



The Patriot

No. 1

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MONTHLY

Exclusive: President Wong

Interview by Erik Berte

Recently, I was given the opportunity to sit down with our very own USG President, Jared Wong. We spoke of many things ranging from what we can expect to happen this semester in USG to the issue of impeachment of USG Supreme Court Judge, Vlad Frants. I'd be hard-pressed to find someone who's looking out for you more than Mr. Wong and my hope is that the following interview will serve to clarify any misunderstandings of what went on during the senate meetings held last semester.

The Patriot (TP): After attending a few Senate meetings last semester, I couldn't help but notice that they were rather inefficient in getting things done. What are your thoughts on this?

President Jared Wong (JW): With any new group, especially a group that hasn't worked together before, you're going to have some difficulty in the beginning. But after seeing last night's meeting, I'm optimistic that they've gotten over those hurdles and that going forward they will get a lot accomplished.

TP: In spite of the problems, many things were accomplished. Could you highlight the important legislation was passed successfully?

JW: We've run into some budgeting problems this year and so one of the things I'm espe-



cially proud of is the We Care About the Students Resolution, in which all of the members of USG who signed it declared that they would give up their salary or stipend so that that money could be used for the clubs and organizations that really need it.

JW: Also UNSCUM was passed to make sure that our media groups are responsible and running in an uncorrupt manner.

TP: How do you think Jeff Kruszyna is doing now as Vice President?

JW: Jeff stepped into a very difficult and chaotic situation and I really feel that he has risen to

the occasion as I knew he would.

TP: Do you see this change in leadership for the better of USG?

JW: Yes, the senate cannot be run without an effective chair.

TP: What qualities does Jeff have, specifically, that make him a good leader?

JW: As president of one club and former president of another, Jeff has the kind of experience to be an effective leader and to run an effective meeting, which we saw on Tuesday.

TP: Vlad Frants: What happened?

JW: Wow, Vlad Frants. A big misunderstanding.

TP: What were the accusations made against you? What is true? What is false?

JW: That um... I guess really that I should be impeached because I had not presented the nominations for the three vacant Judicial positions.

JW: For a number of different reasons... you know, the appointments had to be delayed, but the process was ongoing so that every student would have a chance to apply for the open positions and in the end the best students were chosen. And after next Tuesday's senate meeting, all positions should be filled.

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The Stony Brook Projects

Commentary by Elizabeth Alonzo

When God dictated the Bible to His disciples, He mentioned Heaven and Hell. But perhaps He forgot the footnote that would explain what we have here, within Stony Brook University: the most decrepit, darkest corner of the earth we call Greeley College in Roosevelt Quad. Greeley is perhaps a special kind of hell, and what Greeley-ers refer to as "The Stony Brook Projects," a quad that seems to have been forgotten by our institution and left as the neglected bastard child of this university. It is the infamous quad that prospective students and parents never see; it is the quad the majority resident population fears; it is the kind of hell innocent freshmen could never expect.

I suppose I may be exaggerating when I refer to Greeley College as a special-unit of Hell, but with all the complaints I've heard from some of its frustrated resident dwellers, I hardly find my conclusion unreasonable. A freshman girl who currently resides in Greeley (she wishes to remain anonymous) horrified me with the tripe she puts up with having no alternative for decent living conditions: "A couple of times, I'll walk into the

girls' bathroom and there would be urine stains sprayed all over the showers. There's mildew on the walls, and clogged toilets that haven't been fixed yet. And sometimes the soap dispensers don't have soap in them...Sometimes, it's so unbearable that I'd walk to the other side to use the other girls' bathroom. We call it 'Greeley Pond' because it always has puddles of water on the ground."

The bathroom isn't the only venue that Greeley continues to disappoint in: "We used to have a lounge," said Jessica, "but people stole the furniture so it's just kind of empty right now." Jessica lives by a fire escape where fellow Greeley-ers make it a habit of lighting up a joint which supplies Jessica and her room mate with a generous supply of smoke for an unpleasant, yet sufficient, second high: "We would close the windows but after a while it gets suffocating in such a closed space so we'll open the door but people are so loud in the hallway that it's hard to read or study or do anything else. So we try our luck with the windows because sometimes the wind just blows the smoke away." And yes, the Greeley nightmare continues.

Another student who wishes to remain anonymous complained about an incident both

devious and corrupt. While her clothes were in the dryer, she went back to her room to study. After an hour passed, she went back down to find that someone had rummaged through her load and meticulously stole her intimates leaving not a single undergarment behind. "I was both pissed off and disgusted that someone actually went through my clothes!" she vented.

With such alleged abominable living conditions and unruly behavior from fellow resident dwellers, it is remarkable that these students successfully cope with the hand they're dealt with. It's a shame that such a revered educational research institution would fail to comply with the most basic standards of living for health, safety, cleanliness

and maintenance, especially for students who pay the same amount of money as our other quad residents. Hopefully in the future, our college will find the time, money, and the decency to provide our Greeley residents with the same rights to a safe and healthy environment as everyone else.



Bipartisan Dating at the People's Republic of Stony Brook

Commentary by Yussef Garcia

Let's face it, even the busiest student would at some point date a fellow school mate, but is finding love in the People's Republic of Stony Brook contingent to one's political philosophy?

At the height of the past election cycle, when we were divided into red states and blue states, dating on campus across party lines was rather difficult. It seemed that fellow conservatives were to be avoided as the plague. Identifying oneself with a philosophy of life and freedom was at once rebellious and treacherous.

Last September, at a philosophy soiree (yeah you got that right; they actually have fun) I met a charming guy from the soccer team, a jock with a brain. I was not going to let that chance get away. He was a strong Kerry supporter. I wasn't, and I was not going to let that become an impediment for us to get to know each other better. We talked often on the phone and met up for dinner several times; I enjoyed being in his company. I was very unpleasantly surprised when on the night of the first presidential debate I had to cancel an invitation to his room, because I was attending a pro-Bush debate party. He informed me that since he now knew I was a Republican, we could no longer date. He couldn't see himself with someone that believes in such a twisted and duplicitous philosophy and subsequently hung up on me. Speaking of duplicitous, the first thing he told me when we started going out was not to tell anyone about his preference for other men. You will think that being from Stony Brook, a bastion of liberalism, he wouldn't have to hide his true self.

In October, I met Calvin, a handsome recent Stony Brook graduate, now doing auditing for a firm in Wall Street, the epitome of capitalism. I didn't know whether he was a Kerry or Bush supporter, and I didn't care either way. I just wanted to get to know him. One morning Calvin woke up early to watch the Sunday morning news and there was some nonsensical debate about whether Bush was a liar. Immediately, he was agreeing with the liberal on the panel, about the "real" intentions for going to war with Saddam Hussein. I was feeling very intimidated at the time, and I could see it, a fine relationship out the window. I thought to myself, not Calvin, with such a nice office at the American Express building near ground zero, he would be more accepting of my views. I was wrong. When I voiced my opinion on the matter, he promptly gathered his things and entertained me with a rather lengthy monologue on my stupidity and how I secretly hated myself for being Black, Latino and gay. I needed to become a Republican just to feed on those feelings. I handed him the rest of his things and showed him the door.

Lesson: the left is unyielding to fancy or love someone that happens to think differently. They rather embraced their inner narcissus and pined away in love for their own image. Not surprisingly, since they keep nominating the same guy, albeit in a different suit, for the White House. My experience dating across party lines on campus confirms it. The left have formed an army of clones and their close-mindedness can only spell d-i-s-a-s-t-e-r.

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Ted Kennedy's Drink of the Month



Picture Courtesy of Hudson Graphics

Satire By Virginia Morgan

When not ambling through the halls of Congress or filibustering judicial nominees on the floor of the Senate, there's nothing Senator Kennedy likes more than kicking back on the shores of Chappaquiddick with a nice, cold drink in his hand. Each issue this column will highlight one of Senator Kennedy's favorite drinks.

This week's drink: The Irish Car Bomb!

Irish Car Bomb*

Ingredients

Guinness Beer
Jameson Irish Whiskey
Bailey's Irish Cream

Directions

- 1) Fill a tall glass 2/3 full with Guinness
- 2) Fill a double shot glass with equal parts of Jameson and Bailey's
- 3) Drop the shot glass into the Guinness
- 4) Enjoy!

*Not intended for the faint of heart, weak of stomach, or those who are under 21 years of age.

American Stinginess or Generosity?

Analysis by Erica Smith

The pleas for aid in the wake of the tsunami disaster forced millions to evaluate one of philosophy's oldest questions: What is our responsibility to our fellow man? As all eyes turn expectantly to the world's most fruitful nation, some are eager to claim we have not done nearly enough.

In his editorial "Land of Penny Pinchers," New York Times Columnist Nicholas Kristof wrote, "When grieving victims intrude onto our TV screens, we dig into our pockets and provide the massive, heartwarming response that we're now displaying in Asia; the rest of the time, we're tightwads who turn away as people die in far greater numbers." Although Americans give 23% of all official development aid globally, he claimed that on a per person basis, we place 21st in a ranking of top donor countries. Using the Paris based Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) as his source, Kristof declared that the American government gave only 15 cents a day per person, adding only 6 more cents for private donations. These statistics were undoubtedly surprising for many people- and for good reason.

In his subtitle, Kristof confidently states: "The figures don't lie." Of course it's important to take into account what the figures are actually based on; something Kristof neglected to do in his resentful editorial. The criteria for official development assistance (ODA) only includes allocations to USAID, the Peace Corps, multilateral institutions, and certain programs sponsored by the State Department and Department of De-

fense. What it does not include is forgiveness of foreign debt, military aid, subsidies to promote U.S. foreign investment and of course the hundreds of billions we spent freeing Afghanistan and Iraq. Let's not forget the \$700 billion worth of goods we import annually from developing countries; certainly not charity, but infinitely more beneficial in initiating long term growth.

However, it was Kristof's allegations of misery against the private sector that lacked the most credibility. Despite the fact that Americans pay almost half their income in taxes, American citizens donate 240 billion dollars to charity a year. To believe that only 7 billion of this goes overseas is a little too much to chew. Apparently, the OECD wasn't too confident about this figure either. In their 2003 report of "Philanthropic Foundation and Co-operation", an entire page was dedicated to obstacles mitigating the estimate's accuracy. They admitted they are "still in the process of improving their data collection in this area" and their "results can only be considered tentative." (Something Kristof forgot to mention as well.)

For an individual truly interested in evaluating American's generosity, a more accurate source would be U.S. Agency for International Development. In their 169 page report, "Government Aid in the National Interest", their "low estimate" of American private development assistance was 33.6 billion. That's approximately 31 cents a day per American. Unlike the OECD, the USAID provided a detailed breakdown of monetary contributions, outlining the amounts that corporations, foundations, universities, voluntary organizations and individual remittances were responsible for. They estimate that by 2010, the number will be up to 55.2 billion

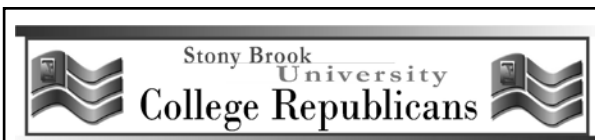
dollars. Still "tightwads"? That's for you to decide.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.usaid.gov>

<http://usinfo.state.gov>

<http://www.oecd.org>



Proudly presents the film:

In the Face of Evil
Reagan's War in Word and Deed

Thursday, March 3, 2005
Student Activities Center
Ballroom B
7:00PM

The Stony Brook University College Republicans meet every Tuesday in SAC 311 at 5:30PM

Be a part of the best party on Campus!

Restructure USG?

Commentary by Artie Perri

As we return to another semester here at Stony Brook there are still some things that haven't changed: parking is still horrible, Patriots won another Super Bowl, 'Food' still makes amazing wraps in the SAC, Bush is still our president and, our very own Student Government is still ineffective.

In case you are new to the University or simply apathetic to USG let me fill you in on what has happened in the past. As some of you may know our University lists our "active" student government as one of the many attractions here at Stony. I find this baffling. Our student government had to be disbanded a year ago due to members trying to rewrite the constitution by making the legislative body stronger than the executive body. The following semester, the unaware student body elected an out of touch president that rendered the whole USG useless, through the usage of filibustering and the most conventional use of stubbornness. Most recently, last spring semester we had one of the most contested elections for USG President for as long as I have been an undergrad. This contested election ran parallels to the 2000 Bush-Gore election. One of the candidates who plainly lost, cried for a re-vote due to discrepancies over when the vote was to actually occur. She apparently had more problems getting her "people" together to vote for her than those voting most recently in Iraq. I still think it was that hanging chad voting system on SOLAR. After having her prayers answered she did receive

another shot at the USG Presidency but lost once again.

So why am I ranting about the ineffectiveness of USG you may ask? Mainly because it runs on our money and more specifically our Student Activity Fee. Here is some simple math I find useful in understanding my discontent with USG. Currently we have 13,858 undergrads attending Stony Brook (Stony Brook Admissions). Of those undergrads all are paying \$83.25 a semester in student activities fees (Office of the Bursar). So by multiplying the two we come to a grand total of \$1.15 million dollars per semester. To me, that is one large sum of money that one ineffective body of government is in charge of.

Don't get me wrong, not all of USG is bad. After all they did get Dave Chapelle, "Whose Line is it Anyway's" Colin and Brad, Bowling for Soup and for this semester a series of comedians to come to Stony Brook. However, these good things are overshadowed by the continuing blunders and lack of awareness that our elected peers continue to display. This can be clearly seen by the Legislative and Judicial bodies trying to impeach our current President Jared Wong over disagreements and of course a continuing power struggle.

In this column I pointed out a lot of problems. But unlike others it is useless to point out problems if we don't have a solution. So hear me out on what I feel should be done with the USG concerning its handling of our student activity fees.

The USG does serve some purpose. But one

purpose the USG shouldn't serve is the handling of

our student activity fees. It is here where we should hire a professional Activities Advisor. The job of this person would demand a salary/stipend. Here the salary can be voted on by an elected assembly. One assembly of 12 members with a presiding officer, the President. His vote would only count towards tie breakers. The other twelve members would be elected by the student body, upon the open publications of their resumes. It would be their job to meet with the President and the Professional Activities Advisor to determine who gets what funding and where to appropriate funds to. Keep in mind the Professional would carry as much power as the assembly's vote. It is when agreements are met they would be also openly published so the student body can be filled in on the inner workings of their elected assembly. It is within the drastic reduction of size and balancing of power where we will find stability and progress in our USG. I always thought we come to college to progress our well beings as well as those around us. Until my proposal or one similar happens there will continue to be countless unnecessary stalls in our USG. So until we start electing and making calls for intelligent qualified individuals for USG, which are in the minority of USG, and by putting an end to the popularity contest, we will have a much more productive use of our time and money here at Stony Brook. Now that was vindicating.

An End to Tyranny

Commentary by Robert J. Romano

Continuing his articulation of both the practical and moral dimensions of the spread of freedom and democracy globally, the President marked his Second Inaugural with the stirring declaration of America's founding principles. He is able to understand the wisdom and rightness of America's mission to spread political liberty and the choice of self-government to peoples that have not known it, that freedom and independence is a requirement for security, and that self-determination does not mean to leave dictators to their own designs. Freedom's expansion serves our vital interests as a nation, and upholds our greatest ideals. As President Bush stated, "We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world... America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one..." This links both the traditional schools of realism and idealism, and certainly proclaims the idea that our safety and our freedom are inextricably linked. Our security depends on our freedom and independence, our constitutional system of federalism, republicanism, limited government, and the rule of law. Ultimately, our lives depend upon not only our belief in liberty, but in the practice of our liberty under law. That freedom serves both the ideals and interests of the individual translates into the idea that freedom also serves both the ideals and interests of entire societ-

ies.

This, on its face, requires an end to tyranny. As the President stated, "From the day of our Founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth. Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time... So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." This theme has very much defined not only his Presidency, but the history of our great nation. The recent history of freedom has known great leaders, great Presidents: Lincoln, Wilson, Roosevelt, Kennedy, Reagan, and now, the current President Bush. It is more than just these men that propel freedom. It is more than just human nature to live in freedom, it is God's will, because it is right.

The work of ending tyranny is not a partisan issue. It can only be achieved in Union, and despite our political differences, one thing that all Americans should agree upon is that we all have the same rights under natural law. Through all of our disagreements, this ought to be the one thing that unites us. The only alternative to spreading freedom

and democracy around the world is isolationism. The fate of freedom hinges on the demise of the twin ideologies isolationism and defeatism here at home. And whether or not freedom will long endure globally presently depends on the free world's ability to unite and defeat the twin dangers of tyranny and terrorism. For, the isolationists would have us believe that ending tyranny abroad is not our duty, and the defeatists would tell us that terrorism is too difficult to eliminate. Opposition for the sake of opposition against the spread of freedom and democracy is a sorry excuse for allowing peoples who yearn for freedom to suffer in the chains of slavery, and is a sound example of poor leadership. The President, with his ambitious rhetoric, has plainly for the whole world to see reached out to his Democratic counterparts to join in this just cause. For them to slap his hand away at this vital moment in freedom's history would be to turn away from the ideals and interests that unite us. Staying freedom's course ought to be the one thing that is universally agreed upon. It has been argued, in social contract theory, than any reasonable person would agree with the principles of natural law and individual rights. Determining principles of national priorities is not an exercise of listening to the mob, for mob rule is a certain recipe for anarchy. Rather, it is an exercise of reason. Leadership means standing up for one's ideals, as the President has demonstrated. The case is being made that these are not just one man's nor one party's ideals, these are America's solemn be-

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Mission Statement of The Patriot

The goal of THE PATRIOT is to offer an alternative point of view to the students of Stony Brook University. It is a paper dedicated to raising awareness of student issues on campus, and conservative issues on the national scene. While it does not actively seek controversy, THE PATRIOT strives to offer opinions and news that will encourage the students of this campus to ask themselves what their true values are. It is dedicated to building upon and fostering the conservative views that are strong among so many of us, yet suppressed in our community. But ideology aside, all of our news will be bound to three standards; we will always be *factual*, *sensible*, and *reasonable*.

For the last 200 years, this country has stood for truth, justice, natural rights, individual liberty, freedom, and independence. Become a part of the tradition. Please send your submissions and contributions to THE PATRIOT.

stonybrookpatriot@gmail.com
www.stonybrookpatriot.com

Disclaimer: The views expressed by the writers in these columns are not necessarily the opinions of The Patriot or its editorial staff.

Bush Tax Plan: Keeping it Simple

Commentary by Timothy R. Cole

For 364 days of the year I consider myself to be a fairly intelligent person. That last day, the day I fill out my tax forms, I feel like no matter what I do I'll always be lost. I remember the last time I attempted to do them I handed the forms to my father to check for me. After just a few seconds he found an error. "Why is it wrong?" I asked. "I filled it out exactly how the instructions said." "I know," he said "it's confusing, just trust me."

The only thing I'm certain of that day is that taxes should be easier.

With the reelection of President Bush there is an opportunity to do just that. He has stated that one of his primary goals is to reform the tax code. Everything is on the table, including a possible flat tax, or even a national sales tax. The flat tax would mean that everyone pays the same percentage of income. In other words, the rich still pay a lot more, but they're not penalized for making more. A national sales tax would mean that no one would pay income tax, but instead pay more when they go to the cash register. How much more is unsure. One thing is certain; whatever is proposed will be simpler and fairer than what we deal with today.

Of course there are those who will always argue that the Bush administration is in league with big business and out to get the workingman.

That couldn't be any further from the truth.

During the last election every Democratic Presidential candidate talked about amending the tax code to stop outsourcing, or make companies pay their fair share. What they didn't say was that every time they do amend the tax code (countless times a year) all they do is create another loophole. For every industry they penalize another ten find a way to use the new rules to their benefit.

No doubt, the best thing for the economy of this country is to keep taxes as low as possible. The people need to be trusted with their own money. At the same time though, we must all pay our fair share for such things as police, roads, and defense. Only by examining huge policy changes like the Bush Administration is currently doing can we ensure that everyone pays in taxes what is appropriate.

During the coming months of debate I ask that you keep your minds open but remember one thing. When we simplify things we make sure that corporations pay more and average people like you and me know where our money is going. In the end things are both more efficient and just. That, in turn, will lead to lower tax rates and smaller government for all. Not a bad deal!

Unborn Pain

Commentary by Chris Dolley

We heard it in the campaigns, and now members of all sides of the political aisle want to know: what exactly is a “culture of life?” President Bush has made this statement a recurring theme. With the approaching need for a Supreme Court judicial replacement, the future’s very uncertain about who Bush wants to, and can, get through the Senate for appointment. Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Arlen Specter has claimed that there is a precedent that could prevent filibustering of nominees, but it’s unclear what precedent he’s referring to, or even if he really means to overturn filibuster rules. This would have a large impact on the type of nominees being offered. It’s possible that nominees who would reverse *Roe v Wade* will be appointed, but it’s too soon to tell what plans are unfolding.

Some bills that change fetus rights do not require a judicial appointment to reverse *Roe v Wade*, such as the recently enacted partial-birth abortion ban. The practice of partial-birth abortions involves, as its name suggests, a partial birth of the baby. The baby is pulled out of the womb, feet first, and suction is then used to remove the brain and spinal fluid. Another bill that has not been enacted yet is the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act, introduced by Congressman Chris Smith, a congressman from New Jersey. The Act would require every abortionist to provide

women seeking an abortion past 20 weeks of pregnancy information about the capacity of unborn children to experience great pain during an abortion. After that, the woman would either accept or refuse (by signing a form) the administration of pain-reducing drugs directly to the unborn child. The bill would apply to all abortions past 20 weeks, regardless of the method used.

Information that mothers are required to be shown under the Act refers to recent evidence that unborn babies experience a tremendous amount of pain after or possibly before 5 months of life. Between 20-30 weeks, the unborn child has more pain receptors than any other time in a human life, which causes them more pain during an abortion than a person of any other age could experience. The pain is heightened because the child has a very thin layer of skin protection, and pain inhibition is not developed until 30-32 weeks of life. The anesthesia given to the mother during an abortion does not affect the fetus much at all, because it is metabolized by the mother’s liver. So when the doctor breaks the fetus’s limbs to surgically remove them, it must be excruciating.

The fact is that unborn babies have less legal protection than livestock.

One Thing I Learned About Love

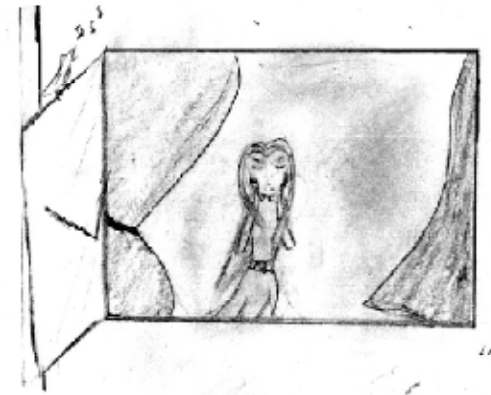


Illustration by Elizabeth Borodkin

Poem by Aleksandra Borodkin

*The only thing I learned from love
is how to cry quietly at night
the lonely stars above
no longer shine tenderly with their light.*

*Outside the whispering wind blows
upon the pavement, dark and cold
tonight, only the white moon knows
of the tragedy I never told.*

*Somewhere the mockingbird sings
cruelly about a hushed goodbye
I find it strange how things
that never happened suddenly die.*

Interview with President Wong

Continued from Page 1

TP: How was this means for impeachment?

JW: It wasn’t. Impeachment is for serious acts of serious crimes.. for bribery, taking kick-backs. It’s for serious stuff. Not for missing dates or deadlines.

TP: So was Vlad wrong to try to impeach you and did he even have the ability to impeach you?

JW: Yes, he was wrong. “Any student has the right to bring up.. to ask for a... ask the senate to impeach an officer of USG, of student government. But I would have hoped that he would have you know talked to me first before taking such drastic and unnecessary action.

TP: What do you see happening to Vlad Frants?

JW: I think that um... unfortunately what happened with Vlad gave students a bad impression of USG, something that we’ve tried this whole semester to move away from because of Polity’s previous reputation.

TP: Do you expect him to be removed from office?

JW: No, but it’s going to take him a long time to reestablish his credibility and the Judiciary’s for that matter.

TP: What do you think should happen?

JW: I’m hoping that we can move for-

ward from last semester and see how we can all work to gether to get things back on track.”

TP: What’s going on with funding for religious and political organizations?

JW: Um... even though the Judiciary indefinitely suspended the enforceability of CORE, there is still a large movement ongoing to make sure that religious and political clubs get the funding that they deserve.

TP: What was CORE all about?

JW: The CORE bill had set up a separate agency within student government, mirrored off of the special services council, that would be in charge of allocating funding to religious and political clubs.

JW: So basically, I just want to say that right now there are a couple of bills floating around and there is a real effort by myself, the treasurer, and other members of USG to implement religious and political club funding into the constitution and the budget process.

TP: Should we expect any improvements in the structure of the senate meetings to make them more efficient?

JW: I think that as we saw at the first senate meeting of the semester that the senate meetings are better organized will be better run from now on.

TP: In general, what can we expect to be seeing next semester in USG?

JW: I would say the first thing is, you know as always, one of our main functions is to plan programming and events and you will see plenty of

that this semester including a really great series of free comedy shows.”

JW: Personally, my own agenda this semester will be focused on streamlining the budget and maximizing the efficiency of the use of the Student Activity Fee so that clubs and organizations can get the money that they need.

TP: Anything else?

JW: Yeah, as always I also want USG to be an advocate for students here and in Albany. And I guess finally, to make sure that the spring elections go as smooth as possible.

JW: And also, I’m still continuing to try to get the One-Stop-Shop approved, which would streamline the entire club process.

JW: The idea was that each club would be assigned a customer service type representative and you would go to them as President or Treasurer with your questions and problems and they’d run around to get your questions answered and paperwork processed.

TP: Any closing statements?

JW: I guess, I’m looking forward to the rest of the semester and I really feel that we’re going to get a lot accomplished and do some real good for the students.

TP: Thank you for meeting with me and I hope to do it again sometime.

JW: Sure, any time.

The State of the USG

Commentary by Ilan Nassimi

The Undergraduate Student Government of our school is a complex being. Much like the Federal Government, the USG is made of up of many different parts and people, each with its own interests and motivations. Also, much like its national counterpart the USG is filled with red tape, power struggles, and dirty underhanded politics.

By now anyone who takes interest in USG knows the downright chaos that the USG descended into in the latter half of the fall semester. With the senate and executive council divided within their own branches, and the Supreme Court paralyzed by its own incompetence, the USG hit a wall. At the November 30th Senate Meeting, after the Chief Justice Vlad Frantz caused pandemonium by speaking out of turn and refusing to stop, and the police were called in to gain control.

The bedlam that occurred on November 30th can be explained by something that many of those who write about the USG (most notably, the Stony Brook Statesman) fail to touch upon. The USG is run not by elected officials, nor is it controlled completely by the administration; the government is actually run by power groups. These power groups are clubs that are very politically active, namely the Education Opportunity Program, the Commuter Student Association, the College Republicans, and the Stony Brook Press, as well

as several other smaller groups. Every member of USG is either allied or friendly to one of these groups. The most powerful of all groups is most probably the EOP. The EOP is well organized and holds several key offices in the Executive Branch. The CSA is a close second, while having less actual voting power CSA has nonetheless been able to wrest control of much of the senate, and was very influential in President Jared Wong's spectacular victory over incumbent Sandy Curtis. In simple terms, the CSA has declared an all-out-war on the EOP, and at the Senate meeting in question, the battle lines were clearly drawn. President Wong stood off with his own council, made up mostly of EOP allied candidates. The senate was divided among CSA-controlled senators, and those who were less inclined to succumb to the will of the CSA's leadership. There were accusations of corruption and racism, and many personal attacks. The Judicial Branch failed not because of internal conflict, but mostly because of Chief Justice Franz, who failed in his duties.

The Stony Brook Press has recently gone on record praising the EOP for its interest in USG, and being a part of the political process. This magazine will go farther, and praise both the CSA and EOP. But the problem rests at this point, while these groups fight amongst themselves; they do little for the student body. Senate meetings are bogged down with pointless and often illegal bills up for discussion.

One fine example; CSA's Jim Driscoll, though no longer at the helm of CSA, proposed a bill to the senate in response to allegations against the Stony Brook Statesman for not having fair elections. Not only was the law ex-post facto and illegal, Judge Artie Flynn actually had to go to the microphone and explain to the senators that this was actually a judicial matter, and the case was already before the Judicial Council. With the Executive Council crippled, and the senators either controlled by the CSA or too incompetent to stop them when they broke the rules, the decision-making process has been brought to a halt.

The USG does have its strong points. Its bureaucracy, better known as the agencies such as Audio/Visual and the Election Board, tend to do their respective jobs rather well and efficiently. Administrative agencies aligned with USG, such as the Accounting Department and Student Activities; also do their best to help USG succeed (although they do tend to influence policy to the favor of the administration).

The key to USG's success lies in a very basic and fundamental part of all democracies: popular participation. You are the solution: public involvement and oversight will fix everything from the warring factions to the incompetent officials, and force the government to work instead for a better tomorrow.

What Lies Beneath...

Satire by William Olsen-Hoek

I have always been somewhat of a conspiracy theorist. I remember the first time the thought ran through my head that the Quaker Oats guy and Colonel Sanders looked remarkably like first cousins. From then on, I knew I was doomed to forever seek the truth and uncover secrets that our government and wishes it could forget. Imagine my unbridled giddiness when I discovered that our precious university harbors its own fair share of conspiracies – one of the greatest of which concerns tunnels.

It has recently come to light that there is a complex system of subterranean tunnels beneath the very soil upon which you stand (assuming, of course, that you stand whilst reading newspapers – which is, I'm not going to lie to you, kind of odd. Sit down before any normal people notice your freakish practices). You want proof? For the longest time, the blacktop pathway that crosses the elegant glass-enclosed dining area of our Student Activities Center was spray painted with arrows indicating a straight line. Sure, this isn't anything particularly shocking, except when one also takes into account that the word "TUNNEL" accompanied these arrows.

I should say that's pretty concrete (pun intended) evidence. Now, a university of this size surely would have no need of a single tunnel, leading me to suspect that there was, in fact, a giant series of underground passageways weaving its wicked way through yet-to-be-uncovered Native American burial sites (we may discuss these anomalies in a later issue [George Washington was known to have mic-

turated on such sacred graves during the Battle of Long Island, thus invoking the ire of the Algonquian ghosts... but I digress]). I shall now, by means of hearsay and rumor, reveal several of the intended purposes I have discovered for the construction of the artificial catacombs that now plague our campus.

I. The Tunnels Are Used to Hide Nazi Gold Stolen from Norwegian Jews in World War II. It is a little known fact that our university was originally funded solely by money diverted by Albany from Swiss bank accounts. My European correspondent has discovered that our founder, Josiah Stonybrooke, was a member of the Nazi party (only because he heard that hot cocoa would be served every Thursday) and had an army of trolls (prior to the Great Battle of Syltø of 1492, of course, in which all the trolls of Scandinavia were killed in just under 6 hours) dig up gold ingots buried under snowmen (McSwigan, Snow Treasure) in the cover of darkness. Through clever extortion rings, New York's State Senate came to inherit all of Josiah Stonybrooke's ill-gotten gains to found our beloved university. The tunnels, which are swastika shaped due either to a terrible architectural flaw or an amazing coincidence, are merely where the State Senate's thugs hide all the gold.

II. The Tunnels Hide a Network of Pipes With Less Than Reputable Contents. If you've ever eaten at Deng Lee's, please raise the hospital bill for your stomach pumping. After sending 8 spies (6 1/4 of which died) into the secret vaults in which Deng Lee's top secret recipes are hidden, I've discovered

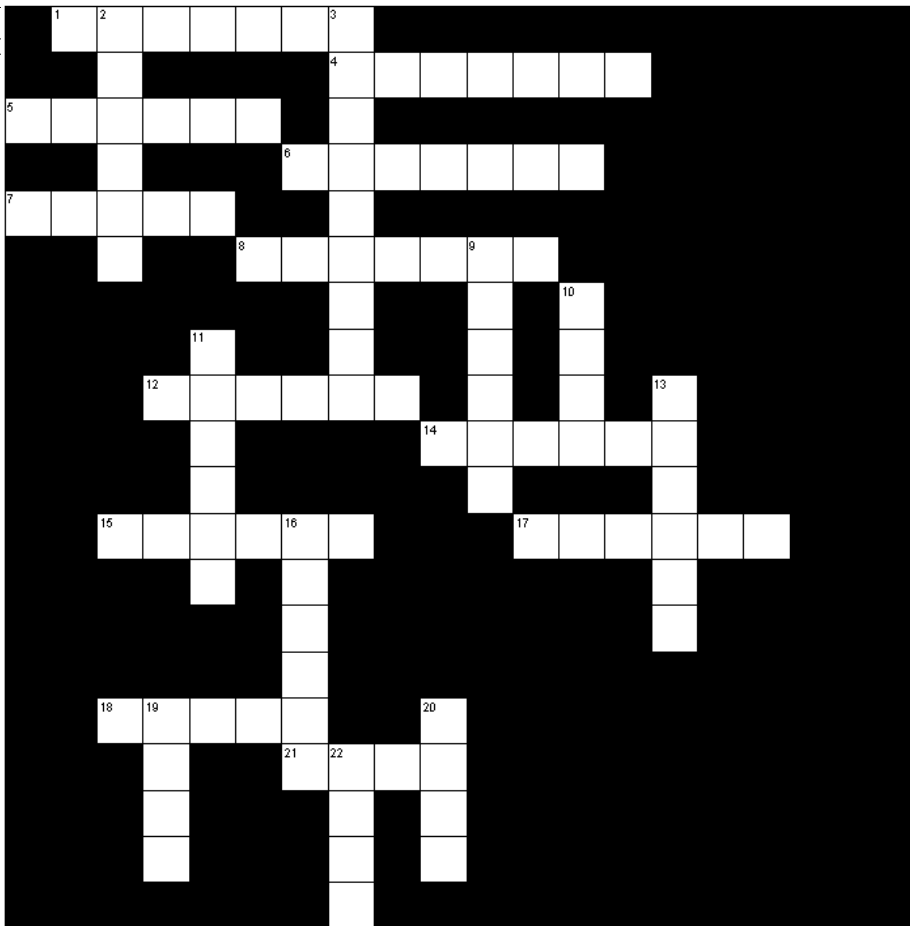
include: artichoke hearts, ground telephone books, lost puppy flyers (finely chopped), used Q-tips, the Olsen Twins, mustard gas, discarded copies of "From Justin to Kelly" DVDs, Ronsonol lighter fluid, the 1969 Miracle Mets, panda fetuses, assorted herbs and spices, and the SECRET INGREDIENT (more spies must die before we found out this elusive ingredient – sources suggest it may be truffles or raw sewage). Where does this stuff come from? That's right! Pipes concealed in the underground tunnels filter all the garbage we throw out and brings it to that smoking power plant located adjacent to the physics building. What isn't used to power our laptops and Dr. Kenny's hot tub / evil army of robots is then secretly piped into Roth Pond where it's collected each morning by Deng Lee specialists and made into "cuisine." As a Green Party member, I must say I'm impressed with our recycling habits here.

III. The Tunnels Are a Giant Nuclear Particle Accelerator. This would at least explain the unusually high levels of eccentricity among faculty and staff. Careful analysis of records shows that for awhile, Stony Brook was actually the only remaining territory in the USSR. During the coldest days of the Cold War, Stony Brook, which is actually a separate political entity to the United States, swore allegiance to the Communist Party of Endor (yes, Ewoks are communists). As a result, Stony Brook scientists built an underground particle accelerator to assist Russia in its Arms Race against

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2004 Year in Review

- Down
- On November 11, Palestinians began to mourn the death of their leader.
 - The largest Muslim country hit by tsunami waves.
 - "Memogate"
 - A scandal involving prisoner abuse at this military facility caused many liberals to call for the resignation of the Secretary of Defense.
 - School children in this Russian town were held hostage by Chechen terrorists.
 - This Lakers star was accused of rape.
 - The name of Laci Peterson's unborn child.
 - Kerry conceded after the majority of ballots were counted in this state.
 - His doctoral degree did not help him secure the nomination of the Democratic Party.
 - This hurricane was one of the four that hit Florida.



- Across
- This Al-Qaeda leader is responsible for beheadings and much of the unrest in Iraq.
 - According to British intelligence, "yellow-cake" uranium was smuggled from this African country into Iraq.
 - During the 9/11 commission hearings, this former counter-terrorism advisor stated: "Your government has failed you."
 - This former U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman was appointed by Annan to investigate the oil-for-food scandal.
 - On March 11, Al-Qaeda blew up the subway system in this country.
 - This famous homemaker spent Christmas in confinement.
 - This president helped bring about the fall of the Berlin Wall and communism.
 - This national security advisor was caught stealing classified documents from the National Archives.
 - One of the European nations involved in the oil-for-food scandal.
 - The interim-prime minister of Iraq.
 - This filmmaker sparked intense criticism from Democrats, Republicans, and U.S. troops.
 - Starting January 20, she will be nation's new Secretary of State.

Freedom for All

Continued from Page 4

liefs and commitments. The promise of liberty was a commitment made by our forefathers, and it is not for us to deviate from the path we are on. There is no compromise which is necessary to uphold our dutiful obligations to defend and protect the march of freedom. If the present minority party determines there to be some expedience in obstructing freedom's course, they will not be rewarded at the polls, and it will be history's resounding condemnation which shall unseat them in the future.

However, since freedom for all is a principle that I believe all reasonable people do believe in, and since it is eminently practical for the parties to unite on the issues of liberty's security and freedom's advance, this author believes in his heart that presently the nation shall be united. Ultimately, the success of freedom in this world for posterity will depend greatly on our ability to unite as a people around the principles which founded this great nation. There is no turning back from the commitment of placing security higher than politics, because both those institutions depend greatly on the freedom and independence of the nation as a whole. The people of America deserve that much, and a majority of them reelected the man whom believes that his most solemn duty is to protect the American people from dangers both foreign and domestic. One deep wound that can be inflicted upon our great nation is to strike at the principled idea of natural rights. The alternative of the spread of freedom and democracy servicing our nation's greatest interests is isolation-

ism and the tyrannies that would expand as a result of that course and whose interests are served by the free world's inaction. Those who demand that there be a counterpoint for its own sake would do well to consider that.

The work of spreading freedom and democracy is not supposed to be easy, and it is not without sacrifice. Those who bleed on the battlefields of liberty in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere today know this, and those who have paid the ultimate price are honored. It is the mission of giving voice to peoples who believe they are not heard, and who believe that they suffer in silence that must succeed. The war on tyranny and terrorism's outcome will not be certain, nor is it inevitable, without the choice of free peoples everywhere to defend their ways of life, each unique to their culture. Tyranny is not a way of life, it is an imposition upon the free will of individuals. Terrorism is not a way of life, it is the senseless murder of innocents in the service of fanaticism. Defeating tyranny and terror around the entire world may very well be the greatest struggle we will have ever had to endure. As President Bush stated on this historic day, "The great objective of ending tyranny is the concentrated work of generations. The difficulty of the task is no excuse for avoiding it. America's influence is not unlimited, but fortunately for the oppressed, America's influence is considerable, and we will use it confidently in freedom's cause..." We must appreciate the difficulty involved, and smile in the face of adversity as we move forward as one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Conspiracies

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the good old U.S. of A.! The result was a top-secret bomb capable of destroying entire continents with a single strike. In a spectacular bit of deus ex machina, a huge tribe of Antarctic paratroopers that were frozen in ice for roughly 94 years stormed the secret nuclear testing labs located in the Old Chemistry and destroyed the bomb and all the plans. Having gone bankrupt, Stony Brook became the final soviet republic to fall shortly thereafter. Mikhail Gorbachev, former President of the Soviet Union was quoted as saying, "Sic transit gloria mundi."

IV. The Tunnels Are Used to Transport Equipment and People From One Building to Another Without Hassle. Yeah, right. Sure, utility elevators in the library's custodial quarters lead down to lower levels hitherto un-researched by civilized peoples. Sure, there's a door in the lower level of Staller that is permanently locked behind a barred door with a staircase leading downward. Sure, it's a "good" "idea." Perhaps it's also used to embalm and bury victims of the Stony Brook Mafia that had unfortunate accidents. Now THAT would make more sense... We've established that there are tunnels and that they are off limits to normal people like you and me... or at least you. I mean, I'm at least special enough to be one of the only liberals working on a staunchly right-winged paper. Whatever the case, the tunnels are being used for wicked purposes and we, the students, have a right to know what's going on. I believe it was the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan who once said, "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts." Well, I've given you the facts, now come up with an opinion.

Brian Wilson Presents SMiLE...

Review by William Olsen-Hoek

Thirty-eight years ago, Brian Wilson started work on what promised to be the Beach Boys' greatest record – a recording so new and fresh that it would make the famed "Pet Sounds" album seem unrefined and soggy. The project was called Smile. It was to be a three movement "teenage symphony to God," as Brian put it. Alas, experimentation with mind-expanding drugs, the pressures of recording, a fight with auditory hallucinations, and guilt (Brian thought one of his recordings was responsible for an outbreak of fires in California) began to take its toll, and these precious tapes were locked away to gather dust in studio vaults. Some rather scratchy recordings of songs like "Heroes and Villains," "Wonderful," and the Beach Boys' famed pocket symphony "Good Vibrations" later made it onto Smile's bastard cousin, Smiley Smile. With Brian's breakdown, Smile's fate seemed sealed as well. Thankfully, this was not the case.

In a new state of mind, having conquered drug abuse and depression-induced obesity, Brian Wilson, enlisting the help of long-time lyrical collaborator Van Dyke Parks, sought to finally let a complete recording of Smile see the light of day. Why did Brian think 2004 the right year to complete this inarguably longest awaited album in music history? "2004 has nothing but crap on the radio," Brian said in an interview with Amazon.com's Peter Hilgen-dorf.

So now that we have Smile, what makes it so revolutionary and special? Smile, in its three-move-ment format, is a celebration of America, the Cycle of Life, and of the Elemental forces that bind the uni-

verse together.

Brian intended the first movement, Americana, to be from the point of view of a bicycle rider on a fantastic trip across the United States during its varying stages of development – from the Plymouth Rock to the conquest of Hawaii. "Heroes and Villains," the standout track, is a driving pop gem with classic Beach Boy harmonies punctuated by a saloon-style waltz chronicling the tensions in the Spanish occupation of the American West. "Roll Plymouth Rock" examines the fate of the Indians both in Massachusetts and of the Sandwich Isles, demanding of the farcical cyclist, "Bicycle rider just see what you've done – done to the church of the American Indian." The under-appreciated "Cabinessence" completes the journey across America, recalling the toil of the American farmers and the rustic pioneer lifestyle with twanging banjo riffs contrasted with the regular hammering sound accompanied with the line, "Who ran the iron horse," alluding to conflict between the railroad companies and farmers.

Having completed the pan-American journey, Smile turns to the subject of aging. "Wonderful," one of the worst sufferer's of Van Dyke Park's Picasso-like psychedelic and cryptic lyricism, discusses the innocence of youth to the pleasing sounds of heavy horn and tinkling harpsichord. "Surf's Up," the ironically (it has nothing to do with surfing) named ballad steals this movement. It's smooth, pure Brian Wilson ivory tickling with fantastic images of falling empires ("columnated ruins domino!"), rounded off with Brian's wavering sadly sweet falsetto.

Around the time when Smile was originally recorded, Brian had experienced a religious enlight-

enment. He wanted to create music that people could pray to (so maybe it was the drugs talking). Nowhere does this belief reveal itself more than in Smile's final movement, the Elements. "Vega-tables," "Wind Chimes" (another, rather trippy version of this song may be found on Smiley Smile), "In Blue Hawaii," and Grammy nominated "Mrs. O'Leary's Cow" (the recording Brian thought caused all the fires), are intended to represent earth, wind, water and fire, respectively. "Mrs. O'Leary's Cow," named for the supposed starter of the Great Chicago Fire, starts with up-and-down scales with bizarre cartoony whistles and bird calls, but then turns into a mad hard-rock jam session with high-sailing violins impersonating fire alarms, until the blaze is quenched with the bubbly, flowing "In Blue Hawaii." Cosmically connecting all these elements is the ethereal "Good Vibrations" complete with new lyrics that few have heard before. It's a faithful reproduction of the Beach Boy's classic, and a perfect way to end such an outstanding record.

Smile is not your typical Beach Boys record, with simple 1960s surfing songs about burger stands and hot rods. Instead, we're presented with a brilliant albeit sometimes esoteric and bizarre record showcasing Brian Wilson's eclectic musical talents. Of course, the record's historical impact is severely tarnished due to its legendary 38-year canning, but the artistry and genius contained in these three movements deserves at least an honest listening. It's an easy listen, intended to make you do what its title suggests.

Sunday Night Football

Quotations Compiled by Alexandra Borodkin

Foundation

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...." - *Declaration of Independence*, Congress, July 4th, 1776

Foreign Relations

The left: "The weight of a [Security Council] member state's vote could be inversely proportional to the number of weapon systems of that nation. That system would give nations that lack military power increased voting power. There are two advantages to that proposal. It would discourage militarization and also be one step toward global equity. ... Respect for the International Criminal Court is necessary for global order. Membership should not be optional. Any nation, charged with a crime against international law, should be subject to the court's findings. If a nation chooses to not participate, that nation should be tried in absentia. A verdict should be rendered. The rule of law should prevail." - Rosemarie Jackowski, "an advocacy journalist living in Vermont" on reforming the UN Security Council

The right: "More to the point, it's an even grosser intellectual stolen base to claim or suggest that because the United Nations does good things in Somalia or Sri Lanka that we should assume its political motives are just as pure. The Nazis were brilliant at delivering

social services. Hamas' 'political wing' builds hospitals and inoculates babies, but that doesn't make it any less of a terrorist organization. Now, the United Nations isn't a hotbed of Nazis and terrorists, by any stretch. But it's not a democratic, representative body either. Absolute power resides in the Security Council, whose core members originally included two brutal totalitarian regimes, China and the Soviet Union ..." - Jonah Goldberg

Domestic Relations

The left: "They are trying to destroy Social Security by giving this money to the fat cats on Wall Street." --Incoming Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid

The right: "President Bush has established some basic principles for strengthening Social Security, the first of which is that there will be no changes in the benefits of those now in or near retirement. [He] believes that workers under Social Security should have the voluntary opportunity to save and invest a portion of their payroll taxes in a personal account. This account would enable them to build nest eggs for retirement, which they would own, which they would control, and which they could pass on to their children." - Chuck Blahous, Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy

The War on Terror

The left: We went in to rescue Iraq from Saddam Hussein. Now, I think we have to rescue our policy from ourselves." - John Kerry (somebody's been on the phone with Chirac again.)

The right: "[E]ncouraging the Muslim world, and particularly the Arab Muslim world, which is the

heart of the global terrorist threat -- to adopt democratic ways and to shine the light of liberty into its culture of medieval darkness is a pragmatic necessity for the future security of the civilized world. That is the reality behind the President's address. Only people in serious denial can be blind to this fact. Only liberals."

-David Horowitz

Humanitarian Aide

The left: " "Are We Stingy? Yes." - New York Times editorial title, concerning U.S. Contribution to tsunami relief

The right: " "In 2003, the Center for Global Development -- funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, despite the fact that it could have used that money on future tsunami victims -- concluded that the U.S. ranked 20th out of 21 nations in helping poorer nations. This came as a surprise, inasmuch as the U.S. gives the highest absolute amounts of foreign aid to the developing world." - Ann Coulter

Religion

The left: "He's [President George W. Bush is] always talking about symbols of evil, using Jesus as a political pawn. The GOP and Bush sound like they have a mandate from Jesus, and I am sorry, but that is not the Jesus that I grew up with." - Rod Murphy of the group "10,000 Jesuses"

The right: " Secularists would like to convince us in America that religion is somehow incompatible with the principles of a free society. And that the dis-

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A Cautious Strategy

Commentary by Robert J. Romano

Two opposing strains of conventional wisdom hold that, in Iraq, either 1) we did not move fast enough to turn over power to the Iraqi people, or 2) that we've moved too fast in transferring power to the Iraqi people in implementing national elections which have resulted in an elected assembly that shall draft the permanent constitution. Both cannot be true, but in the former, the wisdom informs that we would not have the problems we have today in Iraq with the competing insurgencies in the north and south if we had turned over power rapidly, as we did in Afghanistan. Pretty optimistic. In the latter, the criticism leans towards the idea that the Iraqi people were not ready to commit to and implement democracy, elections would've been illegitimate without broad participation, and that until the security situation improved, political institutions could not be constructed. Quite pessimistic. In this piece, this author will wager that while both alternatives share hints of a more successful strategy, they both fail in realizing that there is a middle ground to be had, and that the former would not necessarily have delivered the rosy scenario which is promised, and that the latter would've brought forth an unprecedented tragedy. The test should be if the drawbacks posed by each would be better than the setbacks which we have confronted.

In the first wisdom, it is thought that the Coalition Provisional Authority should have moved far more rapidly to transfer sovereignty over to the Iraqi people, and that the June 28th transfer of sovereignty was too late. In addition, it is further contested in a similar strain that the policy of de-Baathification was a

failure, and that the former security forces should have been rehired right away. This strain, however, underestimates the need that existed in April of 2003 to complete the regime change which had started on March 19th, 2003. If, as suggested, the former security forces (and undoubtedly former Baathists) were immediately rehired without careful vetting to take care of any post-Hussein insurgency that was to arise, this would have sent entirely the wrong message to the majority Shi'a in the south, and the minority Kurds in the north. This would have played directly into the hands of the likes of Muqtada al Sadr and the Mahdi militia, who could have perhaps rightly argued to the people that the Americans were just putting Hussein's people back in charge of the country, and that this was not real freedom at all. This would have undoubtedly led to an uprising in the south far greater than what was seen in 2004. Furthermore, our friends in the north, the Kurds, would have been disenfranchised and perhaps disenchanted from the outset at the prospects of Hussein's former henchmen immediately taking power after the fall of the dictator and his regime. The enemy's propaganda would have immediately seized on this, and effectively argued that this was not any sort of liberation at all, it was a sham.

Instead, de-Baathification did take place, and before former security forces could be rehired, there needed to be a careful vetting process in place to deal with the possibility of enemy infiltration, a problem which exists nonetheless, as was seen in the recent bombing in Mosul. As it turns out, the "uprising" in the south led by al Sadr took place anyway, however it was effectively quelled by the careful and cautious efforts of the new Iraqi government, the multinational forces, and new Iraqi security forces. The wisdom that we did

not move fast enough to turn over sovereignty would have hinged on the ability to predict the past and present insurgency taking place, and that the present insurgency is a worse (if not worst) case scenario. But surely, the CPA did anticipate animosity amongst the majority of the Iraqi people, else why engage in de-Baathification at all? Indeed, why even remove the tyrant from power if the sole goal was to maintain security? In this sense, an insurgency was prepared for, coming from the majority of the Iraqi people. Inevitably, this criticism assumes that a clean transfer of power, and the subsequent rehiring of the former regime forces immediately after the fall of Hussein would have prevented such an insurgency in the Sunni triangle, and it may well have, but probably at the cost of a much larger uprising in the south. The choice may well have been between an insurgency taking place within a distinct minority in Iraq, the Sunnis, and a much larger (and far more deadly) uprising within the majority of Iraq, the Shi'a. It is my belief that the CPA did the *right* and *wise* thing by cautiously moving to build up the present Iraqi security forces, and vetting those who would be hired to be certain that the enemy did not infiltrate the ranks, that war criminals would not be rehired, and that for propaganda purposes, it was not viewed that the coalition was simply putting the minority Sunnis back into power so soon after the fall of the Hussein regime. Indeed, with the mixed results of the new Iraqi security forces, it is hard to imagine how speeding up that process would have been favorable.

Comparing the transfer of power in Afghanistan to the transfer of power in Iraq is akin to comparing apples and oranges. What worked in Afghanistan

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Quotations

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-play of faith in public is somehow equal to forcing religion on the general public. Yet until a real life Santa Claus steps forward to take the seat of power, the real fear is that governments will fail to recognize that they are not the final arbitrators of right and wrong and that morality matters." - Brendan Miniter

America, the Beautiful

The left: "It would be hard to find or invent a more graphic example of evil than that perpetrated by [Charles] Graner in Abu Ghraib." - Andrew Sullivan

The right: "I cannot tell you how inspired and sustained and comforted I am by the fact that millions of people, many of whom I will never see, are praying for me. It's one of the most unique aspects of the presidency. I don't know any other world leaders who can say that about the people of their country, which speaks volumes about America." - President George W. Bush

Government

The left: "You can't say you love your country and hate your government." President Bill Clinton

The right: "So what's the difference between Republican and Democratic forms of govern from the Great Legislator of the Universe.' Nothing in our Constitution suggests that government is a grantor of rights. Instead, government is a profrom the Great Legislator of the Universe.' Nothing in our Constitution suggests that government is a grantor of rights. Instead, government is a protector of rights." - Walter Williams

"The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in a time of great conflict, maintained their neutrality." - Dante

The Most Ridiculous Items

By Maggie Ling and Scarlet Roe

Anyone who watches the O'Reilly Factor knows that at the end of each show he does a segment called "The Most Ridiculous Item of the Day". This is where he often blasts the liberals for their outrageous comments and ineffective, humiliating ways they express their opinions. If O'Reilly had spent some time on campus last semester, Stony Brook University would definitely be featured almost every week. Last fall our campus was a hot bed for liberals to congregate, make up hilarious accusations about conservatives, and spread left wing propaganda to a naive public. If Stony Brook were to give an award for "Most Ridiculous Item of Fall Semester 2005" the recognition would go to the "Die In" protest that occurred last November and the candle light vigil held in December would come in a close second.

The Coalition Against the War group gathered in front of the library and held a "Die In." The students and faculty members laid on the pavement to represent the civilians who have supposedly been murdered by our troops in Iraq. The protest consisted of listing all the human rights abuses the United States committed during the invasion while a group of people laid motionless on the floor, which I gather is supposed to represent the Iraqis who were killed and create an emotional attachment to the situation that is going on in Iraq. Key note participants of this protest were Professor's Michael H. Schwartz and Jacob W. Levich, who with their respective salaries of \$88,965 and \$60 000, showed onlookers why they deserve each and every dime they get by supporting a protest which was mentioning how America would be better off if we lost the war.

It seems these individuals forgot the hundreds of thousands of people Saddam Hussein slaughtered, suicide bombers he paid off, and terrorists he harbored. Instead, what they do is spit on the American troops, calling them murderers, accusing them of barbaric acts and war crimes. They still do not understand the cause our troops are fighting for; to them, liberating the Iraqi's from a brutal, oppressive, merciless regime is not a valid reason to go to war, not to mention extinguishing terrorist and keeping the American people safe from harm's way. What the liberals need to understand is that because our troops are acting, they are able to protest against the government, in a way they are protecting the rights we Americans enjoy and unfortunately take for granted on a day to day basis.

The second most ridiculous thing to happen at Stony Brook last semester was the candle light vigil/protest held in front of the Student Union during the midnight breakfast. This even had the net effect of a fly smacking into an elephant, no pun intended. The protestors, although few in number, made up for their lack of support by huddling close together to protect themselves from the cold that threatened to give them hypothermia. The protest might have made a bigger impact if we had been dumb, deaf and blind. It is inarguable that freedom of speech is a backbone in American culture. As said earlier, they need to understand that it is because of our troops that we are able to enjoy this freedom of expression ourselves as we please. It is disrespectful and disheartening of these people to accuse our troops of war crimes and so forth; they might as well just say that we are the terrorists. Oops, they've already done that. Ridiculous? Yes, indeed.

Patience in Iraq is Needed

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would not necessarily work in Iraq, and vice versa. For instance, Iraq is a far more urbanized and industrialized country than Afghanistan, its terrains are vastly different, and its politics too are much different. While the Taliban in Afghanistan were a theocratic tyranny, Hussein's regime was a secular, totalitarian state, a remnant of the old Soviet satellite system. Assuming that the strategy which had worked well in rural Afghanistan would have worked similarly in the more cosmopolitan Iraq is akin to a "one-size-fits-all" strategy. Indeed, it would be a wonder that we did not use the same strategy for every war that has taken place since the fall of the Kaiser's Germany at the end of World War I (never mind innovations that have been made in modern warfare, differences in politics, terrain, population, etc.)!

In the second strain of wisdom, it is thought that the June 30th, 2004 deadline for the transfer of sovereignty was far too soon after the fall of Hussein's Iraq, and that the occupational authority should have perhaps continued indefinitely. And that the January 31st, 2005 deadline for elections was far too soon in light of the present security situation, and that those elections should have been arbitrarily postponed for an indefinite period of time. Also, in a similar strain, it is argued that the force strength in Iraq should have been much larger better to cope with the insurgency after the fall of Hussein's regime. This too is fallacy, as postponing the transfer of sovereignty would have also played directly into the hands of the enemy, who would have similarly seized on the lack of a transfer of sovereignty as a show of bad faith by the coalition. A much larger coalition presence, coupled with a far slower transfer of authority,

would have also scored a series of propaganda victories for the enemy, who would have argued that this was no liberation at all, it was the makings of a permanent occupation. Furthermore, the idea of arbitrarily postponing the January 30th elections until the security situation was completely in hand was a recipe for never having elections. If all the terrorists, insurgents, and extremists, with the help of former Baathists and foreign fighters, had to do to prevent freedom and democracy from taking hold in Iraq was to keep up their present string of suicide-homicide attacks, ambushes, improvised explosive devices, assassinations, and mercenary bounty killings, then postponing, either the transfer of sovereignty in the past or the elections recently would have handed the enemy a significant victory.

Such a heavy-handed approach seems very "50 years ago," to be frank. Instead, Secretary Rumsfeld, in keeping with transforming the military into a lighter, more mobile force, has too avoided the drawbacks of an immense occupational force which does the bulk of the fighting. Nobody wants an army in their backyard, and the newly freed people of Iraq have a right to expect that we will only stay there for every day that is necessary, and not a day longer. It is my belief that the larger the force that is there, the longer we will have to remain to repair the damage that such an immense undertaking would reap. By steadily and yet cautiously moving to transfer sovereignty in Iraq, and now with the process of constitutionalization, democratization, and Iraqization taking root, the Iraqi people are taking more and more control over their country on a daily basis, and their forces, which still need our help with training and direction, can only become more equipped in the future to deal with the dangers posed to a democratic Iraq.

Indeed, there are forces at play which were well beyond the control of either the CPA or the Iraqi people, which may be chiefly responsible for the present insurgency. Due to these factors, namely the state sponsorship of terrorism that is taking place chiefly by Baathist Syria (fueling the insurgency in the Sunni triangle) and Islamist Iran (which fueled the Mahdi militia's "uprising"), and perhaps coordination amongst the two, that what we presently see in Iraq may in actuality be the best that could be hoped for given the circumstances. As the Iraqi people took control over their destiny through election of the constitutional assembly on January 30th, the newly elected representatives will need to look more regionally for the source of their present tribulations and tragedies. They will need to assess for themselves, based on their own intelligence, and the wisdom of their policy makers, what is causing the insurgency for certain. It is clear that Prime Minister Iyad Allawi is not blaming us for the insurgency, rather he holds the killers themselves responsible, and rightly so. While it may seem comfortable to assume that this or that strategic tinkering could have prevented the setbacks, it must be understood that no war is without setbacks. No war is without misfortune. And no policy is without wisdom. In place presently is a cautious strategy, and one which should be clear since the January 30th elections took place. The Iraqi people must now assert their sovereign right to self-defense on the world stage. The killers will not succeed, because of the commitment of the free world to the nations we liberate, and most especially because of the Iraqi people's unique desire never to return to a tyrannical regime, nor to be obstructed by her neighbors. The Iraqi people must clearly and distinctly know who their enemies are, and act accordingly.

CSA: Representing Commuters

Analysis by Greg Lubivich

The Commuter Student Association (CSA) is Stony Brook's largest (and only) student-run organization dedicated to serving the needs of the University's large commuter student population. According to their website, it "sponsors recreational and cultural activities, lobbies on behalf of commuter students with the administration, and represents commuters in our student government's legislative branch (the USG Senate). In short, the Commuter Student Association (CSA) is the primary organization representing Stony Brook's approximately 7,000 undergraduate commuters..."

CSA had several very successful and free events this last fall including: a Harvest Dinner featuring South American Andean indigenous musicians; Khana; *Mood Indigo: Havana Nights* hosted by WUSB's Felipito Palacios Londa Nueva; a Punk Concert featuring *A Reason For Being*; an evening concert series, and more. This semester, CSA has several Spring 2005 events planned including *Earthstock*, a concert series; study sessions; and will be participating in the Shirley Strum Kenny Arts Festival, Strawberry Fest, I-CON, and a perennial favorite of CSA: co-sponsoring Roth Regatta.

An event attended by thousands of students, Roth Regatta is the annual card board and duct tape boat race, attended by thousands of students, held in Roth Pond in Roth Quad. CSA has, for years, helped with all aspects of Roth Regatta as acknowledged on Roth Regatta t-shirts which clearly state

"Co-Sponsored by CSA." In the past, the positive publicity from this event has included regional and national media such as News12, CNN, and ESPN, and more. Students certainly have a lot to be excited about. This year it is scheduled for the last Friday April 29, 2005. Start saving your cardboard!

CSA also has a history of producing some of the best Senators in Student government. For example, the current Editor in Chief of the Stony Brook Press wrote that Senator Vincent Rasulo, a commuter who is a USG Senator, and has been described by The Stony Brook Press' Editor in Chief as "is one of the few senators that are actually motivated and genuinely concerned with student life. Of the 19 senators, there are maybe five that will sacrifice personal time to improve our community and Senator Rasulo is certainly one of them." (SB Press 4/7/2004).

CSA hopes to start some Tuesday/Thursday evening meetings on a weekly or monthly schedule. Meanwhile, currently, CSA their meetings are on Wednesdays from 1-2pm in at the University Cafe in the Student Union - enter the Union from the gym side. Meetings include Wi-Fi internet access, free training in procedure (procedure in Wi-Fi), free food, an X-Box (bring your Halo 2 cartridges!), and planning for a Roth Regatta boat. If you're a commuter and want or need some way to get involved on campus, there are plenty of ways to get involved through CSA; now more than ever. Come and be a part of it!



Please Contact the Elections Board Chair for More Information at rromano@notes.cc.sunysb.edu or Visit SAC 202.

Petitions and Campaigning Coming Soon!

Confirmations and Accusations



Justice Aleksandra Bordokin takes questions from the Senate at her February 1st confirmation hearing to the Supreme Court of the USG.



Senator Vincent Rassulo takes questions from the Senate as he presents a piece of legislation at the February 1st meeting.



The Elections Board Chairman, Robert J. Romano, at his February 8th confirmation hearing fielding numerous questions from the Senate. Romano plans to guarantee “free and fair elections” within the Undergraduate Student Government this coming Spring.



Andrew Pernick from the Stony Brook Press leveling accusations at Senator Andrew Thompson and student Irfan Syed of conspiring to take over the government at the February 8th Senate meeting.



Senator Andrew Thompson sought to defend himself from any charges of impropriety, and denied any wrongdoing. At the February 15th Senate meeting

Come See All the Action!

Join USG Today!

Visit Us in SAC 202 or visit the weekly Senate Meeting in SAC Ballroom B every Tuesday at 7 PM.



All Photos Courtesy of Virginia Morgan

Who's Looking Out for You in USG?

Commentary by Erik Berte

Could this be the start of a new USG? It seems so, after viewing the surprisingly efficient senate meetings so far this semester. Bills are being passed at the speed of light (compared to last semester) and things are actually getting done. But don't worry; the semester's meetings have not lost their sense of drama. There are bounties on people's heads and plenty of conspiracies to talk about.

The beginning moments of the first meeting were relatively mundane. Jeffrey Kruszyna, now comfortable and settled in as Executive Vice President, began by bringing up the details of the contract for the official Parliamentarian (a legislative expert who advises during the meetings). Apparently, Carol Henselder is now being paid a whopping \$300 an hour for the first two hours of her service and an additional \$125 for each hour the meeting is extended. Senator Kfier Kuba was quick to say that the meetings should be kept as short as possible to save money.

Saving money didn't seem to be on Senator Vince Rasulo's mind, at least not his own. He offered to pay \$1000 "out of his own pocket" as a reward to anyone who could provide evidence that a Chief Justice, namely Vlad Frants, either knew about or was involved in a campaign of any candidate in USG office. Evidence that a Chief Justice was encouraged by a staff member or administrator to "disrupt, delay, or derail... any function... of any branch of the [USG] at Stony Brook" would also be accepted. This was all part of a bill Rasulo introduced in an attempt to clean up the judiciary.

It wasn't long before Rasulo was criticized for his offer of an award. Senator Ralph Thomas suggested the money would be better spent by donating it to clubs that need it. Senator Joanne Marino complained, "Why not just pay your student activity fee yourself?" She then suggested donating the money to the Tsunami Victims. Rasulo responded, "I don't think it's pertinent to talk about my financial affairs." Finally, Senator Andrew Thompson had the guts to interrupt these ever so relevant questions of how Rasulo likes to spend his money and begin the process of getting the bill passed. Senator Rasulo's doing his best, even risking his own money, to clear out corruption in the Judiciary, which has been missing in action for several weeks this semester. I would say he's looking out for you. The bill passed, by the way.

Another successful bill was the "Meal Plan

Resolution". Introduced by Senator Thompson, it stated that the Senate believes the prices of food on campus are unfairly high and that the Administration should work with them in making it as affordable as possible. It is "non-binding, but a step in the right direction to lowering food prices," said Thompson. I'll bet the Parliamentarian was quite happy with this decision as well; she's been aching for SAC food ever since the low carb trend ended. It would seem that senator Thompson is looking out for you; however, issues involving his integrity were brought up during the second senate meeting that I'll get to later in this column.

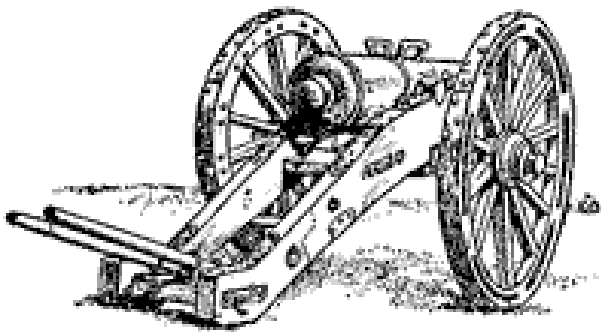
Presented by Richard Hsu, "The Students Uniting and Attaining Higher Educational and Legislative Probity Act" requires all USG faculty, staff, and advisors to sign an affidavit swearing that they "have not planned... or conspired with any faculty, staff, administrator, or student to influence... the outcome of the elections of any student organization." Maybe it was that the \$500 reward this bill offered wouldn't be from Hsu's pocket that postponed its passage until the second meeting. Senator Darguin felt the need to share his expert opinion with us: "I've heard of these things in the past... I only hope it's not abashment of EOP or any other services to the students." Apparently he couldn't figure this out on his own. In response, Hsu assured him that he needn't worry; he wouldn't be kicked out of office just because his student activity fee is paid for him. Prior to voting on the act, Darguin stated, "Before the Senate votes... understand that I really have a strong problem with people in USG making it harder for those who we work with, [the administration]... I don't want to put a burden on them." Hsu's trying to hold people accountable for allegedly setting elections since he's heard "students are really concerned about the legitimacy of the USG" due to problems last year involving a certain Brandon Fuchs. I'd say he's looking out for you. However, Senator Darguin's motives are not as clear; is he looking out for you or is he more concerned with the EOP program?

This semester, President Jared Wong has announced two judicial nominees, an Election Board Chairman, and a Special Services Council Chairman. They have all been approved, but not without intense interrogation from the Senators, or rather just the Freshman Class Representative. Alexandra Borodkin, introduced during the first senate meeting, enjoyed a brief applause before Romuald Jean-Baptiste began questioning her. He asked her

how familiar she was with the bylaws, to which she replied, "I haven't memorized them, but I assure you I'll know it." "That's not what I asked!" Jean-Baptiste shot back. After harassing her for a minute, she told him that she was familiar enough with the bylaws to do her job. Apparently he's got a thing for bylaws since he asked Election Board Chairman Nominee, Robert Romano, "What changes would you make to the election bylaws?" After already giving one of the best speeches ever heard in a Senate meeting, which included several examples of changes he'd like to see made in the election laws, Romano repeated himself and made it very clear that he would work to significantly decrease restrictions on free speech during campaigning.

Now for the shocker: Andrew Pernick, a staff writer from The Stony Brook Press, read aloud an article he had written entitled "Conspiracy to Take Over Student Government Exposed." As the title suggests, the article made some serious accusations with "irrefutable evidence of an attempt by a campus group to overthrow the duly-elected U.S.G." The Chairman of the Committee of Religious Entities (CORE), Irfan Syed, has allegedly been trying to "usurp all U.S.G.'s powers for himself and make USG answerable solely to him." It gets worse: according to the article, Senator Andrew Thompson, as well as several other USG members, have been trained by Syed to form a "group of senators that are in a bloc that has... been influenced... to vote certain ways on almost every issue." There were also accusations that Senator Thompson has been impersonating former Vice President Esam on Stonybrooksucks.com as well as being instructed by Syed to write a false letter from Esam and spreading it around. There is way too much to get into in this column, but I suggest reading the article in the February 9th issue of The Press. Requests for a temporary suspension of Senator Thompson were brought up several times during discussion, but in the end it was decided that a committee would be created in the Senate to investigate the allegations.

In spite of the problems during the first few meetings, it seems that USG is headed in the right direction. Nevertheless, no matter what happens, you can always expect this column to bring out the best and the worst in your Undergraduate Student Government.



Locked, Stocked, and Ready to Fire!



Do Unborn Babies Feel Pain?



Will the Strategy in Iraq Enshrine a Democratic Future for the People?