

News & Views

Volume 6, Number 3 May 15, 1996

Published by the Graduate Student Organization at Stony Brook

Feature Article: Provost and Vice Provost Meet with Graduate Students

by Cary Henderson

On 25 May 96, the GSO sponsored a forum at The Spot about the recently published Provost's report on the state of graduate education on the SB campus. Rollin Richmond, the Provost, and Lawrence Martin, the Vice-Provost of the Graduate School, both attended and made initial remarks in their efforts to address the questions and criticisms that the report had sparked. A panel of SB graduate students openly expressed their concerns about a number of the proposed cuts, cutbacks, and/or retrenchments proposed in the report. Both administrators responded to these concerns, and a lively discussion ensued.

In his remarks, the Provost stressed his willingness to discuss not only the stringent measures proposed, but also to consider even more alternatives than had already been examined. He maintained that, in essence, the changes proposed arose from restrictions from both the state of New York and the so-called provostial area. As the former is clearly out of his purview, he alluded to the efforts of his office to tighten its own belt, as expenditures had purportedly been profligate at one time for unclear reasons. He stated, in no uncertain terms, that his overriding concern about graduate education is that the graduate "experience" at SB should not be restricted or damaged in any way.

Focusing on the topic at hand, the Provost then turned to his report. The revised version should appear for the public's viewing toward the end of May. Three points seemed symptomatic of the revisions now under way. The Provost stressed that no graduate departments in any division will be summarily done away with, and he underscored his commitment to quality graduate education, achievement and experience. His final point alluded to intensified development of public and private contacts to reduce the imbalance between public and private funding sources for the SB campus.

The Vice-Provost of the Graduate School then spoke about some of the efforts of the administration to reduce expenditures and areas of bureaucratic overlap. Apparently, it first became obvious that a deep and far-reaching overhaul of the entire SUNY system was needed when the administration's efforts to prevent monetary cutbacks were not successful. The Provost's report is evidently designed to portray

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Testing Time For SUNY

The New York Times Editorial Board wrote the following article in response to the resignation of Thomas Bartlett, Chancellor of SUNY. The article was published in the New York Times on May 2, 1996. It has been reprinted with permission.

The resignation of Thomas Bartlett, Chancellor of the State University of New York, is being cast in some quarters as the natural result of a power struggle between trustees appointed by Gov. George Pataki and a Chancellor hired during the time of his predecessor, Mario Cuomo. Power was indeed an issue. But more important was a profound disagreement over proposed budget cuts, which Mr. Bartlett regarded as disabling to the 64-campus SUNY system and damaging to its historical mission.

The academic community is watching intently to see whether the trustees will conduct a convincing search for a successor of proven professional competence and an independent turn of mind - or whether they will seek someone who will blindly endorse Governor Pataki's budget.

Mr. Bartlett's departure, after a only a year and a half in office, could not have come at a more awkward moment or in a more distressing fashion. He leaves office with the university staggering under past budget cuts and facing new ones that will reduce both the baseline budget and tuition assistance to the poorest students.

Mr. Bartlett's allies say he has been unhappy for some time but resolved to leave only after the board became overly hostile, meddling even in his choice for provost. His resignation follows a prolonged public squabble with the Pataki trustees, who are meant to be advocates of the system but have signaled their willingness to accept any cut the Governor proposes.

Under pressure from the trustees, Mr. Bartlett refrained from actively campaigning against the cuts, as did his City University counterpart, Chancellor Ann Reynolds. People close to Mr. Bartlett say he was distressed at having to behave in a manner at odds with his values and his definition of SUNY's mission. The same budget problems afflict CUNY and its 21 campuses.

This page has embraced Mr. Pataki's call for fiscal restraint and even suggested that SUNY consider closing some of its campuses. But we have also cautioned against cutting too deeply, too quickly, in ways that would deprive the state of an educated work force - and deny tens of thousands of poor and working-class New Yorkers a college degree. Uncertainties about tuition levels and student aid have already discouraged many youngsters from applying at all. Even conservative SUNY administrators are frightened, calling the cuts unnecessarily harsh to the system and to the poor.

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Is Anyone Reading This?

David Brown,
GSO President

This will hopefully be my last article for *News & Views (N&V)*. I've managed to write for every issue published during my administration. I thought it was important because it is the only way I've had to stay in touch with you, the graduate students. I've tried to spell out my philosophy for the GSO, as well as detail the challenges the GSO faced. I have also consistently asked for your help in running the GSO. However, after the April Senate meeting, I've come to question this, and begun to question the future of *N&V*.

The question is, as the title asks, does anyone read these articles? More specifically, do more administrators read this paper than students? At the April meeting, Senators complained I failed to keep them informed of committee vacancies, as well as the need for help in the Provost's Plan and SUNY budget fights. All these Senators would have had to do is read my past columns. They would have found lists of committees to be filled, appeals for help, and a statement of my priorities. Instead, when I acted, or failed to act as they expected they seemed shocked.

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Graduate Student Organization
2105 Computer Science Building
SUNY at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, NY 11794-4413

how disruptive that overhaul could be. As the Provost himself had done, the Vice-Provost stressed the willingness of the administration to consider suggestions and respond to criticisms in its efforts to preserve as much of the extant system as possible.

A panel of grad students from humanities and social & hard sciences spoke about a wealth of concerns that the Provost's report has fomented among students. One student asked three blunt and direct questions. First, has anyone in administration considered the needs of grad students while at SB? Second, what kinds of measures are being considered that will ensure the students already at SB that their experience here will not be restricted, not to speak of cut short. And finally, what about the university's priorities? Why are there so many vice-presidents? Do these priorities dictate that Theater Arts, German and Slavics, and French and Italian are all losing their state funding so that administrative offices continue to be supported, so that the campus receives aesthetic attention, or to boost certain athletic programs into Division I?

Other students stressed various points. One wondered whether the administration realizes that over 25% of all classes on the campus are being taught by grad students and that therefore any major changes in the graduate population or experience will necessarily cause repercussions in the quality of undergraduate education. With this in mind, another question posed by the same student voiced concern about increased work responsibilities for incoming grad students.

To top all that off, what value will a Ph.D. from SUNY SB have if the restructuring and reductions go

into effect? The net result looks frightening indeed: more difficult work due to less funding for a degree that means less in an ever more difficult minefield of a job market.

Some students voiced concerns about the emotional effect of the restrictions on established faculty members. One Physics student suggested that such repercussions could already be felt in even that still highly-regarded and financially relatively stable department. His concern was primarily for the breadth of the educational experience at SB if departments that are less successful than his at procuring private funding were summarily dropped or heavily restricted. Several speakers asked both administrators present to convince them that all possible stones had been overturned in the effort to come up with alternative belt-tightening measures.

A Sociology student brought up a completely different issue that seemed to highlight a very narrow and one-sided aspect of the administration's thinking. Why has all the rhetoric been determined by SB's status as a research university when it's primary task is to teach? How is it possible that tenured professors put students to sleep in their lectures and seminars because they've never learned to present the material at hand in a remotely interesting way? What about the positive influence that working with grad students has on faculty members, an influence from which the faculty often learns to think in less moribund ways? In a similar vein, a student from English asked why TAs who teach Freshman composition courses are being threatened with the addition of another course per year to fulfill their teaching obligations and retain their funding. Those classes are capped at 25 students per section and the ratio of student to instructor contact is very high. Increasing the burden for each TA by half would seem counterthetical to the purpose of such a labor-intensive course. In addition to this, the proposed removal of composition courses from the purview of the English department seems particularly unfounded and irrational.

A speaker from one of the most heavily affected departments, Theater Arts, asked about the criteria used to evaluate the relative merit of different departments. How does one, after all, determine the value of the aesthetic experience of dramatic productions? Different criteria indeed would seem appropriate than those used to evaluate the achievements of science and engineering departments.

On an ironic note, a student from the Harriman School of Business expressed satisfaction with the "mediocre education" he has enjoyed in light of the relatively low cost of studying at SUNY SB. In his view, the task of the SUNY system should be to provide students with an affordable education that is sufficient for their plans and future needs.

Clearly, the points raised by the panelists approached the present crisis from multiple perspectives and with multiple concerns in mind. However, a common thread that surfaced at several junctures in the talks presented was the overwhelming desire that those most affected by the restructuring proposed in the Provost's report be allowed to take part in its revision. This desire seemed anchored in the hope that the final draft will constitute the least painful and most productive solution to the financial crisis at hand.

Other questions arose during the discussion that ensued. For instance, why do the changes reflected in the Provost's report most heavily influence the lives of

a group of people who earn less than \$10,000 per year? What surprises are coming in the summer, when most students will be away? If the Provost is so eager to respond to criticism and suggestions, why has the department head in English been seeking an appointment for a month with him to voice objections to the changes forecast in the report, but to no avail? Why is the revamping of the SB football team to Division I status an issue, when SB's spectacularly successful lacrosse team is no longer? The answers to these questions were disturbingly superficial and unconvincing.

Although the initial impression that both the Provost and Vice-Provost made was one of cordiality, camaraderie with the student body in a time of stress, and willingness to listen to suggestions, their response to remarks tended to indicate that their thinking was much less open to criticism and reflection. No question about it, they are both consummate politicians - they circulated freely around the room at The Spot before the event and even partook of the pizza served - but their responses were generally heavy on rhetoric and weak in substance. What kinds of revisions actually will appear in the final draft of the Provost's report and the extent to which the administration is really ready to incorporate criticism into its revisions still remains to be seen.

The Top 10 Lies Told By Graduate Students

10. It doesn't bother me that my college roommate is making \$80,000 a year on Wall Street.
9. I'd love to proofread your book/chapter/article.
8. My research has a lot of practical, real-life, applications.
7. The latest article you published was quite thought provoking.
6. I would never date an undergraduate.
5. I turned down a lot of other schools and job offers to come here.
4. I'm going to start my dissertation right after I finish this.
3. My department is really helping me out a lot with my thesis.
2. My job prospects look really good after graduation.
1. No really, I plan to graduate in only two more years.

GRADUATE STUDENT News & Views

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Editor: Mike Fagan

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Graduate Student Organization
Room 2105, Computer Science
SUNY Stony Brook
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The GSO Executive Council

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Vice President: Hasan Imam
Treasurer: Jeffery Hack
Secretary: Eugene Sokolov
Acting Speaker: Hasan Imam

News & Views is published by the Graduate Student Organization, which is solely responsible for its content.

Executive editorials are written by a member of the GSO executive council or its designee, but may not represent the opinion of the entire council.

Readers are encouraged to express their views through the Letters to the Editor, or by contacting the Editor and arranging a Feature or Viewpoint article. Feature, Viewpoint, and Letters to the Editor articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the GSO and may in fact be of opposite viewpoint.

Letters to the Editor must be typed, signed, and under 500 words. Letters to the Editor, if published, will be published "as is". Spelling and grammatical errors will not be corrected. The editor reserves the right not to publish a letter.

Writers are encouraged to submit their work on IBM compatible diskettes.

News & Views pays USB graduate students for well-written, pre-arranged News & Views. Contact the editor for the specifics.

News, cartoons, ideas and comments are always welcome. The newspaper's fax # is 632-8965. To leave a message for the editor, call the GSO at 632-6492 or send E-mail to MFAGAN@ccmail.sunysb.edu.

GSO Proposed Budget 9/1/96-8/31/97

GSO Office General Expenses	\$ 8,000.00
Projected Breakdown	
Equipment & Supplies	\$5,000.00
Telephone	\$1,000.00
Postage	\$1,000.00
Rental Equipment	\$ 500.00
Service Contracts	\$ 500.00
Travel	\$ 500.00
Payroll	
Officer Stipend	\$11,700.00
Office Manager	\$10,000.00
Office Staff	\$ 3,300.00
Payroll Tax	\$ 200.00
Insurance	\$ 1,000.00
C&D Agent	\$ 3,658.00
Accountant	\$ 3,500.00
Legal Expenses	\$ 1,500.00
Computer Services	\$ 1,500.00
Political Advocacy	
NYPIRG	\$12,000.00
GSO Sponsored Advertisements	
Projected Breakdown	
Printing	\$1,000.00
Postage	\$1,000.00
Distribution	\$ 500.00
Program Funding	
Student Clubs and Organizations	\$ 3,000.00
Alternative Cinema	\$ 4,000.00
General Clubs and Social Events	\$ 7,000.00
Speaker Series	\$ 1,000.00
Conferences	\$ 1,000.00
The Spot	
Subsidy	\$15,000.00
Events	\$ 2,500.00
Public Service	
NAGPS	\$ 200.00
Child Care	\$ 8,500.00
WUSB	\$ 3,000.00
Volunteer Ambulance Corps	\$ 1,500.00
RAP	\$18,000.00
Department Allocations	\$ 5,000.00
Advertising of Public Services	\$ 500.00
GSO Publications	
News and Views	
Editor	\$ 3,680.00
Printing and Distribution	\$ 3,000.00
Submitted Articles	\$ 1,500.00
Survival Guide	\$ 1,100.00
Orientation	\$ 1,000.00
Elections	\$ 1,600.00
Meetings	\$ 1,300.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 500.00
Total Expenses	\$ 143,238.00

GSO Income

Activity Fee	\$111,000.00
Rap Grant	\$ 8,000.00
Yearly Interest	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>
Total Income	\$120,000.00

The GSO
anticipates having
a surplus of

approximately
\$23,000 for the
1995-1996 year.
If approved by the
GSO Senate, this
money will be
used to fund
expenditures
incurred during the
1996-1997 year.

The GSO
presently has
approximately
\$26,000 in a
reserve account.

Dave's Article

Continued from Page 1.

Currently, N&V is the only way an officer can communicate directly with graduate students. With changes in office staffing and various difficulties with the new office arrangement, N&V became the only way I could reach Senators as well. I really question the benefit of having a grad newspaper if even graduate representatives fail to read it when all other communication lines fail.

This Executive Council has talked about changing N&V into a newsletter and doing publishing in-house and Xeroxing it at Office Max or Staples. This will save a lot of trees as well as several thousand dollars of GSO money. If you want a newspaper, if you read this newspaper, you had better let the GSO know fast. We may need to start cutting costs, and if the GSO Senators don't even read this "rag" (term used with Editor's permission), N&V is going to be one of the first things on the cutting block.

Moving on, I'm leaving the GSO on June 30, so I'd like to share my thoughts about the organization, give my opinions on problems, and say good-bye. I certainly wouldn't call my administration a shining success. I started by inheriting a messy staffing problem which pulled strong emotional responses from many people. Ida Fuchs is gone, "The Time of Ida" is consigned to history. I don't want to relive "Idagate", but she gave the GSO a false sense of security; officers could think she was performing the details of administration while they could perform the allegedly "sexy" tasks of meeting with the USB President and administrators, holding rallies, and generally making the GSO voice heard and seen. Well, she didn't perform these duties and hadn't for a very long time. Our deepest thanks to Ron Willa of the FSA for spending so much time with us to straighten out the mess. We also had to deal with negative impacts in the SUNY budget (since ameliorated) and a mind-blowing Provost's Plan. Our thanks to Provost Richmond and Dean Lawrence Martin for taking the time to answer the questions of graduate students. We also had to consider the past election and its possible negative implications for GSO funding. All this, and GSO politics straight from the depths of Hell. I got burnt out really fast, plus, on a personal note, I will see two of my academic advisors leave in one year. This is an awful lot to handle if you are President of the GSO and even manage to find some aspect of the job you enjoy; I found most of this really distasteful.

I've always valued wisdom more than happiness. This year I learned that you can glean wisdom even when you're miserable and screwing up. So here then, in no particular order, are problems and challenges I think the GSO should tackle. First, the GSO has long been acting like a government which has no accountability to its constituents. We spend money like it grows on trees. There are really two answers to this. One, be careful when we spend GSO money, and two, raise the activity fee. Over the past year, we did the first with some success. We no longer give thousands of dollars to groups with a dozen people. I hope we can continue this. In my opinion, raising the activity fee is not an option until the GSO can provide some service to the majority of grads. We run some good programs, but they still cater to a select few. Until we run some program for everyone, asking for more money seems immoral to me.

Secondly, we really need to think about the way officers run this organization. The GSO is becoming

an elected despot, and perhaps this isn't a bad thing. If we can't maintain a quorum of a mere eight people at Senate Meetings we can't do business. In this situation, obviously either someone takes charge (and makes the trains run on time) or nothing gets done. This semester we had two Executive Council posts open. There were no volunteers from the Senate for either post. Since the Speaker of the Senate must, of course, come from the Senate, this post remained unfilled since January. Such a lack of resolve from the Senate is disturbing. Senators need to be more than people who yell at the Officers after the fact. We wanted to discuss issues; we just could never keep quorum long enough. For the GSO to work properly, Senators must send graduate students concerns to the Executive Council and relay Executive requests for input back to grads. Without this, the officers are forced to make decisions on their own, and as a result, very twisted people are often attracted to GSO officer positions. I question if these people have any clue as to the concerns of grads.

The third problem, and a related one, is that with Ida gone, the President must be more of an administrator. This, together with the necessary tasks of meeting with University officials, promises to consume a great deal of time for every future President. My belief is that all officer positions must be part-time; making the GSO a full-time job (which is very tempting if you want to do the job right) would mean you would no longer be a full-time graduate student. I feel this would be intrinsically bad. The only other option is to realize the GSO, and in particular, its President, cannot be the savior of Grad students. Anne Mayer's idea that a President must do A, B, C, and D is simply no longer realistic, if it ever was. The GSO can help to focus student concerns, but it can't create concerns or work in a vacuum. If the GSO tries to do its job without "regular grad. students", too much power will be placed in too few hands. In addition, such an obligation is too much to ask of graduate students facing the same daily struggles you do.

Finally, beware of former officers loitering about the GSO. These people mean well, but they are frequently stuck in GSO paradigms of the past. Monica McTigue's and Kathryn Kent's desire to retain Ida Fuchs when she was doing more harm than good is one example; I've mentioned another in the previous paragraph. It's not that Monica, Kathryn, and Anne are bad people, it's just that each administration has its own problems. I certainly hope my preoccupation with internal GSO affairs would not persist if grads continue to be screwed over from on high, but it was necessary to rebuild the GSO. Each officer gets one chance; if he or she cannot make a lasting change in that year, the change probably wasn't a good one. Continuity is good, but innovation is more important to deal with changing problems. So we should thank those who made a contribution to this organization, but not always heed the advice of those with the most seniority. And for God's sake, don't let former officers back in the Executive Council by awarding the Speaker of the Senate as some kind of a strange Service Award. On that note, I hope to bid a lasting good-bye to the GSO, and I thank all of you for your input, your encouragement, and your support.

In accordance with the Executive Chamber Policy Memo 91:18 Asbestos Abatement Notice, this notification will alert you the planned abatement of asbestos-containing materials located on the campus of the University at Stony Brook.

New York State asbestos handling regulations require that building occupants be notified prior to the commencement of an asbestos abatement project. An announcement will be posted by Environmental Health and Safety in public area throughout the building. Should you have any questions with regard to the project, please do not hesitate to contact this department.

Location:

Dewey College, Located in Kelly Quad.

Tentative Start Date:

May 28, 1996

Tentative Completion Date:

July 1, 1996

Type of Abatement:

Removal of sprayed acoustic ceiling material, floor tile/mastic/cove base, thermal insulation, stair treads, tank installation, and fire doors.

Location:

Education Communications Center (ECC).

Tentative Start Date:

Monday, June 3, 1996

Tentative Completion Date:

Friday, June 7, 1996

Type of Abatement:

Removal of 28 perimeter windows and associated caulking (non-friable exterior window caulking contains asbestos).

Editor's Piece

The Applicant's Revenge

Let's be honest: Job seeking is hell. First you must spend hours reading the Sunday classifieds. Then you must send out resumes and cover letters which detail everything you have ever accomplished in your life.

What do you get in return? You end up sitting by the phone hoping that a potential employer will call you for an interview, and a bunch of ultra-sweet, ultra-polite rejection letters in the mail. In case you haven't had to go through this process recently, here's a sample letter:

Dear Mr. Fagan,

We are in receipt of your resume expressing an interest in employment at "our firm".

Your background and credentials are very impressive. However, at the present time, we do not have any openings suitable for someone of your training and experience. Your resume will be kept on file, and should a position become available for which we believe you might be qualified, we will be in touch with you.

Thank you for your interest in working at "our firm" and good luck to you in finding an interesting and challenging position.

Sincerely yours,

Bob/Rebecca Bureaucrat
Director of Human Resources

Although I received at least 10 of the above letters, I was also able to get eight interviews and, (get this!) a job. I start on May 20th.

Since accepting the job, other employers which I interviewed with have offered me jobs, and still other employers have contacted me for interviews. How sweet it is once the table has turned. Here's a copy of the letter which I would like to send to them in response to their offers:

Dear Bob/Bureaucrat,

I have received your offer of employment with Firm Inc.

Firm Inc.'s compensation and benefit package are very impressive. However, at the present time, I do not have an opening for a employer of your reputation and experience. Your offer of employment will be kept on file, and should I seek employment in the future, I will be in touch with you.

Thank you for your interest in employing me and good luck to you in finding a skilled, dedicated employee for your available position.

Sincerely yours,

Mike Fagan

What do you think? Should I send it out to the next firm which calls me?

-M. Fagan

GSO Job Opportunities

The Graduate Student Organization is presently seeking applicants for two paid positions available during the '96 -'97 school year. For additional application information, contact the GSO Office at 632-6492 or stop by Room 2105, Computer Science Building.

Editor, News & Views

This position involves the production of four, eight-page issues of the *News & Views* per semester. You'll need to know (or be able to quickly learn) everything it takes to produce a small newspaper including writing, editing, and desktop publishing skills. The editor is responsible for soliciting (and producing) articles, photography, and ads. Production is on a networked 486 PC with Pagemaker 5.0 software.

The Editor works with the Officers of the GSO, but traditionally has a good deal of freedom to determine the content and form of the paper. During the 1995-1996 Academic Year, the Editor was paid \$460 per eight-page issue. The salary and the number of issues to be printed during the 1996-1997 Academic Year is presently under review.

Interested persons should submit a "non-academic" writing sample, along with a cover letter and resume which details their writing and editing experience. A one-year commitment is required. Application materials must be received by June 15, 1996.

Graduate Student Advocate

The Graduate Student Advocate acts an ombudsman for graduate students, and helps mediate academic disputes involving graduate students, faculty, and administrators. The Advocate also coordinates a monthly colloquium for graduate students and has administrative responsibilities in the Graduate School. He or she will be required to work closely with the GSO officers to serve the needs of graduate students. A knowledge of the University at Stony Brook bureaucracy is a plus.

The Graduate School funds this position as a full GA line (20 hrs/wk, \$9572 stipend), and will assist the student selected for this position in obtaining a tuition scholarship through their academic department or program. For a complete job description contact the Graduate School.

Interested persons should submit a cover letter and resume which details their experience in advocacy, negotiation, and mediation to the GSO prior to June 15, 1996.

Letters

Dear Union Colleague:

The Adelphi University Faculty are members of the American Association of University Professors, (AAUP). We have been unionized since 1972 and wish to remain union members.

Labor unions nationwide are experiencing serious attacks both in the work place and in Congress. This has resulted in severe reductions in membership as well as having impacted negatively on the political, educational, and social service systems of our country.

We need your help. Adelphi's President and Board of Trustees have adopted a strong anti-union attitude, and have initiated a petition with the National Labor Relations Board to have the union decertified. Although the AAUP has defeated the first filing of the petition on a technicality, we fully expect that it will be refiled very shortly. This attack on union representation has grave implications, not only for the Adelphi faculty, but for Unionism in general. We face major legal expenses to fight the administration's attempts to decertify the union, but we are determined that this will not deter us from pursuing this struggle to maintain collective bargaining at Adelphi.

The 200 faculty members at Adelphi University pay union dues of 1% of base salary and, in addition, have already made voluntary contributions in excess of \$60,000 to both the union and to an ad hoc group of concerned faculty, students, alumni, parents, staff, and friends called the Committee to Save Adelphi. Clearly, our resources are stretched to the limit. We seek your financial support to help defray some of the costs of legal proceedings. As Dennis Clausen, President of the San Diego, California chapter of the AAUP wrote in The Chronicle of Higher Education on Jan. 26, 1996, "In any lawsuit, Adelphi's president and trustees will be able to draw on university resources to engage in lengthy, expensive legal maneuvers... Faculty and student leaders will have access to none of these same resources."

We ask that you share this letter with your colleagues. We hope that both your local and its individual members will be able to contribute toward the cost of our struggle to maintain collective bargaining at Adelphi. We reach out to you in the spirit of solidarity.

Please send any donation you wish to make to: AAUP, Adelphi University Chapter, Earle Hall Basement, Garden City, New York 11530. It will be much appreciated, and we thank you in advance for your support. For further information, please call the Adelphi AAUP office at (516) 877-3295, or send e-mail to the addresses given below our signatures.

Sincerely,

Gayle Insler
President

(insler@adlibv.adelphi.edu)

Stephen Z. Goldberg

Vice President for Collective Bargaining

(goldberg@adlibv.adelphi.edu)

Response to Viewpoint Article

Tom Babich's Viewpoint article ("Why are there no attractive women in graduate school?"), and especially its headline, is an insult to all readers. Perhaps Mr. Babich and whoever at News and Views requested his input thought they could subtly sidestep this fact via a pseudo-profound critique of American culture in the body of the article. It appears to this reader that what they really want to say is, "it's not that we're smug assholes or anything; it's just that, gosh, we've been informed by the patriarchal, gender-biased values of our culture." It may come as a shock to Mr. Babich and his cohorts, but many of us have, in fact, been "socialized according to values of fairness and gender equality"; and it is this which enables us to withstand the onslaught on inane beer commercials and grad student editorials.

Ron MacKinnon
G5, History

Mr. MacKinnon,

Profanity and name calling does little to depict the values you claim, but is indeed a rude and vulgar way to communicate. A graduate education should impart at least a modicum of social skills; Why not watch Mr. Rogers (you could pick-up clues). Your second claim seems to be that you speak for everyone - perhaps you should inform the general population.

I'm not sure how or where you were socialized (the midwest, perhaps?) but if your letter is any indication, you have a long way to go before escaping the onslaught of inane beer commercials or grad student editorials.

Sincerely,

Tom Babich
Harriman School

"Feature, Viewpoint, and Letters to the Editor articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the GSO and may in fact be of opposite viewpoint."

"Letters to the Editor, if published, will be published 'as is'. Spelling and grammatical errors will not be corrected."

Congratulations Graduates!

We wish we were you.

You Know You are a Graduate Student When...

Your office is better decorated than your apartment.

Your office is bigger than your apartment.

You are startled to meet people who neither read, nor want to read, Plato.

You realize that you have brought a scholarly article to bar.

You actually subscribe to an academic journal.

You rate area coffee shops by the availability of outlets for your laptop.

Everything reminds you of something in your discipline.

You have ever discussed academic matters at a sporting event.

Your computer is worth more than your car.

You have ever spent more than \$50 on photocopies to write a paper.

There is a CD-ROM Workstation in the library which you refer to as "yours".

You look forward to summers because you are more productive without the distraction of classes.

You regard ibuprofen and acetaminophen as vitamins.

You consume caffeine as if it were a major food group.

You read the bibliographies of a book before the text.

You have accepted guilt as an inherent feature of relaxation.

You find yourself analyzing those Greek letters before you realize that it's a sorority sweatshirt, not an equation.

You find yourself explaining to children that you are in the "20th grade".

You frequently wonder how long someone can live off Macaroni and Cheese without getting scurvy.

You can identify all 17 Ramen noodle flavors simply by looking at the color of their packages.

You can cook and read at the same time.

You decide whether to attend events on the basis of whether free refreshments are being served.

You have more types of photocopy cards than you do credit cards.

You use your financial aid to pay off your credit cards.

You wonder whether the library would be willing to just send you a monthly bill for the photocopies you make.

Your student loans total more than your parents' mortgage.

The re-payment schedule on your student loans is longer than a decade.

Your primary source of income comes from participating in those psychology research projects.

Late one night while doing a paper, you wonder if APA style will allow you to cite talking to yourself as "personal communication". In a letter to a personal friend, you had footnotes.

You refer to other universities by their Internet domains.

There is a hurricane coming and the only things you think are important enough to take with you are your computer, printer and dissertation files.

You regard the phrase

"it's that time of the month"

as less dreaded than

"it's that time of the semester".

You think PMS stands for "Post-Masters Syndrome".

You enjoy a night at the library more than a night in the backseat at the drive-in.

You can create an entirely "new" research paper simply by combining various parts of other papers you've written.

You realize that you refer to your friends and family as "human subjects".

When you go out to dinner with a friend, and tell the hostess you are a "N of 2", not "party of 2".

It does not strike you as odd to be studying on a Saturday night.

Your books weigh more, and are worth more, than your furniture.

You brought books with you on vacation, and then actually studied.

You are on first name basis with the library staff.

The library staff knows you, and runs when they see you coming.

You've ever crossed state lines in order to go to a library.

You have the library's hours posted on your frig.

You have more doctors in your life than that TV show "ER".

You can successfully apply for financial aid.

You use the words "paradigm" and "dialectic" in conversations with your friends.

You find any of the above jokes funny.

Three Views on Racism.

First.

by Mike Fagan,
Housemate

Racism. The last thing you probably need, or want to read about, is another article that describes how it manifests itself in our society. Which is fine by me, because I would be completely disappointed in myself if my final column for this rag was simply another tired, lame description of a social problem. I write this article with far greater expectations of both myself and you.

My housemate and I share a two bedroom apartment created from the first floor of a house in the Lake Hills section of Ronkonkoma. The second floor of the house has a small efficiency-style apartment which is rented by a woman in her 60's who is Japanese.

I moved into the house in September of 1993. For the first year and half, I lived with Dave: A white guy, in his late 20's, 6'2", 210 lb., and a NYS Certified Physical Therapist. I am also a white guy. I am in my mid-20's, and around 5'8", 175 lb.

When Dave lived with me, I was in graduate school earning my Masters in Social Work. We got along pretty well, the only real difference between us (besides size...) was that he was into every kind of sport that existed; I can barely catch a ball.

Dave and I were model tenants. We spent most of our time studying or working. We had a party once a year. Dave's love of sports, perhaps together with his size, mandated that the party be held on Superbowl Sunday. Every year we lived together, we would warn the woman upstairs that Superbowl Sunday was approaching. We would pack the small house with our mostly-white friends, blast "white" music from the stereo (we were both into that retro-Bob Seger stuff), eat a 6' sub and consume large quantities of beer. The woman upstairs took it all in stride.

After giving me several months notice, Dave moved out in Dec. 1994 to live with his fiancée (She beat me hands down: In addition to being of opposite gender, she also played sports). After interviewing about eight potential housemates, I found Anthony.

Anthony is a black guy, age 27, 5'10", 200 lb. He's NYS Certified to teach History and Physical Education. He's presently employed at Bayshore High School. In addition to seeming like someone who would pay his share of the rent on time, I chose him because, like myself, he liked to work with youth at-risk. I lucked-out. In addition to paying his rent on time, he also keeps a cleaner house than I do. Anthony is a great guy, and a good friend.

Since he moved in a year and half ago, he's told me that the woman upstairs bangs on the ceiling (her floor) or comes downstairs and knocks on "Our Door" whenever he plays the stereo too loud. She had never done this to me, so I figured either he was really playing his music loud when I wasn't around, or maybe she liked my alternative and retro music better than his rap and hip-hop stuff. Anthony and I figured one of the above was probably the case and, he volunteered to keep his music lower.

The problem didn't end there. Anthony stated that even when he played his music at the same volume as me, she would complain. In addition, sometimes she would come down and complain when he was playing my alternative stuff at a standard volume (Who says black guys don't like The Cure). He stated, "Mike, even when we're home together and listening to music, we can play it and she doesn't complain. What does she have against me?"

At the time, I simply blew him off by saying "Huh", and then wandered off to the kitchen to see if the chicken I had in the oven was done yet. I didn't think about his comments until about three days later (around May 2nd). My car was in the shop; as a result, I was home despite the fact that my old Subaru wasn't in the driveway.

I was listening to *Counting Crows* at a moderate volume level, when I heard knocking at "Our Door". Our Door has no windows. As I opened it, the woman upstairs began to apologize immediately. "I'm sorry. I didn't know it was you. I thought it was *him*. They play their music too loud. *Those people*."

She then paused and seemed to want me to join in a discussion about *those people*. I didn't. As I did to my housemate, I blew her off by saying "Huh", as I closed the door. I can't say I haven't thought about the incident though. Far from it, I thought about it all afternoon.

Anthony does not have a car. As a result, she assumed Anthony was playing the music because my car wasn't in the driveway. What's this stuff about she being sorry because she didn't realize it was me? Isn't music that's too loud "too loud", regardless of who is playing it? And, as if this wasn't enough to draw a conclusion from, what's this reference to "They" and "Those people"?

The answer to Anthony's "what does she have against me?" question wasn't hard to ascertain; He has done nothing to make her dislike him. He and I have very little contact with her. She has a private entrance. The only time we recently interacted with her was this winter. Out of respect for her age, he and I regularly shoveled out her car and sidewalk without even being asked. Her actions are simply too blatant: She's racist.

When I saw Anthony later and told him of the incident, He asked "What did you say back?". I said nothing back. He shook his head, and gave me a look that said, "why not? Some friend you are."

The discussion ended there. I walked around for a few days wondering what I should have, or *could have* said to her. I felt awkward around Anthony because I felt I sold out my housemate and one of my best friends. He and I talked a lot less than usual over the course of the next couple days.

I have since justified my lack of response to her by telling him, along with myself, that nobody can change a racist. I believe a truly racist person isn't going to change their mind about someone even if someone they know (i.e., *myself*) says to them, "Music is "too loud" on the basis of volume, not on the basis of who's playing it. Anthony is one of my friends."

Anthony listened to my explanation but provided little response. Maybe he was following my "Huh" communication skills. Regardless, I think we both simultaneously -albeit tacitly- agreed to ignore her racism, and my lack of response, to it. An attitude of "Life goes on" seems to pervade most graduate student houses.

Unfortunately, life wasn't simply able to go on. In celebration of the fact that we have both obtained decent full-time jobs, we both invited our friends to a BBQ last Saturday (5/11/96). As in the past, I warned the woman upstairs we were going to have a party, and assured her we would try to keep the music low. I also reminded her that we only have one party

a year; the last party we had was when we graduated last May. She seemed okay with idea.

Over the course of the last year and half, Anthony and I had already met most of each other's friends. Most of Anthony's friends are black. Most of my friends are white. He grew-up on Long Island, and, as a result, he was able get a lot more of his friends to come to the party than I was able to.

Although originally planned for outdoors, rain forced everyone to move inside. The music was kept low, and cards (Spades) quickly replaced music as the "entertainment-of-choice". Despite this, the woman upstairs came down to complain the music was too loud. Anthony and I met with her and agreed to turn it down.

As a result of her previous comments, we agreed that I, "the white guy", should meet with her should she come down again. Despite the music being low, she came down again to complain about the music.

As I stated above, I am a Certified Social Worker. As I talked with her, I found myself being a Social Worker ...not the downstairs tenant. Despite only talking about our "loud" music, everything about her body language and voice told me that she was absolutely "those people" were going to burst upstairs into her apartment and harm her. She exhibited what I believe is at the core of racism: Fear.

Shaking and almost in tears, she said to me, "Please do whatever you can to keep them calm". I looked at her and all of my social work training commanded me to ask her "Why are you so afraid of Anthony and his friends? ...What exactly do you think would happen if I, for example, left and went to a movie right now? Anthony is a High School History Teacher. History Teachers and their friends aren't exactly known for their violence. "They" do things like sell TV's for The Wiz. That big guy over there is an Electrician. You never feared Dave, and he was huge. You never complained about the parties Dave and I threw because all our friends were white. You are a racist."

But I didn't. I just stood there and thought, "I could tell her all about the qualities of Anthony and his friends, and it would make absolutely no difference."

No more than 3 seconds elapsed while I stood in front of her thinking the above. After I decided to say nothing, I looked at her again. She had broken into tears.

The Social Worker in me wanted to hug her and tell her, "you will be OK, no one will hurt you." I also wanted to say, "I am not, and have never been, your ally ...I will not validate your irrational fears of black people by doing a little crisis intervention therapy out here on the front steps. I will not betray my best friend to fix your bigoted psyche."

I wanted to, I wanted to, ...I didn't, I didn't.

As early as August 1st, I plan to move to Westchester. Anthony will need a new housemate. He wants a long-time buddy of his to take my spot. The guy has been a Social Studies teacher for the last 5 years. He's been over to our house on several occasions, and I have no doubt that he and Anthony would get along great; they'd probably watch Jeopardy together for hours.

His friend is black. If he takes my place, I have no doubt the woman upstairs will be terrified 24 hours a day.

Second.

by Anthony Powell,
Housemate

In response to my housemate's article, I would like to describe how racism has effected our living arrangements. Racism is alive and well in our society, and I have had a lot of first hand experiences with it. But first, I'll give you some background on how Mike and I became housemates.

I got my first real taste of racism last year when it was time to move off campus and find a place to live. At the time, I said to myself, "Hell, I am a young single male with a college degree, extremely polite and articulate, I'll just call up ads for one bedroom apartments in the paper. I'll see a bunch of places, find one I like, and have a place to live. This won't be hard."

In the beginning things would always go well. I would call up, there would be a polite voice on the other end, and I would tell them who I was: "I am presently a full time student at Stony Brook, and thus the ideal tenant, because I will never be home."

The voice would say, "O.K. ...Great! When can you come and look at the apartment?" We would arrange a time and I would show-up wearing a tie to see their place. Well, actually I would never get the chance to see the apartments, they would see me coming and they would crack the door, never fully open, and politely tell me that the place had just been rented to the person before me. This happened at least ten to fifteen times. That's when I began see what I was up against.

I also realized that even if I was able to find an apartment that wasn't allegedly rented, I was going to have a tough time paying rent and all the other bills alone. I decided where ever I live, it's going to have to be with a housemate.

I saw an ad at school so I called up. I got an immediate response to come and look at the place that night, I told the person on the other end that I didn't get off work until late at night, he said come anyway. so I drove over around 11:00 o'clock that night, I felt good about this one, so I went over and met Mike and Dave. Dave's room was the one for rent. I learned Mike was a Social Worker, and figured this could work out because here was a man whose job entailed combating the ills of society. After talking for less than twenty minutes, he told me that the place was available for me to move in as soon as school ended, so I gave him the next months rent on the spot.

Once Dave took his finals I moved in. I knew there was an old Japanese lady that lived upstairs and Mike had explained to me that she never was really home and we would never interact except for the occasional trip to the mail box or pulling into the driveway at the same time. Because it was not "his" house, Mike had to clear his new housemate with the landlord, Tony. So after I moved in I gave Tony a call and explained to him who I was and what I did with myself. He told me he has the same name as me what a great Italian name I had, along with certain rules, which were really no rules at all and said he would like to meet me. So he told me that he would stop over the next day.

Since it was winter break, Mike was home visiting his family in CA. Tony and his wife came over the next day, as I went to answer the door I saw that look again, that look of fear or even surprise. The one that says, "Oh my god your Black". Luckily, in this case, the look seems to have been only one of surprise.

Although I rarely see him, Tony has been an excellent landlord to both of us ...myself included.

The woman who lived upstairs was a different story. A few days after moving in, I saw her pull up in her car and went outside to introduce myself. It was a short introduction, because I could tell right away that she didn't like what she saw. I took it with a grain of salt and simply went about my business. Then, about 2 months later, my car needed a jump. I couldn't get a jump from Mike because he had already left for school. I was now running late. Just then I saw her walking toward her car and I made the mistake of running outside toward her car to ask for a jump. After she regained her composure from the threat of violence that she thought would be inflicted on her, she cracked her window and told me that she couldn't possibly help me.

I really don't feel the need to go into every detail about her behavior toward me. But it does bother me when her racist behavior effects the way that I live. I have always told myself that she is an older woman and that she is just a victim of our society's betrayal of African Americans. So I never said anything to her or Mike about the way she acts toward me. And, as Mike stated in his article, we shrugged our shoulders at the issues with the music. I tried to make up excuses for her but it always came down to this terrible double standard.

After Mike told me about the comments that she made to him I was upset with both him and her, but mostly upset with him because he didn't say anything. But then I soon realized that Mike was not the bigot, she was and that my anger toward him was not justified.

Mike and I talked about what had happened, and he suggested that I should try and talk to her, maybe even tell her that when I leave each morning that I don't meet-up with my fellow gang members and go out and snatch purses and sell drugs for a living. "Let her think what she wants", I thought. Why should I have to explain who I was or what I did to this racist.

Well I don't care who you are, it's very difficult to avoid someone if you live in the same house. It's as if you see that person more when you try to ignore or avoid them. So eventually I decided that it would be best if I tried to talk to her.

Armed with a great deal to say on my own behalf I politely stopped her one day on her way in from shopping. I explained to her that I was a history teacher and that I was presently completing my masters degree. I even described how I am sympathetic to the plight of Japanese Americans because they were placed in American concentration camps during W.W.II, and that as minorities in America we should be better equipped to understand each other and want to break down the barriers that separate us as people.

Needless to say, I was not given any response. She just looked at me as if I everything I was saying I was making up. I didn't hear from her again until she started banging on the ceiling telling me to turn down the music the following week, I knocked on her door and told her that the volume was already on "1" and with one turn the radio would be off. She just looked at me told me to "keep it down" and closed the door.

In what I now view as a stupid move, I took it upon myself to tell her that Mike and I were having a

barbecue and that Mike and I would gladly pay for her to go out somewhere to enjoy the evening, she told me that she was staying home and that we should keep the music down. I told her that we would and that we would appreciate her understanding being that we only had one bash a year. I really think that this was a mistake because before the party could get underway she was already banging on the ceiling. I knew it was going to be a long evening.

I can honestly state Mike and I are extremely considerate of her. We know that she only lives upstairs, so we agreed to make sure we would make the music face outside. Unfortunately, it rained and we were forced to move the party inside. We made it a point to make sure that we kept the volume below "3". Yes, "3" at a party. This was not good enough for her. I informed Mike that he should go and talk to her, so he did, and we agreed to turn it down even more to the point where other people conversations were the source of entertainment.

Mike and I both knew that the music was not the problem; the race of the people that were listening to the music were the problem. I made it a point not to say anything else to her that night, and from what Mike has told me about his conversation with her I know that there was nothing I can say or do, to change her way of thinking about me and my friends or African Americans in general, and that's what hurts the most.

I can't help but wonder what's going to happen when Mike moves out, and she loses the 5'8" guy who allegedly protects her from 20 larger African Americans. How will she react if she lives above not *one*, but *two* African Americans? Will she invent some "offense" and then report it to our landlord? If so, who will our landlord believe?

I shouldn't have to wonder about such things. I should be able to wake-up, teach history, cook dinner, and watch Jeopardy in peace.

**News & Views will not be
published again until
the Fall.**

**However, Anthony, Mike
and David want to know
your views on this issue.**

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Third.

By David Juan,
Mutual Friend

More on Racism. My friends Mike and Anthony tell me of their relationship with their upstairs housemate. She's an older woman who is Japanese. Mike and Anthony are white and black, respectively. Apparently, this woman has shown that she doesn't like the idea of living above a black man. In a conversation with Mike, without Anthony present, she referred to him as *them*, and *those people*. It was racist. Subtle, but racist nonetheless.

When Mike told Anthony that he didn't confront such comments, I'm told that Anthony was disappointed. Actually, Mike was told that he sold out his roommate by not defending him in response to such ignorant statements.

Please be aware that I'm paraphrasing and summarizing a lengthy story, and my quotes are not exact. As a result, I'm probably doing a disservice to both sides of what seems to be an ancient debate. In this case, I debate specifically the issues surrounding whether or not Mike should have said something to the upstairs tenant.

Well, should he have? Who are you to say? Who am I to say? Who am I to begin with? I'm a student in my mid-twenties, and I am Hispanic, although I appear Caucasian. As a minority I have suffered my share of racism from subtle to violent. Since my ethnicity is not so obvious, it is often amazing to see how many of the people I interact with, friends and acquaintances, change the way they treat me when they find out I'm Puerto Rican. In fact, this is part of the reason my former in-laws (long story) never met my family. Subtle. Subtle as a brick.

In our everyday, anti-climactic life we learn to live with racism. We do this in many ways. We laugh when we find out how many pollacks it takes to screw in a light bulb. We hang out with our "own kind". Certain dorms, cafeterias and stores are unofficially segregated. What race is the guy who serves you water at the diner? Figure it out. His sister probably cleaned your house. And we all know who dry cleans our clothes. We also know when to hold our purses tighter, and which people to avoid riding the elevator with. Watch your wallet, and don't count your money at the ATM when *they* walk by.

We tolerate bias all the time. That silly sexual harassment commercial on TV does no justice to the crap women have to put up with at work, school or on the sidewalk. Few people are in a rush to shake hands with a Person With AIDS (PWA). Gays are openly berated, harassed and, too frequently, beaten.

This crap happens all the time.

Who's job is it to take a stand? Why should we? What's the big deal? For the most part, in this country at least, crosses are burned at a minimum and a lynching is almost unheard of nowadays.

The battleground is no longer black and white, it's gray. It's not OK to call a person of color a "nigger" period. Everyone knows this. Well... as long as there are no blacks in the room, then it's OK. We're offending no one, right? Well... if you're black, then it's OK to call another black guy that name. Come to think of it, it's only a matter of time after you get to know your minority friends before it's OK to tell them ethnic jokes, even about their own culture. It's tolerated. But why? Politeness? Maybe we don't

want to rock the boat. Do we not want to insult someone by telling them they have insulted us? I don't think it's necessary to sacrifice our own pride for someone else's. If I never hear another spic joke, I won't miss it. How many people really enjoy a Chinese, Mexican, or black comedian banking on their own ethnic stereotypes as a profession? Problem is, can we really make a difference? Can we stop it? If I boycott Reebok shoes, will I abolish Apartheid?

What do Mike and the tenant upstairs have to do with the above? Picture this: there's Mike; he just heard this woman refer to Anthony as *those people* because he's black. What should he do? Now, Mike and Anthony have to live with this woman above them regardless of what Mike's response is. She can make it quite miserable for the both of them. Then there is Anthony. He has to live with this tenant upstairs and his friend who puts up with her crap. Mike and Anthony both have to tolerate the woman upstairs. She, on the other hand, is scared of blacks and wants someone on her side for safety. Finally, we're back to Mike who has to live with himself no matter what he does or doesn't say to her.

I'm sure there is a great show of hands of people who know what kind of an earful this lady should get. Not so fast. This is one of those gray areas we're so used to in the nineties. "Mama's boy" is still an insult, however "nigger-lover" is considered a compliment to some. We *have* progressed a little. We now live in a society where "black-owned" businesses are prevalent in some areas. Mike defending his friend is not the same as giving up his seat in the front of the bus so an elderly black woman doesn't have to stand in the "colored" section at the back of the bus.

Does Mike need to know how it feels to be the only minority in a room full of people laughing at an ethnic joke aimed at your culture? Maybe. It's a different experience when you're in the majority, that's for sure. There's safety in numbers. Should Mike consider that by ignoring her, he lets her racism go unchallenged? Maybe. Is it Mike's fault he's white? Probably not. But does he have a responsibility to his brothers and sisters sharing the broth in our "melting pot"? Yeah, he does. However, it doesn't all fall on Mike, by any means. If you know him, you know he's outspoken enough.

The million dollar question is: Should Mike have defended his roommate against those biased comments? It's not up to me to answer the question, though. It's up to Mike. However, and you guessed it, my answer is an undeniable "YES".

I hold this opinion not because the white man can be a jerk... Not because I got beat up in fourth grade and no one stopped my white classmates... Not because this lady might learn something, and not because the world will be a better place once Mike defends Anthony. The answer is YES because even when I make fun of Mike over the phone, Anthony defends him. Even when he knows I'm joking, he doesn't let it slide. It's YES because when Mike speaks of Anthony, he speaks with respect and admiration for him, and greatly values his opinions. The answer is YES because I saw the look in Mike's eyes when he told me how disappointed Anthony was because he didn't defend him.

You know what, folks? This also happens every day. A moment passes, and you miss a chance to stand up for someone or something you care for. We then spend a lot of time second guessing our actions or inactions. It doesn't make us bad. It makes us human.

As for Mike and Anthony, they'll live. The woman upstairs? Who cares? Just kidding. She obviously has a lot of fear and ignorance to overcome, or does she? It would be easy to dismiss her if we all agreed on this. But do we?

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Who Needs the News?

by Jean McCreesh

Suspected breast cancer genes, babies in dumpsters, circus side shows parading as exercises in "liberty and justice for all", and airline crashes in which all aboard die in alligator infested Florida swamps are some of the reasons that people give.

Children falling out of fifth-story windows. Ethnic cleansing. Postal workers (and others) unable to cope with the stress of life without resorting to fire power.

Killer hamburger. Killer gradeschoolers.

Militant militiamen. "Freemen" being held hostage.

Why are people tuning out the news?

The question seems almost as silly as the standard, "How do you feel?" that reporters often ask victims and bereaved family members at the scene of the disaster of the hour. The quest for "dirty laundry" never wanes, we just have more channels to watch it on.

But for reasons left unexplained, a major study of television news viewership released last week said that the number of people willing or able to watch the news is declining faster than our already abysmal national voter turnout.

The study said that 60 percent of Americans watched a nightly news program in 1993, but only 48 percent were watching last year, and this year the number fell to 42 percent. (newspapers are holding steady at about 50 percent, according to the survey.)

The study was not designed to explain why more people were opting for "Beavis and Butt-head" rather than "World News Tonight", but merely to measure the decline. However, most people cited "lack of time" as their reason for not tuning in.

But you know how diplomatic and evasive people get when answering surveys.

I conducted my own decidedly unscientific study. I polled various students and faculty in the cafeteria of Touro Law School.

This is what I found.

1. There is significant evidence that some people are tuning out the news because the news is bad.

"I need to keep some things out of my mind in order to go forward in life," stated Professor Harmon over her kosher sandwich. "I can't bear knowing about breast cancer genes and babies in dumpsters. Is the McDonald's Happy Meal going to kill my children? Has radiation drift from Chernobyl reached Suffolk County? I try to ignore it, but of course I don't."

2. A portion of the population- those with satellite dishes in particular- sees to have discovered that all local news is the same, and therefore, some how, pointless.

"I don't pick up the local news on my dish, so for the past year I've been watching the local news out of North Carolina," offered Carl the security guard. "Everyone has the same problems- violence, corruption, fear and contamination. Doesn't matter where you are."

3. Eight out of fourteen people interviewed said they do in fact watch the news, do read the newspapers, and do try to keep up on things (these are after all law students I quizzed). "I don't go to sleep until I finish the paper and catch some CNN," said Paula Parrino. "It's a terrible situation in Florida."

She was referring, I assume, to the ValuJet crash in the Everglades, and not the decline in Sea World attendees.

"You know the expression, 'Here today, gone tomorrow'?" asked Elliot Adler. "Well things change so rapidly in our society that it's 'Blink and you've missed it.' I read the paper. I watch CNN. I listen to news radio. I watch the news at 6 and 11. How else are you going to keep up?"

4. People who don't watch the news tend not to want to be interviewed for news articles. "Go away!" was the response I received from a table of known news shirkers (many of whom I like to call friends). "We have enough to stress over without having to resort to electronic voyeurism," grumbled Paul.

5. There is some mistrust for the news. Many of our anchorpeople do not enjoy high credibility ratings.

"The O.J. story turned people off to television news," said Jacquie Kelly, who claims she swore off television news and most newspapers right around the time of the acquittal. "I can't stand to watch it anymore."

6. Many students work nights, and some profess to prefer infomercials to news. The reason: "The news tries to hard to make things seem terrible, I prefer to escape into the inanity of the pursuit of the perfect abs," commented Lindsay, to which Sal nodded in agreement.

As I was leaving the school, I chanced upon one of my classmates and her three year old daughter.

"Mommy! Mommy!" said the little girl, gapping at a blimp floating high up in the sky- too far away to decipher it's advertisement.

"Mommy!" said the little girl, "It's James and his giant peach, we have to go rescue them!"

"It's a balloon," responded my unimpressed classmate.

"Hurry Mommy!" shouted the preschooler. Clearly she saw a news story in the making. Another generation of news consumers is still in the making. How long will it be before she too tires of the news carnival?

Have an Excellent Summer.

See you in the fall.

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Small high-tech company seeks energetic and self-motivated person as a technician. Candidate must have an Associates Degree in optics or lenses. Experience is a plus, but is not necessary. New graduates are encouraged to apply. Please fax resumes to (516) 444-8821 or mail to 25 East Loop Road, suite 216, Stony Brook, New York 11790-3350.

GSO Survives Referendum

USB graduate students voted to keep the Student Activity Fee mandatory in the recent GSO Election: 147 students for the fee, and 43 students voted against it. The GSO depends on the activity fee for virtually all of the funding it receives, without this money the GSO would have ceased to exist.

Other results of the election:

Funding for Child Care was continued: 149 voted for, 25 voted against.

The Constitutional Amendment on the ballot was passed: 136-26.

Hasan Imam was elected President: 147-6

Antonette Louka was elected Vice President: 145-2

Eugene Sokolov was elected Secretary: 144-4

Jeffery Hack was elected Treasurer: 126-11

Viewpoint

Are We Really in the Information Age?

By Tom Babich

AT&Ts' commercial depictions really look fantastic: Talking to your friends from a pop up visual window in the corner of your laptop computers' screen, while you crunch numbers on a spreadsheet, on the beach at Daytona no less - multi-colored Swatch communication devices that not only sponsor the Olympics, but hold giga-bytes of archived data. And of course AT&Ts' future wouldn't be complete without three dimensional teleconferencing.

AT&T paints a pretty picture, but their "techno-fiction" does more to surround the current state of information technology in melodrama and hyperbole than to accurately portray it.

In reality, the diversity of emerging information technology lends itself to as much redundancy and misuse as it does to serious application. We have only to look as far as the nearest office to see the flagrant misuse of information technology contributing to an atmosphere of inefficiency and bureaucratic policy: It is increasingly en vogue to use the fax machine to order lunch from the office. Supposedly, this saves time, and promotes efficiency. However in reality, we've a timely 1 step process into a multistage tenuous process.

Our first step is to obtain a copy of the menu, which alone could involve a number of steps. If we already have a copy, we're ready to move on to step 2; this entails circling our menu choices, and writing in any special instructions in the margin ('extra onions', 'well-done', etc). Our third step involves actually lining up our paper menu in the fax machine, clearing the buffer or any number of technical steps which may be required prior to faxing (depending upon our model of fax machine, specific protocol, etc). Now we're ready to move to step five, dialing the fax number of the deli (or other restaurant) in question and initiating transmission (pressing start). Now we must wait and monitor the transmission for the next minute or two it takes to complete. We might be tempted to ignore this step, but experience will teach us that one lost lunch out of 100, due to data loss, line interference, or inept personnel at the other side warrants guarding the fax machine until OUR lunch order has been processed.

Clearly, this is an involved process which falls far short of the efficiency mark envisioned by its propagators.

While the above example examines redundancy and misuse of technology, redundancy alone is not always unwarranted. For example, for years, computer analysts criticized the redundant design of the various iterations of the IBM PC, which limited the processing power by halving the bitpath on the interface bus, seriously compromising the full potential of the chip.

IBM introduced their machine into chaotic marketing waters, where a plethora of now obsolete 8-bit all-purpose home computers vied and floundered, struggling for a foothold in a fast developing market.

Initially, the 1980 design plan for the PC entailed an 8 bit microprocessor; if this design characteristic had been carried out, it probably would have severely limited the unforeseen success of the machine. There were several reasons for the proposed 8-bit architecture at the time: It was the contemporary standard, there was no perceived need for additional processing power, and parts and support components were all designed around 8-bit circuitry.

IBM compromised, settling on INTELs' 8088 version of the 8086 processor family; this allowed for internal calculations to be handled 16 bits at a time, but the chip was interfaced to an 8-bit bus, allowing it full compatibility with readily available support circuitry.

IBM realized phenomenal success with this architecture, gaining a virtual stronghold over the small business market targeted by the machine. The firm has since moved to more complex CPU's which support 16 and 32 bits.

While IBM was able to increase their machines power and marketability without incurring additional costs, the same cannot be said for the trend of current applications software, which abuse the impressive processing power, memory and storage of today's computers.

Yesteryears' programmers ingenuity enabled them to condense incredible computing power into minuscule bits of code, and efficiency was paramount to the industry. As a result, applications software was relatively small, efficient and powerful. As RAM and disk drives grew in storage capacity, and processing power increased, programming trends changed to take advantage of the new power, speed and storage. Efficiency is no longer valued in programming, because the memory, power and storage which are available exceed the present market demand. As a result, current programming environments encourage the use of excessive code and extraneous library routines; inefficient program architecture is also condoned.

As a result, we often find (although this is changing) that the modern application software we're using on our 100+ MHZ Pentium PC (i.e. MS Word for Windows) takes longer to load, is not significantly faster, and takes up far more storage space than the software we used to perform the same tasks ten years ago (i.e. WP51).

The information age may, indeed, hold the promise depicted by AT&Ts' commercial depictions, but it presently has a long way to go.

GSO Survives Referendum

USB graduate students voted to keep the Student Activity Fee mandatory in the recent GSO Election: 147 students for the fee, and 43 students voted against it. The GSO depends on the activity fee for virtually all of the funding it receives, without this money the GSO would have ceased to exist.

Other results of the election:

Funding for Child Care was continued: 149 voted for, 25 voted against.

The Constitutional Amendment on the ballot was passed: 136-26.

Hasan Imam was elected President: 147-6

Antonette Louka was elected Vice President: 145-2

Eugene Sokolov was elected Secretary: 144-4

Jeffery Hack was elected Treasurer: 126-11

SUNY Budget "News":

Although New York State Legislators have yet to vote on the State Budget or funding for SUNY, the Rumor Mill has it that:

A significant and perhaps complete restoration of the Tuition Assistance Program may be in the works. The program had originally been slated for a reduction of approximately \$100 million.

The SUNY Trustees have retreated from their plan to privatize the SUNY teaching hospitals in Syracuse and Brooklyn.

The Trustees are considering a plan which would allow SUNY campuses to lease property in order to generate revenue.

The differential tuition plan (which would allow SUNY campuses to charge different tuition rates) is not going to be implemented this year. It is possible the plan may be again considered in the future.

The State Assembly is considering restoring some of the direct cuts to SUNY proposed by Governor Pataki. If it is successful, money which is restored may be targeted toward reducing the \$250 undergraduate tuition increase proposed by the Governor and endorsed by the Trustees.

Special thanks for the above "information" is owed to the *Graduate Quill* at SUNY Buffalo.

-M. Fagan