Federal Grants
Shrinking page 7

A Look at Student Cheating page 5



VOLUME XLII, NUMBER 23

Monday, November 23, 1998

PUBLISHED TWICE WEEKLY

Reeming Olide Health Science Center Keeps Quiet over Leasing Allegations page 3

Leasing deals between the Health Science Center and a real estate consortium owned by HSC employees fell under criticism of the state comptroller last week.

CRR

The Stony Brook Statesman Monday, November 23, 1998

December 1st is **RA Appreciation Day**

On behalf of the Division of Campus Residences and The Department of Residential Programs,

we thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to the University Community.

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Gray	Zalika Taylor	James	Dan Flores	Tabler (Quad	Stim	nson Natasha Ebanks	
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Gray	Gillian Morgan	Langmuir	Thien-Ly Doan	Hand	Amy Paxton		nson Malcolm Greer	
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Stony Brook Statesman Monday, November 23. 1

Taking It in Stride

Hospital Officials
Refuse to
Respond to the
Specifics of
Comptroller's
Charges

By PETER GRATTON Statesman Editor

A week after state comptroller H. Carl McCall issued a scathing 25 page report on ethical improprieties in 13 leases at the University's Health Science Center, Stony Brook officials continue to keep mostly silent on the matter, denying to answer any specific questions about the allegations.

The University Hospital has issued one terse 50-word press release on the comptroller's report, saying that in the future, officials there would take McCall's audits "into consideration." Ellen Barohn, a spokeman for the Health Science Center, refused to comment outside of what was in the release.

The comptroller's allegations center around a number of lease deals between the Health Science Center and a real estate agency owned by a consortium made up of HSC employees. In one transaction, the realty company purchased a building in Setauket from the Health Science Center for \$525,000 in 1993, which was then leased back to the Center in 1995 for \$300,000 a year plus \$100,000 in annual charges.

In addition, as part of the deal, the Health Sciences Center agreed to make \$600,000 in renovations to the building to convert it into office space.

Auditors for the comparoller's office said the lease should be referred to the state Ethics Commission to determine if there was a conflict of interest in the deal. After the Ethics Commission has completed its investigation, the state Attorney General may look into the matter as well.

A spokesperson for Attorney General Dennis Vacco said that he has not yet looked at the allegations.

In a written, non-public, response to the controller's office, officials with SUNY said that



The state is looking into 13 seperate lease deals between the Health Science Center and a real estate agency.

they did not believe that a referral to the ethics commission was warranted and that the University was not aware that a possible ethics violation existed at the time the leases were signed. Administrative procedures, the officials wrote, have since been revised to require inquiries be made about who owns leasable buildings.

The comptroller's office was not swayed by the University's response.

"This lease is not an arm's length transaction and should be examined to ensure that the state's

interests, and therefore the taxpayer's interests, are adequately protected," McCall said in a statement last week citing "overpayment on leases, runaway renovation costs, and hidden charges [that] all add up to what looks to be a bad deal for the taxpayers."

McCall also alleged a number of other leases where renovation costs could have been "better controlled" because none of the renovation contracts were competitively bid upon by outside construction firms.

The University Medical Center at Stony Brook is not the first in the SUNY system to run into problems upon audits by McCall's office. In 1996, the comptroller criticized the SUNY Health Science Center in Syracuse for similar conflicts of interest involving leasing bids. That center, McCall said, "is nowusing a competitive bidding process in leasing arrangements."

The allegations against the Center at Stony Brook came just as it was set last week to unveil its new leadership portrait gallery, where representatives from the HSC were set to celebrate the center's role in "pumping millions of dollars into the economy of Long Island."

-Julie Mingione, staff writer, contributed to this story.

Statement of University Hospital and Medical Center at Stony Brook

The leases in question had been approved by the Offices of the State Controller and the Attorney General when they were signed.

In a subsequent, routine audit one year ago, the controller suggested ways our leasing process could be improved. On all future leases we will certainly take these points into consideration.

The University Hospital's full response to last week's allegations by the state's comptroller, H.Carl McCall.

College Smoking at a High

Study Finds 28% Increase in Number of Students that Smoke

Cigarette smoking is on the rise among college students, jumping 28 percent in four years and causing health advocates to warn the nation may face more tobacco-caused disease.

"The rise in this group is really an alarming sign," said Henry Wechsler of Harvard University, whose study appears in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

Wechsler's findings aren't a surprise, smoking already had risen among teen-agers by 32 percent in the 1990s. So once those teens hit college, the rates among college students were sure to rise, too.

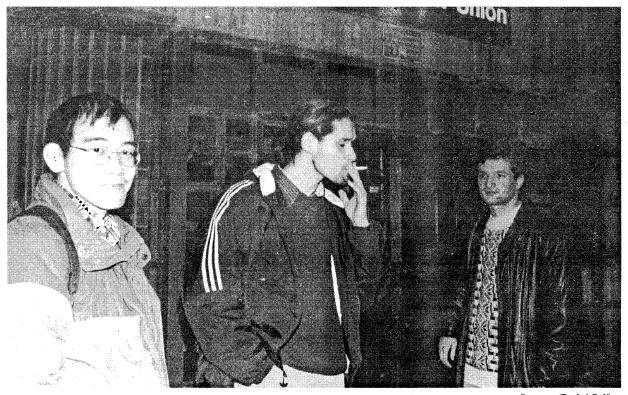
But the findings show that health officials must target college students to try to get them to quit, said Dr. Donald Sharp of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Until now, college students largely have been ignored by anti-tobacco programs.

Historically, they were far less likely to smoke than less educated Americans, plus most smokers begin before they reach age 18. So health workers had focused more on persuading children never to try cigarettes and helping older smokers quit, Sharp said.

"Because of the highly addictive nature of nicotine, very few of those kids who became regular smokers in middle school and high school quit" by college, he said. "They will suffer a much higher rate of smoking-related illness and death as a result unless effective cessation can be provided to that group."

Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of disease and death. The government says it



Left to right, Lup Ma, Vadim Malinski and Sergey Kogam enjoy cigarettes outside of the Student Union last night.

kills more than 400,000 Americans a year. Smoking causes a host of health problems, from lung cancer and heart disease to impotence.

Some 3,000 teen-agers begin smoking every day. The question is what was happening to people a little older, the 18- to 24-year-olds now in college.

Wechsler compared surveys of over 14,000 students at 116 colleges in 1993 and again in 1997. Some 28.5 percent of college students smoked last year, up from 22.3 percent in 1993, he reported.

The vast majority started smoking in high school only 11 percent of college students had their first

cigarette after age 18. But 28 percent moved from occasionally trying cigarettes in high school to becoming regular smokers in college, a finding the CDC called worrisome.

Half of college smokers reported they had tried to quit in the previous year, and 18 percent had made five or more attempts at kicking the addiction.

The findings stress the need for colleges to offer more smoke-free dormitories, because students might go without that cigarette if they can't smoke it conveniently, Wechsler said. He is about to study how smoke-free U.S. colleges are. (AP)

Grants Decline For Low Income Families

Higher education is becoming out of reach for many low-income families as federal grant money erodes and college costs continue to soar, researchers say.

Student grants are covering a significantly diminishing proportion of college pricetags, according to a study released Tuesday. Pell grants, the major federal funding source for lowincome students, provide about half of what they did 20 years ago.

About 3.6 million of the nation's 14 million college students receive Pell grants, and more than half of Pell recipients in four-year schools qualify for maximum funding.

According to the study released by the The Education Resources Institute and The Institute for Higher Education Policy, the average Pell grant covered 19 percent of the cost of attending a private, four-year institution in the 1976-77 school year and 39 percent of the price of a public issued student loans. four-year school.

In 1996-97, the most recent year available for the study, the average grant covered just 9 percent for private schools, and 22 percent for public.

More striking, the maximum Pell grant, given to the neediest students, fell from covering 35 percent of private college costs in 1976-77 to only 13 percent in 1996-97; for public schools, it dropped from covering 72 percent of the price

If low-income students don't attend community college, they can't afford to go to college at all, said Thomas Parker, senior vice president of The Education Resources Institute, a Boston-based nonprofit guarantor of privately

The neediest students, according to the new study, have seen the amount of federal aid for state schools drop more than half

"What we like to think is we have a system where people have both access and choice, but what we're rapidly developing is a system where people have access but not choice," he said.

The average Pell grant award declined by 23 percent, adjusting for inflation, over two decades, but college prices rose by 49 percent, and family incomes crept up by just 10 percent over the same period.

Although the maximum amount for Pell

grants has increased slightly in recent years, the growth hasn't kept pace with rising college costs, Parker said.

In 1996-97, the maximum Pell grant available was \$2,470 for qualifying students.

In 1997-98, it went up to \$2,700 and is at \$3,000 for the current year.

"Even with those increases, the bottom line is the net price still increases for most families, particularly for the lowest-income students," said Jamie Merisotis, president of the Washingtonbased policy institute.

While federal grant dollars have declined over the last two decades, the amount of grant money colleges and universities give to students has stayed the same, said Jacqueline King, director of policy analysis for the American Council on Education, which represents some 1,800 colleges nationwide.

Still, she said, low-income students should be able to attend a four-year college if they take college-preparatory classes in high school and apply for financial assistance from the government as well as from universities.

In 1995-96, King said, the average cost of attending a two-year public community college, including tuition, room and board, was \$7,265 for a full-time student without financial aid. For a public four-year university, it was \$10,889, and for a private college the average was \$19,443. (AP)

Cracking Down on Cheating

By SIEDEL BETHUNE Statesman Staff

By all accounts, the soft-spoken young woman is smart. The senior, majoring in psychology, likes to use her brain, not to figure out how Freud thinks, but how to cheat on her next exam. But after three years of being a cheater, there is one thought that frightens even her, being caught and having to defend an almost perfect academic record before an Academic Judiciary Committee hearing.

And according to Bill Wiesner, Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Affairs, she should be frightened. "We will move aggressively against cheating students. It's not okay to do this," he said.

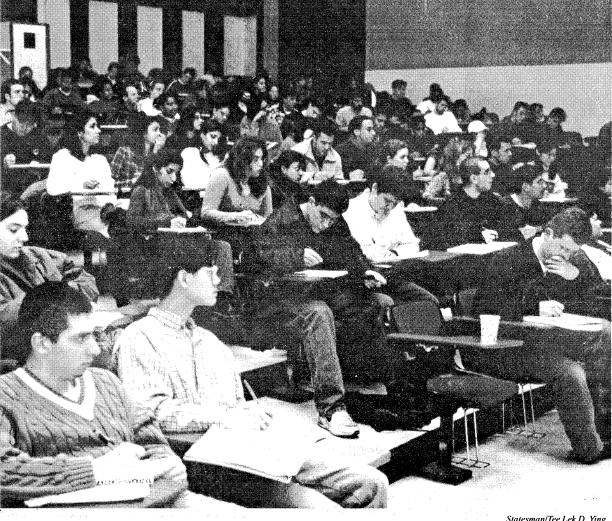
A recent string of students being caught cheating so unnerved the 21 year old student that she began studying for the first time in her college career. No more writing notes in the palm of her hands, or going to the bathroom during an exam to glimpse at the answer to the question she cannot remember. Instead, the cheating student, who has a 3.8 GPA, said she is on her way to achieving good grades the old-fashioned way, by studying very hard and is finally joining other students in study groups.

"I'll go to academic tutoring, study for many hours by myself or with friends. I don't care," said the student, who asked that her name not be used.

She said she became a cheater after her parents ordered her to bring home good grades, or face being evicted. "It was a means to an end. I just don't want to be caught cheating and the only way not to be caught cheating is to stop cheating."

As the fall semester inches toward final exams, Wiesner is calling on instructors to help stop cheating. "Professors need to take more responsibility for what goes on in the classroom and help us identify habitual cheaters," said Wiesner. "It's unfortunate but professors should also see their role as police officers inside of the

Wiesner, who also serves as the Chief Judiciary Hearing Officer for the College of Arts and Sciences and presides over all cases involving academic dishonesty within these schools, disclosed that since the fall semester started his office has handled over a dozen accusations. He would not provide specifics



Wiesner says that professors "should see their role as police officers in the classroom."

about the cases, citing the confidential nature of the

Wiesner conceded that it was impossible to determine the full extent of cheating across the campus, but said he believes cheating is widespread. "Cheating is rampant and grossly underreported by professors," Wiesner said.

Wiesner said many instructors are reluctant to bring students before the hearing committee because "the procedure may seem like a hassle as well as anxiety provoking." But he added, "Professors have a duty to ensure academic integrity instead of

academic honesty."

Because of his concern over what he described as a "cheating culture" among some students that originated in high school, Wiesner said, he is in the process of sending a letter to all instructors explaining steps that could be taken to reduce cheating

Ultimately, Wiesner said, students have got to take the re-ponsibility that comes with being in college. "If you are caught, you will not get away with a slap on the wrist," said Wiesner, who also had some advice for students who have managed to beat the system. "A student who has never been caught should not feel it is okay to cheat since such conduct only makes them ill-prepared to cope in the real world.

A student charged with academic dishonesty usually ends up before the Academic Judiciary Committee if they fail to resolve the alleged act with their instructor and the latter persists in having the matter resolved by the committee. If found guilty, the penalty ranges from having a Q grade placed on ' a student transcript, to suspension or even expulsion, depending on the manner in which the cheating act occurred.

A Q grade is a mark used to indicate that a & student has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Students whose transcripts carry such \(\mathbb{G} \) a grade also carry an explanation of what it means, iesner said. He further explained that a Q grade is computed as an F in determining a student grade

A Q grade can be either temporary or permanent depending on whether it was the first or second time the student has been found guilty of cheating on an exam, Wiesner said. If it is a first offense, the Q grade is Z temporary but contingent on the student completing a 10 < hour class that deals with issues such as ethics and time management. On successful completion of this class, the Q grade is removed from the student transcript and his or her former grade is restored. However, if the student is $\mathfrak L$ found guilty of having cheated for a second time on an exam, Wiesner said, "this second Q grade will remain on your transcript forever."

Trustees Lure Top Students to SUNY Schools

Students who rank at the top of their high school graduating classes are a hot commodity on State University of New York campuses. And trustees say they're willing to shell out millions of dollars to recruit them.

In order to lure top students from New York high schools, the system's trustees have proposed cellor's Scholarship that would award up to \$5,000 a year to high school valedictorians and salutatorians who attend a SUNY school.

"All too often, outstanding students are recruited by out-of-state institutions, resulting in a loss of intellectual capital in New York," said SUNY Chancellor John Ryan.

The trustees voted Tuesday to include the proposal in this year's list of requests to the governor, which would also need legislative

The program would cost \$2 million for the first year.

Some argue that the program is doomed before it even hits the governor's desk, because a nearly identical program proposed last year was bogged down in legislative committees.

Many lawmakers said they agreed with the idea of rewarding high-caliber students, but some wanted the awards to also be based on an individual student's ability to pay.

One objection last year was that a student could conceivably receive more aid than what it costs to attend a SUNY college.

For example, if the \$5,000 Chancellor's Scholarship came in addition to other awards such as Pell grants or Tuition Assistance Program funds, students could receive more money than the \$12,000 a year it costs for tuition, room and board at most SUNY campuses.

Trustees say the current proposal addresses that possibility, stating that the awards cannot exceed the cost of going to school.

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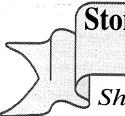
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The Stony Brook Statesman has been a member of the **Associated** Collegiate Press since 1994.



Diagnosis: A Bad Deal

While its main duty may be to heal and cure those who are ill, some of the financial dealings of the administration at the Health Sciences Center are about to make the taxpayers sick.

The recently re-elected H.Carl McCall is ending his first term with a blast by accusing Stony Brook's Health Sciences Center of engaging "questionable lease deals" that just may be ripping off the taxpayers. Apparently, a sweet little arrangement has been made by some HSC employees who just happen to own the very realty agency that has been doing business with the Center. There was some buying selling and then some leasing and releasing of expensive buildings over in Setauket. The dealings seem a bit shady but the bottom line is that some quick calculations will prove that a couple of people over at HSC are making a pretty penny, and it's not the nurses. So where did the money come from to start the buying? Where else but from the pocket of the taxpayers. And what do we have to show for that money spent? We thought we had a research Stony Brook's name to the top of the medical world. Instead we have to worry about finding ourselves on top of the list of the auditors.

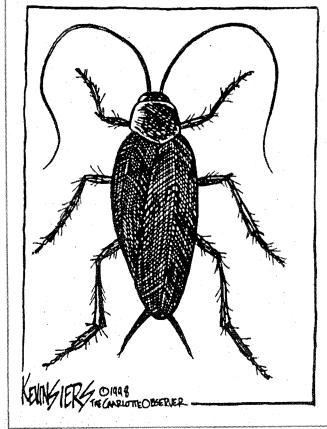
The Comptroller Releases a 25 Page Report on **Questionable** Leases; The HSC Response? 50 Words.

Perhaps the most sickening part of all this is that HSC vague non-response response, and that

center that was going to bring Commision is not warranted. In other words, they gave the old "take two pills and call me in the morning" response—they have chosen to barely acknowledge this for the moment. We say, "just 'fess up, you guys. Don't make yourselves look like liars too. You already look like cheats."

So just how low do we have to go down here? It is very disheartening to see that at every level of the administrative ladder here at Stony Brook, we have a shady character doing We have business. administrators who refuse to acknowledge the safety problems on campus and now we can add sneaky lease deals to the list. We have food managers who overcharge students and serve them barely edible food. What's next? It's administrators are giving a unfortunate that the old saying does hold true: "one bad apple only saving that the lease deals spoils the bunch" but frankly, were in fact approved by the we are sick of hearing about future these stories that land us on the transactions will attempt be five o'clock news. We all know done while taking into that we are capable of so much consideration the points of better here so let's try to shape improvement suggested by the up a bit and make some good comptroller's office. Their non-news for a change. This goes public response also said that for the students as well as our a referral of this matter to the administrators, who should be York state Ethics setting the precedent anyway.

Q:NAME TWO CREATURES THAT CAN SURVIVE ANY DISASTER





The Stony Brook Statesman onday, November 23, 1998

Shellfish Lecture at Marine Sciences Center

Monday, November 23

BLOW-UP.

7 p.m., Frank Melville Jr. Memorial Library, Room N4006. Sponsored by Stony Brook's Center for Italian Studies. Free. For information, call 516-632-7444

Tuesday, November 24

University Wind Ensemble-Autumn Airs.

8 p.m., Main Stage, Staller Center for the Arts. Works by Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Sullivan, Souse. Sibelius, Leroy Anderson, and Elton John will be featured. Tickets \$6, students and seniors \$3. For information, call 516-632-ARTS

Monday, November 30

Chamber Music Winter Festival.

8 p.m. Recital Hall, Staller Center. Performances by music department students, featuring chamber music from the Baroque period to the present. Free admission. Additional performances to be held Wednesday, December 2 and Monday, December 7.

Tuesday, December 1

Christine Goerke, Soprano, Annual Alumni Concert..

8 p.m., Recital Hall, Staller Center. Goerke's Stony Brook performance offers a sneak preview of her first Carnegie Hall recital on December 4. Tickets \$23, senior citizens and students with ID, \$20. For

reservations and information, call 516-632-ARTS

Friday, December 4

Village of Dreams.

7 p.m. Main Stage, Sraller Center. Unrated Long Island premiere! A memoir of childhood in 1948 Japan, set in a rural village amidst the U.S. occupation. In Japanese with English subtitles. For reservations and information, call the Staller Center Box Office at 516-**632-ARTS**

Ronin.

9:30 p.m. Main Stage, Staller Center. For reservations and information, call 516-632-ARTS

Marine Sciences Seminar.

12:30 p.m. Room 120, Endeavour Hall, Marine Sciences Research Center, South Campus. Discussion of "Bioavailability of Metals and Their Influences on the Life Cycle of Bivales in San Francisco Bay." Free. For information, call 516-632-8700

Astronomy Open Night.

7:30 p.m., Earth and Space Sciences Lecture room 001. Discussion entitled, "Gamma Ray Bursts: Mother Natures Bigbgest Firecrackers" in this public program followed by an observation session on the roof of the EES building. For information, call 516-632-8100

1998 Philosophy Colloquium.

2 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 to 11 a.m. Sunday, Student Activities Center. Leading theorists will reconsider the concept of interpretation for the new century in this three-day gathering of philosophers. For information and registration material, call 516-623-6320

Sunday, December 6

Messiah Sing Along.

3 p.m., Recital Hall, Staller Center. Part I will feature the University Orchestra and guest soloists. Scores will be available for purchase at the door. Free admission.

Tuesday, December 8

Opera Scenes.

8 p.m., Recital Hall, Staller Center. Staged scenes from standard operas featuring singers pursuing studies in the University's vocal programs. This year's program features Menotti's Amahl and the Night Visitors. David Lawton, Conductor. General admission, \$6, students and seniors, \$3. For information, call 632-ARTS

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2:20 p.m., Javits Lecture Center, Room 110, Center for Italian Studies hosts this special lecture with Queens College professor Peter Carravetta. Free. For information, call 632-7244



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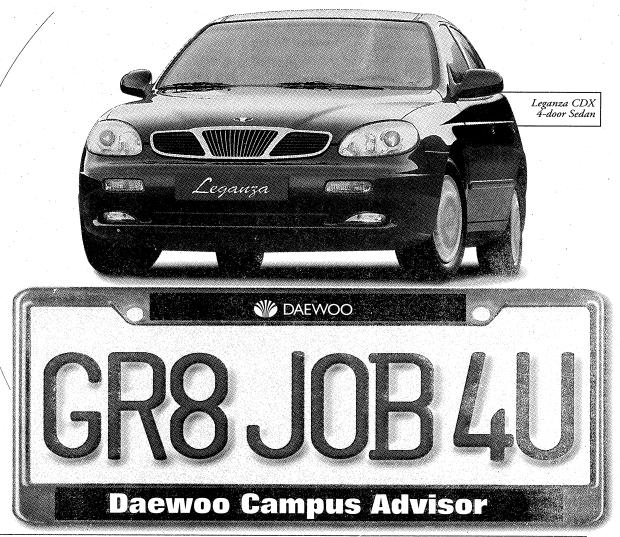
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Area residents as well as members of the University community are encouraged to donate at any of the following locations:

Tuesday, December 1st, 8:00 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Endeavor Hall-MSRC South Campus (South Campus rive)

7:30a.m.-5:00p.m

Indoor Sports Complex-Lobby (Staff/Faculty Drive)

Wednesday, December 2nd, 12:00 p.m.-5:15 p.m. Small Pitchard Gym at the Indoor Sports Complex

If you are between the ages of 17 and 76, weigh at least 110 pounds and are in good health, you can help. Each time you donate blood, you are giving the gift of life. Blood is a perishable product and, without the generosity of volunteer donors, many hospital patients would not be able to receive the treatments they need to survive.

There is no substitute for blood. Blood cannot be manufactured. The human body is the only producer of this precious fluid. Hospitals in Nassau, Suffolk and Queens require 800 pints daily to meet the needs of their patients. The University's goal for this week is just 800 pints. Together, we can meet this goal.

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he Stony Brook Statesman Thursday, November 19, 1998



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Since June of 1998 and currently extending into the 1ST quarter of 1999, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) through its contractor, TESTCOM, is conducting a study aimed at creating the most effective and consumer friendly program possible. To do this, the study (called the **IPA Pilot Study**) must collect data from testing conducted on 5,100 vehicles. The testing facility for the IPA Pilot Study is currently located in Ronkonkoma, NY, at Colt Court, off of Remington Boulevard, east off exit 57 of the Long Island Expressway on Veterans' Memorial Highway.

The IPA Study is <u>not</u> an inspection or enforcement program. Vehicles do not "pass" or "fail". This is a voluntary program for the purposes of data collection and analysis.

To encourage participation in the IPA Study, <u>TESTCOM will pay \$25 to motorists who take part in the study</u> and will also pay separate finders' fees to associations and groups whose members participate in the study as a result of the association's referral. <u>All appointments for testing a vehicle must be made in advance by phone.</u> TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM AND HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE, CALL TOLL-FREE — 1-877-472-8378.

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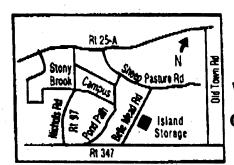
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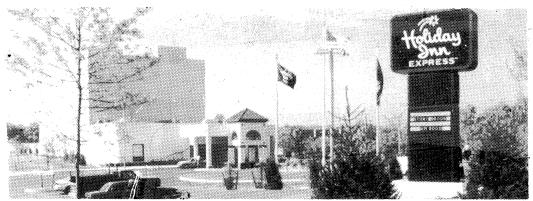
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Monday, November 23, 1998 The Stony Brook Statesman

Poetry Reading to be Held

By Elio Evangelista Statesman Staff

For the second time in as many semesters, the Writing Center will be hosting its Fall Poetry Reading on December 3.

In the spring, the Poetry Reading featured distinguished members of the English Department, as well as original work from the tutors and students of the Writing Center. This semester's gathering will not only feature English professors, but will also include faculty members from the Linguistics Department, Writing Programs, and an "open mike" session.

The "open mike" session is when students, faculty, or staff members, who are not scheduled to read, will be able to present their work to the audience.

At the first Poetry Reading, there were more scheduled readers than "open mike" readers. Therefore, Sally La Forte, Director of the Writing Center, encourages all students to attend the Poetry Reading to share their original work.

La Forte hopes that the Fall Poetry Reading will be as successful as it was in the spring. The audience will first be presented with live music, which will then be followed by an entertaining evening of poetry. "I'm thoroughly excited about the prospects of having such erudite scholars reciting their poetry," said Sheila Shettle, a tutor at the Writing Center.

Following the Poetry Reading, the audience will be invited to converse with professors an poets alike at a reception where refreshments will be served.

The Writing Center is a studentrun tutoring center for all disciplines. For general information about the Writing Center, please call 632-7405 for visit Room 198 in Humanities. The Writing Center's Fall Poetry Reading will take place on Thursday, December 3, at 5:30 p.m. in the Poetry Center, on the second floor of Humanities.

"What I'm really looking forward to is the opportunity to hear my professors' works," said Dave Goldman, another tutor at the Writing Center. "As a student, I've always been intrigued as to what my professors' poetry is like. This Poetry Reading is an opportunity for students to share their works with professors and vice versa."

NECC Honors SBU Soccer Team

Stony Brook men's soccer head coach Scott Dean was named the New England Collegiate Conference Men's Soccer Coach of the Year and freshman midfielder Sam Glassen (North Branford, CT/North Branford) was named the NECC Rookie of the Year, the conference announced today.

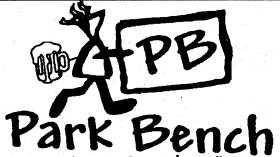
Scott Dean Named Coach of the Year and Freshman Sam Glassen Awarded Rookie of the Year

Junior forward Moses Sarr (Senegal, West Africa/Yal Suuren) was named to the All-NECC Second team while Glassen also earned Honorable Mention accolades.

Dean led the Seawolves to an 8-10 record, 5-4 in the NECC this season. The eight wins marked a 15game improvement from the 0-17-1 season Stony Brook posted Dean's first year at the helm. The 5-4 record in conference play was the first time in school-history that the Seawolves have posted a winning record in NECC action. The fourth place finish in the conference is also the highest ever. This season, Stony Brook posted six shutouts tying another school-record and picked up the program's first ever victory over a team ranked in the top-10 in the nation (a 2-1 win over then #9 New Hampshire College on October 11th).

Glassen became the first Stony Brook soccer player to earn Rookie of the Year accolades. He led the team in scoring in overall games tallying seven goals and four assists for 18 points. Glassen also scored four goals and added two assists against conference opponents. He scored the game-winner in the 1-0 victory Bridgeport and tallied Stony Brook's first goal in the win over New Hampshire College.

Sarr ranked second on the team in scoring, netting six goals and dishing out three assists for 15 points. He recorded game-winning goals in back-to-back games against NECC rivals, UMass-Lowell (3-0 on October 17th), and Sacred Heart (2-0 on October 21st).



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\$2 Miller bottles for the guys

SATURDAYS!

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Sunday 11/29

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\$3 - 22oz. Foster Pints \$5 Molson Miller Buckets \$1 Domestic Pints \$2 Import Pints The Stone Brook Statesman Monday, November 23, 19

The Energies of Jhankhar

Southeast Asian Culture Celebrated at the SAC

By RISHAD JONUSCHAT Statesman Staff

What event brings together variety, culture, and diversity? Jhankhar. Each year the Center For Indian Studies at Stony Brook sponsors South Asian Student Cultural Shows which comprise of numerous arts and talents from all over South Asia. Skillful Stony Brook musicians, poets, actors, actresses, and many more from the student body put on one-man shows or work in teams to make the evening enjoyable, intriguing, and moving as they performed in the Student Activities Auditorium.

National Anthems, specifically the Indian, Pakistani, and the Bangladeshi, were the perfect introduction to the show. Groups of the audience cheered at their respective anthems while others silently felt proud. The four MC'S, Inesha Singh, Fahad Ahmed, Noreen Kazi, and Jaya Bahl exhibited liveliness. They became a necessary ingredient to the performance, as they helped it flow successfully.



Statesman/Michael Kwan

Professor Sridhar was instrumental in planning the show.



Statesman/Michael Kwan

The Rhadha Krishna Raas, a dance symbolic of Krishna, being performed by dancers.

Professor Sridhar commenced with a cordial presentation which placed emphasis on the distinctive and recognized Indian studies minor which SBU offers. He also talked of India's interrelation with its surrounding countries. This particular program extracts "the distinctiveness of India's experiences, achievements, and contributions, and its shared commonality with other cultures," he said.

The audience awaited eagerly to see their friends dance, act, or sing. The Bridal Showcase was a spectacular display of bridal dresses from all over the Indian Sub-Continent. Female students wore ornately decorated colorful sarees and traditional religious jewelry items. Each of the nine Brides- Sikh, Telegu, Muslim, Gujrati, North Indian, Bengali, Rajastani, Marathi, and Malyalee-represented their specific region with unique style. Certain grooms accompanied the brides onto the stage where they formed small groups of two or three.

Neena Bhanti's solo dance of Mera Piya Ghar Aaya was sensational. It combined Indian music with an upbeat western rhythm to produce an unusual but appealing song. Neena's fascination with dance has developed over the years which has ultimately led her to show off her skill in public. Each of her hand movements, swirls, and jumps paralleled the beat of the music. The mood created was that of excitement and amazement.

Aside from the dances, instrumentalists were also a part of the evening. "Hoton Se Chulo Tum" sung by Amit Tandon and tabla was played by Khemraj Singh reflected a real sense of mysticism and enchantment. However, the sound of the special type of drum was familiar and could definitely be associated with India. Another instrumental performed once again by Khemraj Singh, the tabla player, and Nithin Mohan on the harmonium was equally good as its predecessor. The harmonium produced notes with pitches resembling the organ which brought a gothic feel to the event.

Also included in the show were Indian film clips, which were extracted from the most popular movies in the cinema, were acted out by students. Generally, Indian films incorporate music, drama, and heroics to end up with a much loved end result.

The evening was brought to an abrupt standstill when the fire signals in the hall began flashing. Their was a strange twist to the story. The alarm went off exactly in the same instant as stage smoke was being released for a performance. However, later it was found that the two coincidences were unrelated. Students were requested to leave the building immediately. Thankfully, the show was resumed minutes later, after a search of the premises had been carried out. Students were not bothered by this minor interruption. Freshman Christine Rager said, "The Punjabian Da Dhol Vajda was an energetic and beautiful dance!"

The collaborative effort of all those involved made the numerous Annual South Asian Student Culture Shows a marvellous night of entertainment for the whole family.

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