doesn't live in a cooking building.

"I ran out of meal points before mid-November [last semester]," sophomore Chris Bardarson from Yaphank, N.Y., said. Finals did not end until Dec. 23, 2008.

Some students—typically ones who live in dorms with kitchen units or go home on the weekends—are left with

large, nonrefundable balances on their meal plans at the end of the semester.

Malieckal also mentioned how happy she was when she moved to West Apartments, where she now has a kitchen and doesn't have to spend as much at on-campus dining halls.

"I priced a small container of cantaloupe yesterday in the union—probably less than a cup of fruit—which cost \$4.50," Lantz-Gefroh said. "Right now cantaloupes in the grocery store run two whole cantaloupes for \$4.00."

But Lantz-Gefroh will continue to help her students.



"Waiter, taste the soup."

"It is an impossible issue to ignore," Lantz-Gefroh said of her students' situations. "Neither one of these kids came looking for a handout."

# She Ain't Afraid of No Ghosts

By Caitlin Ferrell

If you met Margalit Fox at a party, you may raise an eyebrow at what she does for a living. "I'm an obituary writer," she'll tell you. She's had people respond with disgusted "Eew's," but then there are the ones who light up and tell her that the obituaries are the first thing they read each day.

"I have the strangest job in America," Fox said Thursday, April 17, to a

few dozen people in the Javits Lecture Center. "Now, it's also the best job in America, but until recently, nobody seemed to know that."

People might think an obituary writer's job is depressing, but Fox will tell you that isn't the case. To Fox, an obituary is like starting the day with a really good story. "Obits are often called 'the last word' on someone," she said. "But I think it's more appropriate to call it 'the first word.'"

Fox has detailed the lives of the famous—Susan Sontag, Ann Landers and Wayne C. Booth—the odd—an owner of 582 of Beethoven's hairs and the world's oldest cannibal—and a few hidden gems of history: the inventor of Kitty Litter, the authoress of the Nancy Drew series and the textile worker who washed Napoleon's night-shirt.

"Historically, obits were the bastard stepchild of journalism," Fox said. Too often, the obituaries of the olden days either consisted of two

sentence announcements, or were written like eulogies with empty praise for the dead. Obituaries are not the same as death notices, where families pay to have one run in the paper, and will sometimes write it themselves. Fox said that a death notice is no different than a car advertisement or store sale—there are no journalistic requirements. A news obituary is the story of someone's life written as a story. Not the simple born-died-spouse-children template, but a narrative piece. *The New York Times* now applies the same standards of journalism to the dearly departed, and obituaries have "gone from outcast to hot property."

Fox attributes the obituary-as-social-phenomenon to a few factors. First, the baby boomers are getting older, and obituaries become "required reading." Reading an obituary can also be a primal survival instinct—to ensure that you are, in fact, still alive. And of course, everyone loves a good story.

So who gets an obituary? Fox says, there are the "shoo-ins," the "dark horses" and the "unsung heroes." The shoo-ins are the celebrities, politicians, anybody well known in present day. *The New York Times* has over a thousand pre-written obituaries of very famous people. All other obituaries are written on a daily deadline. The dark horses include the "ordinary folks," said Fox and are more prevalent in smaller, regional papers. The unsung heroes can

include any person who has touched history in some sweeping fashion, like the inventor of Stove Top stuffing.

It's not always easy to decide who the obituary writers will cover. Fox recalled one occasion where a family requested an obituary be written. The man had served as a Marine in Vietnam and had handled the flag that flew at Iwo Jima. He wasn't in the famous photograph, but he had apparently handed the flag to one of the men who flew it. Fox asked, "So the question becomes this: How hard do you have to touch history, and for how long, before you become history yourself?" They chose not to write an obituary about him.

Obituaries can provide a stark realization of a moment in history. Edward Lowe invented Kitty Litter one day and directly impacted the upswing in the popularity of cats as pets, Fox digressed, where else could you pinpoint history to a single person's action on a single day?

For Fox, obituaries can provide comfort to the deceased's loved ones, but an obituary can also provide social context for a life lived. Obituaries can provide "a sliding window on a collective past," Fox said. They can provide a look back in time, a glance into a stranger's life and a greater understanding of the human race. Obituaries may be an announcement of death, but for Fox, they can be a celebration of life.

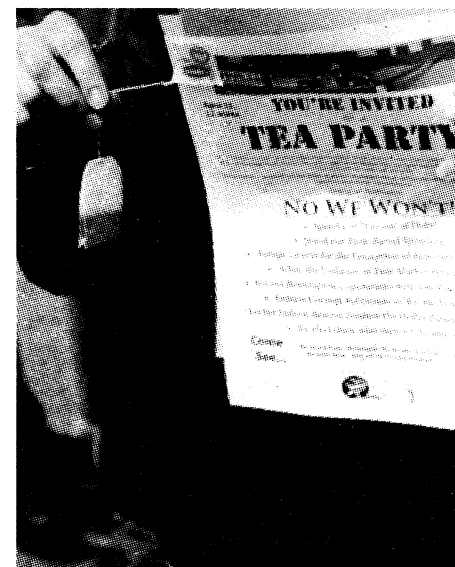
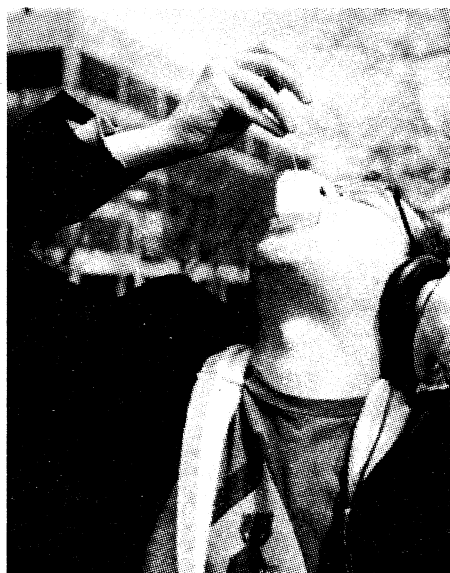


Margalit Fox



# A Photo Essay on Teabagging

Photos by Dan Woulfin



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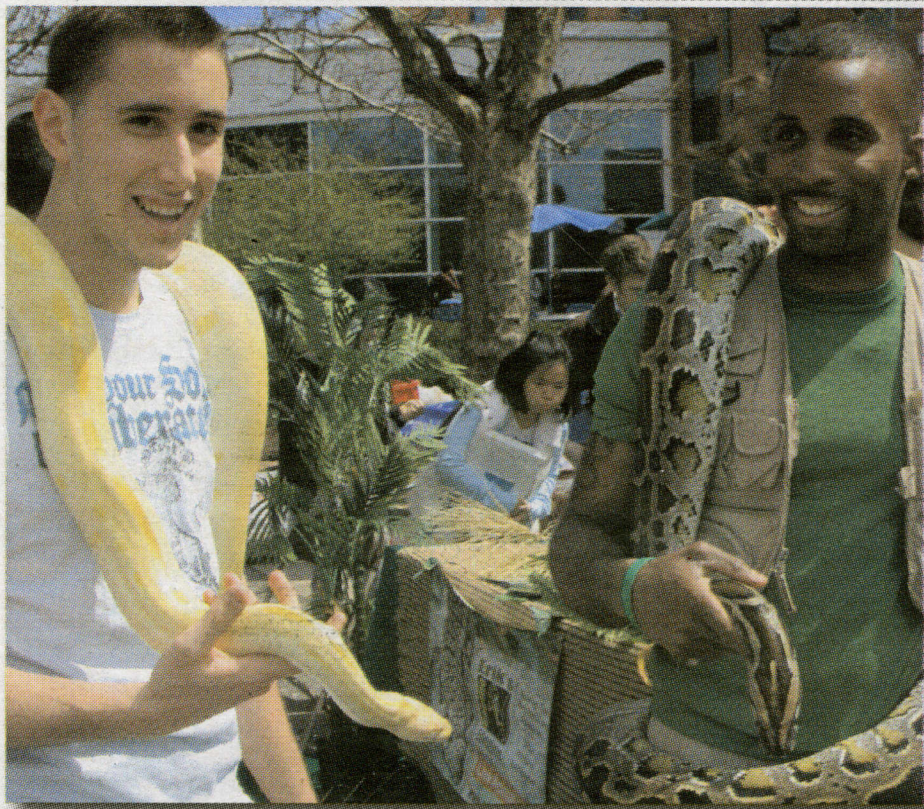
Are these balloons good for the planet? I heard they float into the ocean and dolphins choke on them! omg



These girls are ON FIRE! As an added bonus, they don't emit harmful CO<sub>2</sub> emissions!







I have HAD IT with these MOTHERFRAKKING SNAKES! Actually, this one is sort of cute. D'aww.



The sun came out to play! Consequently, many happy environmentalists received third degree burns.





# A Long Lasting Conflict Revisited

By Najib Aminy

Although Stony Brook University is located more than 5,000 miles away from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the issues occurring remain overseas close to home.

Last March, months after Israel's military action in Gaza, the Social Justice Alliance showed a documentary on the humanitarian crisis occurring in Gaza only to meet resistance from students of the Jewish community, who feared feelings of anti-Semitism would arise. A discussion ensued after the screening of the film, only to result in a stalemate of cemented views and ideas pertaining to both angles of the conflict.

Following the presentation, SJA informed audience members of British MP George Galloway's aid convoy to Gaza and how they could support it. Days later, the Respect Party leader, entering Gaza with 24 ambulances and trucks full of supplies, and was greeted with a tumultuous welcome, according to Galloway.

"We were watching the bombardment in horror—the 22 day and night bombardment of Gaza by Israel," said Galloway in an interview hours before a speech he was to give in Virginia. "We were marching and demonstrating and we realized marching and demonstrating were important but not sufficient."

Galloway—who was denied admittance into Canada on the grounds of being a threat to national security for aiding Hamas, a banned terrorist group in Canada—has been a strong proponent for Palestinian rights and the Palestinian cause. Upon reaching Gaza, he called the area an earthquake zone.

"But unlike a normal earthquake, when all the governments of the world airlift emergency aid, reconstruction, and experts, and rescue dogs and everything else—In Gaza, of course it is the opposite," Galloway said. "The earthquake was a manmade one and the doors were locked before it started and still are now."

Politically, things were a mess. During the military strikes, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice drafted a resolution to the UN Security Council, according to *The New York Times*, calling for an end to such actions. However, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said he had called former President George Bush, telling him to have the US abstain from voting in favor of the resolution.

"I said, 'Get me President Bush on

the phone,' " Olmert said in a speech while in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon, according to *The Associated Press*. "They said he was in the middle of giving a speech in Philadelphia. I said I didn't care. 'I need to talk to him now,'" Olmert continued. "He got off the podium and spoke to me."

The UN Security Council nonetheless voted in favor of the resolution 14-0 with the US's abstention failing to push the resolution into effect.

Pro-Israeli advocate Daniel Pipes, director of the Middle East Forum, said during a phone interview that he was in favor of President Bush settling the matter but was amazed at what Olmert had said. Pipes said he would like to see Palestinians accept Israel and he argues

mer Palestinian Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat in Beirut during his mid 20's—dates the beginning of conflict to the Balfour Declaration made in 1917. Galloway points a finger at the British who promised land in Palestine to the Zionist movement. However, Galloway argues that the land belonged to neither the Zionists nor the British but to the Palestinians.

"The root is a big lie, one of the biggest lies in history which was that Palestine was a land without people and that therefore it could be given away or described as people without a land," Galloway said. "Although as it happens they did have a land, it was a land on which they had been ruthlessly and horrifically victimized, some of them

However, Galloway challenged the idea of ancestral lands, citing the Zionist movement as one seeking any land they could get their hands on and calling the original leaders atheistic Jews. He went on to state what he thinks is the failure in claiming the lands of one's ancestors to be their own land.

"But if amongst the Zionist settlers whose ancestors 2,000 years before had that land, well, what kind of recipe would that be in the world?" he asked. "If everyone had the right to go back to where their ancestors were 2,000 years ago and take the land from the people who had lived there in the interim and kick them out as refugees, you just have to state to realize how absurd a proposition it is."

Nonetheless, both Palestinians and Israelis find themselves living in a state of unrest in this land no larger than Maryland. Israelis face the threat of suicide bombers in populated marketplaces and the threats of Qassam rockets being fired from either Gaza or the West Bank. Palestinians stare at a grey concrete wall as they suffer from Israeli sanctions, checkpoints and lack of aid. Palestinians are cut off from their own economic centers, agricultural grounds and natural resources like water, according to the Global Policy Forum, a nongovernmental organization that monitors the policy making at the UN.

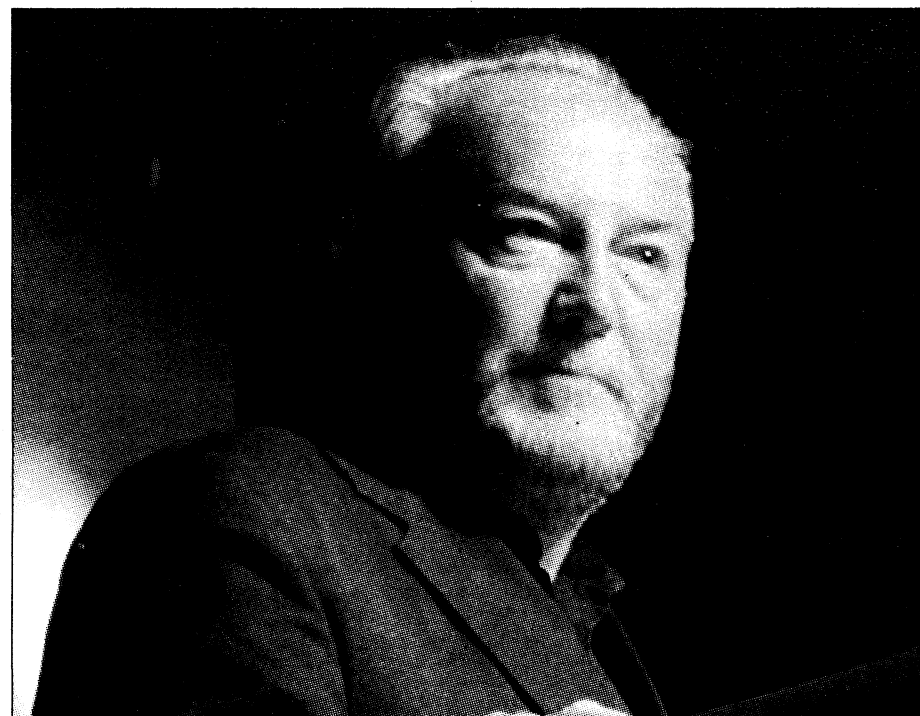
To ease the Palestinian unrest, Palestinians must accept Israel, according to Pipes, who believes that if Palestinians stopped their fighting, they could focus on rebuilding their land and economy.

"If they would only take their eyes off of destroying Israel and instead focus on building their own garden, they could make great things happen," Pipes said. "But that is not happening."

As a result, Palestinians are under occupation and face walls and checkpoints, Pipes added. "I have no sympathies whatsoever. I think the Israelis are entitled to protect themselves and the Palestinians continue to attack Israelis and they pay the price for it," Pipes said.

Whereas for Israelis, the threat of unguided rocket attacks looms over them. To stop the Palestinians from firing these rockets, Galloway said these attacks would not stop until the end of the occupation.

"The Palestinian people have every right to struggle, to try and recover their land, these rockets are pitiful, ineffectual, largely harmless, expression of de-



George Galloway

Najib Aminy

that for that to happen, the Palestinian people have to realize they cannot win.

"The war in December-January was a sort of step in that direction," Pipes said. "Overall, though there are many things that I disagree with it. I don't think you should use military aircraft to fight this war. I do think the Israelis should have a free hand to win whatever that means in this situation."

Pipes became interested in Islam and the Middle East because of the desert. He dates the Israeli-Palestinian conflict back to the 1890s when both Zionism and Arab nationalism developed. Conflict followed for the first time in 1911 in what Pipes described to be a small-scale yet violent confrontation.

Galloway—whose fight for Palestine became more than just political when he wound up living with the for-

were survivors of the attempt to genocidally destroy the Jewish people as a whole under European fascism."

The struggle for land between Israelis and Palestinians stems from the Israelis' claim that the land belonged to their ancestors, while Palestinians said they were removed from their own individual lands. Regardless, Pipes said that argument has become moot.

"Whether there should be an Israel or not was a valid argument a century ago or in the 1920s, but after Israel came into existence I think that is no longer an argument I think worth fighting for," Pipes said. "Now there is an Israel and has been one for over 60 years, the question is should it exist or be destroyed?"

Pipes then went on to say that the issue was not necessarily over the land itself but more so over the sovereignty of the specified land.

CONFLICT continued on page 15



**Editors Note:** To read the full interviews with Mr. Galloway and Mr. Pipes, visit [www.thestonybrookpress.com](http://www.thestonybrookpress.com).

# CONFLICT continued from page 14

spair," Galloway said. "Its really not rocket science, no justice no peace. You can't have peace without justice and the Palestinians have no justice so there is no peace."

With the absence of peace, civilians are the casualties left in the crossfire between a well suited US funded army and a militant group firing rockets towards Israel. Of the victims dating back to 2000, 6,348 Palestinians and 1,072 Israelis have been killed, according to the Israeli Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Both nongovernmental organizations have stated the number of Palestinians who died during this conflict to be underreported. This is due to the organizations' inability to accurately asses the number of dead, because of factors such as Palestinians' lack of medical access, and numerous restricted areas throughout the region.

As for the injured, more than 33,000 Palestinians were injured from September of 2000 to December of 2007, according to the Palestine Red Crescent Society, where more than 8,000 Israelis were injured during the same time period according to Israel's Foreign Ministry.

Specifically, between last December and January, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported 6 Israeli soldiers and 4 civilians were killed by Palestinians. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported 1,440 Palestinians were killed during this same time. This office also reported that more than 5,000 Palestinians were injured in Israel's military action, a number larger than the 523 Israelis injured during this same time.

Boston-born Pipes said he feels that much of Palestinian offensive is fueled more by ambition than oppression. He argues that Palestinians are fighting for concessions, most recently when Israel withdrew from Lebanon and Gaza, Pipes said that Palestinians had a sense that Israel was weak and if they were hit hard enough they would cave.

The sense of a suicide bombing, which was built up by Arafat and the PLO, as well as the firing of Qassam rockets were a vindication of that view, according to Pipes.

"People don't throw away their lives for nothing," Pipes said. "They only do it, they are soldiers in a war, they treat themselves as part of an important effort." According to Pipes' view, Palestinians who fight in opposition of Israel are merely bullets to the war and view themselves as changing the result of

their oppression.

Yet, Galloway said he strongly supports the Palestinian people's right to struggle and try and recover their land. "These rockets are pitiful, ineffectual, largely harmless; [an] expression of despair," Galloway said. "Just like when a young man blows himself up in an act of self immolation, which takes other people with him, these are not militarily effective methods of fighting. They just happen to be all that the desperate Palestinian thinks he has with which to fight."

When it came to the mainstream media and its possible bias, both Galloway and Pipes did not hesitate to admit the existence of such. "I think overall the media coverage is fairly poor," Pipes said, speaking of an instance where the mainstream media misrepresented Israel's Deputy Prime Minister Avigdor Lieberman in saying he had been against the two state solution though he had not. "I am all the time reading between the lines, understanding it my way and rejecting it the way the media puts it."

Galloway gave his answer commenting on the Israeli bias. "I am not aware in our country of any media that is biased towards the Palestinians," Galloway said. "On the contrary the bias is viciously hostile and, in fact, it's bad enough the Palestinians are suffering this, but insult is added to injury that they, who are victims of terrorism, are being called the terrorists. It's really quite an Orwellian inversion of the truth."

One reason for this, Galloway said, is because no American politicians have spoken or would speak out against Israel. "If they did, their political career

would be ended because the pro-Israel lobby is so ferocious and the countervailing force so non-existent that no American politician that didn't have a suicide wish would speak to you in this way." This, Galloway said, prevents the American public from hearing varying views other than Israel's perspective.

As for peace, both men answered with hesitance, not expecting it any time soon. Pipes said he is in support of a three-state solution, in which neighboring Egypt and Jordan would absorb Gaza and the West Bank respectively and leaving the state of Israel intact. "It's possible such that the Jordanians are quite eager for it and have shown that, it is left possible as the Egyptians are left reluctant," Pipes said. "It's not clear what Netanyahu is up to, he has not endorsed a two-state [solution], but not condemned it either. He is playing an ambiguous game."

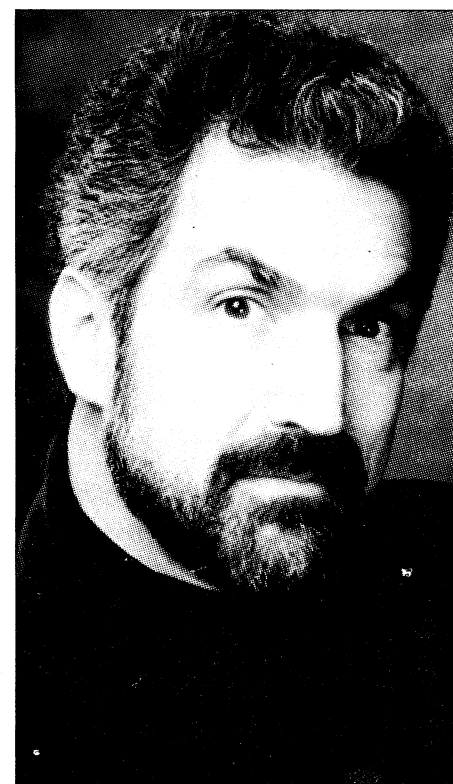
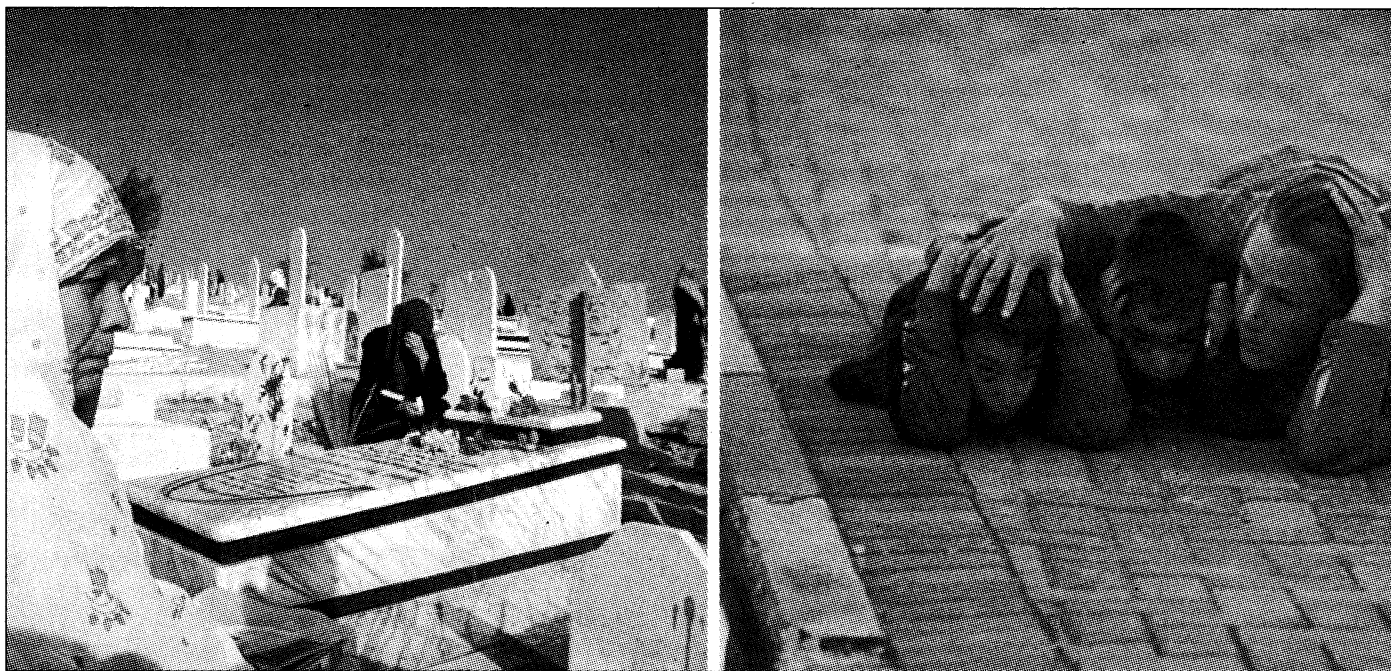
Pipes suspects a three-state solution will come to work only after the two-state solution between Israel and Palestine fails. "And what are the alternatives?" Pipes asked. "A one-state solution? Give me a break. It's just back to the future scenario of Jordan and Egypt."

It is the one-state solution Pipes scoffs at that Galloway supports. Between having a two-state solution, where Gaza and the West Bank are made contiguous through an underpass or flyover and a one-state solution, Galloway said he thinks a one-state solution would rid Israel of the "apartheid" present there.

"We should have one state of Israel-Palestine from the river to the sea in which every Jew, Christian and Muslim lives as an equal citizen before the law,

with one woman, one man, one vote," Galloway said. "That is the kind of normal, democratic, and secular state that emerged from apartheid in South Africa."

From the origin of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the resolutions for peace, little compromise can result from such deeply rooted stances on either a pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian perspective. Whether one is pro-Palestinian British MP George Galloway or pro-Israeli Director of the Middle East Forum Daniel Pipes, one can conclude that the result is an agreement in disagreement, only a conflict remains.



Daniel Pipes



## arts&amp;entertainment

**Fast and Furious**

By Justin Meltzer

The name pretty much says it all, except without the articles. (That's a grammar joke, think about it.) This movie had things that moved at a high velocity and an attitude that was unrestrained and vehement. Vin Diesel reprises his role as Xander Cage, err, rather Dominic Toretto, and uses his expert illegal driving skills to steal tankers of gasoline in Puerto Rico, and find out who killed his lover in California. Paul Walker also reprises his role of Brian O'Conner only this time he made it to the big leagues and is working for the FBI. The other former characters were there too but who really cares about them? They only got like, two minutes of screen time anyway. I mean Michelle Rodriguez was only in the very first two scenes and then she died. Any other part where you saw her, was a flashback to her death. That is hardly a reprisal of her role. I mean on paper yes, but come on.

So Dom (Vin Diesel) travels back to California to avenge the death of his love, while Brian (Paul Walker) has to infiltrate the underground car-racing racket in Los Angeles to stop Vin. The biggest problem with this storyline isn't the far-fetched plot details, but rather the fact that it opens on an extremely depressing note. The love of Riddick's life is already dead so the movie has already begun on a down note. Now the only way to make things right is by racing at super high speeds in increasingly dangerous areas.

Aside from the depressing opening, this film actually had lots of other things not going for it. To start, I think it's clear to say that no one is paying \$10.50 and walking into the theatre to see the acting ability of "The Pacifier," at least not in this film. Many times throughout I felt as if the sappy music was thrown in just to express the emotions of the actors on screen because they were incapable of doing so themselves. But in all honesty, no one went to see this film for the acting or "emotions." They went to a movie titled *Fast and Furious* to watch things that are fast, furious, or a combination of the two. In that area the movie delivered.

The first street race was between four cars, and two of them were the stars, so clearly the actors playing the other two drivers knew before they signed the contract that they were bound to die relatively quickly. And boy, were their deaths spectacular. The race

that took place in the middle of a busy Los Angeles city section was hyper charged... to the MAX. The cars were unbelievably powerful and the chicks were incredibly hot. Every time they took a hard turn the audience veered with the action. Left, right, left, right. This isn't NASCAR folks; this is the real thing (even though it is actually fake). When it finally did come time for the non-essential drivers to die, they didn't get into any simple car accident and just snap their necks. Their cars flipped a couple dozen times, landed on a truckload of rusty hand grenades, and then were attacked by rabid ferrets with laser's attached to their heads. I may be embellishing a little bit, but I'm pretty

need a place to drink too. My only problem was that it was sending the wrong message. No, no, no. Not the message that underground illegal street racing is dangerous and well, illegal. The fact that a bar full of guys and girls who only race cars are drinking and have no way of getting home. Do you really think they are going to call a cab and leave their \$500,000 finely tuned vehicles at the nightclub? Yeah, good luck! These people were getting shit-faced and most likely driving home that way. Not the best message to be sending across in your film Justin Lin.

Yes the director of *Fast and Furious* is Asian and that brings me to another point. There was quite a diverse cast

do you really expect from a *Fast and Furious* movie. The director did diversify and make LA the cultural hotspot it is. There were also a number of beefy roles for Hispanics and I'm pretty sure there were some Black actors in the movie as well. However I don't think there were many Jews, unless you count Vin Diesel's character from *Knock Around Guys*.

Since audiences were drawn in opening weekend to the sum of around \$70 million one must ask themselves if high octane cars were enough to account for that alone. My answer is a resounding no, as that explanation would only make up for around \$43 million. To achieve the other \$27 mil required extremely bodacious bodies, and lots of em'. The movie could be confused at times for a Bally's Total Fitness commercial except for the fact that there was less jazzercise and more street racing. I have never seen a movie so saturated with hotness before. It was all over the place too, because in every scene not without Vin or Paul (and some with) there was a smoking hot chick in the frame somewhere. Sadly (or excellently, depending on how you see it) there was a gratuitous make out scene where randomly, three girls are making out with each other on the middle of the dance floor. You heard right, THREE count it THREE girls making out all at the same time. I know, totally awesome, right!?

As the film draws on Vin finally catches up to his girlfriend's killers and when he purposely explodes his car to get his revenge, a firefight ensues. Bullets are flying everywhere, and in the commotion, Vin gets shot in the shoulder. When this happens however, he doesn't even flinch one bit. That's when I realized, bullets don't hit Vin Diesel, Vin Diesel hits the bullets. That is how badass he is.

I won't even get into the final scene with the cave driving, but if you already want to see this movie you are going to. If you however have no need at all to see the movie you will have already skipped it. However if you are on the fence, just go see the damn thing. Vin Diesel is a nice guy and the movie packs the action with a useable plot so in the end run, it does work. Not extremely well but... Allow me to use an automotive analogy to explain this to you. The movie is like a '94 Chevy pick up. It's not the nicest car out there, but it's reliable and it gets the job done. It goes from point A to point B and only stalls one or two times in the middle—an average car overall.



Don't try this at home unless you have a 10 second car.

sure there was some shit that blew up in there. Good times, good times.

Of course Vin wins and Paul comes in second, and despite the fact that the drug bosses who organized this race said that only the winner gets to work with them, both Vin and Paul somehow move on to the next challenge. Oh yeah, I almost forgot to mention that the movie is based around breaking up a drug ring of heroin dealers in LA. Just though I'd through that in there, much like the movie did.

So Vin and Paul are celebrating the fact that they survived the grueling and death defying race by hanging out in a club for underground illegal street racers. Yeah this stuff is very popular in LA and underground illegal street racers

within this film. Now the main characters were white, but there were plenty of excellent roles for the number of Asian actors. Vin's friend in Puerto Rico tells him he's off to Tokyo. "I heard they are doing some pretty crazy stuff with drifting over there," he mentions, "I wonder how *fast* and *furious* they are over in Tokyo, if you catch my drift." What an excellent reference to another movie in the same franchise that is already in the bargain bin for 43¢ at your local Hess station.

Other Asian characters included some of the other Illegal street racers, and the cute but nerdy FBI junior agent who was good with computers. Hey, I just calls em' as I sees em'. Now the roles weren't especially wonderful, but what



# Fall Victim to a *Swoon*...

By Nick Statt

The Silversun Pickups' sophomore release, *Swoon*, which hit stores April 14, adds some interesting dynamics to the 90s-obsessed indie rockers, but fails to correct the weaknesses of their debut.

Following *Carnavas*, which garnered them a decent following with singles like "Lazy Eye," Brian Aubert and the gang seem intent on broadening their horizons without jumping too far to the point of ruining their sound. While this may be playing it safe, it pays off more positively for them to be knowledgeable of the sophomore slumping tendency of modern popular bands.

Pigeon-holed as a repackaged Smashing Pumpkins, the LA-based four-piece band effectively passes through the barrier that kept them loafing around the same old sound on *Carnavas* and uses strong pop elements to push themselves further. The only really visible problem is Aubert's voice.

Drawing heavily from influences like Elliott Smith and previously mentioned pioneers of alternative rock,

Aubert's voice just doesn't want to stop being so annoying. The opener, "There's No Secrets Here," could have been found jammed between any of the tracks on the first album and is a perfect exhibition of Aubert's static singing style.

However, when you move onto the second track, "The Royal We," you're almost completely taken aback at how different the Pickups, and especially Aubert, can be if they really try. Coinciding with their trademarked heavy fuzz guitar comes blisteringly forceful string arrangements that create quite a cool sound. Aubert's voice actually swells too! Moving away from his tangy, lulling whisper littered over everything on their first album comes a loud and clear ballad-like tone that really helps the poppy edge of their album flourish. It leads you to believe that maybe Aubert is caging himself in an attempt to replicate the indie rasp of his idols.

The first single, "Panic Switch," is a good summing up of the album as a whole. You're met instantly by electrically-muddled guitar and a pretty present bass line that gets you thinking that these guys really stepped up to the plate instrumentally for this second go

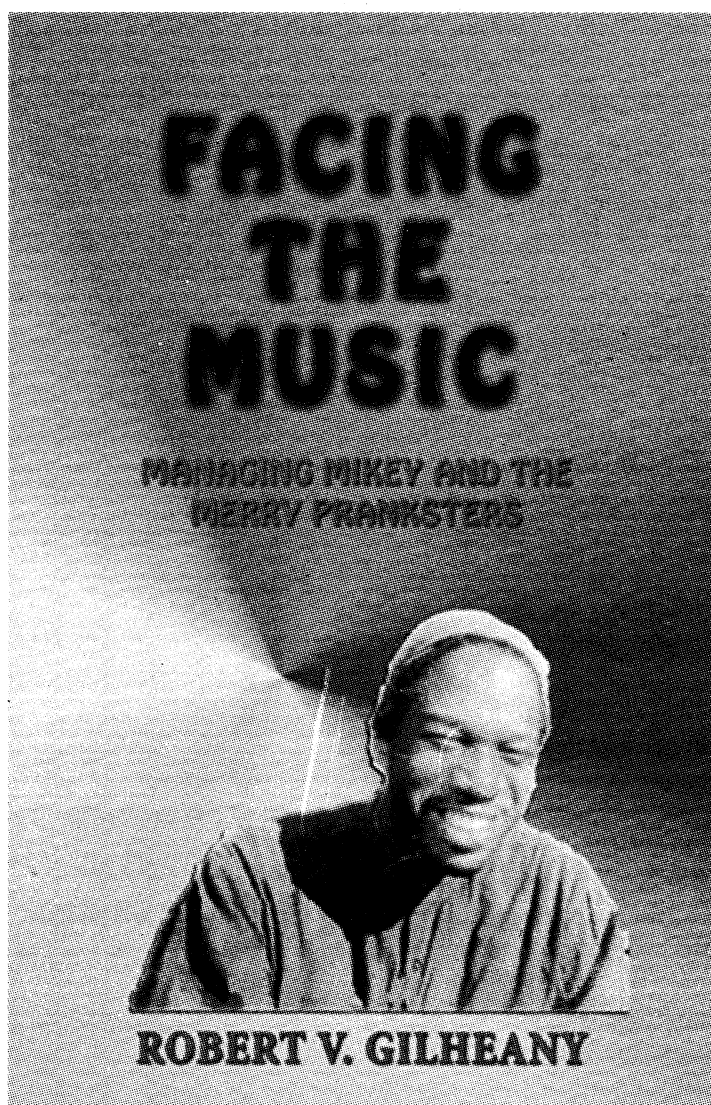
around. Aubert's voice comes in, but still with the semi-annoying whisper that leaves you wishing he would venture out of his box a little. However, the song takes some quick turns and has an interesting breakdown, solo included, that fills in some of the needed color.

Overall, that's about what the album feels like. Their album realizes their new creativity and is setting up a pretty logical progression towards a more pop-oriented sound. The instrumentals are many times tighter and leave you impressed this time, but Aubert's apparent refusal to let his voice do some of those interesting changes still hampers the general sound.

*Swoon* is better than it would have been had the band tried to change gears completely, like so many sophomore re-



leases attempt to do, but doesn't go far enough in self-evaluating its predecessor's weaknesses. Hopefully their third release will be the one with which they really make leaps and bounds on, using this one as a good bridging of the gap between rookie rockers and wielders of their style.



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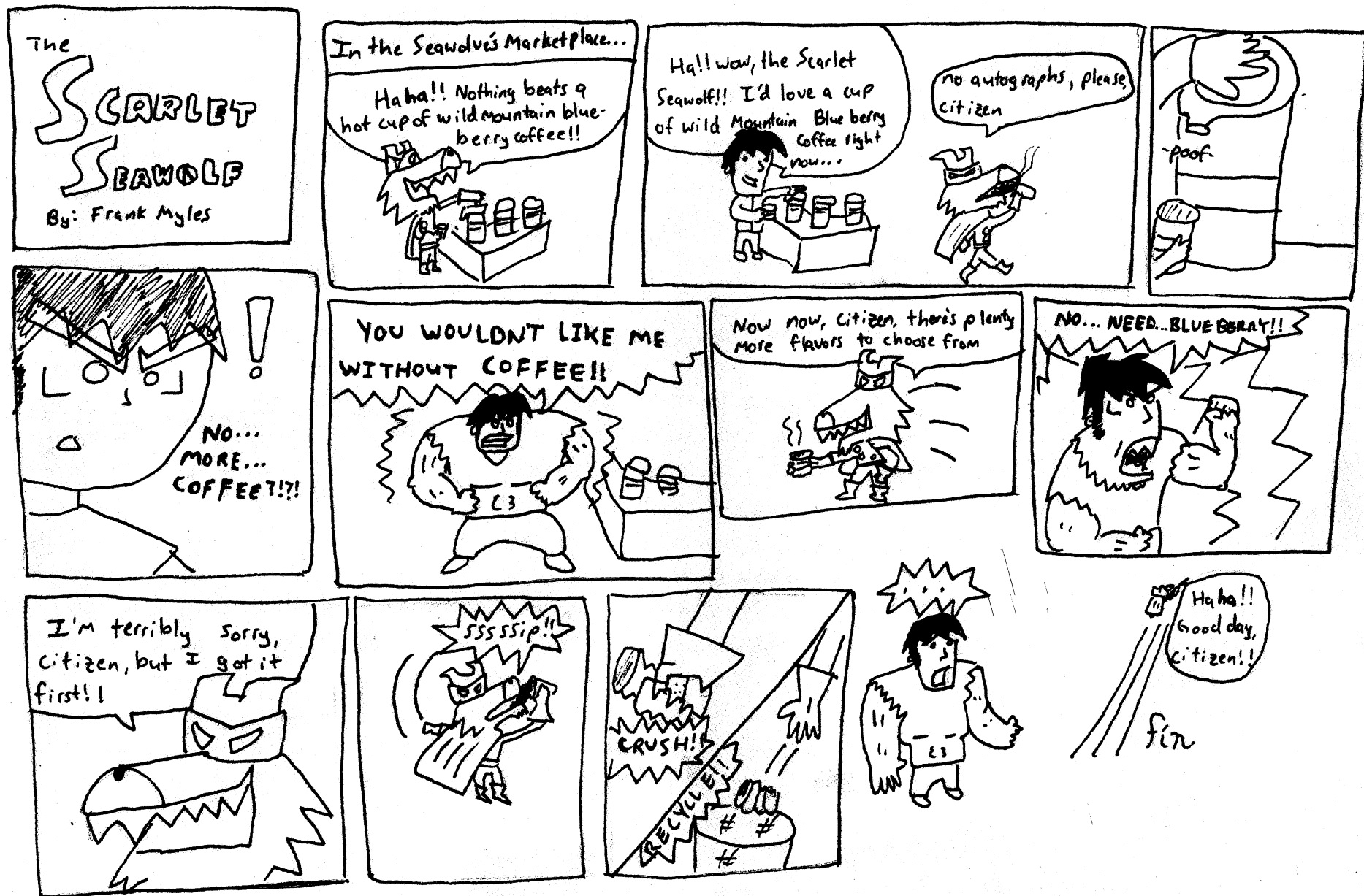
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# Comics





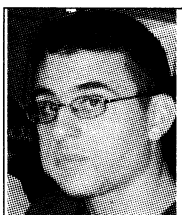
**Panel 1:** A cow with large udders looks bored. A thought bubble above it says "I'M BORED". A penguin stands next to it, suggesting, "Let's play WAR: The Neverending Edition".

**Panel 2:** The penguin, looking excited, says "Oy Vey!". It is holding two flags (the Israeli flag and the American flag) and two stacks of money.

**Panel 3:** The cow, now wearing a kippah, looks frustrated. A thought bubble above it says, "This is going to take forever. I knew we should've played Pirates instead." A small pile of money lies on the ground next to the cow.



# China's Hil-dawg Comes to Stony Brook



By Eric DiGiovanni

On Monday, April 13, Chinese State Councilor Yandong Liu came to Stony Brook University to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Law to commemorate the new Confucius

Institute being established on campus. Liu is the only female in the Politburo, the cabinet that runs China. The Wang Center was closed all day for the proceedings and a large motorcade lined up around the cul-de-sac in front of the Administration Building. Security wasn't so tight. There were reports of sentries on the rooftops, and police officers stood on guard well into the night. From what peeks I could get of the inside, it looked like a very formal affair. So yeah, this was kind of a big deal.

The only problem was that it wasn't promoted at all. I didn't see any further news of the event the next day in either *USA Today* or in a quick search of all US news sites. The only place I saw any acknowledgement was Liu's Wikipedia page. So the only way I could get any information was by speaking with William Arens, the Dean of International Academic Programming.

Confucius Institutes are non-profit

centers funded by the Chinese government, usually within universities, to promote learning the language and culture of China, akin to the British Council and now defunct US Information Agency. He said he expects the Institute

Education Ji Zhou, School of Journalism Dean Howard Schneider, as well as some professors from the political science department were there. Also, 50 out of the 150 foreign students from SUNY-China 150, a program estab-



to be fully operational by this summer, when it will hold events and visits from ambassadors.

In addition to President Shirley Strum Kenny, the Chinese Minister of

lished to bring students from the earthquake-afflicted Sichuan Province to study at SUNY schools, were in attendance. No other students were invited.

Arens said: "Well, she contacted

SUNY, and SUNY recommended us. We have a very good reputation in China." He then tells me a story about how he met a student on the train trying to learn English. When he asked why, the student replied, "So I can go to Stony Brook." He also says that this was one of the many universities Liu visited this week, including Cornell, Harvard and MIT. "It's a great honor to be included among those schools."

He says he expects the Confucius Institute to further relations between SBU and China, where China gives scholarships to students to study in China, and we can expect to bring in more fellowships from there.

One issue that remains is the publicity the event received the day of and afterward. Security reasons were mentioned, but between the support seen for the Beijing Olympics last year and general student apathy, not much would have happened.

"They weren't interested in having a lot of publicity," Arens said. "There's a lot in China, where this is a very big deal. It's more important to have a lot of publicity [there] than it is here because we attract a lot of grad students from China, and a lot of cooperative research is done in China."

## Heroic Nation With \$15 trillion GDP Defeats Band of Pirates



By Ross Barkan

In one of the great acts of courage in our new century, the United States, which accounts for 50 percent of global military spending, van-

quished three Somali pirates. The pirates had taken American naval captain Richard Phillips hostage in an attempt to coax a ransom fee out of the United States.

"We'll teach those bastards to try to improve their living situation," said Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana. "Never have I been more proud of America and appalled at the African people. To think that these silly pirates believe that it is acceptable to lie, cheat, and steal to earn money. That is *not* what America is about."

The United States, which has never

done anything nefarious before to enrich itself, has been battling alongside a myriad of European nations to combat the growing problem of Somali piracy. Many Somalis turn to piracy because the poverty-stricken nation, often mired in lawlessness, offers few outlets for individuals trying not to die horribly before they turn 30.

Awesome American Navy Seal snipers, who look just like G.I. Joe and Spiderman crossed with a Thundercat and were super cool the whole time, totally fuckin' nailed the black dudes who were holding the white American captain guy hostage. Though Somali pirates are not known to kill their hostages and usually only demand a ransom fee, it is good they died because America rules and when you mess with the best, you die with the rest.

"It's sorta like when the Yankees played Tampa Bay pre-2008," said Sen. John McCain. "The Yankees had a



This is proof that not all pirates wear eyepatches.

higher payroll, but still bludgeoned the shit out of the Rays. Did they go easy on them? Fuck no. America is like that. We can't allow impoverished nations to disrupt the transit corridor for 20 percent

of the world's oil supply. I fucking love oil, in fact, I am currently bathing in some Iraqi oil right now. It's a bit sticky, but sometimes the best things in life stick to you."



# Men's Lacrosse Defeats Binghamton

By Ian Thomas

The Binghamton Bearcats men's lacrosse team came to Kenneth LaValle Stadium on Saturday with a lackluster 2-10 record, and were hoping the Stony Brook team would overlook their weaknesses as they prepared for two tough games down the stretch.

Unfortunately for them, that never happened.

A little more than a minute into the game, sophomore midfielder Kevin Crowley scooped up a loose ball, dodged multiple sticks and bodies, and from about 15 yards out, fired a dart of a shot that gave the Binghamton defense a little preview of what they would be seeing all night.

From that point on, the Seawolves didn't look back, and cruised to a 14-9 victory Saturday night at LaValle Stadium.

"It was the best game of the season for us," said head coach Rick Sowell. "Today it just seemed like it clicked."

Stony Brook controlled the play for most of the entire game. Following up a first half where they led 7-2, the team

scored three quick goals, and with over eight minutes left in the third quarter, they led by 8.

The Seawolves dominated most of the statistical categories. Sophomore Adam Rand controlled the face-off circle, winning 15 of 20, and leading the team to a 16 to 9 advantage. Ground balls came to die in junior defender Steven Waldeck's stick, where he picked up eight and the team had a total of 44 to the Bearcats 24.

As the game progressed in the second half, Binghamton rallied as Coach Sowell began to give his starters some much deserved rest, but as Crowley and company were rotated back in, the lead was never in jeopardy.

If it wasn't for a great effort by Binghamton goalie Larry Kline, who had 10 saves and forced two turnovers, the results might have been even more one sided in Stony Brook's favor.

Sophomore attacker Jordan McBride continued his hot streak, as his first period tally made it 18 straight games in which he has scored at least one goal. He now has 32 goals for the season, which ranks him in the top five in Division I lacrosse.

Seven different players scored for

the Seawolves, led by Crowley, McBride and freshman Kyle Belton, who all had three goals. Crowley also had two assists, and led the team with five points in the game. Junior goaltender Charlie Parr had seven saves, and junior Rob Camposa added two saves in relief.

Freshman attacker Josh Russell, appearing in just his fifth game this year, scored his first goal at the collegiate level. Following the game, it was also announced that Belton was named the America East Rookie of the Week for his efforts.

Not only did the Seawolves pick up a big victory that brings them to 7-4 and guarantees a winning record for the 2009 season and adds to their season high three game winning streak, but it also means that they have clinched a berth in the America East Championship.

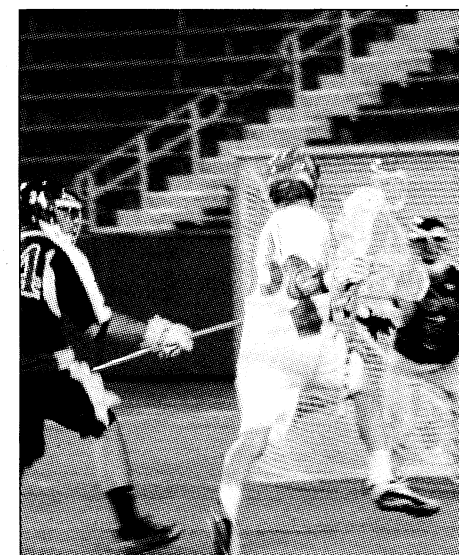
The team is currently tied for first in the division with University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) and Albany. All three teams have a 3-1 in-conference record, with UMBC currently holding the tiebreaker, as they have the best combined record.

"We are playing good," said Coach Sowell. "Hopefully we can keep it

going."

The team will try to do just that, as they will travel to Hempstead to take on their ninth-ranked rival Hofstra, Tuesday night at 7 p.m.

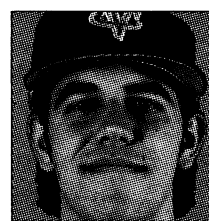
Stony Brook will wrap up their season at home, when they host the Albany Great Danes on April 25 at 7 p.m. for senior night.



Going for the goal

Najib Aminy

## Hockey is Cool



By Ian Thomas

It's true what most people say, April really is the best sports month of the year.

You get the tail-end of March Madness and college basketball, where millions of people worldwide chalk up hard-earned cash to bet on schools they can't locate on a map or name more than one player on the roster. Gonzaga is located in Spokane, Wash. by the way.

There is the Masters, the first golf major of the year, and unfortunately not the last. Tiger Woods battles, well, a bunch of other guys most golf fans won't even remember in five years, to keep viewers interested based on his placing.

The NBA kicks off its playoffs too, and you can almost feel the magic when an eight seed with a sub-.500 record just gets dismantled in the first round. I don't know what's more exciting, already knowing that there is nearly a 100 percent chance the top seeds meet in the finals, or the endless stoppages due to fouls and timeouts.

Then, bursting into the spotlight

like Roger Clemens after getting a shot of steroids in the ass, is baseball's opening day. Ah, nothing says America's pastime like bloated payrolls, steroid epidemics and four hour snooze fests.

But you know what; there is one



event that trumps them all. A series of events that combines strength, stamina, agility, intelligence and pure will-power. A spectacle that is the epitome of blood, sweat and tears. A chance for just run of the mill athletes to become folk heroes and legends. Where the energy and intensity can be felt by the thousands in attendance from whistle to whistle.

Yeah, Wrestlemania is pretty cool

too, but I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

The NHL has every element that makes every other sporting event during this month great and then just amps it up to eleven.

People love these Cinderella teams in college basketball, especially when they completely trash your bracket by knocking out a higher seed. But in reality, these teams do nothing to the big picture. Considering there are more than 330 different NCAA Division I men's basketball teams, the final four results are seemingly rotated between maybe ten schools. The NHL has had five different winners the past five years, and seven different winners the last ten. Hear that Islanders fans, keep hope, you might have a chance in like 2020 or something.

Golf tries to flaunt the preciseness and focus it takes to play its game. Let me just say this, hockey players do everything they do, while playing on ice and standing on a quarter of an inch piece of steel. Enough said.

Basketball tries to play itself off as this overly athletic sport, but really, just look at Shaq. There are guys in better shape than him that are on a Krispy

Kreme diet. Plus, outside of soccer, is there any more of a sad approach to fouls? Players react to body contact like they just ran into a freight train. Well alright, I guess the NHL is stuck with Sidney Crosby, but still, even he from time to time decides to knock people over.

Finally, the MLB. I love baseball, but it comes down to this. A-Rod or no A-Rod. Stanley Cup playoffs every time.

Plus, is there a cooler trophy in sports? The Stanley Cup just rules. Every other trophy gets made just for the winner, it gets handed out at the game, brought to the parade and the ceremony, then just stuck in some bookcase in the team's offices. The Stanley Cup goes everywhere. Players drink from it, put their babies in it, and bring it to all the places they go over the summer, like to charity events, to strip clubs, to charity events. Alright, well I really don't know where else they bring it, but really, it's like a three foot tall metal statue that weighs 35 pounds that has every name of every winning team inscribed into it. If that isn't badass, I don't know what is.

The NHL is pretty irrelevant in the view of the normal person, and that just sucks. Give it a chance, in the best time of the year.



# A Whole New Ball Game



By Jason  
Wirchin

As countless flashbulbs went off shortly before sunset last Monday, April 13, Mike Pelfrey wound up and threw the first official pitch at Citi Field. In front of a nearly packed house of 42,000, No. 34 delivered a fast-ball strike, and New York's National League baseball heritage took a giant leap into the future. The question is, do the Mets know where they're going?

Given the fact that I was a fan in the stands that night, I'd be lying if I said it wasn't surreal seeing the Amazins play a home game in a park other than Shea. I can also attest to the many complaints fans shared as they toured the new facility, especially since I've got quite the list myself.

**Who plays here?** At old Shea Stadium, the place screamed Mets. There wasn't a single square inch in that outdated cookie cutter that didn't resemble some appearance to the team that called it home for forty-five seasons. Whether it was featuring those obnoxiously orange seats or banners of Mets players past and present that adorned the lower concourses, Shea was what made the Mets, the Mets. Its successor couldn't be more of an opposite. Not only are the colors blue and orange missing throughout the entire ballpark – except in the bathrooms, I should add – but the stadium's homage to the Brooklyn Dodgers – and only the Dodgers – seems to ignore the team that actually

plays there. Great job, Wilpons.

**Did you see that?** Despite Shea's occasionally uncomfortable seating, the gutter-hole's sightlines were more than acceptable. With the exception of some perspectives from the upper deck and the back rows of the Loge and Mezzanine sections, full views of the field were more common than not. In Citi, poorly-placed fiberglass panels and railings block fans in the upper deck boxes from clearly seeing the field, and, in some places, the outfield corners are still obstructed as they were in Shea. For a park worth more than \$800 million, you'd think the contractors would have taken these issues into account.

**Don't "Promenade Level" me!** For whatever reason, I decided to take an elevator up to my seat in the upper deck – or the Promenade Level as they call it at Citi Field. Aside from the fact that the elevator looked as if it had marble floors and mahogany walls, when the doors opened, a greeter dressed in formal business attire addressed us fans with an overly-cordial, "Welcome to Citi Field." When we reached the top level, she let us go with an unexpected, "You have now reached the Promenade Level." Don't give me that bullshit! This is New York Freakin' City for crying out loud! Fans aren't supposed to be pampered like this – we appreciate it, but we don't need it! What ever happened to *just* going to a ballgame? When did Mets baseball cease to be the sport of average New Yorkers, and become the game of corporate kings in business suits?

**Blue-collar blues.** One of the many facets that made Shea, Shea was its loyal, albeit modest, fan base. Comprised mostly of Long Islanders, Queens natives and Brooklynites, the Shea faithful were a raucous bunch that always made players – and fellow fans – know of their displeasure with the team. Foul language and drunken rants were stalwarts in the stands, and the place was all the better for it. With Citi's overpriced tickets and a crappy economy, fewer blue-collar fans will gladly cash out enough dough to see the Mets in person when they can easily – and less expensively – watch them on the tube. On Opening Night, there were plenty of rowdy folk in attendance; but far too many snooty, middle-aged geezers to suit my cup of tea.

**Where has all the sound gone?** I've been to two home openers at Shea, and both were booming loud. There was a ubiquitous roar throughout the



stadium from the opening ceremonies to the final out, and when a Met struck out the side or stole a base, fans made noise – *lots* of noise. At Citi Field Monday night, a ghostly quietness enveloped the stands. Even when David Wright tied the game in the fifth with a three-run home run to left field, cheers were subdued in a way I had never expected. Maybe this is what happens in a ballpark seating 13,000 fewer fans than Shea did. Also, Shea's bowl shape led to funneled acoustics, which amplified sound from any point on any tier. Regardless, I couldn't help but feel disappointed that I could hear a pin drop at nearby LaGuardia Airport.

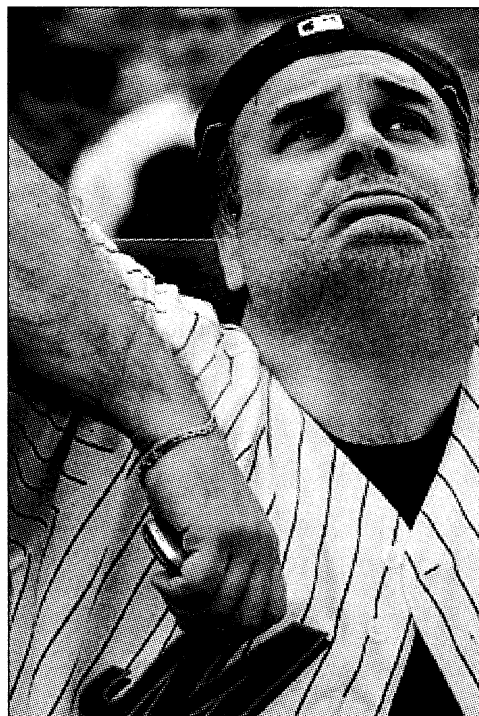
**Wiffleball? Here?** Beyond Citi Field's gargantuan scoreboard in straightaway centerfield is the 2K Sports FanFest. Marketed as an area that is "fun for the whole family," FanFest features a miniature replica of Citi's infield, a batting cage, base running challenges, video game kiosks, a dunk tank – anyone up for soaking Jeff Wilpon? – and a live DJ. Open more than 2 hours before every game and up until the seventh inning, FanFest is an attack on the senses. Think about it. Dad takes kids to game. Kids want food. Dad has to call a vendor. No vendor in sight. Kids complain. Dad forced to take kids to concession stand. Dad misses at least an inning of the game. Kids now have to go to the bathroom. Dad forced to take kids (and food) to the bathroom. Did the Wilpons think it was practical to have a scaled-down amusement park on the premises? OK, maybe going there before the game makes a little

sense. But during the game? No way! The area's packed with standing-room-only fans anyway, and it's too exhausting for an already-tired father to trek a mile-and-a-half just to play some wiffleball.

**Glass of Chardonnay, please.** This bothers me more than anything else! In the middle deck – or Excelsior Level – you can find the exclusive Acela Club. A posh restaurant with tables positioned on five tiers – one outside, four inside – the Club offers full views of the playing field, as do its lounge and bar. Occupying a gigantic space in left field, this glass eyesore limits one of old stadiums' most unique phenomena – the wave. Fans tried several times Opening Night to get a wave going on the Excelsior Level, but failed as the Club, which sits between two seating sections, firmly blocked it from moving around the stadium. Add this to the restaurant's pricey menu choices, and you've got quite the anti-Shea. Sir, would you care for some wine to complement your lobster tail? Seriously, this isn't some other New York stadium where they serve the finest beverages and the most premium steaks. Anyone remember hot dogs, peanuts and cracker jacks?

So ends my rant. Thanks for getting through it. If you haven't been to Citi Field yet, I recommend you go. It's still a very nice ballpark and, despite its flaws, you should try it on for size – at least once. It'll just take some getting used to, that's for sure.

Did I mention that the Mets lost the game on a balk?



Yearning for the bygone days at Shea...



# "Sir, I challenge you!"

By Eric DiGiovanni

**When It Meets:** Thursdays from 8:30 PM to 10:30 PM

**Where It Meets:** Union Bi-Level

**Who's Known For It:** Rafael from Soul Caliber, Neil Diamond, and Pierce Brosnan in *Die Another Day*.

"Fencing?" you ask. "You mean you attended a club where you don't try to beat the crap out of another guy barehanded? How are you going to give us some story about how you got choked or hit in the face? DO NOT WANT!" To which I reply, "I got to use a sword, and one guy did get poked in the arm. So there."

I also learned that "fencing" is a catch-all term for sword fighting derived from the Old English word "defense". However, the Olympics narrowed it down to three styles based on the make of sword and target area: the "epee" (heavier sword, anywhere on the body), "foil" (lighter sword, the torso area) and "sabre" (light and used for swiping, from the waist up). The captain of the club, Michael Yen, gave some insight into the differences between the weapons when I asked him about the fencing scene in *Die Another Day*. He said, "Epee [fencing is] not as flashy as [it was in the movie]. It's a lot more tactical. It's a lot slower because you need to think about what you're doing."

For protection, everyone puts on equipment that makes you look like the world's fanciest beekeeper. I went to the Fencing Club in high school one time, and heard that a kid got stabbed in the mouth and died when he was practicing without the helmet on. Despite that story, the club is very keen on safety and being hit with any of the swords used doesn't hurt with all the equipment on. The club is more than willing to provide all the equipment.

Those who have been in it for a while usually have their own equipment, which is about \$100 for the protective wear and \$50 for a high quality foil.

What surprised me was that there really wasn't any "practice" or "warm-ups," everyone went right into fencing, except for me and the three other people coming for the first time. For some crazy reason, they don't trust people who have never held a sword before. There was a lot of ground to cover on footwork and how to move back and

strike was legit.

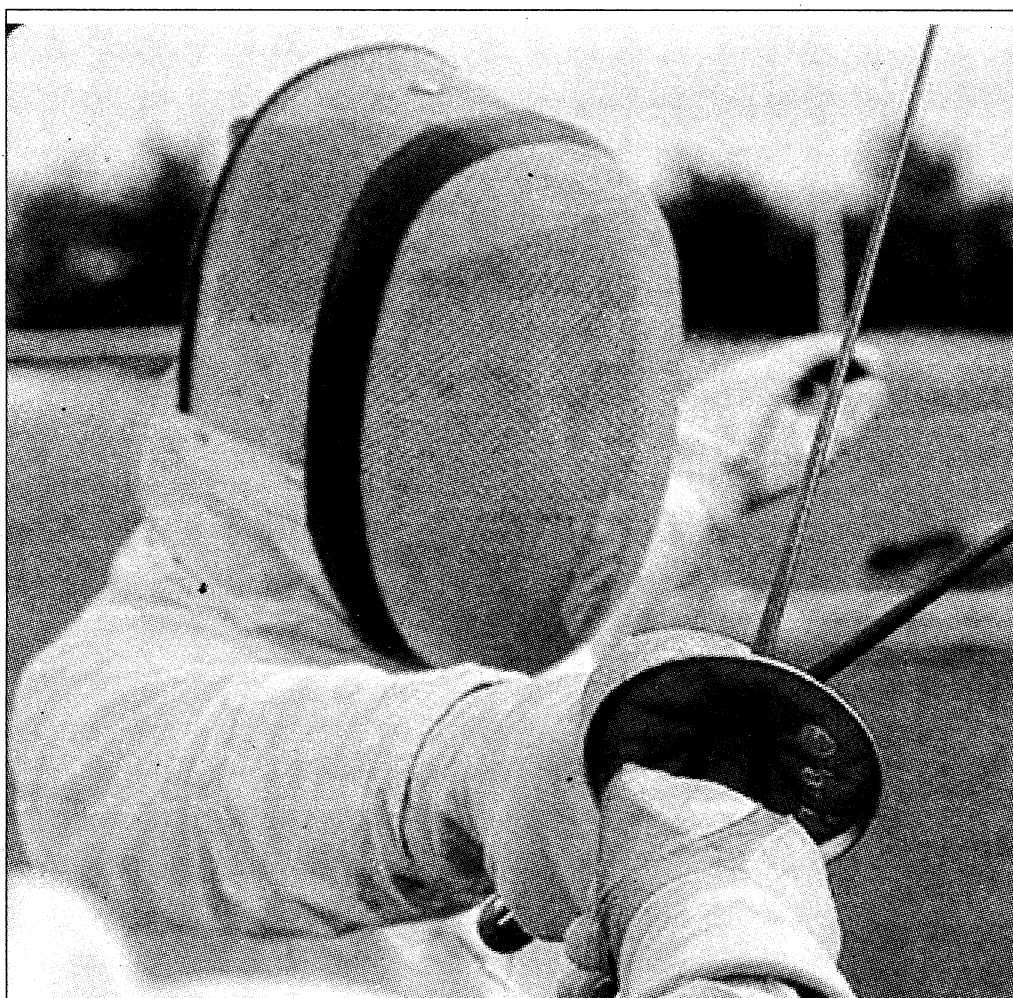
Watching the club (which is more like a team, since occasionally they attend tournaments) fencing is really a spectacle and shows the different styles of fighting. With the foils, there was a lot of back and forth, since scoring is based on something called "the right of way," or who's on the offensive. They're always trying to parry and take control. Sabre fencing went like this: The referee signals to start, the two fencers take a couple apprehensive steps toward one

needs to be pointing a certain way. But eventually I got the hang of it, as Michael taught me all about parrying. When I finally dueled with one of the other newbies, things got much more awesome. The girl instructing us yelled "Engarde!" I raised my sword and stared down my opponent, ready to lunge at a moment's notice. "I'm going to cut you like a Cornish game hen!" I yelled. He was unfazed. The dueling commenced and for a brief moment we stood still, waiting for the other to make

the first move. *Very well then*, I thought, *Have at thee!* I leapt forward and lunged at his chest. He parried my blow and would have gotten me back if I didn't lean away at the right time. I regained my bearings and charged on, parrying away any retaliation. I hit him a split second before he hit me. Then we had to go back and start it all over again. It would have been more exciting if we just kept going and the referee kept a running tally until time was up like a real swordfight. Then I remembered that this sport has its origins in European nobility, so it would only be sportsmanlike to let the other guy start over.

I ran into John Kromidas, a long-standing member of the club and old high school friend of mine who was big on fencing back then too. He said, "Sword fighting is cool," and what he said next sums up my advice to anyone thinking of joining: "I figured take wherever I could. Be patient, stick with it." He was really good from what I saw of him. Stick with it, and you'll be swinging from chandeliers and rescuing fair maidens in no time.

Oh and by the way, the famous actor you were thinking of who was captain of the Fencing team at NYU? It was Jerry O'Connell, star of such cinematic classics as *Stand By Me* and *Kangaroo Jack*.



forth, but once that was out of the way, everything else wasn't that difficult. The "pros" there fenced while hooked up to a high tech system that detects when then sword hits the other fencer. It's not completely automatic because a director has to be there to make sure the

another, then they rush at each other, taking a few swipes until the scoreboard goes off, giving a point. The process repeats until someone gets 15 points.

Eventually, I got to put on the uniform and get a sabre in my hands. It felt awkward at first because the sword

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