

Opinion

Online Ads: Weight Expectations

The latest abomination I have encountered while swimming in the white noise is the epidemic of ridiculous advertisements hawking weight loss products that promise miracle results, with pictures to prove it! For a representative example, please see rachelrayblogging.com/MyStory/ where you will be graced with a heap of lies so gross it defies belief.

» page 7

Arts

"V" Invades Television

As if humanity hasn't been kicked around enough by every other television show and movie out there, ABC's "V" aired on November 3, 2009 with a new take on the invasion of planet Earth. The program, a sleek and fast-paced reimagining of the 1983 miniseries, does however display a fairly unique take on the concept, and its potential to entertain is nothing short of immense.

» page 9

Sports

For Crew, Early Mornings and Low Funds Do Not Negate Passion

It's 5 a.m., and the only light cutting through the sleepy predawn mist is the faint orange glow emanating from the streetlights on Stony Brook's Circle Road. Four dark figures dressed in sweats descend to the bottom of the Tabler Steps, puffs of breath escaping the shadows cast by their raised hoods, each person unidentifiable in the shadows.

» page 11

Professors Take a Stand Against Rising Textbook Costs

FRANK POSILICO
Photo Editor

Jake Whritenour's eyes widened and jaw dropped in disbelief when he saw the \$465 bill for textbooks, and he felt his wallet shrink. "I worked a long time for that money," said Whritenour, 18, a mechanical engineering major at Stony Brook. "Looks like I'll be getting a job."

Students across the country share in Whritenour's despair. The Government Accountability Office has found that students pay, on average, \$900 for textbooks a year. Textbook prices have also tripled from 1986 to 2004, and it is estimated that overall students pay \$6 billion on books a year.

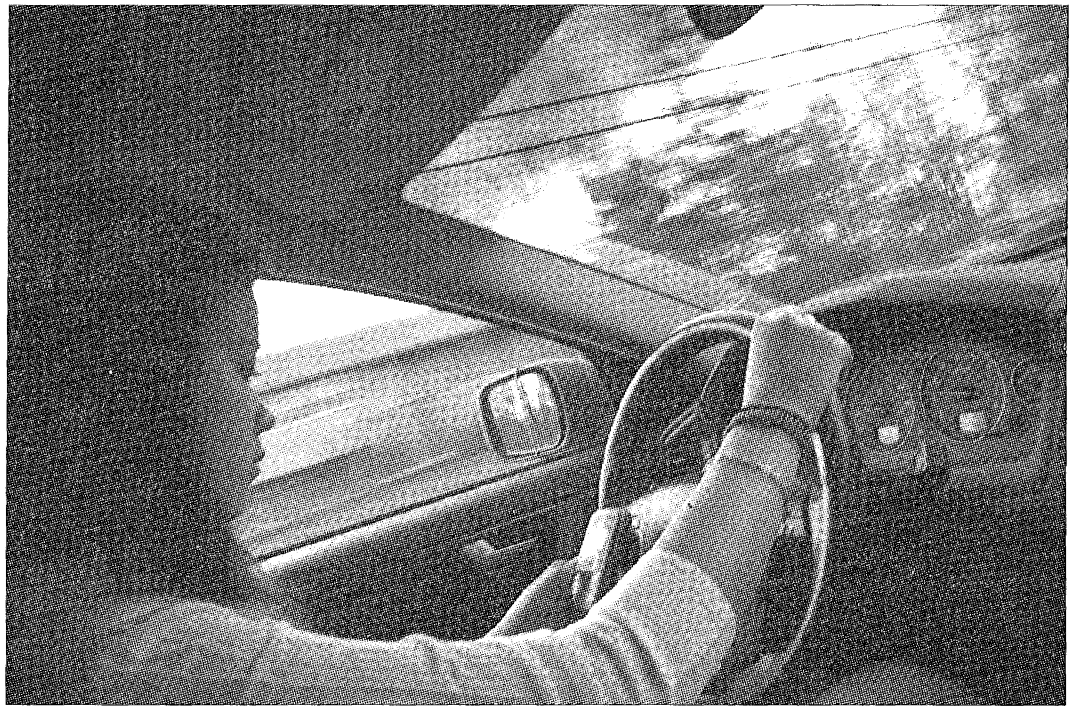
"Textbook prices can be the tipping point between going to college and dropping out, because of cost," said Nicole Allen, the campaign director for the watchdog group Make Textbooks Affordable.

With tuition at Stony Brook already increased for the current semester, and the likelihood of additional increases on the way, prices for textbooks are becoming the tipping point for many students. Keith Filangieri, 22, a theater major at Stony Brook, worked extra hours to afford books for the fall semester and will have to do the same in the spring.

Professors have heard their student's cries for help and are trying to be the solution. About 2,000 professors from Harvard to Suffolk Community College have signed a statement on the Make Textbooks Affordable campaign website, pledging to use online books in their classes.

R. Preston McAfee is one of these professors who have chosen to publish his book online for free. "I couldn't continue assigning idiotic books that are starting to break \$200," said McAfee, an economics professor at Caltech. McAfee in 2006 published his "Introduction to Economics Analysis" textbook online. Originally offered \$100,000 to publish his book, he declined and decided to publish online, citing that the textbook industry was unfair to students. The book, including revisions, has since been

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Ezra Margono / SB Statesman

39 percent of people under the age of 30 admit to sending text messages while driving.

Texting: An Unforeseen Epidemic

BY BERNIE LUBELL
Contributing Writer

David Teater never anticipated that mundane cell phone use would kill his 12-year-old son. Teater, since his son's death, has made it his life's work to prevent distracted driving. In 2004, a young woman ran a red light and hit the car in which his wife and son were riding.

Texting while driving, the drunken driving of the 21st Century, is a modern epidemic hitting American roadways. In fact, the Transport Research Laboratory found that the reaction times of drivers who send text messages while driving deteriorated by 35 percent. This is far worse than drunk drivers, who were 12 percent slower, and those impaired by marijuana that were 21 percent slower.

"We take for granted that driving a car is an extremely difficult task, and that it's the number one cause for death between the ages of one and 35," said Teater, now the Senior Director of Transportation Initiatives for the National Safety Council. The woman who killed Teater's son is not the only person texting while driving. A study conducted by Nationwide indicates that 39 percent of people under the age of 30 admit to sending text messages while driving, while

19 percent confess across all age groups.

The rise of modern technology is bringing with it an unanticipated companion: a surge in deaths. Experts agree that for many, texting has become both an obsession and addiction in modern society, as laws in place are clearly not being heeded. These addictions, fueled by societal pressures to be consistently "in touch," contribute to approximately 2,600 deaths and 330,000 injuries a year, as a result of cell phone use while driving.

In the first half of 2009 alone, according to Nationwide Insurance, there were 740 billion text messages sent -- double the amount of that in 2008. This has proven to be a serious problem, according to Tamyra Price, associate professor in the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at California State University Fresno.

Price was one of 300 representatives who were invited to the Distracted Driving Summit by Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood in Washington, D.C. earlier this fall. The summit included not only academic representatives like Price, but also transportation officials, safety advocates, and law enforcement officials.

Families who had lost a loved one at the hands of a preoccupied driver told their

stories at the Summit. "There have been 6,000 deaths and 500,000 injuries as a result of distracted driving," Price said, somberly.

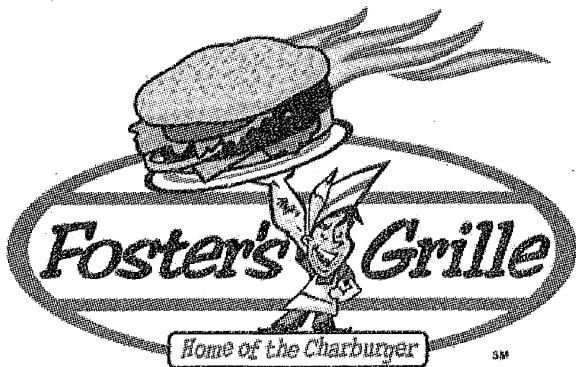
Price, who admittedly was once almost run off the road because of a texter, has since focused her research solely on texting while driving. Her findings have indicated that despite texting and driving being illegal in 14 states, laws are not resonating with the general American public. In Price's most recent study surveying 409 college students, she found that 84 percent said they still text while driving, up from about 62 percent two years ago, when it was legal.

Price's research indicates that the laws are not being heeded, especially in the younger population. "My data was truly startling," Price said. "A third said they almost hit something while texting, 21 percent had missed a turn, and 8 percent had run off the road," she stated.

Other academics agree that texting while driving is gravely dangerous, even referring to it as a perfect storm. "It's really a combination of things that all add up to be one of the most dangerous things you can do while you're driving," said John D. Lee, professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering at the

Continued on page 5

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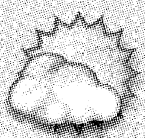
Tuesday:
High: 48°F
Low: 36°F
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High: 51°F
Low: 44°F
Cloudy



Thursday:
High: 50°F
Low: 35°F
Rain



Friday:
High: 41°F
Low: 32°F
Partly cloudy

From weather.com

Professors Take a Stand Against Rising Textbook Costs

Continued from page 1

downloaded almost 40,000 times.

McAfee is one professor who recognized the need for a change, but he is just one of many. Professors like Warren Siegal, a theoretical physics professor at Stony Brook, have also decided to publish solely online for the benefit of their students. Like many others Siegal has made his textbook, Fields, available online for free. "Textbooks are really expensive nowadays," said Siegal. "It's more convenient to have it on the web. It's easier to make changes."

Moreover, according to Siegal, with his book online he has greater control over what his students read and their overall understanding of the material. He also makes the point that the portability and small size of online texts can lead to entire libraries stored on student's laptops.

In most books, according to Siegal and other professors, there is not much of a change from edition to edition. According to a Government Accountability Office report released in 2007, textbooks are revised every three to four years. A poll taken of 1,029 professors found that textbook revisions should be held off until there is a major change in content.

"It was \$150 for the new edition, which means they changed a number in each problem," said Kelly Zorn, a sophomore and mechanical engineering major, referring to her calculus book. "It's excessive and some professors should just let us use the old edition."

Professors like McAfee and Siegal are visionaries, according to Allen. "I think it is fantastic that some professors are choosing to put their books online for free," she said. "I think that could become more common, as more online educational material becomes available and as textbook costs

increase."

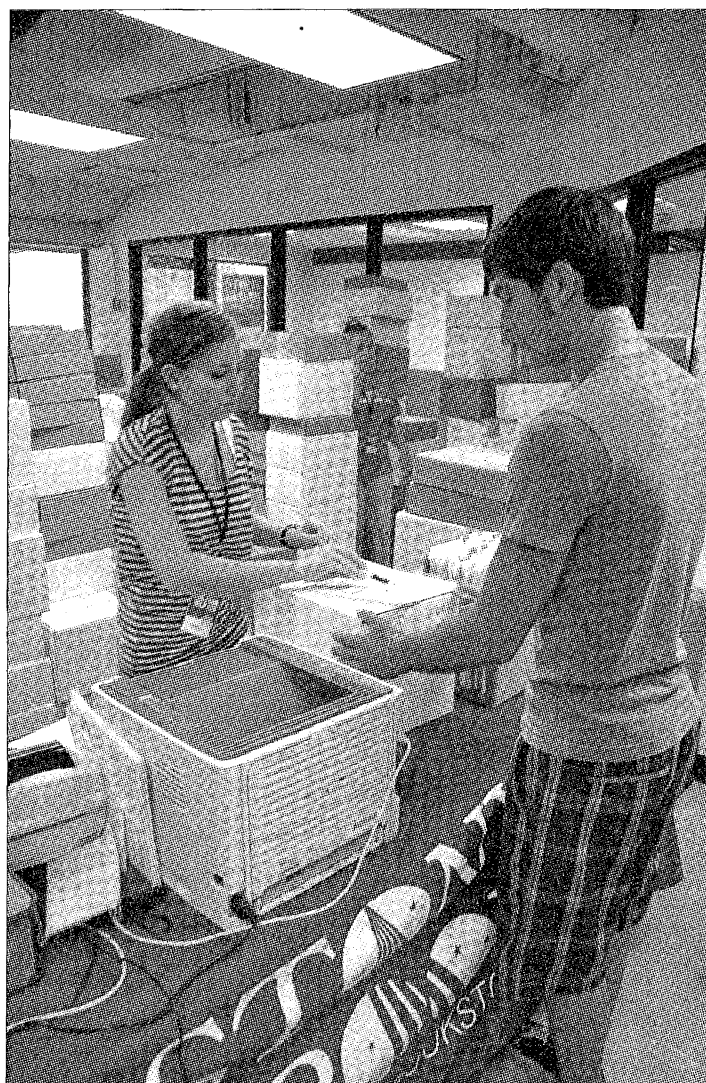
From coast to coast, free online books are taking center stage in all levels of education. In a speech last summer, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California launched a digital textbook initiative providing math and science books for high schools online, saving schools up to \$400 million a year.

The Sony Corporation in Washington, D.C. donated almost 5,000 Sony Book readers to the public schools, according to Michael LoMonico, an English professor at Stony Brook, who works with students preparing to be teachers. The question in D.C. was: would this make students learn better and read more? "My response was, I don't know, but it will make them read differently and that's the key," LoMonico said.

Not everyone is happy with the idea of textbooks being solely online. "I just like having the book in my hands, you know, underlining and highlighting things," said Kelly Alefeld, a sophomore and biochemistry major, who spends on average \$500 a semester on books.

Students overall seem evenly split when it comes to digital textbooks. According to a 2008 survey done by ebrary, a company that helps libraries with their digital needs, 49 percent of students surveyed said they have never used eBooks.

Nonetheless, the digital revolution of textbooks is well under way. "I fully think that in five years, everyone will be using some sort of an electronic reader," LoMonico said. "Our concept of a library is that it's a brick and mortar building, but it doesn't need to be that anymore," he said, "It can be up in the ether somewhere." LoMonico is also involved in a project that would bring the Folger Shakespeare texts online into the public domain.



Statesman File Photo

Although some professors use online books, most students like the one pictured above are still required to buy boxes of books.

McAfee has even a greater view of the future. He fully believes that the future will give breath to a completely different type of book. He envisions a self-directed book that lets students progress at their own pace. "Math books will construct problems for the student's current skill level and history books will have simulations of the historical events," McAfee said. However, this is not the case today. McAfee and about 2,000 other professors agree that something has to be done now. One idea proposed by McAfee is a \$250,000

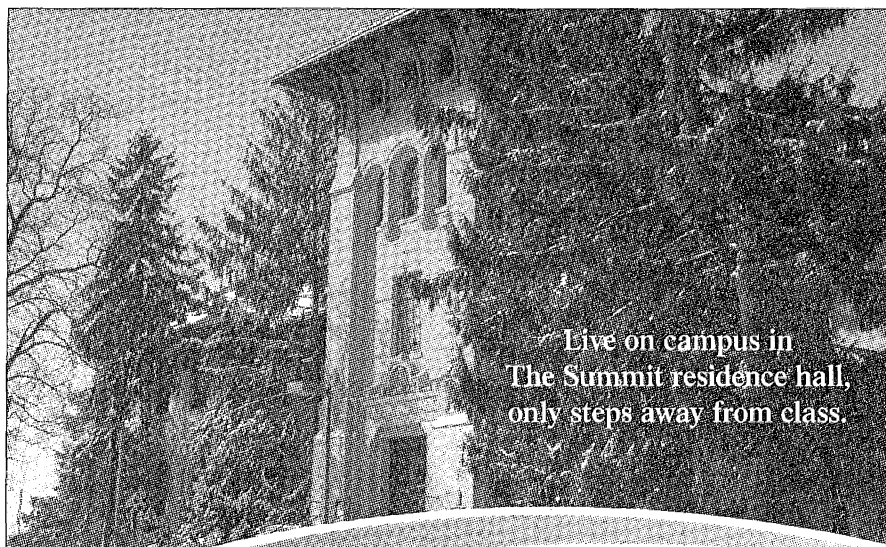
prize that would be offered to anyone who can write the best online textbook on any topic. The prize could be given by a public university, who would then charge students as little as \$12 for the book as opposed to the nearly \$200 they would be paying otherwise.

"Anything that stands in the way of the dissemination of knowledge is a real problem," said McAfee, who believes there is no reason why in today's world, where unlimited information is available online, textbooks need to be guarded behind \$237 price tags.

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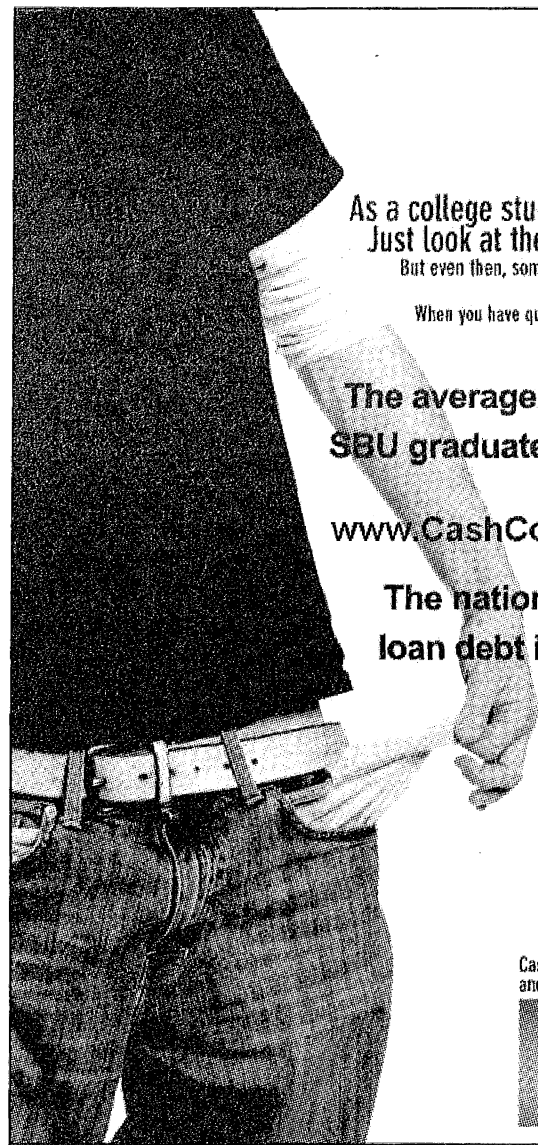
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HIGH TECH BEA I M

Business' Use of Social Media Websites

CHARLES COSTA
Columnist

Social media has long been a boon for the younger generation to stay in touch with friends and discover new things to do and try. However, in recent times, it has attracted increasing amounts of attention from businesses looking to generate more profits with minimal costs. In turn, social media usage is a skill employers will certainly examine when considering candidates.

Now, when saying social media, I'm not only referring to your standard social networking where you leave comments on friends' walls and laugh at the occasional snapshot of the past weekend you have no memory of.

Rather, social media in the business world has three branches. In the hive-like environment of the Web 2.0 Expo media room in Manhattan's Javits Center, filled with journalists phoning in information from the conferences, enjoying Starbucks and cookies or huddled around the router cables, typing away on their laptops, I had the chance to meet with Debra Lavoy, the Director of Product Marketing at OpenText, a company devoted to enterprise social media solutions.

There are three main divisions of corporate social media usage: creative, collective, and compounding. In order of mention, examples of the terms include: using shared and collaborative workspaces, watching trends and links using search



Photo credit: prometheus.net.au

engines and tools like TweetDeck.com, and reusing work that's already been used via message boards. The candid and viral nature of social media also makes it a valuable asset for companies to branch out in such avenues to gather information on and attract new customers.

The main reason companies are branching out into social media is because it encourages discussion of a company and its products without having the company in control. Rather, the company can watch discussions between users, similar

to how friends would recommend products to each other (i.e. "Did you hear about that awesome movie?"). Unlike the past however, the internet is significantly more viral than two friends conversing (e.g. the Facebook News Feed,) making it attractive for companies to embrace.

Although many companies have adopted traditional social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to enhance their businesses, it is important to note many companies approach social media with caution. This brings me to the focus of

my interview with Debra -- that in today's day and age, you not only need to worry about your personal reputation, but also potentially your employer's, depending on their policies on social media.

According to Debra, the internet has brought society back the idea of a small community mentality, where it is easier for people to see what their peers are doing, depending on the amount of content they post online. During my interview with Deborah, she further mentioned that in the past, companies

were able to easily control how their companies were depicted. However with social media, the conversation and power are given to the mass population, which are "human" and prone to mistakes, contrary to the prior ideal of the company maintaining a pristine reputation.

Social media contracts have caught on with businesses as a way to keep employees in check, by allowing employers to determine the actions of employees on social networks. In particular the controversy has caught up with some news outlets, which required their journalists to follow somewhat stringent codes of conduct, in order to prevent misrepresentation of the companies.

Ultimately, the key point from the interview is that companies need to realize that employees are human and are prone to mistakes. As one of my final questions, I asked whether it's possible that in the future educators and employers will be more accepting of the "questionable" content on social networks.

I was told, "Similar to how divorce is no longer scandalized in [my] generation, future employers will be more forgiving of the content on social networks." However, before you start posting those keg pictures on Facebook, keep in mind that acceptance has limits -- namely common sense -- and Debra mentioned that future generations will need to be more sophisticated, to deal with the visibility of themselves in cyberspace.

Texting: An Unforeseen Epidemic

Continued from page 1

University of Wisconsin, who has done extensive research on technology and teen drivers.

"In terms of the distraction, there are intense visual, motor, cognitive demands that affect the degree of engagement."

In addition to these demands, brain resources are drastically reduced during cell phone use, according to research done by Carnegie Mellon University. "Brain activity associated with driving decreased by 37 percent during cell phone use," said Marcel Just, director of the Center for Cognitive Brain Imaging. "You're depriving the brain from critical information. There will be visual activation from the sight of your cell phone, but it will no longer be associated with

driving."

However, while research on texting while driving has been surfacing in the recent years, some believe that that the problem is obvious.

Bill Windsor, associate vice president of safety at Nationwide Insurance, noted how texting while driving has "mushroomed" within the past few years. "The American public really feels the need to stay connected at all times," Windsor said, emphasizing the social pressure to stay connected, even witnessing it in his own children. "But, if you're doing 60mph and taking your eyes off the road for 30 seconds, that's the equivalent of driving the length of a football field with your eyes off the road."

Windsor said drivers are becoming overconfident in their

abilities and losing their common sense at the wheel. He emphasized that additional research isn't necessary to prove it's dangerous. "It is a combination of solutions: creating public awareness, legislation, and encouraging the development of technology that would reduce crashes," he said. "Technology got us into this mess, and technology can get us out."

While the United States is still struggling with texting while driving legislation, other countries are acting with more aggression. Not only is hand-held cell phone use while driving illegal in the United Kingdom, but texting is also highly frowned upon, as suggested by the nearly two year high security prison sentencing of Phillipa Curtis. According to the New York Times, Curtis sent almost two dozen texts

messages in the hours before re-arranging Victoria McBryde's car and killing her in 2007.

The aggression comes at a time when new American technology is being designed to counteract the epidemic. Companies, such as Accendo LC in Ohio, are trying to commercialize Bluetooth technology to simply make it impossible for a driver to use their cell phone while driving. When a cell phone is detected by the technology, it would automatically be put into driving mode, answering calls and texts with, "I am driving now. I will call you later when I arrive at the destination safely." Another solution being considered is voice activated texting. Rather than typing "LOL" to send a text message, you could simply laugh out loud, or say "LOL," and your text would

be sent.

Since California's state law banning texting while driving went into effect on the first of this year, texting while driving has decreased by 70 percent, according to the American Automobile Association. Other states are following the Golden State's lead. In early November, both Rhode Island and Pennsylvania have announced they plan to ban texting respectively.

Since the death of his son at the hands of a texter five years ago, Teater has made it his mission to ensure that his son did not die in vain. He works actively to reduce the number crashes by distracted and teen drivers. "Texting literally has addictive qualities," Teater said. "But with laws, we can increase the education and understand why it is so dangerous to text and drive."

Ego, Excess and Success

To the Editor:

First, I just wanted to let you know that Rhoda Feng's "The Ego of Titans" was about the best and most interesting thing I've ever read in *The Statesman*. I'm a big fan of Ayn Rand and the title caught my attention. If only a course here taught or incorporated Rand – if there is one, I'm unaware.

Her criticisms of Rand are ones I've heard before and valid to some degree. However, while I agree that most (not all) "temperaments carried to excess" can have consequences, one must remember that "excess" and extremes are how Rand makes her point. In *Anthem*, *Atlas Shrugged*, and *The Fountainhead*, the characters are supposed to be excessive, ultimate archetypes. I don't think she's advocating being like John Galt

to the tee as much as she's advocating that what they represent in reality and practice be celebrated rather than condemned.

Something else to think about is that Rand does not unequivocally condemn doing things for others; rather, she advocates that one always do what is in one's own rational self interest. If giving your money to a charity of your choosing is something you want to do and it makes you feel good and happy – then it is in your rational self interest to do so and therefore okay by Rand. Say, however, someone (the government, for example) steps in and mandates that you give your money to a certain charity of their choosing – then we'd have a problem and therein lies what Rand is criticizing.

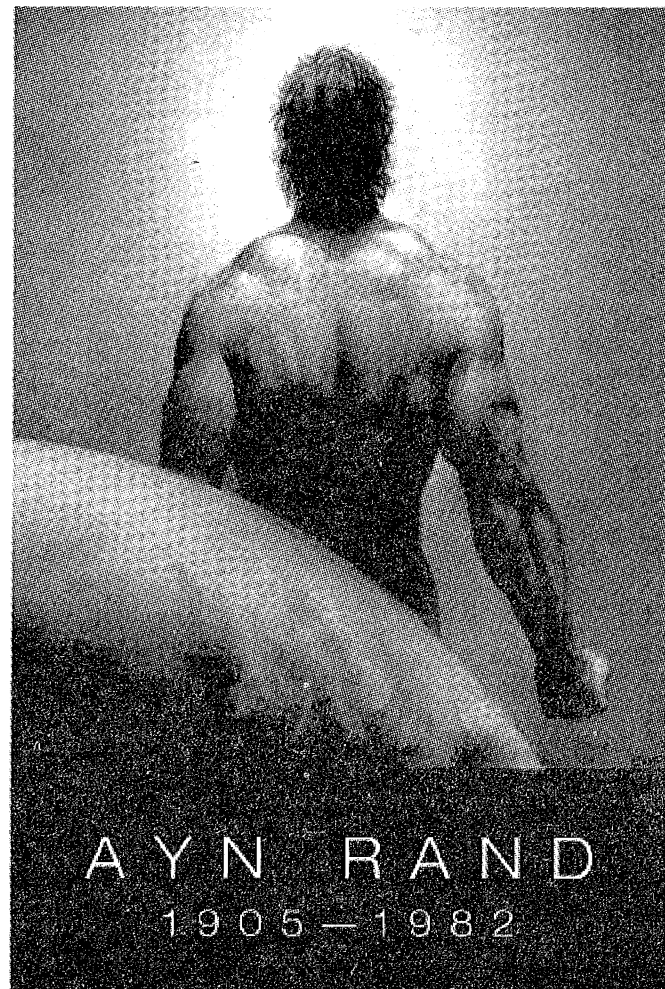
One final thought to consider is the "literary merit" of Rand's writing. Ayn Rand wrote

screenplays for 1940's Hollywood Melodramas and this shows greatly in her novels. However, she is able to pack deep philosophical thought and ideas – things rather inaccessible to the common person – underneath the shell of an easily accessible melodramatic soap opera. In this way, she is able to convey her ideas in a manner almost anyone can pick up. Ideas are castrated if you can't get anyone to understand them. Surely, there is at least some merit in this technique of Rand if not a great deal of merit. In my opinion, this adds to Rand's talent rather than serving to take away from it.

Overall though, thanks for something thought provoking.

Derek Mordente

Mordente is an undergraduate at Stony Brook.



It's a Habitat, Not a Hotel

To the Editor:

Since the mid 1990s, Introductory Biology has been forced to limit field experiences for Stony Brook undergraduates as forests around campus have disappeared. The West Apartment Complex replaced pristine closed canopy woodlands

I hope to show our students that the University cares enough to make sacrifices to preserve on-campus natural resources.

whose diversity, structure, feel and scents were surprising and unique to many of our urban-suburban students.

We used to show students dry upland woods, old field succession farmland, stretches of forest compromised by invasive species, and an awe inspiring

bamboo grove planted, perhaps for fishing poles, long ago. Many students learned names of different species of trees and birds for the first time. Sometimes we would find garter snakes and turtles.

The biology labs moved to CMM/BLL in 2000, too far away to continue to use the uplands and bamboo grove but we felt fortunate to be close to the woods by Nicolls Road. This area is more heterogeneous than the Ashley Schiff Preserve—it has a feeling of deep woods despite the nearness of the adjacent highway. We contrast these habitats in field activities in the introductory labs. Sadly when the new main entrance was installed, this stretch of woods which contained unusual stands of pteridophytes, was wiped away in an afternoon.

Many students come to Stony Brook with little experience in the natural world and it is our responsibility to help them learn about, understand, and appreciate it. I hope we can show our students that the university cares enough to make sacrifices to preserve our natural resources on campus.

Yours sincerely,
Joan M. Miyazaki

Ms. Miyazaki is the Curriculum Coordinator of the Undergraduate Biology Program at Stony Brook.

To the Editor:

I am writing to urge President Stanley to reconsider the location of the proposed hotel on Stony Brook campus. I realize the need for such a facility, and I welcome it, but I think that there are several locations that would be better-suited for the project than destroying an eleven-acre forest that is a home and feeding ground to many bird species.

As Vice President of the local Audubon Society, I am keenly aware of the importance of the little remaining woodland habitat

other bird species that nest here, as well as a great number of species that migrate along the east coast. I do not see them as often now, and when I do it is in the Ashley Schiff Preserve and the adjacent area proposed for the hotel. It may seem like a small parcel of land, but every patch of woodland is becoming critical to the survival of our migratory bird species.

To a small bird flying over this campus, the remaining forested areas look like a very inviting restaurant. Even small patches of forest provide food for our song

Thrush, which has declined by over 40% over the last 20 years, largely due to habitat loss. This woodland is also important for their return trip to their wintering grounds in South and Central America and the Southern US. So in addition to losing a natural buffer from Nicolls Rd. and a lovely woodland, by cutting down that patch of forest we are ultimately aiding the decline of our songbirds.

I encourage him to consider one of the alternate sites for the hotel. Building it on the site of the existing Student Union building,

Though I realize the need for such a facility, there are several better-suited locations for the hotel project than an eleven-acre forest that provides a home and feeding ground to many bird species.

on campus. In my 33 years here at Stony Brook as a student, employee, and resident, I have witnessed the destruction of forested areas across campus, and watched the bird life decrease every year.

When I used to walk through what is now the Schomberg Apartments and the West Apartment Complex, I would see Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Wood Pewee, and many

birds. This relatively new concept in bird conservation called 'Stop-Over Habitat' is now thought to be imperative to the survival of many bird species that stop here for a day or two to feed before they continue north to reach their breeding grounds. Some birds even stay here and breed, and need the habitat for feeding their own offspring.

They include the Wood

for example, would eliminate the need for destroying the forest, and could be a model for Smart Growth on campus.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Luci Betti Nash

Ms. Nash is the Vice President of the Four Harbors Audubon Society.

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GET INVOLVED

Statesman production meetings are held throughout the day on Wednesdays and Sundays in Room 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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Email: comments@sbstatesman.org

To view previous issues, extra material, and to learn about how to get involved with the Statesman, visit our website at sbstatesman.com.

For advertising inquiries, call us at (631) 632 - 6480 or visit us online at sbstatesman.com.

WHO WE ARE

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

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

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

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Online Ads: Weight Expectations

By JOSHUA GLAZER
Staff Writer

The latest abomination I have encountered while swimming in the white noise is the epidemic of ridiculous advertisements hawking weight loss products that promise miracle results, with pictures to prove it! For a representative example, please see rachelrayblogging.com/MyStory/ where you will be graced with a heap of lies so gross it defies belief. To sum up, in an ad placed on Weather.com you are invited to view a "blog post" in which you will be shown weight loss secrets "used by Rachel Ray." On the 'blog' page, you first see a 'before' and 'after' picture of a woman who supposedly went on this miracle diet (provided by Rachel Ray's Dr. Perricone) of acai berry pills and colon cleanser. In one picture you see a moderately overweight middle aged woman, with a scowl on her face, and in the other is a smiling, gaunt, scary looking woman that is supposed to be the same person. Her arms and legs look skeletal in the second picture, and you are made to wonder whether all that extra skin is tucked in under that stylish blouse. Try to close the page and a pop up appears that drops Oprah's name and promises some amazing video



Media credit: www.njweightdoctor.com

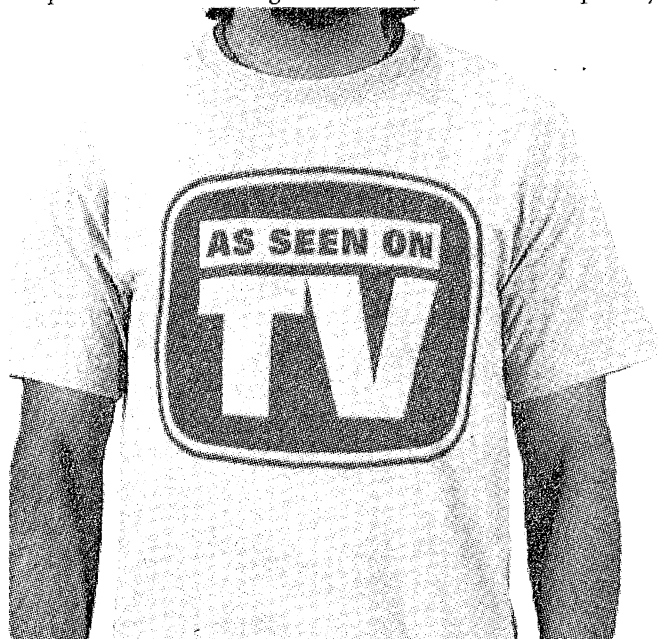
proof. However, one should note that Oprah recently sued several companies using her name to sell their acai berry products because, although she did a show about the berry with a Dr. Mehmet Oz, neither of them ever endorsed any such products.

The rest of the 'blog' post is driven about how trustworthy Rachel Ray and Dr. Perricone are, and how you have to try this method because it worked "so well for me." Well, just take a look at the bottom of the page, where you will find a disclaimer noting that the story is based 'loosely' on a true story and that certain things have been modified such as the pictures, story, and comments. Then, to boot, in all caps it says, "I

understand that this website is only illustrative, and that the story above is not to be taken literally." As if that really absolves them of any legal or moral responsibility.

Okay, now we can take a look at what is so wrong about this. This advertisement, which is full of blatant lies which are dangerous to people's health, was linked from my local forecast on Weather.com. Does no one else feel that it is unethical to advertise snake oil type products on such a mainstream website, which helps lend credit to them? It is a sad truth that some people in this country are susceptible to this kind of trickery, even with a disclaimer on the bottom of the page. If we made it clear that these fake pills were just that, fake, then maybe people would be more likely to focus on real alternatives like lifestyle changes and exercise. We could at least end the widespread use of these fake medicines, which are harmful to both mind and body. It is a thorny issue, because this great country we live in does not allow censorship. However, we do have the FDA, of which body polices all prescription medicines and is now in charge of monitoring the tobacco industry as well. So I would move that the FDA starts removing the loopholes that allow lies, like these about the fake claims of acai berry products to change your life, to infiltrate our hearts and minds through innocent web pages displaying today's weather.

At the bottom of each web page is a disclaimer noting that the advertisement is based 'loosely' on a true story and that the pictures, story, and comments have been modified. If advertisers were more responsible, maybe people would be more likely to focus on real weight-loss alternatives like lifestyle changes and exercise.



Media credit: www.rlv.zcache.com

From the Editor: Introducing "SBstance"

Hello Statesman Readers,

Thanks for picking this issue up. I'm writing to announce a new concept for a column in this section based on NPR's "This I Believe" and the New York Times' "One in Eight Million" series. This periodic feature will offer us a brief statement of your perspectives--the ideas that guide the way you interact with people or dictate how you see yourself--in an informal, narrative style of 400 words or less. Check thisibelieve.org for sample articles, and send your contributions or any questions to me at op-ed@sbstatesman.com.

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.

Grammy Award Winner Béla Fleck and The Flecktones Performs on Long Island

By BRIAN RACOW
Contributing Writer

Last Sunday the band Béla Fleck and the Flecktones played at the Tilles Center, a medium-sized venue for the performing arts located on Long Island University's C.W. Post Campus.

I have known of and liked the Flecktones since a friend in high school introduced me to their music -- an eclectic cross between bluegrass, jazz, and progressive rock -- but had never seen them live before, so my parents opted to get me tickets as an early birthday gift.

The Flecktones are unique in several ways. The band is made up of four musicians whose talents are hard to understate. An argument may be plausibly made that multiple members of the Flecktones are the best players in the world at their respective instruments, including band leader Béla Fleck on the banjo and Victor Wooten on the bass guitar. Wooten's brother Roy, who goes by the stage name "Futureman" and serves as the band's percussionist, certainly is -- he plays a sui generis instrument of his own invention called the "Synthaxe Drumitar," which uses MIDI technology to produce drum sound effects from a guitar-shaped keyboard of buttons and wires. Howard Levy, a pianist and harmonica player, has chops at the harmonica which likewise are unparalleled. Levy was an original member of the Flecktones in the late '80s and early '90s, and filled out the fourth slot in the lineup last week, subbing in for now-regular member Jeff Coffin. Coffin, a saxophonist, is currently taking time off from the Flecktones to tour with his other group, the Dave Matthews Band.

The Flecktones' genre-defying blend of classical and popular musical styles and collective technical prowess has garnered them Grammy awards across many categories and a reputation for dazzling live performances.

I entered the Tilles Center with high expectations, and the Flecktones did not disappoint. The band took the stage immediately after the house lights dimmed and without saying a word to anyone, launched into the first piece of the evening,

even before applause from the audience of approximately 2,000 people had died down.

As the band progressed from one flawlessly executed composition to the next, Fleck played intricate arpeggios with lightning speed up and down the fretboard of his banjo, to which he added guitar-like synthesizer effects to develop nontraditional sounds from the instrument. Victor Wooten's fingers moved in counterpoint to the banjo or in crazy flights of fancy that saw him slapping and popping bombs on the bass like a hyperkinetic robot, capable of fitting more notes in less time than a human being possibly could.

The band also showed its more mellow side on some numbers, with Wooten's baseline becoming much more melodic and Levy's harmonica singing a poignant, mournful tone.

Levy was a surprise element to me, because a fair amount of the concert's song selection came from the Flecktones' earliest albums on which he is featured, but with which I was not familiar. His cool, breezy piano lines gave these tunes a jazzy feel, though unfortunately they were hard to hear, since he played an unamplified baby grand piano. The music got lost in the mix at times under Wooten's booming bass or the hiss of Futureman's electronic symbols and pounding snare attacks. His harmonica was at the forefront for most of the show, at times replicating complex saxophone parts note-for-note usually played by the absent Coffin, and at one point taking a 10 minute solo that wove through harmonies, tempos, and themes, including a tease of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."

Indeed, despite the Flecktones' obvious serious musical devotion, the band often demonstrated its capacity for playfulness. Levy plucked at the strings inside the piano on one song. Wooten pretended during a solo to continue an ascending pattern of notes beyond the realm of playability or human hearing, by forming the pattern with his fingers in the air past the head of his bass after having run out of room on the strings. Futureman's entire essence is oddly comical, from his moniker and the instrument he plays to the feathered three-cornered pirate's hat he wears on-



Media credit: www.flecktones.com

Bela Fleck and the Flecktones is made up of of Bela Fleck, Victor Wooten, Roy "Futureman" Wooten and Howard Levy.

stage. Lastly, Fleck responded to one fan's shouted request to play "Sinister Minister," one of the band's signature songs, by saying, "sorry, I don't know that one."

The band later closed their set with the song, and I for one was glad they did. The song features a, yes, sinister-sounding, infectious bass riff that always eventually leads to an extensive bass solo breakdown, highlighting Wooten's massive talent. While every Flecktone was left alone on stage by his bandmates at some point to wow the audience with his improvisation skills, Wooten truly brought the roof down, destroying runs of notes that would be ludicrous for any other mere mortal to attempt to play, before segueing back into a reprise of the main groove, thereby causing Fleck, Levy, and Futureman to rejoin the piece for its ending.

This is not to say that the Flecktones are merely a showcase for the individual abilities of a troupe of four virtuosos. The whole is clearly equal to greater than the sum of its parts: they actually mesh together very well musically, as was evidenced last Sunday by their tight jamming and graceful song structures. Fleck, the band's main songwriter, is an accomplished composer as well as player, having authored several

albums of compelling rock and pop rooted in jazz sensibilities.

The Flecktones' disparate influences were reflected in the makeup of the audience at the Tilles Center: there were older couples- likely bluegrass or jazz enthusiasts- who dressed as they would perhaps for a night at Lincoln Center, as well as groups of friends in their 20s wearing tie-dye Grateful Dead t-shirts, who came for the high-energy improvisation, funky grooves, and the possibility of a transcendent jam. There might have been much less of the former and more of the latter present had the Tilles Center been a standing-room rather than assigned-seating venue. Instead, everyone remained seated (with the exception of two standing ovations), and ushers scurried around the aisles trying to confiscate the digital cameras of anyone who attempted to snap a picture.

It was too bad, because the Flecktones' music is highly conducive to interpretive dancing and audience participation, in my opinion, but I guess I have revealed my own inclinations when seeing a concert. But all in all, getting to catch a Flecktones show was a highly enjoyable and eye-opening experience. This is a band everyone should definitely check out.

The 2009 mtvU Woodie Awards Come to NYC

By ANTHONY DOBRINI
Contributing Writer

The Roseland Ballroom in New York City played host to the taping of the sixth annual mtvU Woodie Awards on Wednesday, November 16th, bringing out college students and a large number of teenage boys and girls hoping to catch a glimpse of their favorite celebrity.

The line was wrapped around the building, even after doors had already opened. The audience was told to get there before 7:45 p.m., when doors would be shut to get the

taping started. But that didn't stop some curious kids from running over to the makeshift "red carpet" near the main entrance, that was held in what seemed to be a tent only a couple of sidewalk pieces long.

DJs were on hand to play some of the year's bigger hits as the crowd waited for the event to begin at its 8 p.m. start time. The venue that is a popular destination to most of the mid-sized tours that come through the area was decked out in a completely new fashion -- with two stages and only a small amount of room for the audience. People were scattered throughout the venue, but

were held off in only certain areas to make way for all of the rooms the V.I.P. had. The celebrities had access to an open bar in the back filled with beer pong tables and an ongoing tournament -- and each nominee had their own table with full catering and a keg at the end.

Each performer was allotted enough time to play two to three songs. Matt & Kim started off the show with a performance that made you want to get naked. But you didn't have to -- their backup singers decided to



Media credit: mtvU.com/Candice Lawler
3Oh!3 presented an award at this year's mtvU Woodie Awards.

Continued on page 9

mtvU Woodie Awards

Continued from page 9

strip to their undies as they jammed through their breakthrough hit, "Lessons Learned." Definitely a wise way to start off an awards show.

Death Cab for Cutie and Passion Pit followed with their respective sets – and played outstandingly. It left you wishing you were at a real concert, not just hearing three songs to only tease you.

A couple of other artists performed – but it felt like the crowd was more into the beginning of the show rather than the end. Some artists left you asking – "who was that?"

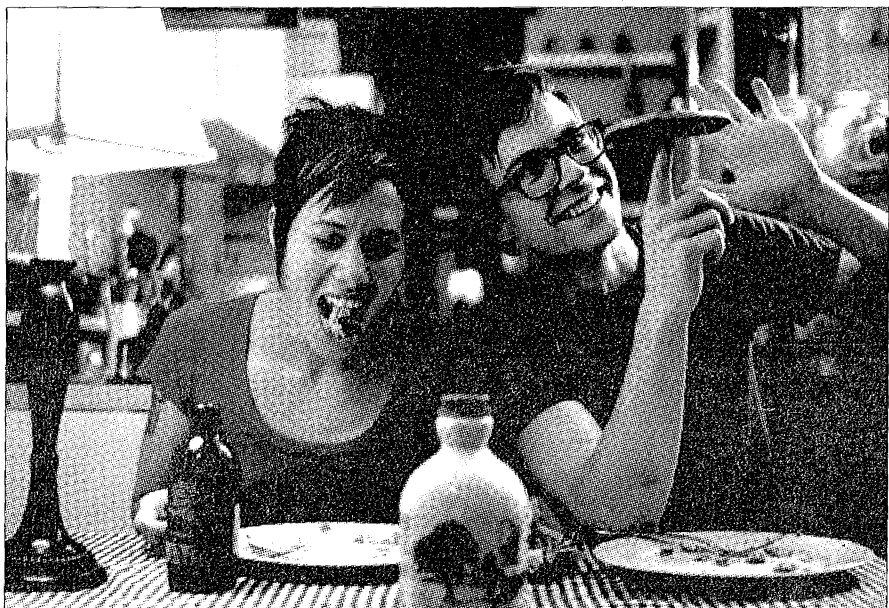
There were a slew of celebs to present awards, from Fall Out Boy's Pete Wentz, 30!3 and beauty queen Zooey Deschanel.

Tapings of awards shows are kind of awkward and weird. There were only a small number of presenters and awards given out in the first place – so in between those and

the few performances, there was a lot of waiting around and small-talk with your neighbors. It was a little interesting to see how the tapings are done – with monitors blown up that the presenters often read off of. There was also a large number of people on-staff working the event, constantly running around.

Perhaps the hilarious part of the evening was watching the amount of tween – and even adult girls- try to get past security by batting their eyelashes and waving their sparkly dresses to make up for not having a VIP bracelet. Few succeeded.

The event went on a little past the 10 o'clock hour, but people weren't shoved out right away. It was time for a little schmoozing with the stars – and preparing for a night of after parties. Unfortunately this article isn't going to tell you about the big winners – you'll have to see for yourself when it airs on mtvU on Friday, December 4th at 10 p.m.



Media credit: www.mtvU.com/ iheartcomix

Duo Matt and Kim opened the 2009 mtvU Woodie Awards with their breakthrough hit "Lessons Learned."

"V" Invades Television

BY DANIEL GIORLANDO
Contributing Writer

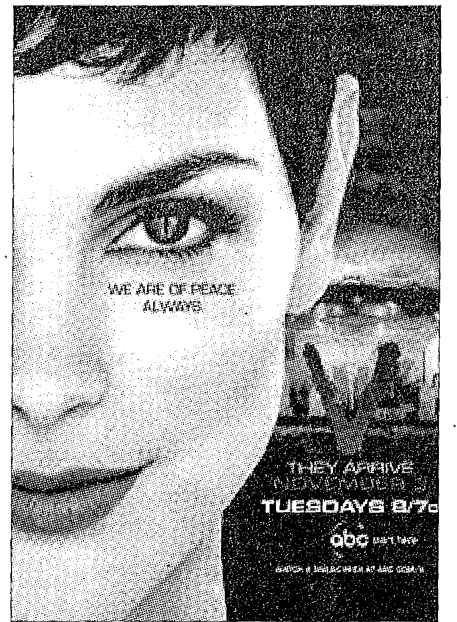
As if humanity hasn't been kicked around enough by every other television show and movie out there, ABC's "V" aired on November 3, 2009 with a new take on the invasion of planet Earth.

The program, a sleek and fast-paced reimagining of the 1983 miniseries, does however display a fairly unique take on the concept, and its potential to entertain is nothing short of immense.

"V" tells the story of humanity's contact with, and underground struggle against, the Visitors, a race of super-advanced lizard people posing as humans. They promise peace, prosperity and technology, and are, for the most part, accepted by the gullible homo sapiens of Earth. It is revealed that the Visitors have been on Earth for years, infiltrating societies and governments, making their final conquest of the planet near-impossible to resist. A small resistance movement of humans and rogue Visitors fight against them, but is scattered and broken by the time the Visitors arrive in twenty-nine motherships, each positioned above a major city of Earth.

This is where the show comes in. The plot revolves around an interesting and likeable cast of characters, including Erica Evans (Elizabeth Mitchell), an FBI agent who stumbles upon the Visitors' true nature and motives, Father Jack Landry (Joel Gretsch), a Catholic priest unwillingly drawn into the action after a dying man sends him down a path that reveals to him the truth, and Ryan Nichols (Morris Chestnut), who is an ex-resistance Visitor who has been brought back into the fight out of a desire to protect his human fiancée.

The action fashionably switches be-



www.vistorsite.net

"V" invaded television screens Nov. 3 on ABC.

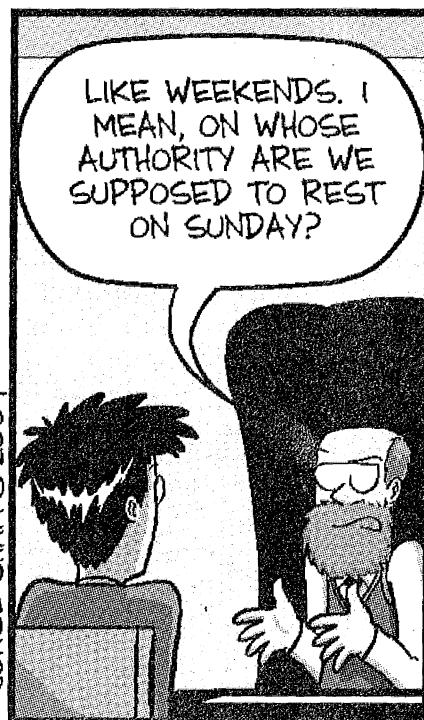
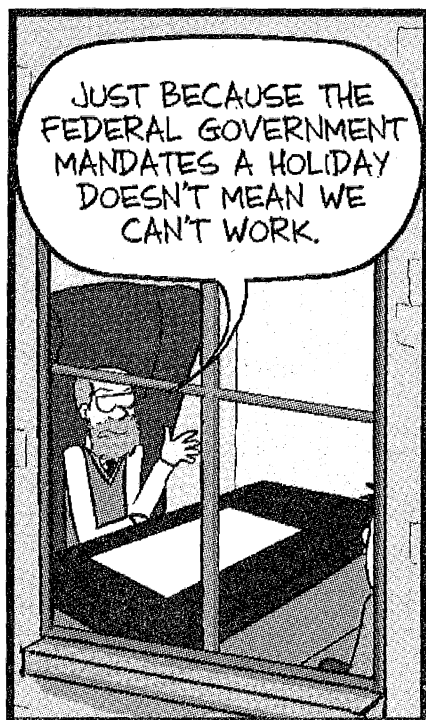
tween the characters, keeping you interested in each story, but not depriving you of the other ones for too long. The show is fast-paced, but shot so that important details aren't hard to miss or remember. The cinematography doesn't suffer during the action, and is in fact very exciting and enjoyable.

Every television show has its flaws, and "V" is no exception. There is of course the talk of political agenda surrounding the program, which is not completely unfounded. The Visitors promise "universal health care," a phrase pronounced with painstaking meticulousness, and impress the people of the world with fine oratory skills and promises of peace. The message isn't overbearing, and is easily ignorable.

If it bothers you, don't pay it heed and enjoy "V" for its primary role as a sci-fi thriller, one it fills just fine.

Comics

PHD COMICS BY JORGE CHAM



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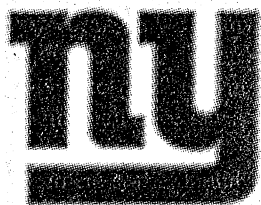
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Okay...Now What?

BY CONSTANTINE LOIZIDES
Contributing Writer

The Yankees won, MLB season is over, and the only people occupying Yankee stadium are the janitors keeping it clean for next season. Now what?

The 2009 World Series featured two of the more popular franchises in the majors: the Yankees and the Philadelphia Phillies. The YES Network saw a viewer increase of 42 percent over last year's Fall Classic, a record jump.

An average of about 19 million people tuned in each night to watch these two prolific offenses battle over six games, making this the fourth-highest viewed World Series over the last decade, and restoring baseball's accustomed October dominance after a down year in 2008. Needless to say, we were all watching.

But now that "America's favorite pas-time" season is over, which sport is filling

this void amongst avid sports fans, more specifically those on Stony Brook's campus?

With nine teams based in and around New York City, there is an ample supply of leagues and sports to support. Stony Brook students were asked to weigh in on where they turned to for their athletics fix.

Many chose the gridiron. "Football is exciting to watch, because the games can swing at any time, as opposed to baseball, where it's more drawn out, or basketball, where scores are usually blowouts," Hee-joon Park, a Stony Brook senior and a New York Jets fan said. "Plus, it's more free flowing and hard hitting."

In a sports era where shows like "The Ultimate Fighter" have, according to Spike TV, seen a ratings jump from a previous high of 2.8 million to 4.1 million viewers, hard hitting is definitely a major attracting factor.

In addition, league parity plays a major role in making football more popular

amongst the general public, as opposed to other sports where the same teams seem to make the playoffs almost every year.

For example, after a 1 and 15 season in 2007, the Miami Dolphins bounced back with a 10 and 6 record and made it to the postseason in 2008.

"I was relieved after 2007 was over," Sagar Mehta, a former Stony Brook Student said, "making the playoffs in 2008 definitely rejuvenated my interest in the team and the sport."

Whereas football is the clear favorite, basketball seems to get the least amount of love from Stony Brook students.

This might have something to do with the dismal state of the New York Knicks, as the franchise has failed to make the playoffs since 2004 and lost 9 of its first 10 games to kick start this season.

"I would definitely watch more basketball if the Knicks were a better team," Ahmad El-Gendi, a Stony Brook junior,

said. "But it's been so long since they've been any good that basketball has definitely fallen under the radar for me."

Elite teams like the Spurs, Lakers, Celtics and Magic have all added premier talent during the offseason, whereas perennial bottom dwellers, such as the Knicks, did very little to improve themselves.

If basketball was slighted by SBU students, hockey was absolutely ignored, not getting any love despite the high national ranking of the Seawolves Ice Hockey team.

So the final verdict is that Stony Brook sports fans want to be entertained. Of the roughly 60 different students questioned, leagues in which the strong get stronger and the weak seem glued to the cellars of their divisions just aren't as interesting.

The SBU football season is over, but basketball is in full swing and students don't have to look too far for a diversion.

Logos above from sports-logos.net.

For Crew, Early Mornings and Low Funds Do Not Negate Passion

By SAM KILB
Staff Writer

It's 5 a.m., and the only light cutting through the sleepy pre-dawn mist is the faint orange glow emanating from the streetlights on Stony Brook's Circle Road. Four dark figures dressed in sweats descend to the bottom of the Tabler Steps, puffs of breath escaping the shadows cast by their raised hoods, each person unidentifiable in the shadows.

But the university police let these mysterious persons be. They aren't criminals, vandals or miscreants of any sort. They are the Stony Brook University crew team.

"It definitely gets a little creepy," Kyle Urbanczyk, a junior and member of the team, said. "You're like, 'these guys could be crew, or they could be about to jump me.'"

Rising on most mornings for training well before the sun rises, the crew team is a driven group that represents Stony Brook University in intercollegiate rowing competitions. The team, which boasts approximately 45 members, travels to regattas—official events where schools gather to race each other—along the East Coast, from Boston to Philadelphia.

Being a morning person is close to mandatory. To prepare for regattas, the team practices five or six days a week from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. The rowers meet at places across campus, such as the Tabler Steps, to carpool the 20-minute ride from campus to Long Beach Marina in Nissequogue, where the team launches into Stony Brook Harbor, when the weather permits.

"Obviously, waking up in the morning sucks," Kirsten Preskenis, the club president, said. "It's really tempting to stay in the car once you get to the marina."

"But once you get on the water, and your concentration is more on a successful row and working together with the girls in your boat, everything changes," she said.

When it becomes too cold or windy to row, practice is at the same time in the sports complex on campus. It's not unusual for crew to make it to the gym floor before Stony Brook's ROTC, which also trains there.

"It's hard getting up in the winter," said Urbanczyk, who is entering his seventh year of rowing, one of only a handful of team members to have rowed in high school. "Walking to the sports complex in the dead of winter is absolutely miserable. Some people say I'm insane, and ask why I subject myself to that."

Suse Boardman, a team member and exchange student from England, says the mornings are easy because of the people. The team loves to joke around, and despite the early morning, the team goes happily about its tasks, smiles coming easily.

"I don't think you can be mean at 5:30 in the morning," she said, laughing. "I don't think that part of the brain has kicked in yet."

When the team arrives at the marina, still ahead of the sun, the crew immediately takes the boats, or "shells," off the racks and gets them into the water. The only other sign of life is a handful of seagulls waiting in hopes of a morning treat from some early-rising fishermen, who will arrive and launch a few minutes after the first Stony Brook boat hits the water.

Preskenis said a good row is enough to overcome getting up early. "Once you get off the water, you're in a good mood and it's all worth it," she said.

The crew team has been around longer than Stony Brook

University itself, dating back to 1959 during the school's Oyster Bay campus era. Stony Brook crew operates as any varsity crew team would. The team is split into four: men's and women's varsity teams, and men's and women's novice teams. The varsity teams race alongside the likes of Harvard and Stanford, storied rowing programs that are national championship contenders annually.

Despite competing as a varsity program, crew is a club sport funded by Stony Brook University's Undergraduate Student Government, not the athletic department. The USG provides money for clubs from the student activity fee paid by each student as part of tuition. For the 2009-10 school year, USG granted the crew club \$27,747, a decrease of nearly \$2,000 from last year. The crew club also charges its members \$200 in dues each semester.

Calls to the crew programs of Harvard, Yale, and Stanford seeking information on their team budgets were not returned.

Preskenis said the team has only enough money to buy used shells, if it can find room in its budget. "We certainly don't have any new shells," she said.

"It's difficult because other programs are funded through the school, and they have lots of money to work with," Preskenis said. "We're a very poorly funded program. We don't have the opportunity to buy \$40,000 shells. We just don't have the funds to compete against these schools."

Mitch Fourman, who coaches the novice team, agreed. "Our equipment is in some of the worst shape it's ever been," he said. "The funding is dead-on paltry, and it's almost a travesty."

Fourman shook his head as he watched the varsity coach paddle the old metal launch,



Photos (above and below) by Lukas Esterle / Stony Brook Crew Members of the crew team carrying equipment (above) and preparing to take to the water (below).



which he uses to follow the team as it practices, back to shore with its attachable motor apparently broken. "Now we have to make a decision we never should have to make: Do we spend a couple hundred dollars to fix the motor, or do we spend it on the equipment we need to row?"

But even without funding, the competitive spirit of crew continues to attract new members. The team is the largest it has been in years.

"We try to do so much with so little," Preskenis said. "We have

five boats for 50 people. But we all share a passion for rowing, so it works."

The ride back to campus after practice is less sleepy, the sun having roused itself from its nightly slumber to sit low over the sound. Lively conversation replaces the tired silence of the earlier drive, with discussions of who has tests, homework left to do, what parties are coming up and, of course, crew.

"The thing about crew is that it's addicting," one rower said. "Even if you hate it, you just keep going."

Dear Allen Iverson...

By SARAH KAZADI
Sports Editor

Wait. Before I jump into this, I want to let you know that you are one of my favorite players and that is why I feel so strongly about this. Take the following with a grain of salt. Here goes:

It's sad. Your illustrious career was not supposed to end this way. Your fans, who supported and appreciated you for the past

13 years, were blindsided by the news. We found out on Thanksgiving Day, as we were helping our mothers prepare the yearly "kill-an-innocent-bird-day" feast. I don't even like turkey, but that's beside the point.

I saw the breaking news scroll on the ESPN Bottomline, and heard Stephen A. Smith say that you were done. Why? No specific reason given, other than the generic "spend more time with my wife and kids" line. It blows my mind that you, the best little guy to play the game, would step away from it, when you still have so much to give. You said it yourself, "I still have tremendous love for the game, the desire to play, and a whole lot left in my tank. I feel strongly that I can still compete at

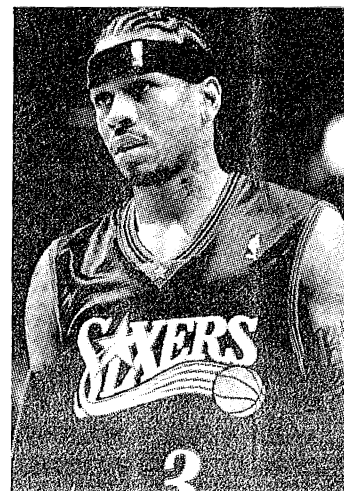
the highest level." Your crossover is still top 5 in the league. At 34, you are still in better physical condition than most, and have kept your body in 10-time all-star guard shape. So why leave?

Word on the street is that you can't stand coming off the bench. The issue plagued you in Detroit, after your experiment in Denver failed to get Melo past the beasts of the West. Then you juggled your options a bit and opted for Memphis. It takes swallowing pride to even put on a Memphis Grizzlies jersey, which is why you only put in on thrice, playing three short games before leaving the team indefinitely. I don't get it. What happened to the hunger? The drive? The sheer will to just play?

When I think of Allen Iverson, I think of how every single kid in my junior high and early high school years had a Sixers number 3 jersey. I think of him shaking the mess out of MJ (translation: executing a deadly crossover that made Michael Jordan proceed to wobble and thrust his body in the direction completely opposite to his). I think of the Tyron Lue step-over and stare down. I think of the "Practice? Not a game, not a game, we talkin' bout practice?" rant. I think of your heart, and how hard you played every time you were on the hardwood.

I'm not ready to let that go, and I know that you're not either. It'll be eating at you. You'll wake up with cold sweats. You'll have nightmares about your legacy

being tainted and your name forgotten. If you love this game the way I know you do, you'll come back. Think about it.



allen-iverson.org
Former NBA guard Allen Iverson.

STATESMAN SPORTS

Men and Women's Hoops Coast Over Break

By SARAH KAZADI
Sports Editor

Both the men's and women's basketball teams picked up much needed wins over Thanksgiving break. While most students were home, enjoying time with loved ones, and chowing down on some turkey, both Seawolves teams took to the court to devour opponents.

On Black Friday, the ladies hosted the Air Force Colonials, and the men followed suit Saturday afternoon, welcoming the NJIT Highlanders to Pritchard Gymnasium.

Behind a season high 20 points from junior forward Kirsten Jeter (Elmont, N.Y.), the ladies coasted against Air Force. Trying to steer the ship and get in the win column for the first time in this young season, the squad relied on both tough defense and better offensive execution to pull out the 72-60 win.

Various Seawolves scored in double figures, with freshman guard Sam Landers (Springfield, Va.) recording a career high 10 points and junior guard Misha Horsey (Wyncote, Pa.) racking up 11. The home team was stingy defensively, forcing an astounding 31 turnovers and keeping the Colonials to just 29 percent shooting in the first half.

Despite a late Air Force rally, the ladies managed to hold on and win by the comfortable 72-60 margin.

For the men, a career-high 25 points from sophomore guard Bryan Dougher (Scotch Plains, N.J.) carried the men past NJIT. The game was the team's first since the tough loss to Rhode Island last week, and the Seawolves bounced back nicely for the 60-46 win.

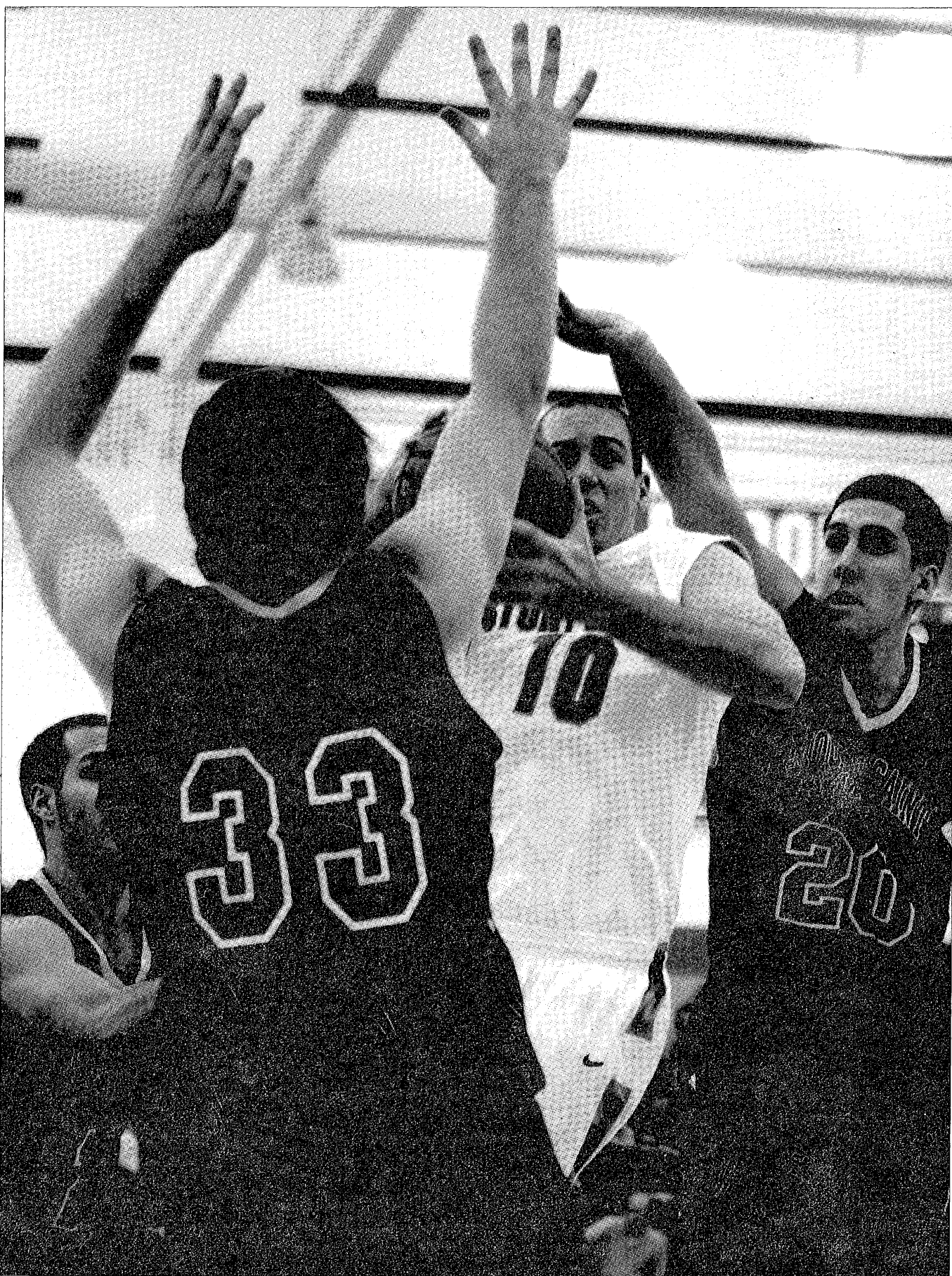
Dougher, who also matched his career-high with 8 boards, was not the only one to reach a personal best.

Sophomore center Dallis Joyner (Norfolk, Va.) tied his career high in rebounds with 9, and sophomore forward Tommy Brenton (Columbia, Md.) picked up a career-best 5 steals.

The game was close throughout the first half and most of the second, but the Seawolves managed to pull away towards the end for the 60-46 win. Now standing at 4-1, the men are off to their best start since the 1993-94 season.

The home wins are clutch for both teams, as they hit the road for their next matchups. The men are back in action first, heading to Lehigh for a date Monday evening.

The women have more of a breather, not taking the court again until Wednesday evening at Monmouth. Both tip offs are scheduled for 7:00 p.m.



Sophomore guard Bryan Dougher splits defenders in last week's win over Mount St. Mary's College. Dougher notched a career-high 25 points in Saturday's win over NJIT, to go along with 8 rebounds.

Kenneth Ho / SB Statesman