

# An In-Depth Review of the Undergraduate Student Government

By WILL JAMES  
Asst News Editor

The Undergraduate Student Government is the subject of countless headlines that pass under the gaze of an often disinterested and detached student body. However, as part of a campus in which “there’s nothing to do” rings out as the most oft-spoken and ubiquitous of grievances, the direct association between USG and the quality of campus life is a line that must be drawn, clearly, in the minds of all students. Although the USG provides a well of real-life experience and resume-fodder for aspiring politicians and leaders to draw upon, it cannot be ignored that these undergrads are in charge of the real deal; in fact, the prime function of the government at Stony Brook is to control the student activity fee that’s tacked on to every undergraduate’s tuition (and amounts to a lot of money, each year). In this way, a handful of your peers meet, largely free of administrative management, and decide exactly what goes on every semester: what clubs exist, how much money each group gets and how much of your money you get back. They are the force that can forge and shatter lines of connection between students, and make or break the college “experience” that is the vision of every undergraduate.

That said, it’s vital for everyone to understand, on a basic level, how USG functions. In fact, it exists as a miniature model of the United States Government; three branches with a separation of powers, with representatives voted in to reflect the will of everyone who pays the student activity fee (which is to say, everyone). While each branch is inherently different, some factors remain the same throughout; for instance, every active member of USG must attend seminars or otherwise be trained, formally, in parliamentary and legal procedure. All three branches acknowledge the USG Constitution as their ultimate point of reference, while having their own complex sets of bylaws.

## Executive:

The Executive Council is in place to enforce and oversee the carrying-out of legislation passed by the Senate, and make sure all branches are functioning at their fullest within the bounds of the Constitution. More often than not, however, the

Council’s responsibilities are many and scattered, from championing candidates before the Senate, sponsoring activities, addressing the student body and the media and acting as administrators to the remaining two branches and the entire population of clubs and organizations. The undergraduate students who run the Executive branch are usually paid, as their posts demand more time and attention than others in the USG.

## Legislative:

The Senate is comprised of about twenty students who hold office for one academic year. Although their duties are less intensive than those of the Executive Council, their jobs are equally important, and more directly reflective of the whims of the undergraduate body. If you want something done, if your club needs more money, these are the people to talk to; their main function is to propose legislation, and thus, the USG Senate is meant to be the dynamo from which all new ideas for the campus sprout. Their roles as “idea people” also prompt them to be a problem-solving entity that absorbs many of the University’s grievances, although these complaints often filter through the President first, who relays them to the Senate at their weekly meetings.

The senatorial role that most directly affects student life, however, is their task of approving the semester’s student activity budget, and approving or disapproving the requests of clubs for more funds.

Senate meetings are chaired by the Executive Vice President, who maintains order and parliamentary procedure, but usually acts as an objective, non-voting figure. The Pro-tempore is a special senator, who acts as an assistant to the Chair. One senator is voted on by campus residents to represent them and one is chosen by the Commuter Student Association. The remaining senators are chosen to represent the Health Science Center Undergraduates, the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and the College of Arts and Sciences.

Outside of their weekly Tuesday night meetings, senators meet to form committees, which act as task forces on specific issues. Certain committees form temporarily, while some are mandatory,

## BRANCHES OF USG

### Executive Branch

*The Executive Council is responsible for enforcing all legislation passed by the Senate. The Council is comprised of:*

**President:** Diana Acosta

**Executive Vice President:** Samuel Darguin

**Treasurer:** Jackie Wu

**VP of Communications and Public Relations:** Nicole Reyes

**VP of Student Life, Progs, & Activities:** Romual Jean-Baptiste

**VP of Clubs and Organizations:** Ralph Thomas

**VP of Academic Affairs:** Chinelo Onochie

**Class Representatives:**

**Freshman:** Jeffrey Akita

**Sophomore:** Ana Hernandez

**Junior:** Kanika Jain

**Senior:** Annlyn Bristol

### Legislative Branch

*The USG Senate is responsible for approving the student activity budget, proposing and passing legislation, and it also acts as a clearinghouse for people to voice their opinions. It encompasses the:*

**Legislative Review Committee**

**Academic Affairs Committee**

**Elections Committee**

**Programming and Activities Committee**

**Rules Committee**

**Referendum Standards Committee**

**Budget Committee**

### Judicial Branch

*The judiciary is broken down into two parts, the Supreme Court and Judicial Council. The Supreme Court is limited to matters dealing with “issues of substance” that affect the workings of the government, while the Judicial Council handles all other matters.*

*Continued on page 2*



# USG SENATE UPDATE:

## Legislators Revamp Budget Process

By WILL JAMES  
Asst News Editor

On Tuesday, November 22, the USG Senate unanimously approved the Budget Reform Act, as presented by Senators Lynch, Wisnoski and Ortiz. The Act proposes to split the USG Budget into a Line Budget fund and a Grant fund, in an effort to forge a new system of specificity, complexity and efficiency in the doling-out of USG funds to clubs.

The scenario, as of this year: The math club, one semester, decides to apply for an addition to their Line Budget in order to buy a television. However, every semester afterward, the math club receives an extra \$500, as if they were

buying a new TV twice a year.

According to the new Budget Reform Act, the math club would need to apply for a Grant in order to make such a purchase. As presented, the Grant system is tailored for one-time purchases of equipment by clubs, to ensure that organizations are not receiving unnecessary funds, semester after semester, for computers, furniture, sports gear, etc., that they've already bought.

The burden is now on the clubs to prove that they need the item, know how to maintain it, and that the item will last two years, as Grants per club are beginning with a semi-annual limit. The senate is considering an amendment that will allow "Emergency Grants" to take place if a club needs

money more than once every two years.

The act received the most opposition from the President and Vice President of the Athletic Group Bureau, who declared the legislation "totally unfair." At SBU, the athletic clubs are traditionally the most active, politically vocal, and fund-starved of all organizations on campus. Of late, clubs like Ice Hockey, Crew and Rugby have had to appeal for extra funds in order to survive the semester. "Adding more specifics to the process will just make it more complex," said the President.

A special recess was taken so senator Esam Al-Shareefi could reassure the two men, saying, "Basically, we're trying to get the clubs all the funds we possibly can."

## The Structure of the USG

*Continued from page 1*

and maintained throughout the semester as a point of procedure.

### Judicial:

USG's judicial branch is split into a Supreme Court and a Judicial Council. Although they, in the context of a university, are somewhat detached from the wants and needs of the student body, their existence is necessary to complete the circle of

checks and balances that make this type of thing work. Mostly, the Supreme Court deals with legal issues arising from issues of impeachment of executives and senators, but occasionally, they will get some serious practice when a student lays a real constitutional issue at their feet.

As far as the USG Constitution dictates, the Judicial Council handles just about everything else.

Three sophomore judges and three upper-class judges compose the Supreme Court; the members are nominated by the

President, and require approval by two-thirds of the Senate.

President Diana Acosta has recently created a USG-wide Constitutional Review Committee, to sift through the document and shuffle words around until it works more smoothly; who knows which of the above facts will still hold true next fall. As a piece of a highly dynamic university environment, the workings of the USG realize massive changes each year — one semester's Senate may be a circus, while the next semester's may fall back

into line.

Of late, every morsel of the USG has been working tirelessly to increase the turnout of voters in the fall and spring elections; the fact that the organization was designed to serve the campus means nothing without the actual involvement of the student body, voting on referenda and representatives. Upon analysis, it's clear that the system leaves plenty of room for suffering students to take matters into their own hands, and shape certain aspects of their college life from the inside out.

## Police Blotter

Compiled by Eugene Tan/Statesman 11/18 – 11/21



### Criminal Mischief

In Hand College, a water fountain was reportedly ripped from the wall on 11-20-05 at 3:17 AM. The Residence Hall Director of Hand College was notified.

### Suspicious Persons

In the Administration garage, a suspicious male was checking out vehicles on 11-18-05 at 1:31 PM. On 11-18-05 at 4:46 PM, a suspicious male was reportedly hanging around in the Health Sciences Center but was gone upon arrival of the police.

### Thefts

An Xbox was stolen from Hand College on

11-19-05 at 9:05 PM. In the SAC, a wallet with contents was taken on 11-18-05 at 2:03 PM. In Sullivan Hall of the Dental School, a purse with contents was taken on 11-18-05 at 2:55 PM.

### Unruly Groups

A group of males was reportedly trespassing in Dreiser College on 11-19-05 at 9:54 PM. The group was escorted out of the building.

### Harassment

People were verbally harassing a student in Greeley College on 11-19-05 at 8:38 PM.

### Parties

In the West Apartments, an RA called the police on 11-19-05 at 2:09 AM for assistance with

breaking up a party. All complied, and all appeared in order.

### Marijuana

In James College, the smell of marijuana was reported on 11-19-05 at 3:27 PM. Also, in Dreiser College, the smell of marijuana was reported on 11-19-05 at 11:24 PM but was unfounded; a similar case was reported in the West Apartments on 11-21-05 at 12:52 AM.

### Hospital Assists in Emergencies

On 11-20-05 at 11:46 AM, a teenage male was running on the Stadium Outdoor Track when he was impaled by a steel spike through the foot. The Stony Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps transported him to the University Hospital.

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

# Michelle Abraham

By **CARRIE COTTON**  
Staff Writer

When people think of SBU they usually picture students spending hours in the library poring over organic chemistry books. What they don't know is that there is a whole other community spending hours poring over sheets of paper in another building: The Staller Center. Within it are some of the country's most brilliant musicians.

Music has always been a part of Michelle Abraham's life. She began playing the piano when she was five, but after watching her parents perform in her community orchestra in West Hartford Connecticut, she became fascinated with the violin, and established a passion that still radiates from her eyes twelve years later.

In the ten years before Abraham came to Stony Brook, she studied at The Hart School, a pre-college conservatory in her hometown, on the weekends, while attending public school during the week.

Although she dedicated much of her time to music, it was not until her junior year in high school that Abraham decided she wanted to pursue a career as a professional violinist. Throughout high school she kept her grades up, and was considering going pre-med. Then in her junior year Michelle won a concerto competition, and lived her lifelong dream of playing in front of an orchestra. Her love for music became a passion, and she decided to dedicate her life to the art. She said, "I realized I wouldn't be able to live happily without playing the violin more than just for fun. I knew I could live without going into medical school."

This school's music faculty is not the first thought that

comes to mind when people hear Stony Brook University. So why would such a talented musician choose Stony Brook instead of conservatories such as Julliard or the Manhattan School of music? Abraham's answer was simple: the faculty.

"My teachers are the greatest things that ever happened to me," Abraham said, referring to Phil Seltzer and Pam Frank, whom she also describes as her musical inspirations. She said she is very happy with her decision to study music at Stony Brook and work with the world famous Emerson String Quartet, a professional quartet that resides at Stony Brook when not entertaining the music world. Abraham's ultimate goal is to perform professionally in her own string quartet *Quatuor Suivez*, which she established a few summers ago.

But pursuing a dream is not easy. Like the pre-med student that she had contemplated becoming, she spends hours in her practice room six days a week, poring over books of sheet music, meticulously breaking down each musical idea into its basic element. "Whatever I am working on becomes my favorite piece," she said.

In 2003, Downbeat Magazine named Abraham *Best Classical Soloist* in the high school division.

She has performed in Ireland on The Late, Late Show, which she describes as a more serious version of The Jay Leno Show, and has received honorable mentions in string and concerto competitions throughout Connecticut. Abraham currently performs in the Stony Brook Undergraduate and Graduate Chamber Orchestras, The Stony Brook University Symphony Orchestra, and Stony Brook's Baroque



Courtesy of Michelle Abraham

**"I realized I wouldn't be able to live happily without playing the violin more than just for fun. I knew I could live without going into medical school."**

ensemble. She will be featured in the upcoming seasons with several orchestras throughout the tri-state area, including a solo performance on December

3 with The North Shore Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Susan Deaver, conductor of the Stony Brook Undergraduate Orchestra.

**When:** December 3, 8:00 PM.

**Where:** Concert Plainview / Old Bethpage. JFK High School.

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- **Dec. 3, 10 & 17 - BREAKFAST WITH SANTA** - Santa comes early at 9:30 am to share a festive breakfast. Meet Mrs. Claus & the elves. Sit with Santa for photos. Adults \$27.50, Kids (under 10) \$18.50, inclusive. Advance purchase required
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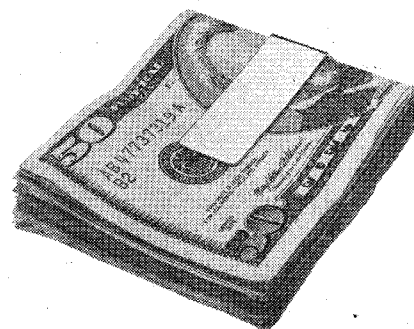


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The Statesman encourages readers to submit opinions and commentaries to the following address:

Stony Brook Statesman  
PO Box 1530  
Stony Brook, NY 11790

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#### WHO WE ARE

The Stony Brook Statesman was founded as "The Sucolian" in 1957 at Oyster Bay, the original site of Stony Brook University. In 1975 "The Statesman" was incorporated as a not-for-profit, student-run organization. Its editorial board, writing, and photography staff are student volunteers while its business staff are professionals.

The Stony Brook Statesman is published twice-weekly on Mondays and Thursdays throughout the fall and spring semesters.

*Disclaimer: Views expressed in columns or in the Letters and Opinions section are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Statesman. All content Copyright 2005.*

# USG Tackles Budget Reform

It seems that the theme for this year's USG Senate is reform, and rightfully so – reform is badly needed. This past week, the Senate set its sights on tackling the issue of allocating monies to various clubs, which resulted in the passage of the Budget Reform Act. This act makes the budgeting process more transparent and logical, marking a huge step forward from the budgeting disasters in semesters past. However, things are moving a bit too fast when it comes to major overhauls like this and it is very easy for problems to arise.

First off, the new rules go into effect for the Fall 2005 budget revision process, which

means that these guidelines have been thrust into the laps of clubs without adequate time to digest the changes. Changing over the budget process is a very big deal and to simply enact a law so late in the semester is asking for trouble.

This is USG's chance to show its competence in the coming weeks and months as this new system is used more and more. A team of auditors needs to go through each club to see where there is fat under the old paradigm of the Line Budget and allocate money towards the Grant Fund accordingly. Last time USG changed its budgeting guidelines, all hell

broke loose, leaving certain organizations like WUSB to fight for the right to exist. It literally took months to straighten out the budget fiasco of the last fiscal year because of a distinct lack of effort and time put in by USG members to ensure that the allocation process was conducted fairly and smoothly.

This is a new year with new ambitions and it looks like there are many people within USG who want to see real changes for the better. They need to realize the amount of legwork it will take to ensure that these reforms are carried out smoothly, and if they do, we will certainly all breathe much easier.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*In response to the article "USG needs to maintain communication" in the Statesman on Thursday November 17, 2005.*

According to the USG Constitution (Article IV; Section 1; B; 1; c) it states that "should the seat(s) be vacant after October 31st, the President of the Student Government and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall appoint the remaining membership". Esam Al-Shareffi was a candidate for the USG Judiciary Branch and received the highest score out of all 7 candidates. Esam filled out an application and submitted a resume, cover letter and was interviewed and evaluated by the Judiciary Nominating Committee. This committee consisted of representatives from the Dean of Students Office, Provost Office and the Executive Council. Esam has proven a high level of knowledge and dedication to the Undergraduate Student Government.

When presented to the USG Senate for Judiciary confirmation, he was not confirmed with a vote of 10 in favor and 8 against, not receiving the two thirds vote needed. After

outcry from some of the Senators, and many of the gallery members there was a motion to revote on the nomination, which resulted in the same vote of 10-8. I felt that the reason why he was not confirmed to the Judiciary was because Esam has filed an injunction against the CORE laws passed by the 2004-2005 Senate. I believe that because of the affiliation of some of the Senators to the CORE party, they voted against Esam's confirmation. All of the Senators were given the opportunity to ask him questions regarding his character and qualifications. Some of the Senators drilled him with questions, and he answered every single one accordingly.

As President, I am responsible for making appointments to vacant seats in the student government after October 31st. I have chosen individuals who are committed to the betterment of USG. I will not make appointments based on affiliations or personal relationships, but rather on the quality and potential of the candidate. We need to think about what is best for the Undergraduate Student Government, rather than trying to promote personal agen-

das. Additionally, it is important to evaluate an issue based on their merits rather than our own personal biases. I have not received any complaints, other than a few of the Senators, about his nomination. Instead, many students and administrators have given accolade regarding his nomination. Amy Wisnoski, President Pro-Tempore and I both felt that Esam was a perfect candidate for the USG Senate, and we will stand by our decision.

The article stated that "this recent failure to bring everybody to the table to discuss the issue makes us believe that maybe nothing will change after all." I do believe that USG is making great strides towards a better future. Once we are able to surpass the road block that prevents us from moving forward, letting personal agendas and affiliations persuade our votes, we will see a better overall Student Government.

Diana Acosta  
USG President  
2005-2006

# Balancing School Work and Sports Proves a Challenge for Athletes

*Continued from page 15*

is more important than being a good student. "Football, party, study," he said. "That was my order of business."

Both Karp and Moriarty are still students at the University but no longer play sports because their eligibility has ended. According to the NCAA handbook, students are prohibited from participating on a college sports team for more than four years, and Karp and Moriarty have both completed their four years.

Fred Bruning, a former journalism professor, experienced several conflicts with athletes who attended his classes during his nine years at Stony Brook. One football player routinely fell asleep in class, he recalled. "The athlete

explained that he had to fulfill his obligations to the football program to maintain his athletic scholarship," Bruning said. "Football was his top priority and any extra energy went into the sport instead of academics."

Bruning said he is a firm believer in fulfilling one's academic responsibilities. "Academics always have to trump athletics," he said. "A student must first learn and then compete in sports. The University must be very vigilant about placing academic experience as a priority."

On the other hand, Celia Marshik, an English professor, said she didn't recall any serious problems with student athletics. "Most of them were very good at providing me with their schedules," she said. "None of them failed, and they were actually more active about coming

to office hours."

The rigorous schedules of Division I athletes affect not only their own situations but also those of other students. Dr. Susan DiMonda, Director of Campus Recreation for the University, said athletes' training schedules affect students who simply want to use the Sports Complex for recreation. "Students and athletes must share this complex, and team practices reduce the time available for other students," she said.

DiMonda said her own nephew plays lacrosse for Stony Brook University. "He only has time to work four hours per week because playing lacrosse is like having a full-time job already," she said. "Being an athlete is extremely time-consuming, but that's the price they pay to do what they love."



# English Department, The Other Side of SBU

By SARAJ RAMBHIA  
Asst News Editor

The Department of English at SBU, part of the College of Arts and Sciences, is home to some of the most creative individuals on campus, literary fanatics who understand the value of effective communication and critical thinking. The English department is comprised of 29 core faculty, twelve adjunct faculty, and 50 teaching assistants. A brief overview of statistics from the Department of Institutional Research shows that the Department of English is also one of the larger departments on campus.

As of fall 2004, there were 455 students at SBU enrolled as declared English majors. This figure is likely to have increased, according to speculation by Peter Manning, Department Chair, due to the increase in total student population this year as well as with incoming transfer students in the spring. However, a surprising

fact is noted by Bente Videbaek, Director of Undergraduate Studies for the English department. She commented that, "Many students currently enrolled as English majors have transferred into our department from other departments, most of the time, a science major." Videbaek described her experience at college recruitment fairs on campus, where students who she was speaking with were shooed away by their parents, usually to meet with representatives of one of the science departments.

Many people are uninformed about the benefits that a solid background in English and a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree can bring. While it appears that classes such as "Shakespeare: The Major Works" (EGL 243), "Survey of British Literature I" (EGL 205), and "Major Writers of the Victorian Period in England" (EGL 349) may not be the most appetizing, Videbaek commented on the skills of effective communication, analysis, and argumentation that one can gain as an English major. She

said, "Students can benefit greatly later on in other professions, if they have the ability to communicate and put forth their ideas in a creative and efficient manner." A pamphlet provided by the English department holds some of the basic information one would need if he or she were interested in pursuing a major or minor in English, English Education, or a minor in Journalism. This pamphlet also describes how SBU students who graduate with a degree in English have become writers, lawyers, journalists, librarians, academics, governmental administrators and publishers.

Videbaek agreed, upon looking over this list, that students who are interested in becoming science majors would also benefit from double-majoring or pursuing a minor in English. Providing an example from her own life, Videbaek described her husband, Thomas Videbaek, a physicist who, "smashes gold atoms together at high speeds and measures how much they scream." She commented on how she rou-

tinely goes through her husband's manuscripts correcting the grammar before he submits them for publication. Videbaek emphasized the fact that, "I don't have to understand the physics to help him out."

When asked about the importance of being able to communicate effectively, Susan Crane, a graduate student in the English department at SBU, commented on her experience working with physicians in the Dermatology department as a medical transcriptionist. Crane elaborated that her main problems did not arise from trying to spell all the medical terms correctly, but, as she puts it, from the plain fact that many of them, "can't write."

Many of the science programs on campus have an upper division writing requirement in addition to the D.E.C. "A" English requirement. However, as Videbaek claims, "it is not enough." She commented on how students in the sciences often don't realize the importance of

*Continued on page 9*



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# Spotlight on the English Dept

*Continued from page 7*

adding a creative element in their writing. The Department of English on campus, according to Videbaek, "focuses on literature and creative writing." Videbaek added another anecdote of a student who she once taught, who wrote an essay for a science class where the professor singled the student out for writing his essay creatively as opposed to simply factually. She recalled, "The professor actually read this student's essay aloud in class because it was so interesting." Videbaek continued, "Many students who write solid, factual essays, often produce dull, unimaginative work. Granted, this wouldn't have worked in any science class; sometimes you just need to take a risk."

It is this creativity that is emphasized in the Department of English. "This is very different from the 'Program in Writing and Rhetoric' on campus," according to Videbaek. "The writing program serves

the rest of campus by giving students the skills they need to write academic papers, and I believe they do a phenomenal job."

The creativity is evident as one simply goes around to some of the professors or graduate students and asks them what their research entails or what type of writing they do. Assistant Professor Benedict Robinson actually is getting a book published this Spring, *Romance Encounters: Islam and Early Modern English Literature*. Crane, the graduate student mentioned earlier, is working on *Enigmata between Old English and Latin*. Celia Marshik, Assistant Professor, is working on correlations between British modernism and censorship along with fashion in the early 1920's. As Videbaek joyfully elaborated on Marshik's description of her work, it also describes a direct correlation between violence and fashion. Another member of the English department, Michael Bocherer, is working on how to stage the supernatural in Renaissance drama. Clearly, at the

SBU English department, creativity and the use of one's imagination are of utmost importance.

Videbaek herself is the recipient of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching as Part-Time faculty in 2003, and the Student Choice Award for Most Influential Professor in 2004. She described how she has been kept busy lately, editing an anthology. She described some of the other events that the English department focuses on, the largest of which is the URECA celebration held during the spring. The English department, during the URECA celebration, hosts a mini-conference with a faculty panel where ten students who have submitted exceptional papers can read their works to an audience of students and faculty. Not only do the faculty members encourage creativity amongst themselves and the graduate students in their research, but they also encourage undergraduate students to come out and display their best literary work.

This is significant especially because SBU is known for its research in the sciences. Videbaek mentioned, in fact, that funding is also harder to obtain for the English department, as the numerous research laboratories on campus continue to vie for state funding as well as other national grants. To have a balance, it becomes important to be able to showcase the talents of all students on campus, as Videbaek put it gingerly, "not just those involved with molecular biology projects."

To further their cause, the English department has also created a student-run literary magazine on campus, called *The Folio*. Students now have the opportunity to submit their text or visual work for publication. The first publication of *The Folio* is set for December 5, 2005. Submissions will be accepted until November 25, 2005. However, students who submit later than this deadline can still get published if they are selected for the next issue in the spring.

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# Tabler Center's International Film Festival *Divorce Italian Style*

By CANDACE ISHMAEL  
Staff Writer

In its last session before the Thanksgiving Break, the International Film Series aired a Professor's Choice from European Language and Comparative Literature Professor Jacqueline Reich. The film, *Divorce Italian Style*, was directed by Pietro Germi and inspired a new movement in film called Comedy Italian Style. This style features a sweet, lovable and bumbling protagonist and a social commentary that targets every aspect of society: religion, government, aristocracy, etc.

The film features a disgruntled husband, Pepe, who falls in love with his cousin, Angela. In order for him to marry her, Pepe must find a way to get rid of his wife during a time when divorce is not yet legal. Finally, inspired by a court case ravaging the media, he devises a plot to catch his wife with another man and commit a crime of passion.

His plan goes awry when his wife outwits him and runs off with her former lover, who is also married. Pepe tracks the lovers down, along with the wronged wife of the other man, and avenges himself on his other half. At his trial, Pepe is sentenced to the minimum prison term and upon his release, he is finally able to marry Angela.

The film pokes fun at the values of chauvinistic and honor-crazed society without being over the top. The audience is so busy laughing about the idea of the hen-pecked husband boiling his wife with the laundry or launching her into space that the serious critique of the judicial system slips in without an argument. Instead of being force-fed a moral, it is offered with a spoonful of

comedic genius.

At surface level, *Divorce Italian Style* appears to be a frivolous comedy to be enjoyed and forgotten, but there is a deeper plane to consider. The idea that murder is a lesser crime than divorce is unthinkable, especially in the current society where nearly half of all marriages will end up in divorce. This film posed serious allegations to the Italian judicial system and the society that supported it.

The main character is inspired by a court case he hears about in which a woman shot her lover after he betrayed her in order to save her honor. This criminal becomes the "hero" of southern Italy because, to them, pride was the most important possession a person could have. To avenge one's honor was the grandest accomplishment of a lifetime.

The film itself is an interesting commentary on the society it depicts, if it is not taken too seriously. Rather, if one considers the reasons for its creation, the film speaks worlds about post-Fascist Italy. Seeing it in the light of 21st century America, it is a little bit difficult to appreciate the real purpose of Germi's work, if only because it is a different social condition. However, his vision is not completely lost.

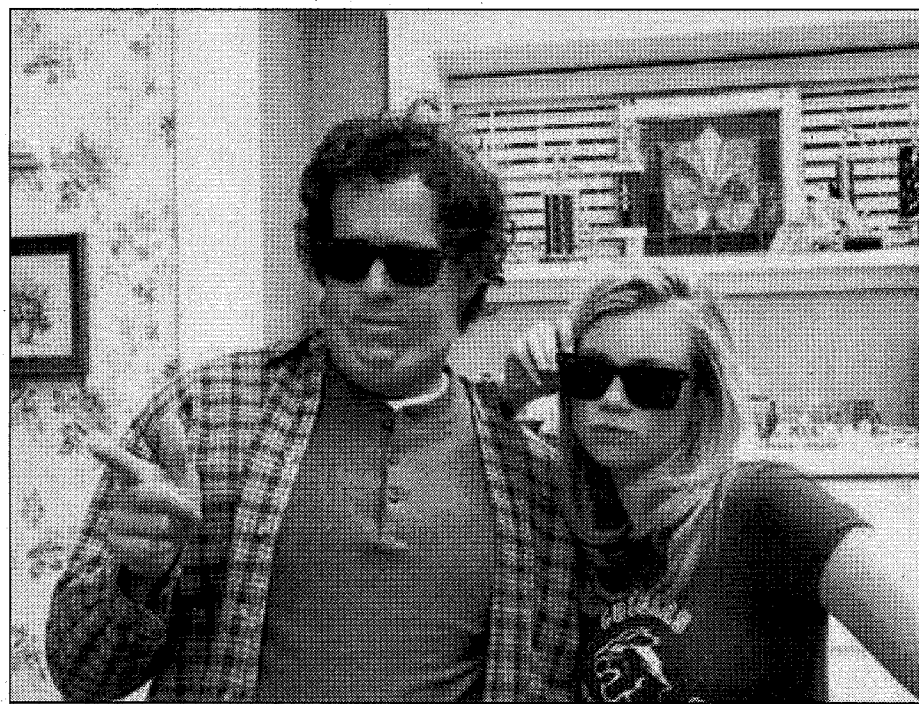
While it is difficult to relate to the characters of the film, it does not detract from the enjoyment of the story. The characters and the situation are every bit as ridiculous and comedic even without understanding the social conditions.

Next week's selection is an English film by director Bruce Beresford called *Breaker Morant*. The film depicts the unorthodox practices used during the Boer War and the way in which the government later attempted to distance itself from culpability for such practices.



Courtesy of Green Cine

## Movie Review: *Just Friends*



Courtesy of New Line Cinema

By RISA GOREN  
Arts and Entertainment Editor

Dweeby high school guy falls in love with his attractive and all-around perfect female best friend, but she doesn't feel the same, and he spends the next ten years of his life becoming successful and attractive in an effort to overcome the initial shame of her rejection. Bored yet? Me too.

This is one of those plots that is so familiar that you can swear you've already seen it, but since you thought it was crappy the first time you quickly brushed the experience aside and moved on with your life. Come on now, I don't know about you guys, but I need variety in my movie plots. If you feel the same, perhaps *Just Friends* is not for you.

Directed by Roger Kumble, the same man responsible for *The Sweetest Thing*, *Just Friends* lacks the gusto necessary to become the whole goofy-comedy-that-will-evolve-into-a-cult-classic-in-later-years quality.

Chris Brander (Ryan Reynolds), having been rejected by his love interest Jamie (Amy Smart) in his formidable high school years, loses the extra 80 pounds that had been weighing him down and emerges as a business-suit clad music executive and "playa," void of the sensitivity that had once made him adorable. Re-vamped Chris uses women, but predictably lacks the ability (or desire) to form a relationship of any sort.

Enter Anna Faris (*Scary Movie* 1, 2, and 3) as Samantha James, a Paris Hilton wannabe with sexual energy so awkward you find yourself wincing only a few minutes into her appearance. Samantha wants music-executive-Chris, who upon

returning home during a freak plane incident wants his old love Jamie, who only has a place in her heart for dweeby-Chris. Chris pawns Samantha on his younger, much hornier brother, while reverting to his geekdom in an effort to regain the bond between him and Jamie, who has since taken to liking another former geek of their mutual past, Dusty (Chris Klein), who has discovered Clearasil and has become a caring EMT.

Perhaps in an alternate universe where chemistry between these actors existed, and timing was on, this could have the potential to be an entertaining flick — charming even. Yet instead I found myself counting the seconds until the 96 minutes of banal repartee concluded.

I must admit, plot aside; Reynolds manages to make even the dorkily predictable Chris Brander funny and loveable even when the whole movie is working against him. Maybe I am just too taken by his sensitive, soon-to-be Mr. Alanis Morissette charm, but Reynolds is by far the star of this show. I had high hopes for Smart, who seems to fall into the token hot girl role very well, yet she came off as cold and bland — much like the grilled chicken that comes with the Chicken Caesar salads you get at the SAC (ok, terrible analogy, but I tried).

This is definitely one of those movies you wait to watch until it comes to DVD, if you so feel the desire. Perhaps with the accompaniment of good friends and lots of alcohol, you might even find yourself entertained. Until then, take those 96 minutes that you would have spent watching this awful movie and do something useful, like scrub the grout between your bathroom tiles with an old toothbrush. No, seriously, that stuff is gross!



# Rockin' the Brook: The Sunset Tree

BY INUR MAMOOR  
Staff Writer

**Artist:** Mountain Goats  
**Album:** *The Sunset Tree*  
**Release Date:** April 2005

I have heard many albums this year, yet none have been as beautiful as Mountain Goats' *The Sunset Tree*. This album is an intimate look into an abusive childhood. But that's not saying *The Sunset Tree* is a cry fest, feel-bad-for-me type of album. It is lo-fi at some point, maybe not its best, but definitely above average. While the lyrics at times become overwhelmingly heartbreaking, there is such a strong overarching poetic feel to the album that the sadness transforms into a glorious beauty. You cannot listen to the album once; the voice, the sounds, everything about it compels you to listen to it again, and then again, and over and over until you forget you're listening to music.

John Darnielle is the mastermind behind Mountain Goats and *The Sunset Tree* is their third release on 4AD. Mountain Goats have been around for over a decade, and like any other indie band, they have remained unknown outside of their circle of fans. While listening to *The Sunset Tree* you realize how good music can really be, especially when it's stripped down to the basics.

The songs on *The Sunset Tree* sound like poems read over music. The entire album carries a sort of literary essence with a cathartic purpose at its core. With songs like "Pale Green Things" and "Dilaudid," Darnielle's voice warps around you and engulfs you. The lyrics on "Hast Thou Considered the Tetrapod" and "This Year" re-tell Darnielle's childhood with an abusive stepfather.

Not every track is about Darnielle's childhood. "Lion's Teeth" plays with all sorts of emotions; you get the sense that Darnielle wants to fight and make love but he's not sure which to do, or if he should do both, and the end result is a song that's full of Darnielle's ex-

perience, but an experience which can transcend to the listener. In "Dilaudid," Darnielle is a full of teen angst as he sings: "Hike up your fishnets, I know you. If we live to see the other side of this, I will remember your kiss, so do it with your mouth open." The lyrics mixed with Darnielle's nasal, raspy voice produce a great effect.

*The Sunset Tree* ends with the beautiful "Pale Green Things." It is arguably one of the highlights of the album. Darnielle's voice is just so haunting – lyrically it ties all the songs together, making this one of the most coherent Mountain Goats albums. But to get to "Pale Green Things," "Love Love Love" must be heard first. This is a song that lyrically makes reference to Kurt Cobain and musically sounds too much like a lullaby rhyme. You get the feeling "Love Love Love" is striving for something, but falls short.

After listening to *The Sunset Tree* you will realize that you needed it. You needed to hear Darnielle's voice, you needed to listen to his words, and you needed to experience their sound. It becomes something you never knew you needed until you had it. Darnielle's lyrics and his voice will affect the listener. This album has left me dazed and in amazement.

## Mountain Goats *The Sunset Tree*

1. You or Your Memory
2. Broom People
3. This Year
4. Dilaudid
5. Dance Music
6. Dinu Lipatti's Bones
7. Up The Wolves
8. Lion's Teeth
9. Hast Thou Considered The Tetrapod
10. Magpie
11. Song for Dennis Brown
12. Love Love Love
13. Pale Green Things

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# Staller Center FOR THE ARTS

## Hamlet

BY ROSIE SCAVUZZO  
Staff Writer

"At least I didn't fall asleep," said one of the older audience members during intermission at the Staller Center's production of *Hamlet*, staged by the British-American Aquila Theatre Company.

Indeed, if this production did anything at all, it prevented many dozers from catching some extra z's. Whether this was due to the whiny, high-pitched voice of the character of Hamlet or the loud drug-induced music is unknown.

The Aquila Theatre Company has been known to revitalize Shakespeare's classic plays to be enjoyed and understood by a modern 21st century audience.

However, in focusing their attention on this task, much of the intrinsic value and deeper understanding of these plays is either damaged immensely or lost completely.

It is quite a bold undertaking to direct and produce the most famous play in the world. It is even ballsier to perform it within the walls of a reputable institute of higher learning, such as Stony Brook University.

Artistic Director Peter Meineck, having studied London theatre extensively and now as a Professor of Classics at New York University, should have had a better idea of how to work with such a piece.

Audience members were sadly disappointed; there were quite a few witnessed walkouts by intermission, disgusted at the misrepresentation of the work.

The character of Hamlet left much to be desired. The manic sort of interpretation portrayed left a lot of audience members laughing, many of whom were chuckling in disillusionment and wondering when exactly *Hamlet* became a comedy.

There was much disunity on the stage, possibly stemming from the fact that the characters spoke with different accents including British, American and Scottish.

It seems only logical that in any production, either all actors speak with a certain accent or none do. While the cast was appropriately speaking in their native tongues, the one Scottish accent was clearly affected, confusing and complicating the general use or non-use of accents to begin with.

Actor Louis Butelli, playing the gravedigger, player King and ghost of

Hamlet, was by far the most respectable actor on stage. Seen last year as Feste in *Twelfth Night*, he was once again the most redeemable aspect of the play.

His ease in physicality and his humble connection to the other actors on stage was remarkable, and although he was very likely the best actor on stage, he never once upstaged the others.

For a touring national company, an easily moveable set is important. The use of moving doors gave the illusion of a labyrinth, with danger lurking behind any entry or exit. In addition, a rectangular black box served not only as a coffin, but also as a bench and a bed.

This minimalist approach offered just enough to serve the words of the play while not burdening the stage with unnecessary additions and long scene changes. Also, it offered some symbolism that the audience could chew on while getting over the shallowness of many of the other directing choices.

The play was cut down to less than two and a half hours, a thankful reduction when performing any five-act Shakespearean play. Still, the director chose to leave out some important scenes and characters, namely that of Fortinbras and his paralleled connection throughout the entirety of the play.

In addition, a Shakespearean tragedy traditionally leaves the audience with a sense of hope for the renewal of the age. In Aquila's interpretation, when Fortinbras' name was briefly mentioned as the next ruler of Denmark, those unfamiliar with the play were left unsettled and confused.

By dumbing down the play and cutting out major important advancements and depth, Aquila's rendition of *Hamlet* loses its value as a work of art. It lacks the depth of interaction between its characters; the look into the psyche of the most well-known Shakespearean characters of all time.

Some may argue that it is better to introduce those who may not have been otherwise interested to a version made more palatable by contemporary flair. I agree only somewhat.

While I loved that so many people were in the audience, most of whom had never seen Shakespeare performed live before, I would not like to leave them thinking that this illuminated in any way the mastery that was and is Shakespeare.



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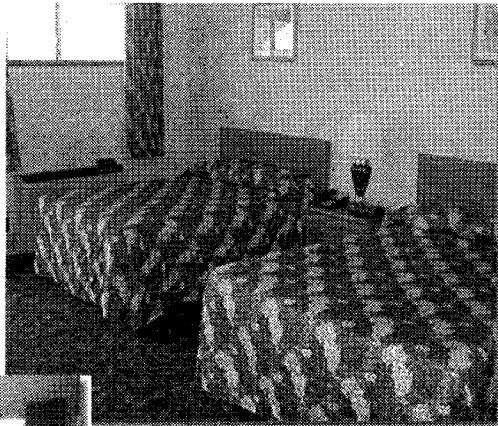
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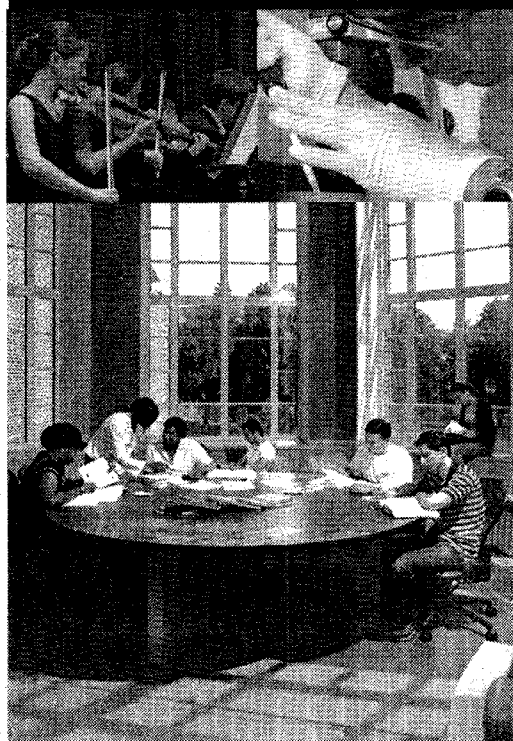
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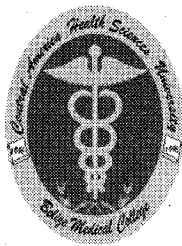
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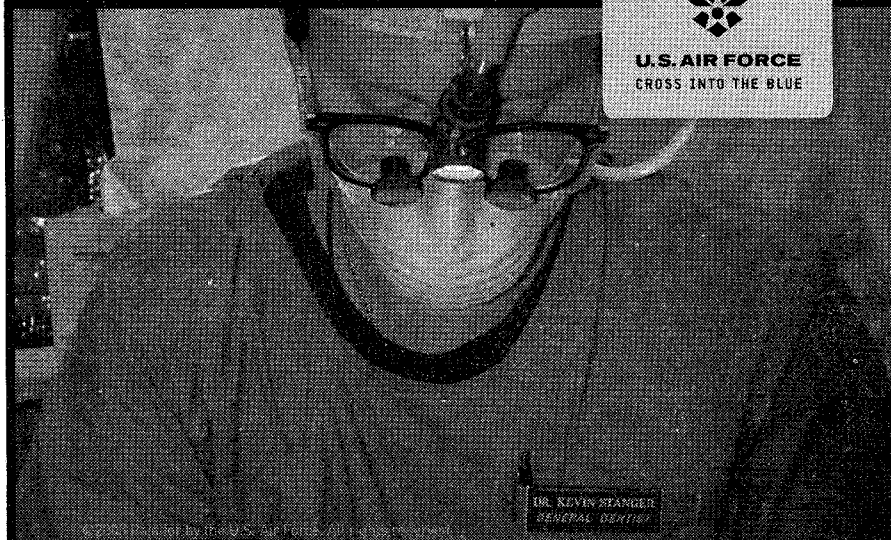
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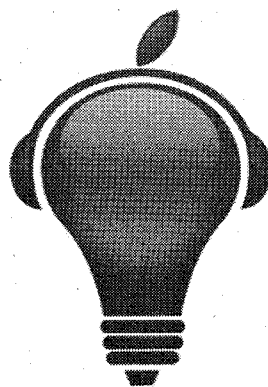
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# Balancing School Work with Sports Proves a Challenge

By JENNIFER CHOI  
Contributing Writer

Being a biology major in college is difficult in itself—now try being an athlete on top of that.

"It's tough trying to divide up my time between football and classes," said student athlete Eugene Pietzak Jr. "Football wins a lot of the time."

Pietzak is a biology major and football player at Stony Brook University. He misses labs for his biology classes every week because of football practice. He meets with lab instructors separately to make up those labs, but exhaustion from football practice has kept him from meeting with lab instructors on more than one occasion, he said.

Athletes at Stony Brook University must follow rigorous schedules to avoid losing their tuition support. Many athletes are dependent on the athletics program for scholarships and sometimes miss the same class two weeks in a row when traveling to away games. The frequency of travel varies for different sports teams. Varsity athletes are also required to spend as many as 20 hours in training and practice per week when they are in season. Out of season, they spend fewer hours in training and practice, but conditioning can start as early as 6 AM.

Donna M. Woodruff, the senior associate director of athletics, said approximately 50 percent of the student athletes are receiving some sort of athletically related aid this year. "There are a variety of ways a coach can elect to offer

scholarship money to student athletes, though all of those decisions are regulated by NCAA rules," she said. "The only areas an athletic scholarship can cover are tuition, room, board, fees and required books. That can be anywhere from \$400 to a full scholarship of approximately \$20,000 for an out of state student."

Heath Senour, the Director of Compliance for Athletics, makes sure that the department is following all the rules and regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. "The NCAA limits athletes to 20 hours of practice per week and four hours per day, and they get at least one day off during the week when school is in session, he said. "Outside of their playing season, student-athletes are required to have at least two days off."

These hours are longer during August before school starts, he said. Athletes are not permitted to miss classes for practice, but they are expected to attend every game.

Senour said he realizes that athletes must devote much time to training and practice, but this allows them to learn how to better manage their time. "Time management is a very important skill," he said. "Especially during their season, when traveling to away contests is required, athletes have to learn how to manage their time between class, work and their individual sports schedules."

Senour said professors typically understand the reasons athletes miss class. "They recognize that these athletes are representing the institution," he said.

Senour also said that most athletes realize they are getting

a "good deal" by receiving scholarships for participating in sports. "They are aware of the type of commitment needed to be a student athlete, and they are willing and ready to follow the rules," he said. "Plus, officials from the Athletics department make sure that all student athletes understand the rules and time commitments of being a student athlete."

Keith Cherney, former tight-end coach for the Football team, agreed that it is difficult being a college athlete. "You must manage your time well or else you will collapse," he said.

Cherney said football players avoid scheduling classes between 2:30 PM and 7:30 PM because their practices and workouts are scheduled then. "Athletes sacrifice a great deal, but they are doing something they love and can establish good relationships with their teammates," he said.

Bryan Karp, a former athlete with a learning disability, found it especially difficult to manage his time. He not only attended classes and football practice, but he also met with a tutor for four hours a day, Monday through Friday. "This left me little time to do anything else," he said. "And when athletes miss a test because of an away game, they have to take the test on the road the night before the game."

Thomas Joseph Moriarty, another former athlete, said football took up much of his week. Asked whether his academics have suffered because of football, he said, "Absolutely." He said, however, that athletes are not very concerned about grades because being a respected athlete

*Continued on page 6*

## Seawolves Fall to Columbia 55-54 in Final Seconds

By JOHN WALTER  
Staff Writer

Saturday, Nov. 26 - The home opener for the men's Basketball season ended in dramatic fashion with Stony Brook being defeated by Columbia 55-54, losing a two-point lead to Columbia's Justin Armstrong on a three-point shot in the last five seconds of the game. The loss leaves Stony Brook still looking for its first season victory, falling to 0-3, while Columbia remains undefeated and improves to 4-0.

Beside three short spans in the second period, Stony Brook retained the lead all throughout the game before falling behind in the final seconds. After gaining a large point margin during the first period, Columbia battled to take back a short lead a few times in the beginning of the second period. Stony Brook then improved to 11 points over Columbia with 4:57 left to play in the game. However, missed shots from the foul line were costly for Stony Brook and Columbia closed to within two, setting up Armstrong's three-pointer for the victory.

Stony Brook's offense was led by Hendrick Feist who racked up 14 points and made one assist. Close behind was Antwan Hardy, who scored 13 points, made four assists and seven rebounds. Going just nine for 22 in the game, free throws were a problem for Stony Brook, who missed four of their last six over the course of Columbia's twelve point charge with 4:57 left to play.

For Columbia, leading the charge was John Baumann who scored a game-high 16 points. Armstrong scored eleven points including his game-winning clincher, while Ben Nwachukwu followed, scoring ten.

The Seawolves take on St. Johns on Wednesday, December 7 for a 7:30 PM game as they continue their search for their first victory of the season.

## Game Watch Month of December

### HOME

- Dec. 7** Wm's Basketball v. Temple, 6 PM
- Dec. 13** Wm's Basketball v. Dartmouth, 7 PM
- Dec. 23** Men's Basketball v. Albany, 7 PM
- Dec. 28** Wm's Basketball v. Delaware State

### AWAY

- Dec. 3** Swimming v. BU, 1 PM  
Wm's Basketball v. Arkansas State
- Dec. 4** Wm's Basketball v. Hampton/Brown, 1/3 PM
- Dec. 7** Men's Basketball v. St. Johns, 7:30 PM





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**Women improve to 2-0  
Men sink to 0-3**

# Kornhauser Leaves Legacy

## *Retires After 22 Years as Head Coach*

By JON WALTER  
Staff Writer

As head coach, Sam Kornhauser has watched and guided the growth of Stony Brook's varsity football program since its birth in 1984, when the Stony Brook Football team was still "The Patriots," and played in the lowest-ranked Division III. Now, after 22 seasons, he will be retiring, leaving behind a legacy that goes beyond wins, losses and championships, and extends to the players and coaches he's affected during his career.

Kornhauser's 22nd season brought with it his first championship. Despite the championship, he has been satisfied with his career all along. "This is just the whipped cream on the pudding," Kornhauser said. "I'm just satisfied to have had the opportunity to work with great people, and watch the program grow."

"I don't know how, but we're gonna win" a player told Kornhauser before their last home game, a game in which they would achieve their first-ever championship. The activities before the game, however, could be more memorable for Kornhauser than the victorious game itself. Former players and coaches lined up on the field outside of the players' entrance to the field, all of whom were waiting to embrace their former head coach when he came by on his way out. On the opposite side of the stadium, someone had hung a sign that read "This Is The House That Sam Built."

"It was very very special to see former players and coaches out there," Kornhauser said. "Players, coaches and moms were all crying. There was lots of emotion



**Sam Kornhauser retires this year after 22 years as head coach. This year he led the Seawolves to the first conference title in the program's history and was named the 2005 NEC Coach of the Year.**

out there. It was like a feel good movie that never would have made it through Hollywood. If I could have written one, that is how it would have been."

The relationships Kornhauser made over his years coaching here, and what he's taught those people he's formed relationships with, are more important to him than anything else he's achieved here. "It's about passing knowledge on to someone so that they can pass it

on to someone else," Kornhauser said. "Wins and losses are great, but that's not what it's all about."

In order to form a championship team, Kornhauser had to bring the team together. "We had to circle wagons," he said. "We emphasized that there are no stars, and by doing that, tried to teach them that everyone is a star. The guys really bought into it."

He said the key to their success was winning some very close,

tough games. "I think that the game against Albany was one of the most important and grittiest games we played. The other team wouldn't let up and we won 7-3, less than a touchdown." Six of their games this season were decided by a touchdown or less; four of those were victories. "Football is a fickle game, and this year our team had the 'it' factor," said Kornhauser. "The secret ingredient to a success is 'it.'" That's the beauty

of coaching. Whatever 'it' is, we had it this year."

Now, after 37 years of coaching Football, Kornhauser's career comes to a close. "It's all I've ever done, I've loved it," he said.

"I got a card the other day from a former player telling me that what he learned from me, he's now teaching to his kid," he said. "That's what it's all about. I've helped intertwine football into life."