

NEWS & BLUES

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November 2001

Stony Brook Peace Rally

Rally for Peace: Finding your own place

by Ellada Evangelou

Although I had seen posters for the peace rally around campus, it never registered as something legitimate: I had never associated academic communities in the United States with any type of anti-government demonstrations. The voices of all the students rebelling in the late '60's against the horror that was the Vietnam War, seemed echoes of a song you no longer remember the lyrics to.

But going to the rally was a compellingly real experience. Polyphony was the main line that the organizers followed, and though not everyone agreed with everything that was said, the (vast majority of) people were respectful to the speakers, bringing out and reminding me of the best trait of America: tolerance. The mere fact that the gathering took place in the middle of one of the most ethnically, racially and religiously diverse schools in the country was a victory in and of itself.

But standing there I was



reminded why I chose to attend: besides my being a pacifist, I remembered what it was that had troubled me about this whole situation. America was calling for war when it did not know what war is. It is a conflict during which (mostly randomly) a) people die (death being an irreversible loss of life) or are physically or psychologically injured and b) properties are destroyed (houses, natural habitats,

livestock, national treasures, monuments and other material wealth). That is it. That is war. What war is not is a tool for revenge. The faster people realize that they are a mere pawn to the hands of those who hold influential positions (in politics, economics and the media), the sooner they will rise to stop the unnecessary bloodshed of their own and of innocent civilians of other states, who have done nothing wrong but be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Let us also be reminded of the hundreds of innocent soldiers who took part in Desert Storm, who returned home to face their phantasms alone, since the operations were considered to be a success and they could not spoil it with their problems. For those people and for all the victims of war, both the abstract concept that seems to be the answer to rage and the pragmatic process of death, we must stand together to stop the war.

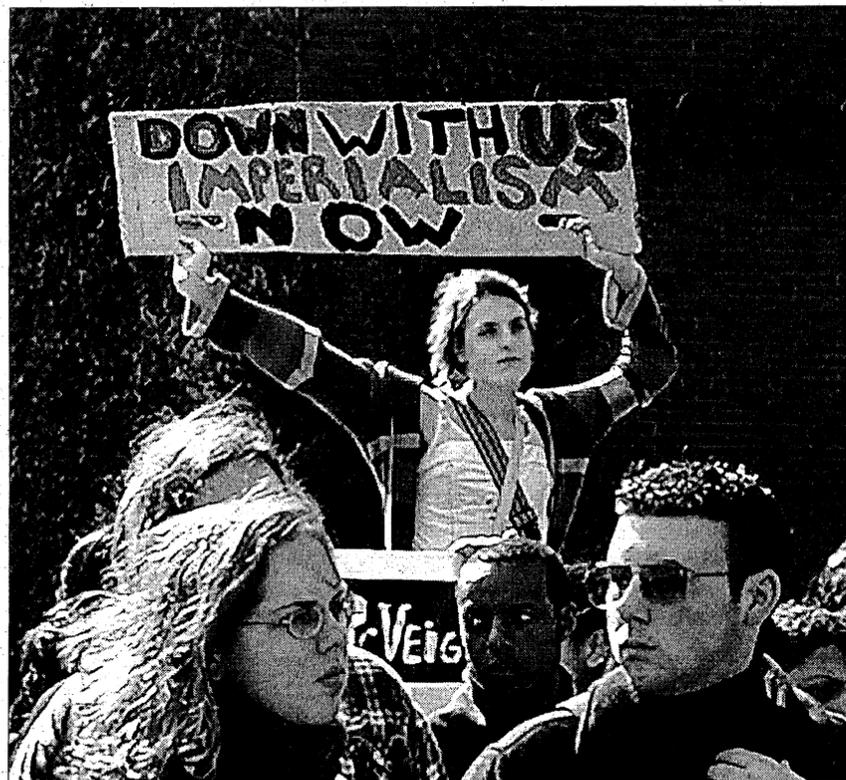
Rally for Peace at Stony Brook

by Jasmina Sinanovic

The rally happened on October 17, during the Campus Lifetime. The speakers at the rally were:

Jasmina Sinanovic, graduate student in Theatre Arts Department, Mike Davis, History Prof., Associate Editor of The Nation magazine, David Anshen, graduate student in Comparative Literature, Susan Blake, activist, coordinator of Peacesmiths (off campus), Steve Preston, Pres. of Students for Peace and Humanity and graduate student in Math Department, Martin Koppel, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Mayor of NY, Bill McNolte, peace activist, works on School of the Americas, Hermann Kurthen, Sociology Prof., Sister Sanaa, Muslim Chaplin, Azlan Tariq, President of Muslim Student Assoc., William McAdoo, Chair Africana Studies Dept., and Roger

Snyder, War Resisters League. The rally started with Eva Cheskava who played guitar and sang. Chad Crautz, President of Social Justice Alliance and a graduate student in Philosophy gave introductory remarks and introduced the speakers. The rally started a minute of silence for the innocents lost on Sept. 11th and those civilians killed by the bombing campaign in Afghanistan. In addition to the university police there were four group "peacekeepers." The rally was sponsored by Students for Peace and Humanity, LGBTSA, Social Justice Alliance, Feminist Majority, Muslim Student Association, Peace Center and Center for Womyn Concerns. There were no major incidents at the rally.



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News & Blues

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News & Blues is published by the Stony Brook Graduate Student Organization and serves the Graduate Student Community at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. It is currently being published on a monthly basis. We welcome submissions in the form of letters, opinions, poetry, news items, art works, photographs, announcements or anything else that could conceivably be of interest to graduate students and the larger University community. Please include your name and a way that you can be contacted with anything you submit. All submissions are subject to editing for length and content. In theory, submissions to News and Blues should be made one week prior to each Senate meeting—or by the first Thursday of each month. Items may be submitted directly to the Editors by e-mail at newsandblues@hotmail.com

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The Current Crisis in Afghanistan and the Implications for the Region and the United States

by
Mustafa Siddiq
and
Sherrye Glaser

Group Captain Khalid Banuri, Deputy Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs at the Strategic Plans division in Pakistan gave a talk for the International Focus Lecture Series, co-sponsored by the Graduate School/ International Programs, Social Justice Alliance (SJA) and Graduate Student Organization on "The Current Crisis in Afghanistan and the Implications for the Region and the United States." Chad Kautzer, President of the SJA and Les Paldy, Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Technology and Society introduced the speaker.

Captain Banuri, speaking on his own personal perspective, not that of the Pakistani government, opened with a half hour speech introducing the audience to the opinions of the common Pakistani citizen on topics such as the lack of trust for the American government because of the withdrawal of diplomatic forces after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, leaving a nation of warlords and clans to battle it out with each other. He stressed that it is important that a true commitment be made from the entire international community to aid in the battle against terrorism. Captain Banuri brought to light that Pakistan is also a victim of terrorism and they are in a very sensitive situation relative to its neighbors from the east and west. He also said that if the US would pay more attention to the Kashmiri situation (a region that has been under battle between Pakistan and India) and influence India to a more peaceful situation, it would benefit the entire international community. He assured the audience that the nuclear weapons of Pakistan are well

protected and will not fall into the hands of terrorists.

Captain Banuri's talk was informative, however due to his military background and affiliation to the government of Pakistan, he could not address sensitive but important questions such as the prevention of educating the Afghan refugees for nearly two decades and the potential involvement with and support of the Taliban in the 90's. Captain Banuri did say that the Pakistani government did try to inhibit the destruction of the Buddha statues and artwork in Afghanistan, that held the key to the transition between the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, considered to be a loss to the world. This destruction of art has been seen as the first aggressive strike taken against the West. Captain Banuri's talk helped bring to light how difficult a challenge it will be to bring stability to that entire region, but stressed that a prolonged conflict will only bring additional grief and resentment between cultures who need to work on better understanding overall.

At Stony Brook University, we will be celebrating International Education throughout the month of November. Please join us in celebrating International Educational Exchange by attending these events and by joining us in a special reception on November 16th. Here is a brief list of upcoming talks and events:

"A Response to Terrorism: The United Nations in East Timor"

Monday, November 12, 4 p.m., Javits Room, Melville Library
Provost's Lecture Series:

"Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy"

Tuesday, November 13, 4:30 p.m.

"Afghan Women Under the Taliban"

Wednesday, November 28

For more information, please email: ebarnum@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

Ramblings.....by Rich Yi

Okay, okay...you can throw it in my face. Somebody besides the Yankees won the World Series this year. So throw your "Yankees finally lost!" celebrations; start your mocking chants of "Yan-kees suh-uck". It's okay. After all, part of the joy of being a Yankee diehard is that there are so many who despise the Bombers. The world wouldn't be as much fun if everybody loved my team. For the past 5 years, I have experienced few joys as great as taunting those who wished ill-will to the greatest sports franchise of all time. So taunt me. Feel free to put your finger in my face and laugh as you sarcastically ask me what happened this year. Because next year, when the Yankees are playing ball in October and the players on your team are working on their golf games, I'll make sure I find you.

On a related note, I am happy for the Diamondback players. Grace, Williams, Schilling, and Johnson all deserved their first championship rings. Any true baseball fan would think so. But the state of Arizona does not deserve a championship franchise. Diamondback fans are all a bunch of unknowledgeable, bandwagon, swimming-pool-in-right-center-having, TGI-Fridays-during-seventh-inning-stretch-eating, I-can't-name-the-starting-line-up, can't-sell-out-NLCS-games, white-pom-pom waving fake-fans. Let's see how many of them show up to the BOB next year when the Diamondbacks pull a Florida-Marlins.

Have you noticed the phenomenon since September 11th where your e-mail has been overloaded with friends' and acquaintances' forwards of jokes and presumably funny pictures involving Osama Bin Laden and/or the Taliban. Some have Bin Laden making sweet, sweet love to sheep, goats, cows, etc. Apparently, our enemies become less frightening(?) when we visualize them copulating with livestock. Maybe it's a weird version of patriotism. Or maybe it's like when you were in grammar school and you hated your principal. So during recess, you drew a picture in your spiral notebook of the principal doing peculiar things with hoofed animals. Good

times.....

We recently received a call from a local resident who wanted to place an advertisement in our paper to rent out a furnished studio apartment attached to her home. She asked me to gauge the level of interest that her apartment might produce. As the conversation progressed, the topic of international students at the University arose. Because I only gave her my first name and I speak English with no accent (besides a mangled combination of NYC, Pennsylvania, and LI), this potential landlord came to the conclusion that I was a non-minority like her. Somehow, she thought it appropriate to tell me that she won't return calls from potential renters if their names are foreign. She went on to say that she didn't want to rent to international students: not to Pakistanis, Indians, Afghans, Iraqis, etc., etc. In her words, she had the fear that a foreign tenant might be spreading anthrax all around her apartment. I'm not kidding you - she really said this. Now what can we do in this situation: when prejudice is rationalized with irrational fear? Clearly, this is what our potential landlord was doing. I'm sure she doesn't see herself as prejudiced. She thinks she is protecting herself and her family. Would a textbook's worth of statistics suggesting her fears are irrational open her mind? Would a comment that her behavior is morally reprehensible AND illegal make her call back a Muslim renter? Maybe it's her way of feeling in control in her little world, because it's clear that nobody we want is in control of the world at large. Do you think that this woman also laughs at jokes about Middle-Eastern clerks working at 7-11 or driving cabs? Possibly having never met any, what do you think are the chances that she thinks Mexicans are lazy, Japanese are sneaky, that homosexuals are sexual predators. How likely is it that she would turn away a young, black male looking to rent? I struggled with this for a while. How can we educate her? What can we do? I don't know; I have no answers and I cannot resolve this in my own mind. So instead, I'll just visualize her making sweet, sweet love to sheep, goats, and cows.

A Lump of Sugar Ray

by Neil Moon

With their sunny dispositions and saccharine southern California sound, Sugar Ray blew into Stony Brook in a roof-thundering blaze of guitars and drumbeats. Their headline appearance of Homecoming Week took place at the Sports Complex Arena on Tuesday, October 16, but more than enhance their own reputation as an energetic live act, it did more to display our University's third-rate facilities.

Sugar Ray are a five-member band featuring Murphy Karges on bass, Rodney Sheppard on guitar, Stan Frazier on drums, Craig "DJ Homicide" Bullock on turntables, and charismatic vocalist, Mark McGrath. Other than their chart hits, I was unfamiliar with Sugar Ray's music before this concert. Like many happy-pappy commercial music-video and radio-play oriented bands, it wasn't too long into their act that I realized why bands like this become successful. All the songs sound remarkably similar and their simplicity helps shift units down at the nearest Mall's music megastore.

Clearly Sugar Ray are more about personality and putting on a show, predictably throwing out all the gimmicks that rock bands are supposed to, than achieving any groundbreaking musical developments. Oh, but Neil, you're being unfair, you cry! The band's press-release explains beautifully in its opening paragraph (for the untrained ear, such as my own) that, "The self-titled fourth Lava / Atlantic album [from which they played a good many songs] from the boisterous Southern-California based quintet masterfully mixes elements of pop, punk, hip-hop, reggae, New Wave, and good old-fashioned rock 'n' roll to create a stunningly multi-faceted collection which takes the trademark Sugar Ray sound to the next level and beyond." Right. Well, I guess it was over my head or the amps in the uninviting basketball court were too high to expose the subtleties of their magnificence. Hey, I love drinking coke, beer, rum, and wine, but in the same glass?

The evening as a whole was definitely an intriguing experience. Perhaps I felt a bias against watching a band that had actually accepted a gig at Stony Brook. As a music fan, my excitement as seeing a live act comes from the insane pilgrimage to get to the concert. I once drove from my house in England to the south of Wales to see R.E.M. play to a crowd of 80,000 in Cardiff rugby stadium, only to get lost somewhere in the middle of the damn country at

4am as I attempted to drive home on adrenaline. Anyway, I digress. Walking across campus didn't exactly fuel my fire, and having to watch a concert in an acoustically-unsound arena worked against the event as well. Our beloved University also knows how to sap the fun out of life. With a heavy security and campus police presence, sadly there was no danger of anything getting out of hand. I'm still waiting for someone to actively persuade me that a Sugar Ray concert in the wilds of Long Island could be a key geo-political target for a sinister terrorist attack. Hence my mild surprise to find that the long line of fans backed up along the sidewalk towards the Union building would have to go through a metal detector.

My experience getting into this event has taught me that muscular security men with thick necks have very little sense of humor; Stony Brook's event "planning" presents an image of many people not really knowing what is going on; and that as a member of the media for the night, Sugar Ray were in hiding and would not give any interviews. Evidently not the M.O. of a band trying to sell their new album to a wide audience, but their appearance in the New York area became much clearer when I saw them perform on NBC's "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" show the very next night.

Just when it seemed that the security measures allowing a gentle stream of people to enter the arena would delay the start of the show, the lights dimmed. The two opening acts were Long Island bands, enjoyably lending a personal feel to the feeling, as friends and family cheered loudly from the front of the crowd. First up were Halfmanwonder. They played a twenty-five minute set, including the songs "Markee" and "Guns in the Air", and even got the crowd to surge towards the stage, despite the concerned motions of the security staff. The band had a Barenaked Ladies vibe, if only in their appearance. As the crowd was directed back to their seats at the end of Halfmanwonder's performance, I talked with Megan Hofman, a long-time friend of the band. She explained their local roots in Brentwood and Ronkonkoma. For more information, visit their website: www.halfmanwonder.com.

The second act was another Long Island band, Iridesense, who had to follow BLI DJ Steve (from "Steve and Maria in the Morning" - others in the crowd were impressed) on stage. I liked their sound, and their best song was "Drop Me a Line". When the female vocalist,

Tara Eberle, saw that no fans had surged forward, she implored us "Don't be afraid to come to the front of the stage!" I smiled as the security made it known they weren't enthusiastic about the idea, having already cleared fans away once. As Iridesense did more to remind me of No Doubt with songs like "I Need a Holiday", I was more distracted by the band's guitarist. As a general rule it's not prudent to wear a crimson silk shirt when you're planning on doing a whole lot of sweating. Go to www.iridesense.com for more information. Both Halfmanwonder and Iridesense will be performing at The Spot on November 8th, beginning at 10pm.

Back to the world of Sugar Ray, by 8.45 the opening acts had given way to roadies preparing the stage for the main attraction. As I looked around I was more aware of the sheer numbers of kids with parents, high school students, and a lesser number of undergrads. Then again, most of the audience was probably of University age and I was just feeling old and out of place.

When Sugar Ray finally made it on stage at 9.15 the crowd wasn't going to stay in their seats. Close enough to get front and center before the men with thick necks regained control, I spent the next ninety minutes with a great view of the show, distracted only by the ninety pound teenage girl in front of me jumping up and down on my toes.

Mark McGrath opened with some words to the crowd and (am I a cynic?) some story about having just received a phone call before coming onstage from his girlfriend who was dumping him. Momentarily suckered, I quickly realized he regularly "broke up" prior to singing the familiar song, "When It's Over".

As they moved through their set list, drummer Stan Frazier moved to guitar, leaving the pre-fab drumbeats to "How did he earn his name?" DJ Homicide. Meanwhile Mark McGrath skipped, shadow-boxed, preened, and hammed his way around the stage. Ok, so I was entertained! He is a frontman who is confident and plays the crowd to a tee. Self-aware in their humor, Sugar Ray, in Mark's words, are "not the most political band in the world". In a sincere speech to the crowd, he explained that the band was playing its first gig since September 11th, and that it was a "real honor to be playing here in New York". Touching indeed, as he dedicated the next song to the "victims and families of the tragedy". The song

they played? "Fly". Was it only me who picked up on the unfortunate coincidence of the lyrics "I just wanna fly" to accompany the images in my head of planes crashing into the World Trade Center?

The moment quickly passed. The humor returned, Mark McGrath tested the PG-13 audience with some profanity, returned his microphone intermittently to its earlier spot, tucked into his belt above his crotch, and then made a rare allusion to his academic surroundings with the comment, "Got any midterms or shit like that?"

After playing the song "Arms Around the World", McGrath did his best to enliven the flagging audience by running through the crowd, with thick-necked security, eyes bulging with concern, giving chase. The music may not be political, but Mark made a requisite politician-style stop in the audience, finding a cute kid to help him with a few bars of The Beatles' "All You Need Is Love".

Impressed with the spirit of his braving the fans, and back-slapping return over the security barrier in the mosh pit to get to the stage, I was less enamored with the scripted feel to the rest of the show. "Mean Machine" was followed by the comedic antics of Mark and Craig thrusting to a brief cover of "You and me baby ain't nothin' but mammals so let's do it like they do on the Discovery Channel". Ever seen Al Pacino deadpan the line "Ahhhh funny!" Exactly.

Mark introduced his fellow band members and then Sugar Ray played out their major hits, "Someday" and "Every Morning". By concert's end, McGrath had donned a Stony Brook football shirt to join Stan and Craig who had worn them throughout the show. Once the hits were done with, the crowd had been pumped to cheer for "Girls" and "Dogs" (don't ask!), and Mark (I swear he looks like Ethan Hawke's brother) had skipped one more lap of the stage, Sugar Ray was done and the crowd spilled slowly out of the Sports Complex.

I've seen better, I've seen worse. Sugar Ray are a fun band, their sound is sweet and catchy, but like any sugar buzz the high wears off quickly. Security measures, the hindrance of bad seating, the distraction of vacuously bad acoustics, and the overwhelming feeling that I had just witnessed another spectacle of commercial manipulation took away from Sugar Ray's energetic performance.

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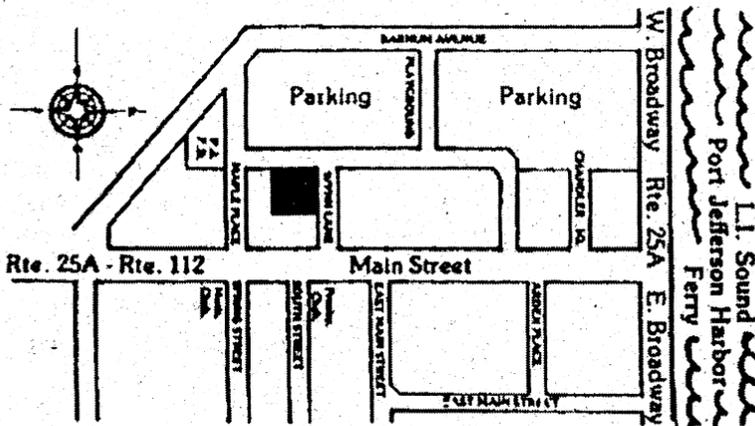
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GENERAL CALL TO ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS:

Would you like a chance to present your work to other graduate students and faculty in an informal setting which you can put on your c.v. under "conference presentations"?

I am running a series of Graduate Student Colloquia throughout the year, the purpose of which is to allow graduate students to hold interdisciplinary conversations on a variety of topics. This year I'd like to offer colloquia in three broad areas:

- The academic, with possible topics including ethics, race/ethnicity, queer studies, and the role of academia in the larger society;
- The practical, including workshops on grant and fellowship writing and job-search / networking advice for all disciplines;
- The war in Afghanistan, including interdisciplinary perspectives on tolerance and intolerance, the role of the U.S. in the Middle East, analysis of the media coverage of the September 11 attacks and subsequent U.S. action, and questions of the democratic process in the U.S., taking into account the election debacle and the recent sweeping war powers legislation.

I want to start with a debate on the ethics of the U.S. action in Afghanistan, which would deviate from the usual roundtable format. I'm looking for those willing to take the pro and con sides, though I'd also like to have someone present a more middle view—in favor of some policies but not others, or in favor of the objective but not the strategies. It should prove a lively and interesting event!

If you are interested in presenting on any of these topics, OR if you have work on ANY other topic that you would like to present, either by a formal, 20 minute paper or by an informal, 10 to 20 minute talk about your work, please contact me:

mlshaiman@notes.cc.sunysb
632-1654
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THANK YOU!!

Maureen Langdon Shaiman,



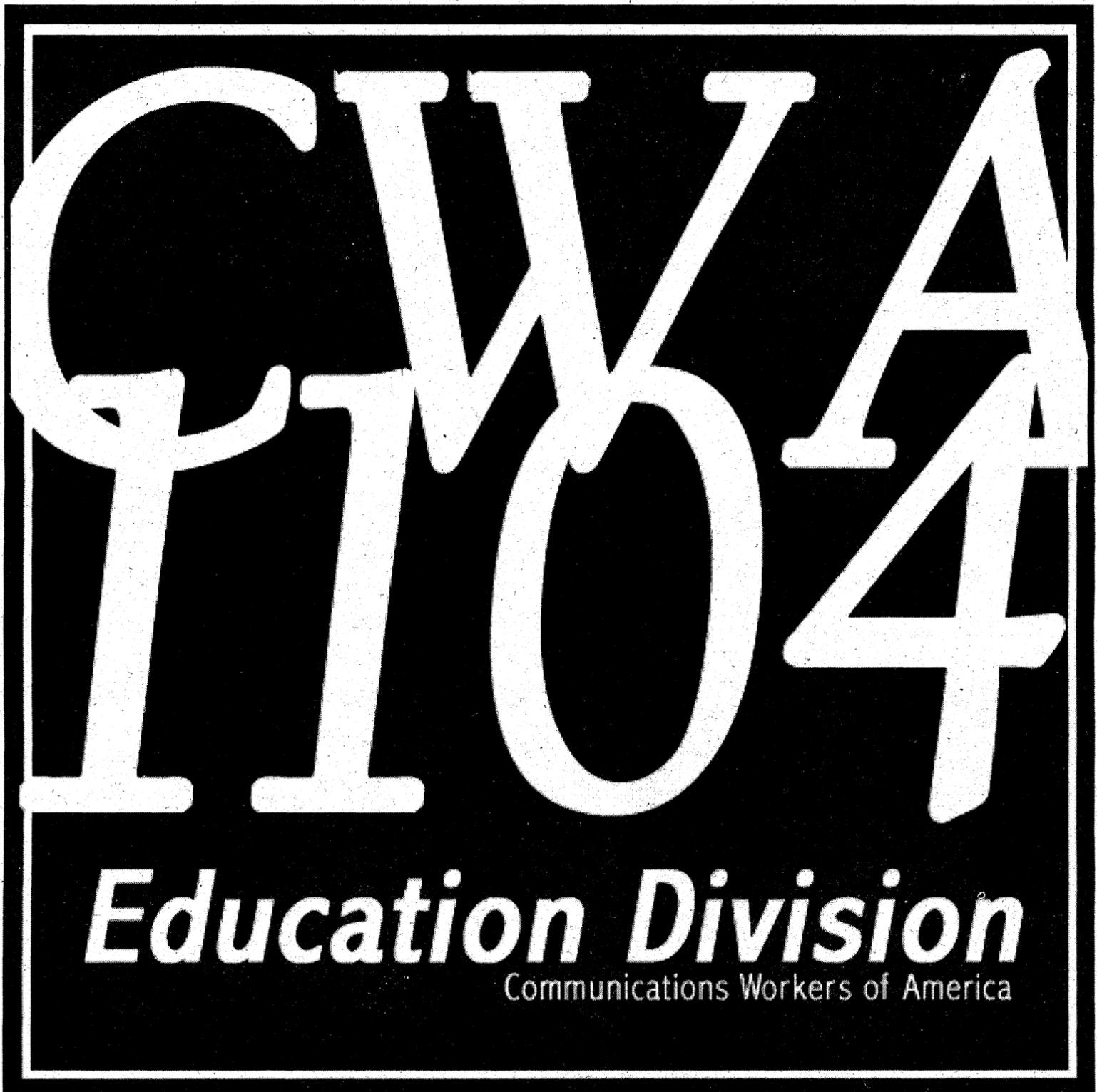
Stony Brook's First Drag Show Huge Success

Held at the Spot and sponsored by the Queer Alliance, the GSO, and Out in LI, the Drag Show was hosted by Ms. Understood (at left) and featured numerous acts in a friendly competition. The Spot was packed and the whole evening was run through with positive energy. Held to bring awareness of SUNY Stony Brook's LGBT Community, it did that and more. Led by Ms. Understood the performers got down with a very enthusiastic audience. It's been a while since I've had a man in drag on my lap, and though tickled pink might not be right on the money, the evening was the best time I've had in a while.

—Marc Dempsey, editor

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DISTRACTIONS

Love in the Age of Anthrax, or Things that Go Bump in the Night

by Sue Denim

Halloween may not be the most romantic celebration of the year. It certainly gives Valentine's Day a run for its money though. At least Halloween is a day that us single types can enjoy without the heightened sense of rejection that accompanies being alone on February 14th. The Halloween party I went to gave me the chance to bring out my Rudy Giuliani / Dracula costume, although it wasn't as successful this year. Making fun of the King of New York could be construed as blasphemy these days.

I think it's a tough time to not be in a relationship. Anxieties are heightened in the nation, and seemingly many people I do meet have a similar sense of frustration at the dating scene. A Halloween party was just what I needed to let loose in a difficult semester, and I found myself attracted to a curious assortment of people garbed in various ghostly get-ups, as ghoulish princesses, and as the ever so au courant "terrorists".

There is definitely a surreal quality getting to know someone when they are covered in make-up and sprouting any number of prosthetic attachments. But the excitement of first meetings and attractions is almost always masked in the art of performance anyway. We tend to display our best qualities, striving to make stories we've told before sound original and exciting, and half listening to the other person as we wonder whether they really like us. Is that vanity or insecurity, or maybe a hopeless mixture of both?

Serial dating can be fun up to a point, but partnership appears to be the natural condition of the graduate student: the sharing of all the mundane experiences and endurance tests that pursuing a doctoral degree entails - finding that special someone with whom you can comfortably exist in semi-poverty, while still feeling excited by their presence, or thrilled when you make time for take-out or a movie together.

So it was with such anticipation that I hoped I would meet someone wanting to share an evening in the illustrious company of Count Giuliani. I felt good. A steady relationship has been missing from my life for some time. What would the night have in store? I'd already done the typically festive duties of the day, leaping to my feet at the ring of every afternoon doorbell as a fresh batch of trick or treaters emptied my candy jars. I even managed a polite smile to one anx-

"A
Halloween
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ficult semes-
ter . . ."

ious looking mother who instructed her little goblin to avoid my lovingly made cookies. I thought the powdered sugar gave them a ghostly quality. She apparently thought I was spreading anthrax. Maybe I should have prepared some envelopes filled with little chocolates, only when you opened them a puff of white powder would erupt, just so I could really get some people spooked! I realized the potential legal ramifications and considered the negative impact of finding some crack news team from CNN ready to bust into my house looking for a shrine to Osama Bin Laden.

Where was I? Lost in a fantasy of my own creation. Oh yes, the Halloween party! Suffice to say that I did not endanger any children, and found many takers for my chocolate chip anthrax specials. With all kinds of sugar (I felt obliged to eat my own left-over baked goods, not to mention the "fun size" candy bars) pulsing through my veins, I found myself in the company of a wonderful ghost. Captivated by deep eyes and a warm smile that made the sheer whiteness of the face paint seem almost invisible, I had a wonderful time, terrific conversation, and if you think I'm going to tell you if I got me some "trick or treats", I don't kiss and tell, so mind your own business!

After a summer in which I've been distracted by the wonders of contemporary media, and my own reality has been impacted by getting older, not to mention the more potent reflections of questioning our very existence in the wake of large-scale tragedy, some costumed escapism and the rejuvenating powers of love have given me hope as Fall season blows into town. Even if we are all much more sensitive to the world around us, and opening the mail is more dramatic these days, we shouldn't let the things that scare us make us lose sight of what's important and who we choose to share our lives with. Ultimately that's what counts.

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