

Should Student Funds Be Used For Political Groups?
Special Report begins on Page 2

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From Another World

The Fantastic and
the Just Plain
Weird Converge
on the Campus
for I-CON XVIII
COVERAGE BEGINS ON PAGE 6

Contestants take part in a armored fighting tournament this past Saturday.



CRP

A Special Report:

An Education in Politics

Supreme Court to Decide Whether Student Activities Fees Can Be Used for Political Purposes

By JENNIFER KESTER AND PETER GRATTON
Statesman Editors

Against the backdrop of a University controversy over the use of Polity funds for partisan purposes, the Supreme Court agreed last week to decide whether mandatory student activity fees at public universities can be used to subsidize campus groups that pursue political goals.

Students on the campus here have been battling the office of Student Affairs to have the right to use Polity funds to support a bus trip to Philadelphia to protest the imprisonment of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an African American convicted of the murder of a police officer in that city in 1982. Abu-Jamal has remained on death row while a number of activists across the country have scrutinized the case in the hope of getting a new trial granted.

Jodie Lawston, president of the Center for Womyn's Concerns, and Anya Mukarji-Connolly are two students that have been fighting for Abu-Jamal's cause. The activists are trying to get funds for the bus trip and increase awareness about the case on campus. However,



Statesman/Jennifer Kester

Jodie Lawston (left) giving Stony Brook student Stephen Preston literature on the Mumia Abu-Jamal trip last week when organizers tabled in front of the Student Activities Center.

the activists, who have been tabling all over campus, have encountered problems in getting funds from Polity. They say that Abu-Jamal's case is representative of an oppressive use of police force that even students on campus face.

"Mumia's struggle incorporates all of us," said Mukarji-Connolly. "We're trying to connect [our trip] to recent cases of police brutality."

The problem said Fred Preston, vice-president for student affairs, is the perception that the planned trip is not so much a learning experience for students as a political one. "If there was some educational, social or cultural benefit, it is fine, but if the activity is a political event, [polity

funds] cannot be used for that purpose," he said.

At first, Lawston and Mukarji-Connolly said, Preston refused to sign off on permission for the trip - leaving event organizers without the cash to pay for the scheduled busses. "Preston told a student council meeting that he wouldn't let the check [for the trip] pass," Lawston said.

However, Preston has now reversed his original view on the trip, saying that event organizers described the trip as political in purpose. Lawston and Mukarji-Connolly have since submitted a proposal causing Preston's change of mind. The trip, he says now, "is an educational vehicle."



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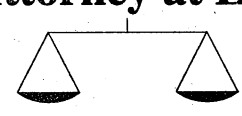


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Statesman/Jennifer Kester

Organizer Anya Mukarji-Conolly (right), explaining the Mumia Abu-Jamal case to a student on campus.

It is this fine line between the political and educational uses of student money that caught the attention of the Supreme Court last week. In the case to be decided by the court, conservative students from the University of Wisconsin sued the university to bar it from using student activity money, collected mandatorily, for the funding of groups that were political in purpose.

"We don't want to see the university involved in funneling mandatory student fees to any private student

What activists see as educational, some students see as political.

groups," said Scott Southworth, a 1997 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School who now works for a state legislator. "We think that it constitutes an invasion of the marketplace of ideas." Southworth said that he was pleased that the Court has now agreed to hear the case.

John Grabel, president of the United Council of UW students, agreed. Lower courts, "ignored the educational mission of the university," he said. "The Supreme Court now has the opportunity to preserve free speech on campus by overturning" those decisions.

A federal trial judge and an appeals court had already ruled that the subsidies unlawfully force some students to subsidize views they find objectionable and thereby violate free-speech rights. The lower courts barred the university from using fees collected from objecting students.

Southworth was among the conservative law students

who had objected to the funding of 18 organizations on the Madison campus. Among those groups was the Students of National Organization for Women, the International Socialist Organization, the Campus Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Center and an AIDS support network.

"The forced funding of such organizations significantly adds to the burdening of the students' free-speech rights," a three-judge panel of the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last year. It said that the university "cannot use the allocable portion of objecting students' mandatory activity fees to fund [those] organizations."

The appeals court panel's ruling did not shield objecting students from paying any activity fees, but gave them an opt-out privilege. They can identify the political or ideological groups that they do not want to support and have their fees reduced on a prorated basis.

Opponents of the Circuit Court's decision say that the ruling greatly diminishes the flow of free speech on college campuses, an element necessary in educational institutions.

Ultimately, the Supreme Court will have to decide.

"We look to the Supreme Court to stop this narrow-minded assault on a neutral system for supporting campus dialogue," said Patricia Logue of the Lambda Legal Defense and Educational Fund, a gay rights group.

In a friend-of-the-court brief supporting the university's appeal, Lambda's lawyers had argued that the appeals court's ruling "confuses payments to construct a stage with being forced to speak upon it or fund an organization that uses it."

The Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that public universities

and colleges cannot create a "public forum" for students and then refuse to subsidize some student groups because of their viewpoint. That decision said the University of Virginia wrongly prohibited funding for a student-run Christian magazine.

The 7th Circuit panel used University of Virginia case in its own decision. "If the university cannot discriminate in the disbursement of funds, it is imperative that students not be compelled to fund organizations which engage in political and ideological activities - that is the only way to protect the individual's rights," the panel ruled.

Preston said that he felt that there was "no need for the Court to place a correction. The way the mandatory fees have been utilized have worked in the best interests of the students," he said, "I'm supportive of the Wisconsin campus."

However, at least one student leader at the University remains wary of the political use of student money.

"I have a problem with groups using funding for political purposes," said Sayed Ali, vice-president of Polity. Ali said that in certain cases, such as the funding of the April 24 trip to protest the scheduled execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, there is a clear indication that it can only be for political purposes. "People are going up there to demonstrate for his innocence and that is political," Ali said. "But if people were going to learn about the case or the facts of the case, then that would be educational."

Lawston said there was not such a clear-cut line between what is political and educational. About the distinction between the two proposals that her groups submitted, the first of which Preston's office declined, Lawston said "it's all how you word it."



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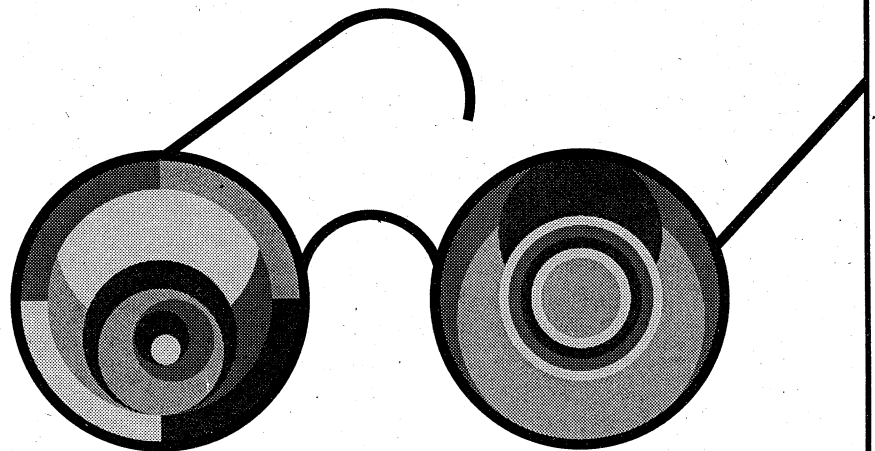
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There is something important that many of students don't know is happening here on campus. And if Polity's leadership has its way, they will remain in the dark.

Students may be missing the usual campaign literature, and posters that dot the campus at this time of year, and there is a good reason for it. As usual, there is a major snafu with this year's Polity elections.

The *Statesman* has made more than several sincere attempts at finding out exactly what happened, but we have been stone-walled at every turn. All of the candidates that we have tried to contact said they were instructed not to comment. Apparently, someone on the Polity Council has placed a gag order on the whole election.

The only response that we were able to get was from Heather Wilbur, freshman representative. In correspondence sent to us on Friday, April 9, Wilbur wrote the following:

The elections are on hold still. I don't believe campaign week will be next week, certainly not Monday. The Council is having a meeting to try to help clear things up, but until then I'm on hold as well as elections.

Please don't inquire any further, to any candidates or council, I promise I'll get back to you when I can. None of us can answer questions right now because we don't know what's going on.

-Heather

Wonder why?

From what we have been able to find out, the story begins with Brad Hausman, a polity senator, who wanted to run for the position of treasurer. His bid was rejected by the Elections Board.

In order for someone to be on the ballot, he or she must get 250 signatures -from undergraduate students.

Nicole Daniel and the

Three Words for Polity Leadership: Inept, Inept, Inept.

Elections Board rejected Hausman's petition, saying that the number of illegible signatures put the count of his signatures under 250.

But when has anyone's signature been legible? Well, many people just don't take the time to sign their signatures as legibly as the Board would like them to. Maybe the whole student body should apologize to Ms. Daniel and those who count the signatures. Apparently, those on the Election Board have hand writing that is much, much better than the rest of ours.

Hausman appealed the decision and the matter was eventually passed to Polity Judiciary. However, Oliver Tam, the head of the Judiciary, is missing in action and could not be found to hear the case. This lead to the initial delay in the

election.

Originally, approval of the ballot was on the agenda for the March 24 emergency meeting of the Senate, when the Constitution was passed. That was simple enough. However, the usual squabbling and petty nit-picking took over, and quorum was lost before it could be approved, or even looked at. That wouldn't have helped anyway, because Hausman's situation was still before Judiciary, and Daniels, who was supposed to make a presentation before the Senate had quietly slipped out of the meeting sometime during all the arguing.

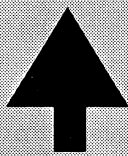
The ballot was again on the agenda for last week's meeting, but the Hausman situation remains unresolved, and could not be passed anyway.

The elections are still up in the air.

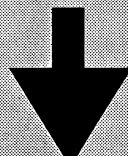
All this leads to a couple of more questions about the actions that have been taken during this year's election process. With the semester quickly coming to an end, when are they planning to have the mandatory campaign period? And why was the ballot printed and finalized before what is probably the most important thing before Polity this semester, the Constitution, was approved to be sent to the student body?

With these lingering questions going unanswered, it is the responsibility of the Polity Council to inform the student body. There is no need for secrecy, especially when those on the Council are elected representatives who will be held accountable for their actions.

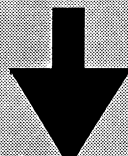
Misery Index



Shirley must be peeing in her pants with excitement: After wondering where Shirley and the administrators came up with the notion of "diveristy" they are always bragging about, it all came to light this weekend at I-CON. There are few things as diverse (not to mention down-right scary) as "Hamlet" performed in Klingon or Mr. Spock selling cardboard cutouts of Boba Fett. Perhaps even a better example of diversity at its finest is the people who would actually pay \$175 for the Ewok village or buy a video titled "Teenage Cat Girls in Heat."



If you thought that was scary...We are starting to notice a very disturbing trend: We can write about tuition increasing, women professors getting paid less than their male counterparts and Polity attempting (but of course failing) to reinstitute a new constitution. You know, important stuff and we don't hear a peep from the student body. But start criticizing fraternities and sororities and cracking some jokes on April Fool's Day and suddenly everybody's a critic! As long as you people know what really counts.

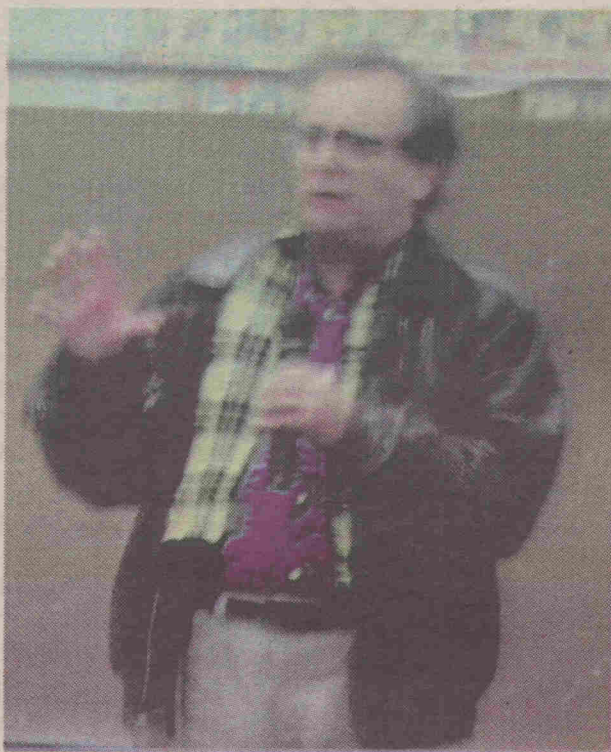


Don't you feel safe now: In case you haven't noticed, the parking on this campus is horrendous. And to those of you that thought it was safe to park behind the Union during Spring Break, you too fell victim to the mighty meter maid. But the really annoying part was questioning the cop who was hanging out in the office in the Union. Don't ask them if its okay to park over there, the guy won't even know what lot you're talking about. But in all fairness, maybe he didn't know because his game of computer solitaire was so rudely interrupted. (Yes, this really happened.)

- Compiled by Erin Rosenking

Not Geek to Us

I-CON XVIII Brings the Weird and the Wacky to Stony Brook Campus



By MICHAEL KWAN
Statesman Editor

FOR ONE WEEKEND A YEAR, KNIGHTS, damsels, cowboys, futuristic adventurers and anyone else from Mars to Alpha Centauri can be seen all over campus when the I-CON science fiction convention takes over Stony Brook.

In its eighteenth year, the "Con" brought people from every walk of life together, "It's a diverse crowd," said SBU student Alec Kleier.

"There's lot's of interesting things here, interesting people," said Rich Ticomb, a second-year volunteer. He said that going to the convention was a natural offshoot of his work as an engineer.

People dressed in Star Trek costumes, gothic and medieval clothing, and even some popular video game characters could be seen wandering around locales like the Cyber Bar, where visitors could relax after a long day of traveling, the Dealers' Room, which featured science fiction memorabilia, toys, videos, and medieval weapons and armor, and a performance of

William Shakespeare's play, "Hamlet," in Klingon, in the Union's Bi-level Lounge. Visitors could also be seen running around campus while participating in LARPs, Live Action Role Playing games. And on the lawn in front of the Physics building, medieval warriors could be seen battling each other to the death, sort of.

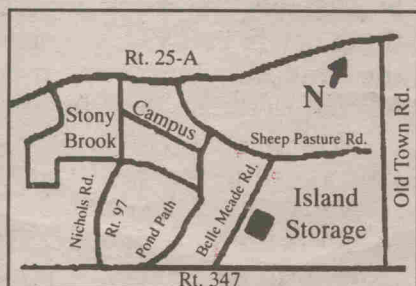
The special guests this year also continued this thread of diversity. Robert Picardo, the Doctor of Star Trek: Voyager, another Doctor, Sylvester McCoy, of the BBC series Dr. Who, Nebula Award Winner and fantasy author, Harlan Ellison, another author Lois McMaster Bujold, Star Wars' R2-D2, Kenny Baker and artist Todd Lockwood.

Audiences were given the opportunity to ask the guests questions about their lives, experiences and thoughts about the world.

AT A Q&A SESSION FRIDAY NIGHT, MCCOY spoke about his experience during his three season stint as Dr. Who, entertaining the audience with amusing banter.

He said that he was always against writers that tried

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Photos by Michael Kwan and Peter Gratton

The mysterious Doctor Who, Sylvester McCoy (facing page). Kenny Baker, R2-D2 unmasked (above). A medieval shop keeper finds the ultimate shop lifting deterrent (upper right).

to make the Doctor violent. "That was Ace's job," he mused. He also said that "too much had been found out about him [the Doctor]," and that the mystery that had originally surrounded the character was gone. He was looking for a return to the original mystique that surrounded the Doctor during his early days.

McCoy said that he really admires the actors who portrayed the monsters that the Doctor would battle each week, especially those who played the cybernetically enhanced Daleks, who much like Baker who played R2-D2 in Star Wars, were stuck inside a tin can all day. "They had to have a smooth surface for the Daleks to conquer the universe," he said, saying that the actors always had problems moving around in the suits.

Baker, who said that he had originally turned the part of R2-D2 down, had much of the same problems. Essentially all he could do was waddle and turn the head in the costume.

He is reprising his role in the upcoming "Phantom Menace" and said that the first day of shooting was very exciting for him, and that it was much like a family reunion. Many of the crew members and several actors returned to work on the first of the prequels.

Baker said that the part that he would most like to play is that of "Little John."

Ellison and science fiction author Peter David emceed a charity auction for the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, which aids comic book dealers who have been put out of business by those who simply feel that comic books are subversive. "Just because it's in the Constitution doesn't mean it's a given," he said, "In this day and age, you have to fight the Joe McCarthys of the world."

I-CON IS ALSO A TIME FOR NOSTALGIA FOR some of its participants. Merchandise covering the span of science fiction's history can be found in the Dealers' Room, where copies of Pierre Boulle's novel, "Planet of the Apes," and old toys and comic books of all types could be found on sale.

"I started [to go] when I used to come to school here," said Greg Schaefer, class of 1991, "and it became a tradition."

Another of this year's visitors was John "Dr. John" Brantley, an actual PhD. and a former member of I-CON's board of directors. "All my friends are here," he said, "I'm here to enjoy the show. Which is sort of an interesting experience."



Sci Fi fans looking for their favorites among all of the merchandise in the Dealers' Room. Everything from toys to clothing to replica weapons was available at the Sports Complex last weekend.

Dear Carolyn:

I'm 22 and about to enter a Ph.D. program. I've dated heavily for the last five years, and learned a lot. Now, I really want to settle down—have kids and a husband. The problem is, people seem to think that because of my age, this is a stupid idea. I do date guys a bit older—25, 26—but they always act surprised when I say I'm looking for a commitment. I'm beginning to think I'm sending out the wrong vibes.

-Virginia

It's not surprise these guys are expressing. It's horror. There's nothing at all wrong with a 22-year-old who knows what she wants. But a 22-year-old who knows she wants a commitment before she knows with whom? That scares me a little, and I'm not paying for dinner. You think you're saying, "I may be 22, but I want to be taken seriously." But men are hearing, "I wanna get hitched. Now. You'll do."

If you put any stock in stereotypes, it's women who are loved for their looks, their bodies, their something-other-than-their-truest-deepest-selves. But men have a funny way of wanting to be appreciated, too. When you hand over your Perfect Life Road Map, you're ruling out that the man of your dreams might still have some itches to scratch before he settles down. You're ruling out that you and the right man, when you find each other, might chart out a different kind of life.

You're ruling out that guys are also defined by their plans, quirks and dreams—and that, just like women, they hope for a mate who recognizes and supports these things. Want to send better vibes? Close the commitment subject, and open your mind.

Dear Carolyn:

My parents won't let me date. I'm 15, will be 16 at the end of April, and I feel I need a girlfriend. It makes me feel bad when I go places with friends and they have their girlfriends with them. It makes me feel like I'm not very useful and not as "special."

My parents don't like the situations I could get myself into and I don't think they want to trust me enough to give me the opportunity. I think I need to be allowed to make my own decisions. I'll be "playing with fire" but I think I need to prove not everyone gets burned by it. I feel I need to make the decision to date or not to date by myself.

—J

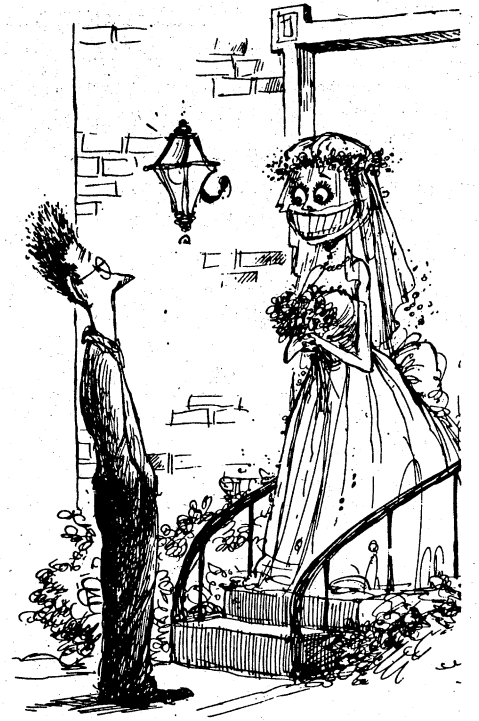
If you were my kid, I would base the dating decision not on your age or maturity level, but on your grasp of English. You learn to distinguish between "want" and "need," or you stay home. I'll give you an exercise. Repeat after me, five times: "I want a girlfriend, but I need permission to date."

Much better. Though I imagine winning your parents over is more an age/maturity thing.

The freedom to cruise chicks seems like a reasonable 16th birthday present. But if you ask for it badly, you're toast, because your parents are utterly freaked out by the prospect of giving it. And, as veterans of being 16 can tell you, somewhat justifiably. Yet you're going to get your freedom one way or another, and freedom needs trust, and trust grows from freedom handled responsibly, so your parents have to start this harrowing process somewhere.

Here's how not to approach them: by saying you need to make this decision yourself. You're 15. You don't. Besides, it's an all-or-nothing gambit, which, with parents at least, is the hard way to get absolutely nothing. (I'd also leave out the part about your not getting burned. We all get singed eventually. Builds character. Allegedly.)

Instead, approach them by acknowledging, accepting and addressing their fears. Embrace them, even! Admit you're a bit scared yourself. You are new to this, after all. But say that, when you turn 16, you would like a little more freedom anyway—not all at once, but incrementally, as you learn to handle it and as you prove you won't abuse it. Then offer up sane, explicit boundaries. You can go out with girls, but never on school nights, and only on double or group dates to start, and you'll bring every date home to meet Maw, Paw and Granmaw after you introduce yourself to her parents, you'll leave a name or phone number where you're

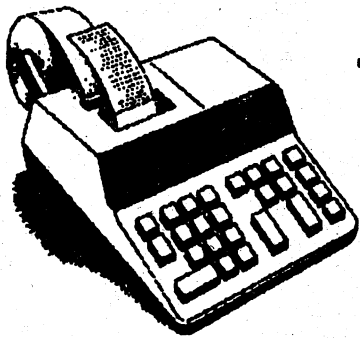


going to be, and come home by 11, and pledge never to be wheeled onto their doorstep drunk in a shopping cart by your pregnant ex-convict girlfriend.

If they say yes, thank them by observing these boundaries explicitly.

If they say no, summon every bit of self-control and ask, "What can I do, then, to earn your trust?" If they won't budge, drop it and try again later. Do not, I repeat, DO NOT wig. A tantrum will only convince them they're right. And don't respond with any sentence that begins, "Everybody else's parents let them ..." You'll have a curfew till you're 40.

Accountant



- Tax Returns
- Financial Advice
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Hit and Miss

SBU Softball and Marist Split Doubleheader

The Stony Brook softball team split a thrilling doubleheader with the visiting Marist Red Foxes at University Field this afternoon. In game one, Stony Brook knocked off Marist, 11-9, to earn its first victory over a Division I opponent of the year, but the Red Foxes bounced back to take the nightcap, 14-13.

In game one, Stony Brook out hit Marist, 17-12, and got seven innings out of pitcher Cassie Rupp who allowed 12 hits but only one earned run to outlast the Red Foxes for the 11-9 win. Tricia Lipareli went 4-for-4 with three RBI to pace Stony Brook. Christie McMurray went 2-for-4 with three RBI and Rupp was 3-of-4 for the Seawolves. Amanda Koldjeski went 3-for-4 with two RBI and two runs scored to lead the Red

Foxes. In the nightcap, Marist fended off a furious Stony Brook rally in the seventh inning to earn the 14-13 win. The Seawolves crossed the plate five times in the last inning but left the tying and winning runs stranded on the bases. Marist pounded out 18 hits while Stony Brook had 16 hits in the second game. Koldjeski led Marist as she went 3-of-4 with a home run, three RBI, and four runs scored. Koldjeski's solo home run in the seventh inning proved to be the game winner. Maria Saracino went 4-for-5 with a run scored and an RBI for the Red

Foxes. Lauren Ruane led Stony Brook as she went 2-for-4 with a run scored and three RBI. Marist ran its record to 8-11 with the doubleheader split.

Baseball Knocks off NY Tech

Stony Brook, NY - The Stony Brook baseball team ran its record to 15-7 on the year as Craig Ansmann and Gregg Foster drove in two runs apiece in a 10-7 win over NY Tech

SBU 10
Marist 7

Wednesday afternoon at University Field. The win was the Seawolves' fourth in five tries against Division I opponents this season.

Stony Brook banged out 15 hits on the afternoon, roughing up NY Tech starter Shane McKeon for six runs over the first three innings. Ansmann got the Seawolves going in the first frame with a two-run homer to right field. George Kearnes added a solo shot in the second inning and Alex Trezza hit a blast in the third to help SB build a 6-0 lead after three innings.

The Seawolves upped their lead 9-2 after four innings but the Bears battled back to within 9-7 in the

eightth inning. Stony Brook added an insurance run in the bottom of the eighth to extend its lead to 10-7.

In the final inning, NY Tech tried to mount a rally but came up short

when the game ended on a very unusual play. With runners on first and second and one out,

Stony Brook pulled off an unconventional double play as Khalil Gourdin's long drive to right field fell in for a single, but right fielder Kevin DeCapua threw behind Gourdin as he rounded first to first baseman CJ Lutz who applied the tag. Lutz then fired home and nabbed Mike Rick as he tried to score from third for the final out of the game.

Stony Brook will next be in action this Saturday when they travel to New Hampshire College for a doubleheader beginning at 12:00 p.m.

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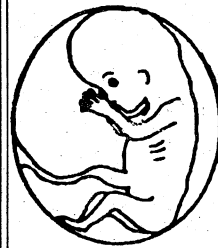
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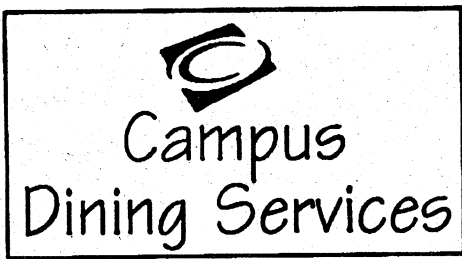
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Scholars Meet to Discuss Post-Modern Philosopher



Statesman/Peter Gratton

Keynote speaker Geoff Bennington discusses the biographies of Lyotard....

In a conference a year after his death last April 21, academics from both Europe and the U.S. eulogized Jean- Lyotard Thursday and Friday the best way they knew how. They discussed his work.

All told, seven people took to the podium to deliver papers as part of the Jean-François Lyotard Memorial Symposium held in the University's Humanities Institute. And another four professors from the University responded and introduced the papers.

Geoff Bennington, a professor of French at the University Sussex and a frequent translator of Lyotard's work, said that the philosopher's work was "excitingly prolific;" Robert Harvey, a University professor of comparative literature, said that Lyotard "tried to warn us against" the way that authoritative regimes work, and François Noudelman of the University of Poitiers, said that "he was in many ways the intellectual of the eighties."

Other participants warmly recalled memories they had of working and studying with Lyotard, a former visiting professor at Stony Brook. Hugh Silverman, a University professor of philosophy and comparative literature and an organizer of the symposium talked about seeing Lyotard's lectures while they were both in Paris, France. "It was a very exciting time," Silverman said.

- Peter Gratton



..while Robert Harvey's paper notes the French philosopher's work on what happens between two opposing sides or discourses.

An Indian Exhibition

JULIE MINGIONE
Statesman Editor

The Center for India Studies is currently hosting an exhibition of rarely seen photographs of India from the early twentieth century that celebrate India's independence movement. The show, titled, "India: On the Threshold of Freedom" is a collection of images that portray a broad scope of India's culture. These photos have never been exhibited before in either The United States or India and were recently made available due to the assets of a private collection.

The sponsor of the art show, Rick Recard, has assembled near sixty photographs that depict the evolution of the freedom movement in India, particularly in the 1930's. The people portrayed in the pictures range from Mahatma Gandhi celebrating his sixty

second birthday to Hindu pilgrims washing away their sins in the Holy Waters of the Ganges. The Maharajah of Kashmir is shown solemn faced along with the funeral of Liaquat Aliu Khan, which drew the biggest crowd ever in Kashmir.

Pictures of a political nature were prominently displayed at the exhibition, featuring the procession to the India House of Parliament, which at the time was newly constructed. Another photo of the Great Council House showed British and Indian troops drawn up before it at attention. Additional photographs included the Indian Interim Government and the Legislative Chamber at Dehli.

The exhibit opened on March 6 by veteran Indian freedom crusader Vidya Charan Shukla, who served as a minister in Indira Ghandi's cabinet, and will run until May 2 in the Melville Library.



"Polling Scenes in India" A section of the voters outside Town Hall in Dehli during the polling in the Assembly Election.