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Ready for the Pride!

FEATURES

A 1920's Sayville Resident Who Claimed to Be God

The green cedar-shingled two-story house sits on a tree-lined street in Sayville. A bronze plaque screwed into a chiseled piece of white stone just inside a vinyl, white picket fence is the only evidence of the house's claim to history. It was once owned by an African-American man who claimed to be God. His given name was George Baker, but his followers called him Father Divine.

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JC Chan / SB Statesman

Next semester students will pay more for their tuition.

Hiring Freeze Softened Amidst Rise in Tuition

By FRANK POSILICO
Staff Writer

On Dec. 1, President Shirley Strum Kenny lifted the hiring freeze, originally enacted in October, which prohibited any department from hiring new personnel. However, since the news arrived so late in the semester, and many departments are under budget restraints, the melting could go unnoticed.

Over the past few months Gov. David Paterson cut SUNY's budget by \$210 million. The governor recently announced an additional cut to SUNY by \$65 million. Due to this proposed cut, the SUNY board of trustees has raised tuition.

As a result of the budget cuts, Kenny was forced to enact a hiring freeze in October. This freeze was originally put in place so that the university would not be forced to lay off staff and faculty and so that the overall payroll would not decline, Dan Melucci, associate vice president for strategy, planning and analysis, said.

"Each vice president will now be responsible for managing his or her budget reduced by the amount necessary," Kenny said in a press release to the campus community. "Each has been developing a plan for his or her unit. Those plans include reductions in expenditures as well as revenue enhancements, in order to operate under the reductions."

The lifting of the freeze, however, does little to help many departments for the upcoming semester.

"Though the hiring freeze has been lifted, it will still take some time for the cuts to work their way from the Provost's office, to the Dean's office, and finally to the departmental level," said Jeffrey Segal, the chairperson of the political science department. "Until that happens, we don't know what

Continued on page 3

OPINION

Why We Unionized

Lets get one thing straight: The government cannot create jobs, invest in infrastructure, and create demand for alternative energy or "save" the economy. Generating or saving capital for investment requires some source of production, unless the investment capital is taken from somewhere else.

>> page 10

Investing in Our Future

The U.S. Department of Labor's numbers are in, and they're not pretty. Job loss has reached a whopping 533,000 cuts for the month of November. That brings the total casualties for this year to nearly two million. To put that statistic into perspective, the U.S. economy lost 2.7 million jobs between December 2000 and mid-2003. On top of all of this, the unemployment rate has risen to 6.7 percent, the highest level in 15 years. Average pay is dropping, economic growth is grinding to a halt, and we expect Barack Obama to fix all of this within four years.

>> page 11

Nationwide, Public Schools Turn a Profit on Cafeteria Food

By NICOLE INDELICATO
Contributing Writer

It's 2 o'clock in the afternoon and 15-year-old Chris Vlasaty's last meal was the cafeteria special -- a slice of pizza and large side of fries -- nearly four hours ago.

Now he has exactly 30 minutes to muster his belongings and grab a snack that will nourish his muscles before dashing to football practice where he will be required to perform 20 40-yard sprints in under 10-seconds, each as a mere warm-up.

The familiar trudge to one of the hallway vending machines, the only food source after school hours, provides Chris with his routine power meal: 11 grams of fat, six grams of trans fat and 22 grams of sugar in his favorite candy bar.

"I usually get a Nestle's Crunch bar because I need to eat something before practice and there is nothing healthy in the vending machines," the Smithtown High School East varsity football player said. "It doesn't make me feel good, but it's better than eating nothing."

Districts nationwide have been grappling with how to generate a profit from school food, while still respecting students' health and wellness.

Administrators have been trying to provide meals and snacks to students that will both satisfy and nourish them, while making enough money off of the food to subsidize the cost of other educational commodities.

Computers, field trips, sports programs and extracurricular activities are costly for the district, and food sales are among their strongest options for making money.

These arrangements have parents and school wellness committees on edge. As obesity continues to rise and has already plagued an estimated 23 million children nationwide, parents worry that many vending machine snacks will help

contribute to that number. In addition, many of the snacks contain high levels of trans fat, an artery-clogging ingredient that is used to lengthen shelf life and improve flavor and texture.

Trans fat is known to lower levels of "good" cholesterol and increase risk for heart disease, according to the American Heart Association. If eliminated in just 3 percent of breads and cakes and 15 percent of cookies and crackers, trans fat could save up to \$59 billion in health care costs in the next 20 years, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration predicts.

Sugar is another abundant ingredient in vending machine

Continued on page 3



Aisha Akhtar / SB Statesman

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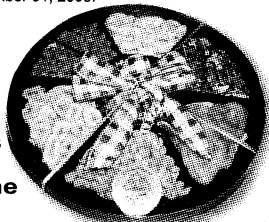
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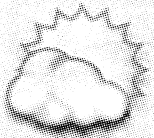
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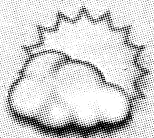


Monday:

High: 35°F

Low: 23°F

Breezy in the morning; otherwise, mostly sunny and very cold.



Tuesday:

High: 47°F

Low: 35°F

Mostly cloudy, breezy and milder.



Wednesday:

High: 55°F

Low: 45°F

Cloudy with rain possible; winds gusting past 40 mph.

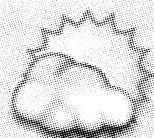


Thursday:

High: 37°F

Low: 19°F

A thick cloud cover, windy and colder with rain and snow possible.



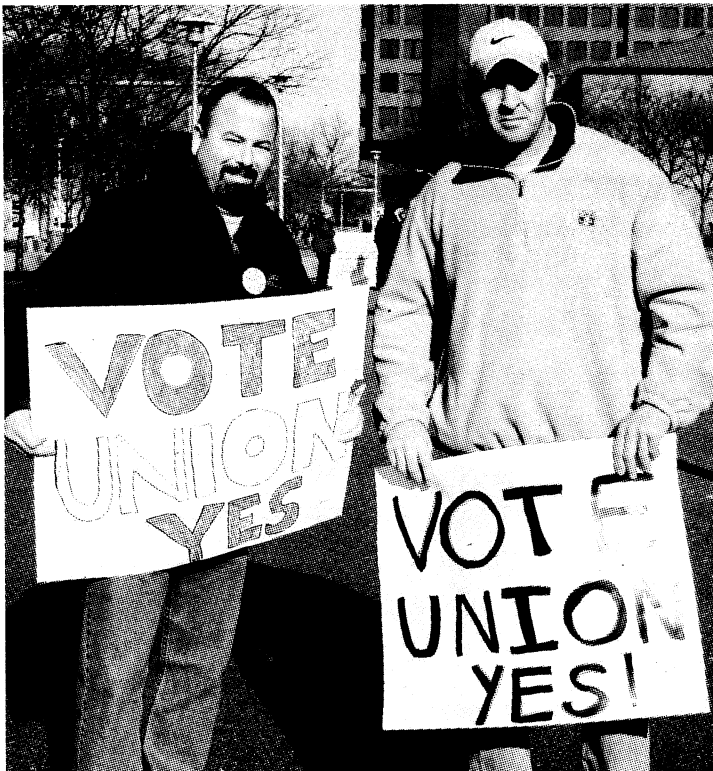
Friday:

High: 29°F

Low: 18°F

Periods of clouds and sunshine.

From accuweather.com



Kenneth Ho / SB Statesman

Campus Research Assistants Held Elections on Friday.

Hiring Freeze Softened Amidst Rise in Tuition

Continued from page 1

our situation will be."

As of now, there is no word from the state government on an early retirement program or re-trenchments, according to Kenny. These decisions will not be made by the university but by the state.

Along with the lifting of the freeze, the SUNY board of trustees has effectively raised tuition for all students. Tuition for in-state undergraduates will increase from \$4,350 to \$4,970, starting with a \$310 rise in the spring. For out-of-state undergraduates, tuition will increase from \$10,610 to \$13,620.

For graduate students, in-state tuition has gone from \$6,900 to

\$7,880, and \$10,920 to \$14,020 for out-of-state students. Students will be billed according to these increased rates in the spring semester.

The board of trustees has the power to raise tuition, but cannot spend the money collected until the rise is approved by the state legislature. Without legislative-approved spending, the cash will sit in an account and not be available to pay the expenses of running the university.

"It will take cool heads, financial acumen, and collaborative efforts to pull through this period without harm to our University," said Melucci.

"We will weather this storm," Kenny said.

Nationwide, Public Schools Turn a Profit on Cafeteria Food

Continued from page 1

snacks and drinks. An 11.5 ounce can of Snapple has approximately 170 calories, which is equivalent to 10 teaspoons of sugar -- an amount that takes up just below half the amount of space in the can. If just one Snapple is consumed each week, that adds up to more than four pounds of pure sugar pure year.

But in 2003, the average American downed approximately a gallon of soft drinks per week, ending off the year with more sugary drinks to fill the average bathtub.

"We're very passionate about health and wellness and we're not in a battle with the wellness committee," said Smithtown Superintendent Ed Ehmann. "But at the end of the day we have to make sure the food is healthy but will also be foods that the kids will eat."

At least 15 states have organized task forces or wellness committees that are studying nutrition issues, according to a survey by the Education Commission of the States.

Though no states have outright banned the sale of sodas, West Virginia has mandated that half the beverages in high school vending machines be juices and water while California has required public hearings before schools can renew their vending contracts since 2003.

"We're not trying to take their revenue away," said Janelle Kildale, a Smithtown Wellness Committee member and mother of three. "We just want to see

healthier choices and the PTA has agreed to support them financially with fundraising throughout the year."

Smithtown School District has devised a nutritional plan that divides the day into two parts: school and after-school. Vending machines, which do not turn on until approximately 1 o'clock, are considered an after-school asset. Their purpose is to provide concession snacks for after-school sports teams and those who attend the games, according to Ehmann.

But athletes like Chris have been using the snacks to fuel their bodies before they even hit the field. And students have access to virtually the same snacks before one o'clock from a la carte and the school store. These inconsistencies enrage many parents and wellness committee members.

"People ranked Smithtown food choices without doing a ton of research," Ehmann, who accepted the position of superintendent two years ago, admitted in a low voice. "But I do try and make sure the choices are in the parameters of healthy life choices. I don't want to make an artificial situation."

Wellness committee member Christine Santori, who is also a registered dietitian and bariatrics specialist, has brought much of her "frightening" findings and research to the table.

At a recent meeting, she spoke about "diabesity," the new phrase coined by the Centers for Disease Control to illustrate the rising trend of obesity related diabetes. Of the children born in

the year 2000, one in three Caucasians and one in two African-Americans and Hispanics will develop the disease, and many before they graduate high school, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention predicts.

"It seems to me that our schools are almost trying to sabotage any attempt at healthy eating," Santori said. "We, as school districts, need to take the lead and provide nutrition education and healthy food items. Children should not have the burden of adult choices. It is our responsibility to set them up for success and support them in healthy eating."

While Ehmann is not in complete opposition to the changes, he finds himself in a conflicting situation with the vending machine company. Beverage distributors, especially those affiliated with Coke and Pepsi, offer schools lucrative contracts that include signing bonuses, a share in machine profits and perks such as athletic scoreboards, according to the American Association of School Administrators.

Seven years ago, Quick Snack Vending Company agreed to fund Smithtown \$300,000 for outdoor football field lights, which they promised to pay back by selling the company's snacks. Chris was only in elementary school when Smithtown signed the deal with the vending company, and now, as a high school sophomore, he and other Smithtown students are helping the district out of its deficit one unhealthy snack at a time.

"I take it very personally," said

Kildale, who has formulated her own list of healthy snacks that she'd like to see in the vending machines and submitted it to her son's principal. "I can't stand that children are being used for someone else's benefit, it's just so sad."

Currently, Smithtown is trying to cut out all sugary drinks containing high fructose corn syrup. Like West Virginia, Ehmann is hoping to change all the vending machine drinks to water and fruit juices that are low in sugar and artificial flavoring this year. But wellness committee members have noted that these changes have taken a while and they fear that administrators are not taking their requests seriously.

"I've got 24 schools," Ehmann said. "The wellness committee members always want three steps higher than what we already have."

But the possibility of change reigns approximately eight miles away, where Commack School District has made noteworthy transformations. They now offer vegetable burgers, baked fries, more plant based food, and have cut back significantly on vending machine snacks that are high in sugar and trans-fat.

Other schools around the nation have also sustained vegetable gardens to cultivate learning and healthier eating habits.

"Change is never easy," Santori said. "But we owe it to our kids to make sure that they are not the first generation to live a shorter life span than their parents."

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A 1920's Sayville Resident Who Claimed to Be God

BY APRIL WARREN
News Editor

The green cedar-shingled two-story house sits on a tree-lined street in Sayville. A bronze plaque screwed into a chiseled piece of white stone just inside a vinyl, white picket fence is the only evidence of the house's claim to history.

It was once owned by an African-American man who claimed to be God. His given name was George Baker, but his followers called him Father Divine.

Divine was born during the late 1800s in Georgia -- during a time period where African-Americans were still considered three-fifths of a person.

Divine started life as a public figure by teaching tolerance and interracial harmony starting in the 1920s -- a time when racism was accepted in society. Divine became Sayville's first African-American resident when he acted on a real estate add selling a house to "colored" people. The prior owner hoped to get back at a neighbor by selling to an African-American -- not uncommon for the times.

A short, petite, balding man hovering around the five foot mark, Divine was usually depicted in photos with a wide smile brimming across his face just under a thin black mustache. Portrayed in old black-and-white photos, he always wore a pressed, neat, three-piece suit accented with a tie and light-colored fedora encircled with a dark-colored ribbon around the brim.

"Father Divine attracted black ghetto residents in part because he was an inspiring role model for many poor, uneducated blacks seeking evidence that they could improve their lives," Robert Weisbrot said in his biography "Father Divine Religious Leader."

Divine's religion focused on the here and now rather than Heaven.

Believing in Heaven is "seeing if there is a reality in an unknown place," said Graham Westcott, a Divine follower and groundskeeper of the Macon Street house.

"We believe in American politics, integration, and self supporting," said Mother Divine, Father Divine's widow in a telephone interview from Philadelphia.

Divine also preached against vices. His followers could not drink alcohol, smoke or even have relations with members of the opposite sex. Instead, followers dedicated their lives to be "married" to Father Divine.

One follower remembers a story about a man from Harlem who came to Macon Street drunk one night. The man walked onto the

property, stood next to a tree and suddenly dropped down dead.

Behind the hunter-green main house with white trim, a two-story white barn with two garage doors is still used today when Divine's followers return several times a year. The barn is where the "brothers," or male members of the congregation, stay. The "sisters," or female members, reside in a two-story gray house with a white porch located to the right of the main house. Separate quarters discouraged the temptation for relations between men and women.

The Sayville house became a "heaven" during the Great Depression in the 1920s and 1930s for the poor. Every Sunday, six buses and hundreds of cars would line up in front of 72 Macon Street in search of Divine's banquets of endless food and to hear Divine's message of preaching peace. If guests tried to pay for the food, Divine refused to take their money. Instead declaring, "God will provide." This left many wondering just how he paid for the large amounts of food without a salary.

A skeptical lawyer ventured all the way to Macon Street from Melbourne, Australia, to see for himself just how Divine could afford to feed the droves of believers that came to his modest house. The lawyer later told Westcott, a believer since 1957, that he saw food being manifested in the Divine kitchen for believers to cook. The attorney proceeded to return to Australia and book city hall in Melbourne to preach Divine's teachings.

Dedicated followers of Father Divine lived communally in the houses designated for men and woman. They shared income from jobs that Divine helped them achieve through encouragement in exchange for vouching their honesty, domestic expertise and devotion, according to Weisbrot. Divine's word spread. Harlem newspapers noticed their readership increased when articles about Divine were published. Followers on the west coast helped spread the word of Father Divine to new listeners and word quickly spread abroad.

Westcott recounts a California woman who traveled to Harlem to hear Divine -- still uncertain he was, in fact, God. She stood in the back for one of his sermons and couldn't catch a glimpse of Divine because he did not use a pulpit and he was shorter than the rest of the crowd. Suddenly, Divine rose up

and stared directly at the woman. Right then and there she became a believer because in her mind only God could be a mind reader.

Unexplainable healings also brought followers and curiosity seekers to Macon Street. Westcott recalls one blind man who spent the night on the cement stoop after Divine said there was no room for him to sleep inside. The next morning the man woke up, saw the fence with perfect vision and jumped over the wooden slats screaming praises and singing about his miracle.

Another unexplainable healing occurred several stoops down. Divine was called in to help a woman from Boston who was dying. The doctor could not save her and she passed away. When Divine entered the room a few minutes later, the woman instantly came back from the grave. Westcott ran into the woman 25 years later and she still declared Father Divine brought her back from the grave.

"We believe he was God," said



Media Credit: Libertynet.org

Mother Divine.

As word of his healings and teachings spread, visitors to Macon Street increased. At the peak of the movement, which Divine titled the Peace Mission Movement, Time magazine reported close to 50,000 members. Westcott believed the number to be closer to the millions. No official records were kept.

Some residents of Sayville did not appreciate the flocks of people. On the front page of The Suffolk County News for May 6, 1932, under a picture caption stating "Lindbergh Baby Found Dead," was an equally shocking headline to Divine's followers, "Rev. Divine is under arrest" with a subtitle reading, "Colored Messiah of Macon St. Indicted by Grand Jury As Public Nuisance."

The article, by an unknown author, described Divine "in having disturbed the peace, rest and quietude of his neighbors by boisterous singing and shouting during the late hours of the night."

Michael St. John, a Divine follower, offered to go to jail in place of Divine, but the court rejected his plea.

Before his trial began, Divine applied to the Parole Board for custody of all prisoners on parole from state prisons. He hoped to "make over" the prisoners "in accordance with the spiritual light he would bestow upon them," according to a News article from May 13, 1932.

The trial began soon after and witnesses called to testify showed no mercy. A neighbor phoned Divine's residence one night hoping to stop the noise from a loud party. "A voice I believed to be his replied, 'Do you know whom you are talking to? This is God himself,'" said Eva Connelly on the witness stand. "I was so mad to think that a mere man thought himself God that I did not care whom I was talking to and I called the police."

Supporters of Divine protested in crowds up to 10,000 against his arrest and trial. "He was by now far more than a religious leader; he had become a symbol of black hope and resentment against racial injustice," according to Weisbrot.

On May 27, 1932, just one page away from advertisements calling "housewives read this ad" marketing four bars of Palmolive soap for 25 cents each and steel refrigerators for \$24.95, read the headline "Jurors Find Divine Guilty."

The first paragraph of the article takes a jab at Father Divine. "If, as many of his followers claim, the Rev. Major J. Divine, Sayville cult leader, can perform miracles, now is the time for him to do his stuff, because he's in the Nassau County jail at Mineola."

Three days after being sentenced to one year in jail and a \$500 fine, presiding Supreme Court Justice Lewis J. Smith died at age 56. Smith was in good health at dinner the night before.

Many followers believe Divine was the root cause. "Father's a live wire," said Westcott. "It's like electricity it has the same result, positive or negative."

After being released from jail only a few months later, Divine left Sayville for Harlem to continue preaching when tragedy struck. Pinninah, also known as Mother

Divine, his first wife, died.

Not long after her death, Edna Rose Ritchings, a white, 21-year-old from Vancouver, Canada, traveled to Harlem to meet Divine with a message. She was the reincarnation of his first wife's spirit. The two married the next day.

He did not let his age deter him from public speaking. "Father Divine, when he spoke, outdid them all," The Suffolk County News reported after his first appearance in Harlem after jail. "He jumped as high as the microphone, he shouted himself into inarticulation. He promised peace and happiness and food and clothing for all the world."

Divine continued to spread the Peace Mission Movement until his death on Sept. 11, 1965. Since the Movement refused to keep records, his age is unknown but according to his obituary in the New York Times, he was about 100 years old and died of lung congestion.

Although Divine was considered by believers to be immortal, they feel his spirit still lives on. His body is buried in a white, marble mausoleum in Woodmont, Penn., where the mission, still headed by Mother Divine, is still spreading his teachings.

His followers live in two hotels belonging to the movement where they still live communally. Instead of greeting telephone calls with "Hello," the mission greets callers with the word "peace." This is because the word is more positive and harmonious with their teachings instead of a word that is one letter away from hell.

Divine's followers feel Divine is the spirit and they are his body. This is why several times a year the entire congregation revisits Macon Street to bring the body all together in the same place. They eat, play recordings of Divine's sermons and discuss the movement.

Several followers even attest to sightings of Divine long after his death. One follower, walking down a street in Harlem, clutching an umbrella to shield herself from the rain, claims Divine appeared next to her. "Come under the umbrella out of the rain, Father," she shouted at him.

There is still one month left until the reunion at 72 Macon Street, but the house is ready.

Inside the pistachio-colored walls of the dining room, one round wooden table joins with two rectangular ones. Each table covered with a white linen table cloth. Over 30 place settings of Cherry China are set; each including a small salad plate resting in the center of a larger, dinner plate and accented by a clear glass and silverware. Just waiting for the body and spirit to meet -- again.

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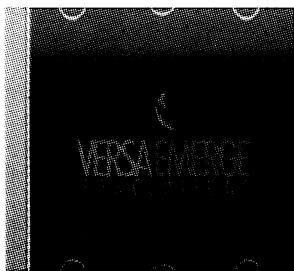


FUELED BY RAMEN'S NEWEST QUINTET

By IVANNA AVALOS
Staff Writer

There are thousands upon thousands of artists on MySpace showcasing their music with the hope that one day a record label believe they have what it takes to make in the music industry. VersaEmerge is one of those few lucky bands who gets to see their dreams become a reality.

Record label Fueled By Ramen added VersaEmerge to their musical family on Dec. 1. The band, from Port St. Lucie, Fla., is comprised of lead singer Sierra Kusterbeck, drummer Anthony Martone, guitarist Jerry Pierce, bassist Devin Ingelido and guitarist/



Media Credit: Purevolume.com

"The Authors" and "Clocks" appear on VersaEmerge's EP, "Perceptions," released in July.



Media Credit: Myspace.com

their 15 minutes of fame, but a group of young talented artists. In songs like "The Authors" and "Clocks," singer Sierra Kusterbeck and guitarist Blake Harnage vocalize in perfect harmony with each other.

As of now, VersaEmerge will only be touring for four days in Florida starting from Dec. 12 until Dec. 15. Since debuting their new lineup, the band has been compared to the popular, female-led alternative rock band Paramore, who just happen to be their new label-mates.

Comments on their YouTube videos go on and on comparing the two groups. As VersaEmerge continues to gain popularity in the music industry, the comparisons will keep developing. But let's all be adults and let the music speak for itself.

As the band continues to establish itself in the music world, there is no doubt it will receive more attention for the musical talent than the gender of their lead vocalist. I can easily see them garnering as much popularity as some of their label-mates.

According to the Fueled By Ramen website, VersaEmerge will release a new EP early next year. To preview the band's latest EP, go to their MySpace at www.myspace.com/versaemerge.

By JASMIN FRANKEL
Contributing Writer

Four Christmases (2008)
Rating: PG-13 (Adult Humor/Profanity)
Running Time: 88 Minutes

Light humor with a few punchlines and jokes left "Four Christmases" with the potential of a comedy.

Overall, the movie set a likable tone, but could have done much better with its wit. Vince Vaughn, who plays Brad,

Continued on page 9



Media Credit: Fandango.com

PHD COMICS BY JORGE CHAM

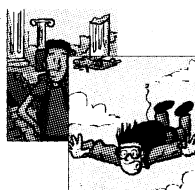
Your Profile Picture Perhaps the most important decision of your day.

The Goofy Close-up



Personal Info:
"OMG, like, haha ROTFL!!!!!"

You in exotic location/participating in extreme sport



Activities:
"Been there, done that."

Your baby picture (aww!)



About me:
"I used to be cute... WHAT HAPPENED?!"

You with significant other



Relationship:
"See? I'm not the only person who likes me."

The casual snapshot

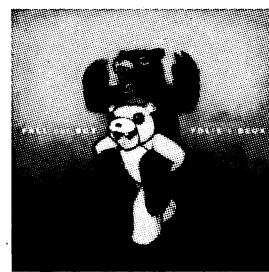


Status:
"Like, whatever, i didn't spend 3 hours trying to pick my profile picture."

JORGE CHAM © 2008 WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

A FIRST GLANCE AT "FOLIE À DEUX"

By EMILY GOVER
Copy Editor



Media Credit: Amazon.com

Fall Out Boy
"Folie À Deux"
(Island Records)

Disco, solos in "What A Catch, Donnie" and duets with Stump in "20 Dollar Nose Bleed."

The album, originally planned to be released on Election Day, was pushed back to mid-December as per the band's request.

"Six months ago, we thought it would be a fun idea to release our album on Election Day, but this is not the election to be cute," the band said in a release on their web site, FriendsOrEnemies.com.

"This is the most important election of our time and, as much as the record is a social commentary and the term 'folie à deux' is relevant to the candidates, we felt as though rather than making a commentary, we were only riding the wave of the election," the statement said.

Whether or not this is the true reason for its delay, Fall Out Boy plans to make it up to their most loyal fans. According to MTV, the band will be touring small clubs across the United States

Though not slated for release until Dec. 16, the ever-stealthy Statesman acquired a copy of Fall Out Boy's newest album, "Folie À Deux," this weekend.

Much like their other records, Fall Out Boy created a 50-minute generic pop-punk dance party. Though more or less catchy as their other records, "Folie À Deux" has some characteristics that make it stand out from their previous albums, including some downright foul



Media Credit: Bryan Bedder / Getty Images

Fall Out Boy's Joe Trohman, Andy Hurley, Patrick Stump, and Pete Wentz at the mtvU Woodie Awards.

expletives - oh my!

The record begins with the epic and ridiculously-titled "Disloyal Order of Water Buffaloes." (Obviously their talent for unusual track titles has not faltered.) Synthetic organs, heavy drums and Patrick Stump's distinct voice build up the first verse to a head-boppin' bridge and chorus.

Their first single, "I Don't Care," had a bizarre music video laced with celebrity cameos, including Mark Hoppus of blink-182, paparazzi whore Spencer Pratt and Cobra Starship's Gabe Saporta. Celebrity appearances, however, were

not solely limited to the music video.

The melodic "What A Catch, Donnie" features a handful of musicians singing excerpts from Fall Out Boy's past hits. Gym Class Heroes' Travis McCoy, William Beckett of The Academy Is... and even Elvis Costello contribute to the song. Brendon Urie, lead singer of Fall Out Boy's doppelganger Panic At The

throughout winter. Tickets will only be available the day of the performance for fan club members only.

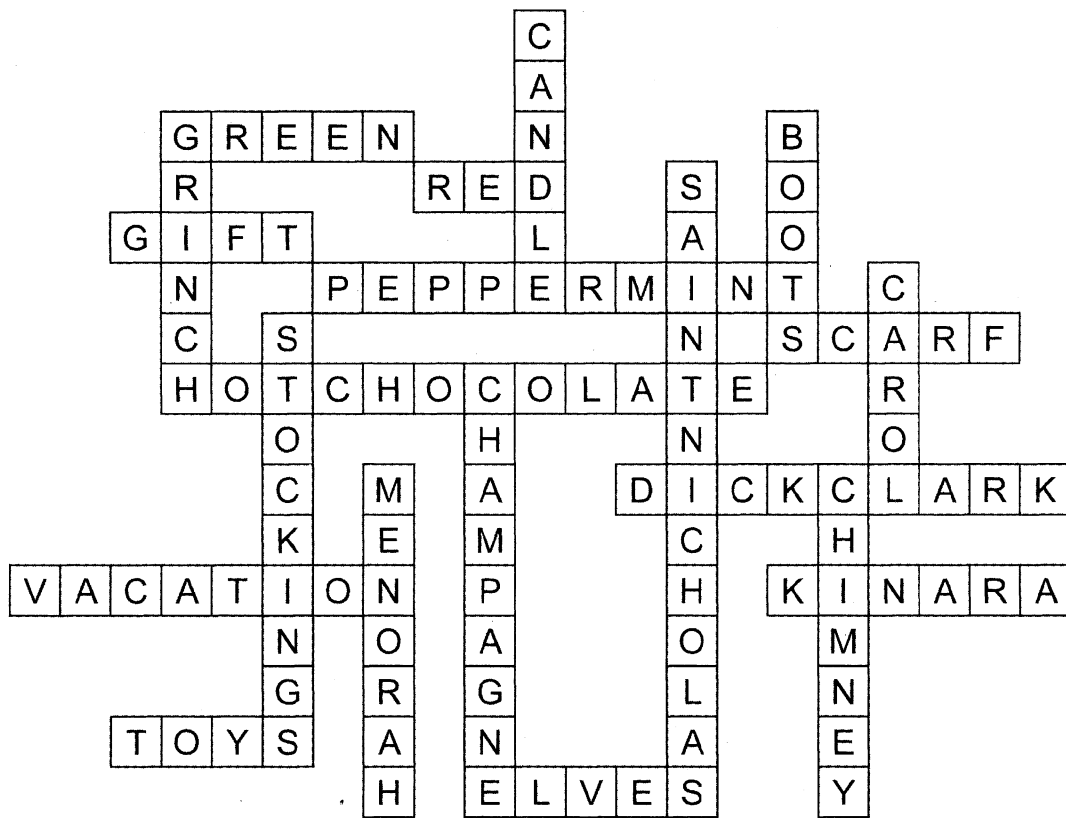
Fall Out Boy's sound is essentially the same as it always has been - that is, catchy pop-punk with infectious guitar riffs, whiny vocals by Stump and obscure-yet-relatable lyrics by Pete Wentz. "Folie À Deux" strays from their past three studio records, however, in the sense that Stump's voice descends lower than originally thought in "Headfirst Slide Into Cooperstown On A Bad Bet" and drops many an "f-bomb" in "27."

Fall Out Boy is not the most talented band out there by any means. But their music is impossibly popular and almost every song is a fail-safe earworm. Though many express their disdain for the band, give their albums a listen and it is almost guaranteed that their songs will resonate in your head - whether you like it or not - simply because their songs are so catchy.

Four singles from the album are currently available for download on iTunes. If purchased before the official release date of Dec. 16, users will save some cash on the balance of the record.

If you're looking for a gift for any trendy, pop-punk loving scenester, "Folie À Deux" is a safe bet for any holiday shopper. Unlike us, you'll have to wait until Dec. 16 to snag it. PEACE!

Winter Wonderland



Continued from page 8

is known for his uncanny twisted jokes, which appeared in the beginning of the movie but did not play up to the full potential throughout. Alongside Vaughn, Reese Witherspoon plays Kate, who is presented as the perfect girlfriend.

There was what felt like open space

or plenty of room for more jokes. The two actors' height difference alone could have called for a great joke. Their on-scene chemistry was pretty straightforward. Though their unexpected pairing for this movie appeared to be mismatching, the actual performance between the two managed to work, especially since the movie was to focus on each of their

time, vacation every year to escape the torturous holidays with their families. This year in particular, their vacation has been canceled due to nasty weather conditions. Upon complaining about their canceled flight, they are approached by a news anchor who is doing a report on how the weather is ruining traveler's plans for the holidays.

Last Weekend's Top Holiday Flick

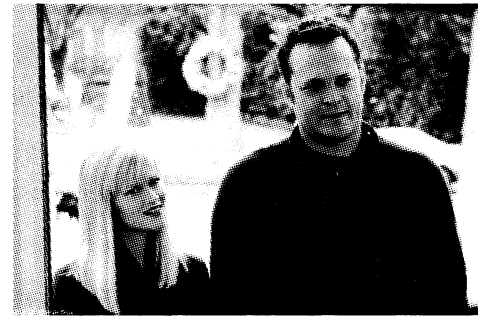
families and embarrassing pasts.

The couple of three years, who decided not to marry nor meet each others' families during that

With their faces on the news, they instantly receive calls from their families expecting them to come over for the holidays. Both sets of parents are divorced. Therefore, they have to visit four families, hence four Christmases.

This is where the story begins. They visit the families revealing each of their unique embarrassing qualities.

During the visits of each family the couple learns things about each other they did not know in the past three years. The movie also depicts how unusual yet important fami-



Media Credit: Fandango.com

Reese Witherspoon and Vince Vaughn play Brad and Kate in the holiday comedy, "Four Christmases."

lies can be.

The not-so-common tale of Christmas turns into a heartfelt story and places an emphasis on spending the holidays with family. The cheery comedy is worth seeing for a few laughs without over doing the holiday image. Just remember mistletoe.

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Statesman production meetings are held throughout the day on Wednesdays and Sundays in RM 057 in the basement of the Student Union. Anyone wishing to contribute to the newspaper is welcome to attend these meetings.

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

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WHO WE ARE

The Stony Brook Statesman was founded as "The Socolian" 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 Statesman is published twice weekly on Mondays and Thursdays throughout the fall and spring semesters.

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OPINION

Why We Unionized

A Letter from a Research Assistant

By MATTHEW ENGEL
Contributing Writer

The purpose of this article is to describe the recent activities of graduate students at Stony Brook University and to explain how and why we formed a union, from my own perspective.

There are three main points:

1. I love Stony Brook University. It has assisted in turning me from a student into a professional.

2. I believe that this union will benefit the school and its students.

3. Graduate students should be allowed to organize their union peacefully without interference as they voted to do so on Dec. 5, 2008.

Stony Brook University conducts a tremendous amount of research in engineering, chemical, physical and life sciences. The majority of this research is enthusiastically conducted by graduate students, who are termed Research Assistants (RAs). These RAs come from all over the globe to attend graduate school here, learn from Stony Brook's internationally renowned professors, and to conduct their cutting edge research in pursuit

of a Ph.D. These same RAs are technically employed by the Research Foundation, a private commercial non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. This non-profit tax designation gives the Research Foundation the best of both worlds: a non-profit company with no taxable income and a private commercial employer who has no official obligation to make any of their financial data accessible to the public.

Research Assistants decided to form a union when they realized that Teaching Assistants (TAs) were achieving some better benefits through having a negotiated contract with the Research Foundation. This contract included a waiver of their technology and transportation fees, as well as a special downstate allocation fund to adjust for the very high cost of living on Long Island. In total, these benefits saved TAs nearly \$500 per semester, or \$1000 a year. For graduate students living on their own, this was a significant asset.

Research Assistants hope to achieve these fee waivers and other benefits in the future when negotiating with the Research

Foundation. This union will become a wing of CWA 1104, the Communication Workers of America who already represents all 4,600 TAs across NY State.

The University continues to perform research at the highest level competing with ivy league universities nationwide attracting some of the best and brightest students and faculty. It's collaboration with Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and Brookhaven National Laboratories place Stony Brook in the crossroads between two world-class institutions. When I envision Stony Brook,

I see limitless intellectual potential, with room for further growth and improvements in many sectors. The university's goal should be to bring in the most productive and experienced students, as we are contributing to the backbone of this college.

Raising the living conditions for RAs will make them happier, more productive, committed, and effective in their job performance. It will also serve to raise the caliber for future classes and increase the university's reputation.



RAs Vote To Unionize, 12/5/08, Kenneth Ho/Statesman

In summary, the current research assistants have participated in a fair and democratic election overseen by the National Labor Relations Board. We voted yes, we do want a union. The RA Union will begin organizing immediately and is looking for interested graduate students from all departments to begin actively participating. There is a lot of work left for us to do moving ahead. The union will be able to negotiate fee waivers, and even a standardized raise and health benefits in the years to come. It is my belief that if achieved, these things will lead to more job satisfaction, higher retention, and importantly even more grants coming in due to our increased productivity. I believe this win is a victory for everyone.

Obama's Fiscal Policy Defies Free Market Logic

Continued from page 11

Companies lay off workers to save money for future investments, the market is correcting for past mistakes by reverting to saving rather than spending. Eventually, if it's left alone, capital will be diverted to the right places. Innovation from entrepreneurs will continue to reduce costs, provide goods, services and employment to the market. Temporary contraction is necessary to return efficiency to a market.

In practical terms, Obama's long-term infrastructure projects is simply bad fiscal policy for short term stimulus. It may provide the perception of increase employment, but without an immediate net benefit in production because projects take too long to come online. If the government wants to save taxpayers some money,

cutting government spending and lowering payroll taxes is a better option. This will allow people to save their own money and make investments, which will allow market confidence to return.

The current rationale behind large scale government spending is that spending now will save us money later. But government spending that doesn't result in future savings will result in lots of loss. When investors lose money because of mistakes, it is unfortunate, but an investor must accept the possibility of risk before making investment. When the government loses taxpayer money from faulty investments, the government neither apologizes nor learns from its mistakes. Rather, it demands more money and blames errors on "market failures."

Obama's plan has good

intentions, but it defies the logic of the free market, which produces the most efficient answers as long as competition is ensured. The government monopoly, which distorts natural investment patterns, doesn't suffer from competition and therefore has no monetary incentive to act efficiently.

While it's true that the government should be doing something

during this time of economic instability, this should simply be cutting spending to give people the opportunity and funds to invest their own money. Government interference, when it aims at producing either long- or short-term financial stability, only succeeds at producing the misleading appearance of action that voters mistake for progress.

Guidelines for Opinion Submission

Letters to the editor or op-ed contributions can be submitted by e-mail at Op-Ed@sbstatesman.org, on our online submission tool at www.sbstatesman.org, by hand at our office in the Student Union Rm 057, or by mailing it to us at the address in the left column. They must be received at least two days before the next printed issue. The Statesman reserves the right to edit or not print any letter based on appropriateness, length, timeliness, or other reasons at the discretion of the editorial board. Letters should be no longer than 350 words, and opinion pieces should not exceed 550 words. Please include your full name (which we may withhold if you request it), phone number and email address for verification. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses will not be printed. Letters submitted anonymously or under false names will not be considered for publication.

Right, Left and Center: Obama's Fiscal Policy

Investing in our Future

By JOSEPH LABRIOLA
Columnist

The U.S. Department of Labor's numbers are in, and they're not pretty. Job loss has reached a whopping 533,000 cuts for the month of November. That brings the total casualties for this year to nearly two million. To put that statistic into perspective, the U.S. economy lost 2.7 million jobs between December 2000 and mid-2003. On top of all of this, the unemployment rate has risen to 6.7 percent, the highest level in 15 years. Average pay is dropping, economic growth is grinding to a halt, and we expect Barack Obama to fix all of this within four years.

To say that this is a daunting task for the president-elect is putting it mildly. No president has had to grapple with an economic catastrophe of this magnitude in today's globalized economy. There is, however, hope. CNN reports that Obama has begun to outline some more of the details in his plan to create 2.5 million jobs by 2011. Parts of his plan include making public buildings more energy-efficient, repairing roads and bridges, modernizing schools, increasing broadband access, and ensuring that health care professionals upgrade to the latest technology.

A couple of points stand out in his bold proposal. First, it seems as if one of his main goals is to use this opportunity to improve the country's infrastructure by investing in state and local projects, such as transportation and school systems. That might not be such a bad idea given the staggering number of job losses each month. Even temporary road, bridge, tunnel, and mass transit construction and repair work could help to stave the bleeding as layoffs continue to soar.

Second, although the actual labor of some of these projects will only offer immediate employment, the benefits are long lasting investments. Many cities and towns are in desperate need for funds to repair these exact types of problems, and Obama's plan will likely be welcomed with open arms when he enters office this coming January.

The exact aim of his plan

is still not entirely clear. He is obviously looking at this in both the short and long term, but whether his plan is geared more towards actually improving the state of the economy or simply towards providing relief until the nation picks itself up again is yet to be completely calculated.

This brings up an entirely new set of dizzying questions. Most will probably be pleased to see that the incoming president is actually taking action instead of sitting idly by and fiddling, but many will likely also want to know how Obama's going to "fix" the economy rather than just slowing down the current recession. Others will argue that the president-elect should in fact do nothing, and instead let the markets work themselves out by learning from their own mistakes.

Perhaps the fundamental problem with this country right now is that we are stuck in a 20th century mindset on how to get things done and solve problems. It seems as if any and every wide spread recession needs some sort of "revolution" to pull the economy from out of the ditch. Look at the times when the nation's economy has grown in U.S. history. In the 1940's it was gearing up for WWII, in the 1990's there was the Internet and computer boom that created hundred of new businesses and millions of new jobs. What industry will save us in the 2010's?

The answer might be more apparent than many realize. As the world population continues to grow exponentially and resources decrease, there is going to be an eventual tipping point where too many people are competing for too few supplies. Some of these resources include food and fresh water, but perhaps the most sought after and fought over product will be one above all others: energy.

It is going to take an energy revolution to truly remold our economy to the point where it is of sustainable long-term growth and progress. Look at the fluctuation in gas prices over this entire year. Every American remembers seeing prices creeping steadily towards five dollars a gallon just this summer. Now, there

is hopeful talk of some stations soon charging 1 dollar or less, assuming economic trends continue. The point is that oil is a volatile resource controlled not by domestic suppliers but largely by foreign countries.

Obama's plan addresses this fundamental flaw in American energy policy and it will be interesting to see if he follows through on his pledge to invest \$150 billion over 10 years into renewable sources of power. His goal to end our dependence on foreign oil is not just a good idea; it is a necessary one.

Perhaps this is all unnecessary, though. Maybe the markets will dictate how and when the country will emerge from its current economic decline. What is appealing about Obama's plans and initiatives, however, is that they are not just idealistic ideas about how or why the country's economy should function and be run. Instead, they are the necessary steps that must be taken if America and the world are going to last in the long run.

If we decide to step back, for example, and let the market take its course, the push for these alternative energies will die down. So long as gas prices remain reasonable for the time being, there will be no incentive for anything to change. So long as speculators and Big Oil lobbyists are able to fix prices, we will not have to worry about climate change, global energy shortages, or environmental ruin, until the shortsighted markets partly responsible for our current economic problems deem such investments as worthwhile and possibly profitable endeavors.

Even the most free market thinkers probably would argue that alternative energies are the solution to the planet's energy crises. There needs to be a balance between government intervention and private investment and Obama's plan is the first monumental and pivotal step in accomplishing just that. Instead of thinking about immediate profits, which is what partly caused the banking and housing debacles, let us at least give Obama a chance, and see how well investing in the future works for both us now and our children later.

The Inefficiencies of Government Spending

By ZACHARY KURTZ
Opinions Editor

Lets get one thing straight: The government cannot create jobs, invest in infrastructure, and create demand for alternative energy or "save" the economy. Generating or saving capital for investment requires some source of production, unless the investment capital is taken from somewhere else. When government increases its budget to finance "public projects" it has to take this money from taxpayers. Every dollar the government spends is a dollar the American people can no longer spend. Every job the government creates is a job that the market can no longer create.

Lets take a look at the case study of alternative energy. Alternative energy sources are not created equally. There's wind power, biofuels, solar cells, liquid hydrogen, with dozens of technologies, which use different sources to create them. For every dollar that the government invests in one of these technologies, the opportunity cost is that other technologies go unfunded. So while the government provides massive subsidized for corn to ethanol production, a process which currently requires four times more energy input than is released, perhaps there is some technology which a greater potential that cannot be explored for lack of funds.

This is how government spending distorts markets. The reason why alternative energies are so expensive is because the initial infrastructure requires a huge amount of capital investments. But, far from being a barrier to desirable alternative energies, this represents a safeguard against over-investing in the wrong technology. Oil is cheap right now, so people are sticking to oil. But, when gas prices rise, people buy less gas. As the oil supply runs out and gas becomes prohibitively expensive the market will require cheap alternative energies.

Investors will bet on which one it will be, and the best one will "win."

The result will be the cheapest solution, because investors tend to follow the government's money, even if this is providing funding to the "wrong" technology. When the consumer rejects the outcome, much more investment capital would be lost than if the market were left to provide the best solution from the beginning.

This happens in the free market and the result is the best possible outcome desired by consumers. What if the government had subsidized beta max over VHS in the format wars of the 80's? The result would be an inferior, higher cost technology.

Obama claims that his plan will "save you, the American taxpayer, billions of dollars each year. It will put people back to work." This statement is inherently contradictory. The government can possibly spend money now with the hope that it will save money later. But it cannot do so efficiently or without taking the money from taxpayers. Obama's plan is to raise taxes on the top earners. This will limit the power of the market's biggest investors to fund the best, most efficient solutions to our nations problems.

When the government throws money at public investments, especially such things as schools, transportation and health care, much of this money gets wasted in an administrative black hole. Anyone who is familiar with government bureaucracy can tell you about the type of waste that goes on. When private business seek to increase profits, it will trim the fat to become more efficient and cut costs and sometimes that means cutting jobs. Government bureaucracy, although technically non-profit, will always try to raise more capital from the taxpayers and justify large budgets.

So while we're in the middle of an economic recession, and jobs are being lost, we cannot hope that government spending will succeed in finding the best and cheapest solutions.

Continued on page 10

Right, Left and Center

RL&C is the Stony Brook Statesman's new initiative to expose readers to the diverse array of opinions about important local, national and international issues.

The views expressed here are those of the authors themselves, and do not necessarily represent those of the *Statesman*.

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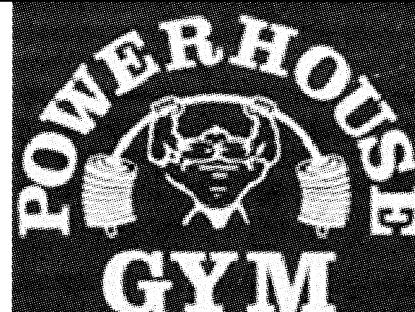
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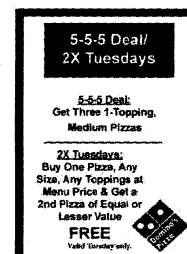
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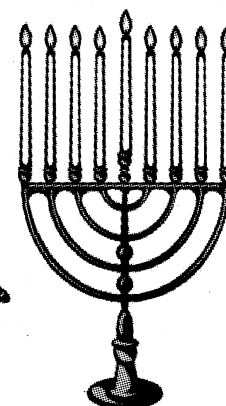
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*Christmas
(Christian)*



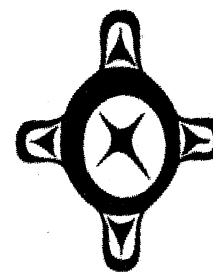
*Three Kings Day
(Christian)*



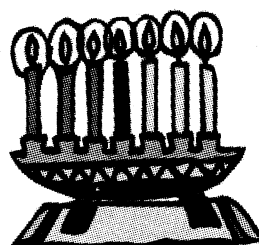
*Hanukah
(Jewish)*



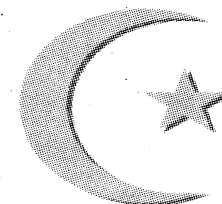
*Diwali
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& Eid ul-Adha
(Muslim)*

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STONY BROOK

2008-09 SEAWOLVES ATHLETICS

Seawolves Men's Basketball vs. Hofstra Pride

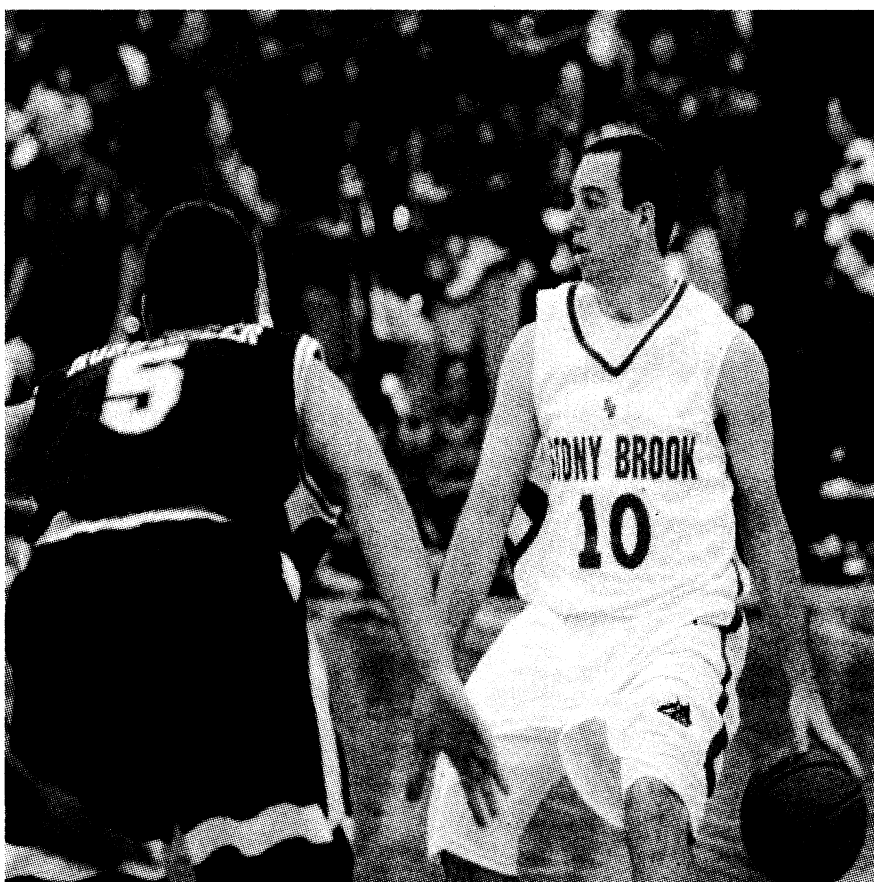
Wednesday, December 10th at 7PM

Come Join Us in the RED Zone Student Section!

Pre-Game Pep Rally in the Univ. Café
with the entire Red Zone @ 5PM

***Get a chance to win an I-Pod Touch &
42" Flat Screen TV!**





Brian Dougher and the Seawolves look to keep the winning streak alive when Charles Jenkins and Long Island Rival Hofstra visit Pritchard Gymnasium on Wednesday night.

Kenneth Ho/ SB Statesman

Women's Basketball Still Searching for First Win

By GENE MORRIS
Sports Editor

Seawolves Fall 81-42 at Sacred Heart

On Dec. 3 the Seawolves traveled to Fairfield, Conn. to take on Sacred Heart.

The Seawolves got off to a slow start, falling behind early 11-2. They were never able to dig themselves out of the whole, falling 81-42.

Stony Brook turned the ball over 23 times, and Sacred Heart was able to turn that into 24 points.

Sacred Heart also out rebounded the Seawolves by a 54-28 margin, and grabbed 22 of those rebounds on the offensive end.

Freshman Misha Horsey led Stony Brook with 13 points. She also had two steals, two rebounds, and an assist. She shot 6-15 from the field, while the rest of the team combined to shoot only 8-38.

The victory was the first of the season for Sacred Heart.

Seawolves Defeated By Northeastern

at Home

Stony Brook took an 11-10 lead at the 10:07 mark of the first half after a jump shot by Kirsten Jeter.

They held the lead throughout the first half and early into the second.

But a three-point shot by Ashlee Feldman put Northeastern ahead 33-30 with 18:40 left in the second half, and the Huskie never looked back, going up by as many as 16 before winning the game 62-51.

The Seawolves were again led offensively by Horsey, who scored 15 points on 5-11 shooting. She also had two rebounds and an assist.

Joia Daniels was the only other Stony Brook player to score in double figures. She had 13 points on 5-7 shooting. She also contributed three rebounds and three assists.

The loss dropped Stony Brook to 0-7.

The Seawolves once again look to pick up its first victory of the season on Monday night when they host Yale at Pritchard Gym. Tip-off is scheduled for 6:00pm.

Men's Basketball Extends Win Streak

Continued from pg 16

Hawks to only 39 percent (11-28) shooting.

Seven different Seawolves scored in the opening period, with Martin leading the pack with six points. Through hustle plays and free-throws, the home team managed to cut the lead to five at 22-27 going into halftime.

The second half saw the Mountain Hawks extend their lead to 32-22, after a three-point bucket by Hall and midrange jumper by Rob Keefer.

But a three-point basket from Freshman Brian Dougher (Scotch Plains, N.J.) and back to back layups from Martin and Adedeji trimmed the Hawk lead to seven with 14 minutes left in the game.

A monstrous dunk by Adedeji got the Seawolves within six at 32-38, bringing the crowd of over a thousand screaming fans to its feet and leading to a Lehigh timeout.

The Seawolves' defense was relentless, seemingly feeding off of their offensive suc-

cess to force the Hawks into difficult shots and costly turnovers.

A three-pointer by John Moore (Cleveland, Ohio) brought the Seawolves within one, followed by another layup by Adedeji that finally put the Seawolves on top at 41-40 with nine minutes left. The home team would never look back, playing stifling defense and capitalizing on offense.

Over a nine minute stretch, the Hawks were held to two field goals, en route to shooting a mere 30 percent (9-30) in the last 20 minutes, while the Seawolves hit 53 percent (16-30) of their shots.

The Hawks were held to 50 points and committed 23 turnovers, after averaging 74 points and only 11 turnovers in their previous seven games.

A 19-2 Seawolves run, in which Martin contributed seven points, sealed the deal and gave the home team a 62-44 cushion with 2:30 minutes to go.

By BRIAN MORGAN
Senior Writer

Stony Brook's men's basketball team picked up its fourth straight victory Sunday, beating Div. III Mount Ida by a score of 95-40.

"We took care of business," said Stony Brook's head coach Stephen Pikiell.

In the first half, Stony Brook thumped the Mustangs, outscoring the visitors 52-25. Mount Ida was held to 28.1% shooting, while the Seawolves shot 52.8% in the half.

Junior Muhammad El-Amin led all scorers in the half, as he tallied 18 points on 6-7 shooting, including 4-4 from three-point land.

"El-Amin scores in a lot different ways," Pikiell said. "He loves to shoot and he's been working hard on his game in the gym."

In the second half, Stony Brook continued its dominance, as the team out-scored the Mustangs 43-15. The Seawolves went on a 11-0 run to start the half, and added a 15-0 run later on to increase its lead to 90-35.

Mount Ida was held to 21.7 % shooting in the half, finishing 25.5 % for the game. To add to their woes, the Mustangs had 24 turnovers, compared to the Seawolves' 9.

El-Amin ended as the high scorer for the game with a career high 22 points, while freshman Bryan Dougher and junior Jonathan Moore added 12 points each.

Newcomer Desmond Adedeji, a 6-9, 298 pound junior transfer from Dayton played in his second game as a Seawolf and added six points, four rebounds, and led the team in the blocks category with four in his 15 minutes.

"Desmond is a guy who has great hands, clogs the lanes, and adds size to our team," Pikiell said.

Overall the Seawolves shot 33-68 (48.5%) from the field, including 10-21 (47.6%) from three-point land.

Although the Seawolves were going against a lesser opponent, Pikiell was happy with his teams' offense performance.

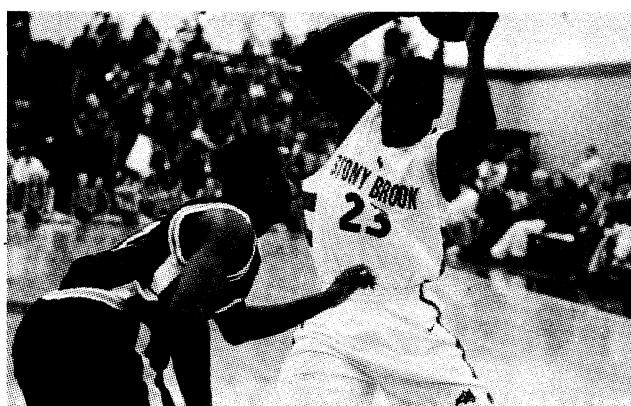
"A jump shot is a jump shot," Pikiell said. "It gives the guys the comfort to know they can hit their shots."

The victory gives the Seawolves a 5-3 record on the season, their best start since the 2002-2003 season. The next game for Stony Brook is this Wednesday, where the Seawolves will host Long Island Rival Hofstra, who is 6-1 to start its season.

"We're going to be facing a tough team who is on a six game winning streak," Pikiell said.

But Pikiell has a secret weapon this year. Pritchard Gym.

"I love Pritchard. It's brighter, louder, and the guys shoot on these rims every day," Pikiell said. "The fans are closer to the game, and they give us a home-court advantage."



The Seawolves have proved to be a tough team to play against in Pritchard Gym. The Seawolves have won its last two at Pritchard and host Hofstra on Wednesday night.

Kenneth Ho/ SB Statesman

STATESMAN SPORTS

Ready for the Pride!

**Chris Martin and the
Seawolves are off to best
start in six years, host
Hofstra on Wednesday**

Kenneth Ho / SB Statesman

By SARAH KAZADI
Contributing Writer

A dominating second half and stellar play from Sophomore Chris Martin (Springfield Gardens, N.Y.) and Junior Desmond Adedeji (Landover Hills, Md.) propelled the Stony Brook Seawolves to victory over the Lehigh University Mountain Hawks at Pritchard Gymnasium Friday night. Stingy defense and timely scoring

flurries led to the Seawolves win, the third in as many games.

"It was a great home win for us," said Stony Brook Head Coach Steve Pikiell, "Our guys did a good job on D all night and were focused on the game plan."

Martin tallied a career-high 19 points, 13 of which came in the second half, and won America East Player of the Game Honors.

In his first home game as a member of the Seawolves, Adedeji barely missed a double-double, contributing 11 points and nine rebounds. "I never got a chance to fight and go to war with them," said Adedeji of his team after his home debut, "It felt great to be out there, especially in a game like this."

But the game was a tale of two halves for the Seawolves.

In the first half, the home team looked

sluggish and unsure on offense, shooting only 22 percent (7-32) from the field. Lehigh guard Marquis Hall scored ten quick points, including 2 three-pointers, giving the Mountain Hawks an early nine point lead at 16-7.

But the Seawolves played tenacious defense, forcing turnovers and holding the

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