

THE STATESMAN



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Kenneth Ho / SB Statesman

Classes will soon pause for Thanksgiving break.

OPINION

The Clinton Surplus Myth

It is obvious that during elections in which the economy is the most important issue to voters, the candidate deemed to be "strongest" on the economy will get elected. As it happens, one of the arguments I most often hear in support of the Obama presidency is citing the budget surplus under the previous Democratic president, Bill Clinton. This is supposed to give evidence to the superiority of the Democrat's "economic plan" over Bush's disastrous "free market" policies. The only problem is the alleged budget surplus is a myth.

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Much To Be Thankful For

It was a longstanding Thanksgiving tradition for my grandfather to make all the kids say what we were thankful around the dinner table. The tradition for us kids was to sing the praises of the many trivial things that amused us: television, video games, toys, etc. These kinds of answers must have certainly disappointed my grandfather and the rest of the elders.

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Despite Bear Market, Business Majors Remain Optimistic

BY LAUREN CIOFFI
Contributing Writer

With the economy teetering on the edge of collapse and several Fortune-500 companies cutting thousands of jobs, some students at Stony Brook University continue to remain optimistic about their future careers.

Freddy Mac, Fannie Mae, Bear Stearns, AIG, Lehman Brothers, Washington Mutual and Citigroup were just a few of the companies that were forced to either declare bankruptcy, be seized by the government or be taken over by another corporation. The turmoil left many businessmen and women and CEOs jobless.

Students, however, are still turning to a major in business. The amount of undergraduate students declaring a business major have been developing at a rapid pace over the last 28 years, according to the Census Bureau.

One particular analysis conducted by the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics found that majoring in business has been the number one choice for undergraduates attending national colleges from 1980 through today. The same study found that since 1980 students declaring a major in business jumped from 86,000 students

to over 300,000 nationwide in 2005.

Despite this large number, some students remain unconcerned.

"Professors say it might be tough," said Christina Postiano, a student in the university's School of Business. "But there is light at the end of the tunnel. There's only one way to go, and that's up. I don't see myself being too affected by it," Postiano said.

Postiano said the major gives her a broad knowledge base.

"Business is so versatile," she said. "In the end, if I don't become a businesswoman I can use it in everyday life -- knowing things about marketing, knowing things about finance."

Postiano interned in marketing over the summer in New York City and can see a possibility of venturing into that field after graduating.

"No university can manufacture jobs for students," said Marianna Savoca, the director of the Career Center. "But we want to make sure in times like these students feel they have to prepare early and get an internship and be more competitive than ever."

Internships have become a very important part of the process, especially for business majors, according to Savoca.

"They're low-work costs," Savoca said. "Businesses can't totally blow their relationships with colleges. They're going to keep training future workforce."

According to Savoca, business majors have not visited the Career Center with concerns that their major will keep them from getting a job upon graduation.

Other students also remain optimistic.

"It'll turn back around," said junior Brian Morgan. "It'll be harder to find a job, but if you're qualified you should be able to find a job."

Some experts see the market decline as an opportunity for freshmen.

"This is unprecedented," said John Russell, a journalism professor and business reporter. "The freshmen are in fine shape. When they graduate this economy is going to be humming."

Clarification

An article in the Nov. 20, 2008 issue of The Statesman titled "MRSA Outbreak On Campus" reported at least three cases of MRSA were found on campus. The headline was not intended to suggest MRSA was found campuswide or that more than several cases were reported.

Plans for LIRR Station Upgrades Unveiled

BY SAMANTHA BURKHARDT AND SHIREEN JAYMAN
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Sen. John J. Flanagan announced upcoming renovations to the Brook Long Island Rail Road station that will cost more than \$2.5 million. These upgrades, unveiled at a press conference last month, are meant to enhance comfort, safety and accessibility to railroad passengers.

These changes were brought about by discussions with the community, according to Robert Caroppoli, a spokesman for the senator.

"People who use that transit in the area and from the university deserve to have services that make it convenient and safe as possible," Caroppoli said.

Flanagan, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, designed a plan for the station in the hopes of implementing changes that would improve the transit in the Stony Brook and Three Village areas. The senator is a member of the MTA Capital Program Review Board.

According to President Shirley Strum Kenny, the renovations "will significantly impact the lives of our commuter students."

The upgrades include the replacement of platform shelter sheds, improvements to the waiting room such as heating enhancements, installation of new lights, renovation of station restrooms, and the modification of platform railings to conform to American Disability Association standards.

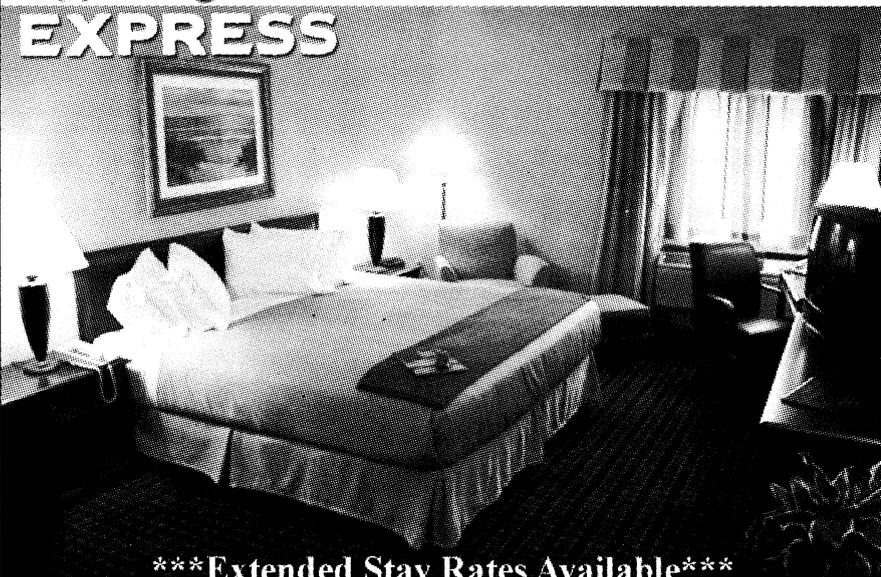
The goal behind the changes is "to make the station as user friendly as possible, and as up to date as possible," Caroppoli said.

The station's improved lighting and handicapped accessibility are two of the main features stressed in a press release by Flanagan's office last month.

One of the goals of the station upgrades is to maintain durability

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President Kenny in Retrospect

BY ERIKA KARP AND LAUREN CIOFFI
Contributing Writers

After 14 years, Stony Brook University President Shirley Strum Kenny's term is in its final months.

Prior to the worldwide economic crisis we face today, President Kenny spoke at her inauguration and said, "It is my goal that Stony Brook will not merely adapt to an increasingly hostile environment, but will take the lead in creating the American research university of the twenty-first century."

Since taking office, Kenny witnessed growth and improvements through the university's educational standing, demographics, and constructional development.

Retired faculty member Manuel Lerdau, who worked at the university through Kenny's 14-year term, reflected on Kenny's desire for improvement at the university.

"Her positive contributions involved her interest in undergraduates and her efforts to raise the caliber of the undergraduate student body," Lerdau said.

In a recent interview, Kenny expressed her excitement upon first arriving at Stony Brook. "The opportunity to grow, to develop, to change, to become a human institution, which we did, I could see all that potential here," Kenny said. "It was very young and yet it had become such a strong and respected university and it had to keep moving forward."

According to Kenny, the university has changed since 1994. In her 2008 convocation speech she referred to the grounds as a "blacktop desert," enrollment was at 17,600 and the standards of acceptance into the university were much lower. Since then Stony Brook has seen an increase of enrollment by 6,400 students and S.A.T. scores have increased by 128 points.

Under Kenny's presidency, Stony Brook joined the Association of American Universities, an association categorizing the top 62 research universities in the nation.

"That really put us in a very special league. Just the fact that we were members of that says this is one of the best institutions in the country," Kenny said.

Kenny explained how Stony Brook would deal with an influx of applications. "Every year [we] set a number of freshmen that we accept and we have not let that number rise in the last couple of years...we're bringing in about 2,700 freshmen a year and that will be true next year too."

With an increase in applicants, the standards are rising for incoming undergraduates.

"We have been becoming more selective over the past years," Kenny

said. "Our applications for last year were the largest over any SUNY school, although we're not the largest population school."

According to Kenny, the selectivity of the number of applicants accepted has decreased to 40 percent.

Faculty members such as Norman Goodman, a teaching and service professor, have seen Kenny's involvement here at Stony Brook as honorary. Goodman, a 45-year member of the faculty at Stony Brook has earned the title department chair of Sociology, president of the Senate of the College of Arts and Sciences and twice president of the University Faculty Senate.

"Just look at the accomplishments since she's come," Goodman said. "She spearheaded a major national commission, called the Boyer Report to define education for undergraduates at research universities. That has been a blue print for Stony Brook and other major research universities in how they educate undergraduate students."

While some faculty and administration are pleased with Kenny, others are not.

Last year, the College of Arts and Sciences started an online petition and survey that stated a "loss of confidence in the academic leadership of President Kenny."

The survey, conducted by the Committee of Concerned Faculty, questioned 257 respondents, all faculty members. According to the College of Arts and Sciences faculty, studies reported larger classes caused a decrease in the quality of education.

"That was interesting," Kenny said in regards to the petition. "That was one of these petitions that was put up on the Internet to get people to sign, and four percent of the faculty signed but I think it was a tempest in a teapot."

According to Patricia M. Whitaker, a faculty member of the Department of Psychology and the director of the Committee of Concerned Faculty who started the petition, "the quality of education was suffering because of some decisions made during Dr. Kenny's presidency."

Whitaker said that class sizes were too big, preventing faculty to get to know students, and that recommendations for graduate school and internships became more difficult.

"It made teaching less rewarding," Whitaker said.

"I felt that the President was not supporting the faculty enough. Too much money was spent on unnecessary projects, like buying Southampton College when more faculty should have been hired and more classrooms built," she said.

Manuel Lerdau supported this idea.



Media Credit: East Hampton Press

President Kenny will retire at the end of this academic year.

"Kenny never appreciated the depth and breadth of loyalty that her faculty had toward the university," he said.

Professor Jeffrey Levinton spoke about his desire for more careful spending with Stony Brook's new cut budget.

"I would hope the new president will strongly consider the burdens, relative to benefits, imposed by Stony

Brook Southampton and Stony Brook Manhattan," he said.

According to Levinton, the campus is in need of facilities and development. According to Kenny, development will be difficult due to budget cuts and a decrease in finance.

Ironically, Stony Brook University faced similar budgetary difficulties in the first and last years of Kenny's presidency.

In 1994 Kenny realized the significance of the university's economic struggles.

"During that year we discovered a very serious budgetary situation in which we had significant debt," she said. "Every year was getting significantly worse than the year before." The latest financial crisis and budget cut has resulted in a freeze on all hiring and construction at the university.

"It's going to be a lean period but we will do everything in our power to protect the academic program as much as possible," Kenny said.

On Tuesday, the SUNY board of trustees approved the first tuition increase in five years. The increase would total \$620 between now and next fall and include a number of smaller hikes over the next three years.

Kenny was in favor of the increase. "I feel strongly that tuition increase should go to improve the education we're able to offer to the students," she said prior to the decision made by the board of trustees.

Goodman, a member of the Budget Advisory Committee, said, "I would have preferred more transparency in budget. She's been much more transparent this year, but over the years I think she could have been more transparent."

"Also, I wish she'd consulted more, prior to making a decision," he said. "She does consult, but I think there were times she could have consulted earlier and gotten good advice from faculty."

With Kenny's position as president ending in June, the members of a search committee have been in the process of narrowing down those that are qualified for the position.

According to Kenny, there have been a number of town hall meetings on campus for specific constituencies, but nothing has been placed. Requests for interviews with individual members of the committee were not granted.

"The next president will have wonderful opportunities and should feel joyous about the future," Kenny said. "There is every reason for a new person to be delighted to be at this place at this time."

Kenny was very optimistic about the future for Stony Brook.

"The person who comes in will have the sense of the potential that he finds in this place and the excitement of the intellectual enterprise here and a vision of what that next set of steps should be," she said.

Plans for LIRR Station Upgrades Unveiled

Continued from page 1

Flanagan's office last month. One of the goals of the station upgrades is to maintain durability of the improvements. "These changes should stay in place for over a year and shouldn't need massive renovations," Caropoli said.

The renovations are still in the development stage. No timetable or date of completion is scheduled.

For now, Long Island Rail Road passengers -- including Stony Brook University commuters -- won't face any disruption of service or alterations of the schedule due to construction.

The Clinton Surplus Myth

Continued from page 9

was, in itself, funded by low interest rates set by the Federal Reserve, giving investors a surplus of capital which to invest in the overvalued Internet companies. Government policy contributed to the unsustainable dot-com bubble which the government took advantage of to temporarily reshuffle its debt to give the appearance of a budget surplus to win political favor.

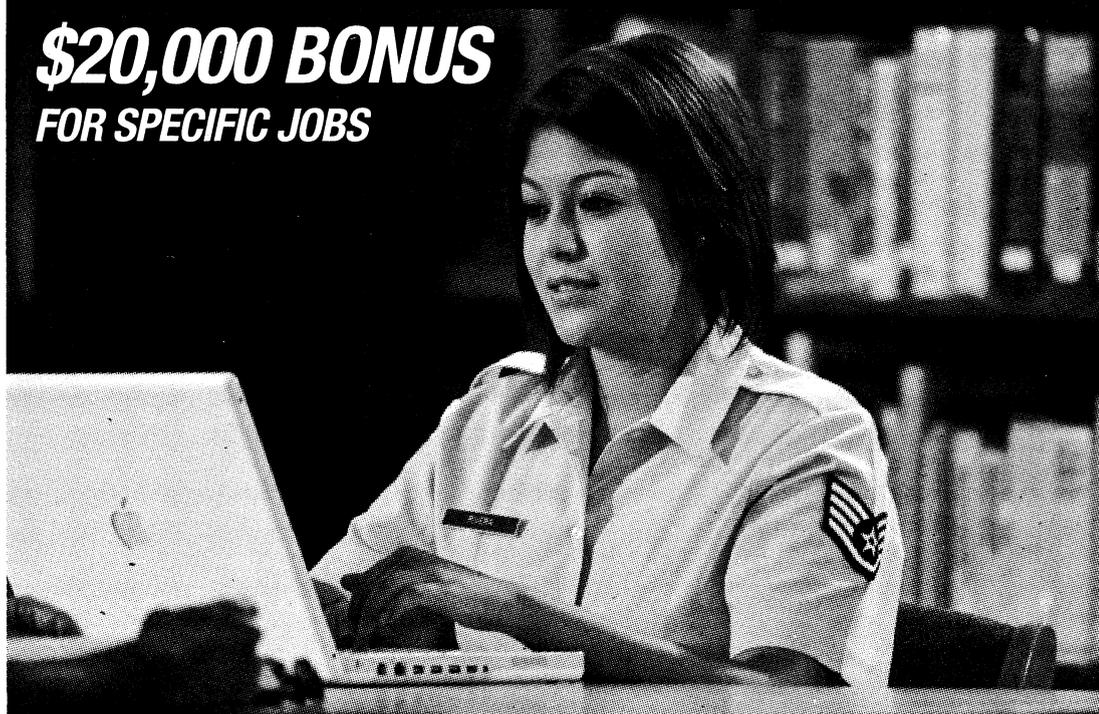
Admittedly, I blame ignorance rather than malevolence on the bad policies of the Clinton Administration. I doubt that Clinton, who is unstudied in Austrian economic theory, realized how his policies contributed to the business cycle, and therefore probably thought his debt reshuffling was innocuous. If he had realized that the dot-com bubble was going to burst, however, and that it would leave the economy worse off and Social Security without its much-needed surplus, he

would have found a different way to pay off the national debt through lowering spending.

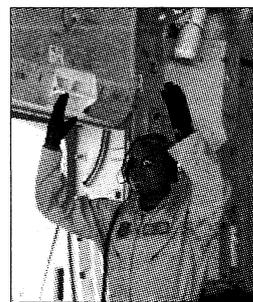
If more people were aware of the above facts, I very much doubt that Obama would want his economic policies associated with the likes of Clinton. Unlike Clinton, Obama is coming into office at the beginning of a recession, without a plan to decrease government spending and will have no conceivable way of decreasing the national debt.

If Obama wants to cause real economic prosperity that Americans can rely on, he will focus on decreasing the size and scope of government, cease federal policies that generate unsustainable economic bubbles and let people keep more of their own money. Otherwise, like Clinton, he will leave office with delusions of grandeur and leaving more problems that will be blamed on the next President. Surely, Obama has a better vision for the future of this country.

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“Free Food” Expo Draws In Students

By ERIKA KARP
Contributing Writer

As the end of the semester nears and meal points diminish, nothing sounds better to students than two words: free food.

Students got their wish yesterday with Campus Dining’s annual food show, “Taste of Stony Brook,” which was held during Campus Lifetime in the Student Activities Center Ballroom A. The show drew in over 2,500 students, faculty and staff for an afternoon snack or, in many cases, feast.

The food show featured an array of goodies for guests to choose from, including sushi, smoothies, ice cream, pastries, breads, drinks, and sandwiches.

There were 35 vendors at the show, according to Lisa Ospitale, director of marketing and communications for Campus Dining. The vendors are all under Chartwells, which is Stony Brook’s dining provider.

Kelly Caron, a sophomore, waited on the popular Tropi-Kool Smoothie line for a strawberry smoothie. Caron hopes Tropi-Kool Smoothies will become a permanent addition to Campus Dining.

Rose Jimenez, a freshman, said her favorite food and beverage was the Boar’s Head sandwiches and SoNu, a flavored water beverage.

While many students snacked on a few samples, others stockpiled as much food as possible. Many balanced as many products as possible, which was quite a sight. Others piled all types of foods in boxes, most likely stocking their fridges for the next few weeks as meal points fade.

Campus Dining employees encouraged guests entering the ballroom to fill out a survey. The survey asked guests to list their top five favorite food vendors at the show. Survey results were not available in time for this story’s deadline.



Aisha Akhtar /SB Statesman

Students examine the new food options vendors brought to Stony Brook.

How To Watch Your Weight This Holiday Season

By CAITLIN STEIGER
Contributing Writer

Prior to the holidays, many students look forward to Thanksgiving dinners and New Year’s buffets, but when the snow melts, several may look back on their holiday diets differently.

A small group of Stony Brook faculty women met at the Wang Center on Nov. 21 for a lecture led by Tina Annibell, a holistic nutrition counselor. The Friday lecture focused on “How to Survive the Holidays Without Gaining Weight or Going Crazy.” The workshop is part of the Lunchtime Learning Workshops, sponsored by the Stony Brook University Employee Assistance Program.

“Today we are going to focus on not only surviving the holidays, but dare I say, thriving throughout the holidays,” Annibell said.

The interactive workshop paired up individuals to discuss their stresses around the holidays and what they would like to change this season. The group shared traditions, the single biggest challenge during the holidays and why they want to make this holiday different from previous years.

Annibell invited participants to share their challenges with the group. Laughter resonated, as everyone seemed to have the same understanding.

Most people save their resolutions for New Year’s, but Annibell challenged the group to “resolve to take back your health and your sanity and your pleasure starting with this holiday season.”

Overeating is the biggest issue around the holidays. According to Annibell, for every 3,500 extra calories a person consumes, they gain one pound. The average person gains five pounds during the five weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year’s.

“Be aware first hand of the critical link between nutrition, lifestyle and health,” Annibell said.

The holiday season can be “self-sabotaging,” according to Annibell. A reasonable game plan is necessary to eat healthy, get rid of stress, take care of yourself and bring magic back to the holidays. Annibell discussed a series of tips she engages in herself, as well as suggests to her clients.

“Set your intention.” By setting your intention, you are “setting your energy in motion,” Annibell said. This is the most empowering step, as your mind is so powerful.

“Most of your meals should be healthy and home-cooked.” Since most people are preoccupied preparing for the holidays they tend to eat drive-thru and take-out meals.

The best way to stay healthy is to design a list of five simple meals. Be sure that the ingredients for these meals are in the kitchen at all times. These “default” meals can be made without much difficulty.

“Freeze meals.” When cooking a meal, eat some for dinner, but also put some on the side to freeze. When you are busy running errands, cleaning your house or making preparations for that holiday party, you can easily go to your freezer for a healthy, pre-cooked meal.

“Don’t save calories.” Many people like to save calories when they know they are going to a party or holiday event. Eat a healthy breakfast and lunch. Consume food that is high in protein and full of healthy fat before going to an event so you are not starving when you get there. You can make better, healthier choices if you are not starving.

“Painter’s approach.” Buffet-style presentation is an enticing set up where everyone wants to eat some of everything. Think of a painter’s palette -- the piles of different colored paint separated around the palette. Go down the buffet line and make little piles of food so you can taste everything.

“Scan approach.” Gaze across the table and pick three to four dishes that seem the healthiest. Put some of each on your plate and if the food is not absolutely delicious, don’t eat it.

“Drink a glass of water or two in between drinks if you’re drinking or taking trips to the buffet.” Thirst

usually comes through as hunger first. If you are dehydrated, you are going to eat more. By having a glass of water, you can get rid of that pang of hunger that is most likely caused by thirst.

“Fill up on the good stuff first.” Pick the healthy foods first then decide what you want to go back for. It doesn’t mean you can’t have the things that aren’t the best choices, but you will have the opportunity to try some of everything and you will fill up on healthy food first.

“Put a piece of gum or mint in your mouth.” If you are at a party where food is being passed around, having gum or a mint in your mouth will prevent you from that continuous snacking after you are already full.

“Bring magic back to the holidays.” Take a day off from work to rest. Do something you have always wanted to do, but have never had time to.

“Avoid overspending.” Create a budget and stick to it. Don’t buy

anything that isn’t on the list. Pay in cash, don’t put everything on your credit card to worry about in January. Put a dollar limit on gifts.

Besides watching what foods are consumed, students can also delete, delegate or diminish activities to reduce stress.

Delete. Pick something on your to-do list and skip it altogether. For example, if there is that holiday party you don’t want to go to, don’t.

Delegate. Let someone else handle it. Hire a housekeeper to clean your house before the holidays. Ask everyone you invited to your holiday party to contribute a dish.

Diminish. Reduce your workload to just the core necessities and perform easier alternatives to required tasks. Instead of buying gifts for everyone, buy gift certificates. Send an E-Christmas card instead of mailing cards.

So when students go home to their much-anticipated home-cooked meals, they should think twice about what they eat.



Kenneth Ho /SB Statesman

Tina Annibell suggests that students watch what they eat during this holiday season.

Dir en Grey Mesmerizes New York City Crowd

By **BRADLEY DONALDSON**
Managing Editor

For foreign performers virtually unknown to the majority of the American people, there's no room for the uninspiring. Whether or not Japanese rock band Dir en grey knows this is debatable. Either way, they delivered a near-perfect concert in fist-pumping energy with music so intense that you'd think someone let them in on the secret.

Still, quality is no secret for a band in the music business for almost 12 years. It's a duty.

The concert, held at Terminal 5 in Manhattan on Nov. 14, started on time at 8 p.m. sharp after the doors were opened at 7 p.m. to let in a horde of concertgoers. Needless to say, the turnout was unexpected. There were easily 1,000 or more people there.

The opening band, The Human Abstract, was good -- with melodies that invigorated the crowd -- but the lead singer fell short on the vocals. Jolting bass-laden music and an impressive piano performance can only go

so far. Frontman Nick Olaerts seemed able enough, but his voice was lost beneath the music.

After about 40 minutes, The Human Abstract's set was over, and, soon after, the crowd started chanting, "Dir en grey! Dir en grey!" while concert staff readied the stage.

Finally, at 9 p.m., the lights dimmed, and "Sa Bir" -- the first track off the Dir en grey's latest album "Uroboros," which was released earlier this month -- began to play. Its heavy bass literally shook the floor, and only amplified the level of anticipation in the room.

One by one the band members came on, and the audience erupted. For Kyo, the lead singer, the screaming was the loudest.

The opening notes of the band's song "Obscure" begun shortly after, and the circus commenced.

Track after track Kyo belted out vocals that dug into you, even if you didn't understand the words. (He sung in Japanese.) The other band members were

just as eager, with Toshiya (bass), Kaoru (guitar) and Die (guitar) all commanding their own stage presence. Shinya (drums), though hidden behind his massive drum set, also had his place, noticed especially during the band's complex drum melodies.

A lot of the songs called for screaming, screeching, roaring, and other non-singing vocals from Kyo, who rose to the occasion.

For about three minutes between "Agitated Screams of Maggots" and "Conceived Sorrow" he goes into an entirely wordless performance. He shrieks, gurgles and gasps (think of being drowned or strangled), whimpers, croons and growls -- things I thought possible only in a studio.

To round off his vocal prowess, Kyo abandons his microphone near the end of "Conceived Sorrow." The audience becomes mute, allowing his voice to surge through the room. With arms flung out to the side, his words and emotions are clear, even without a mic.

Choosing Terminal 5 as the New York City venue was a good move. The rectangular room feels big enough, with two balconies on the second floor surrounding the stage and an open floor right in front of the stage for up-close viewing and "moshing." The light show also added to the dramatic effect Dir en grey normally tries to achieve, and complemented the mood of the songs. (Not to mention the images and videos projected on the backdrop.)

There was more aggression in The Human Abstract's set than in Dir en grey's, but the crowd was more fired up during the latter's. Fists pounded the air and many fans attempted -- and succeeded -- to be carried over the barrier just in front of the stage. Terminal 5 staff flung water on the crowd, dousing the heads of eager fans that swung their heads to the music. One audience member collapsed, but security carried her out.

There was a little break during the 90-minute main set, but the crowd was tireless. Kyo seemed

unaffected as well, bouncing around the stage in convulsive dancing, and sometimes climbing back onto the singer's podium to sway his hips -- and the rest of his body -- as gracefully as a snake. The crowd egged him on.

I expected the band to play more than just three songs off "Uroboros" ("Dozing Green," "Toguro," and "Gaika") and I especially wanted to hear "Glass Skin," but what they delivered was enough to suppress my disappointment.

Dir en grey is already gifted musically, using their own originality to dish out infectious and meaningful songs, that achieving a good live performance -- especially in a foreign country -- only speaks to their success as a band.

When a band has been around as long as Dir en grey has, it's no surprise that they know how to take performing seriously. And they did.

Media Credit for Page 7 Photos:
Kathy Chee / jrockonline.com

MUSIC FOR GROWN-UPS: Veterans' Day

By **MICHAEL KIMMEL**
Staff Writer

"Old soldiers never die, they just fade away," said General Douglas MacArthur, the aging World War II warhorse, sadly and prophetically.

Not so for old rock and rollers. They're more like the Energizer Bunny, and keep going and going and going. Each of these guys has been in heavy rotation on my turntable since -- well, since I had a turntable and records!

Each of their new releases circles on mortality. By this point in their careers, they're less about posturing and more honest, unflinching, and determined not to channel the denial of groups like the "ageless" Rolling Stones or the "timeless" Beach Boys. These guys are grownups.



Jackson Browne
"Time the Conqueror"
(Inside Records)

There's more than a whiff of mortality here. Browne epitomized that endless L.A. summer until he let his political convictions drive his musical passions off a polemical cliff. As an independent, he's achieved a balance between the political and the

personal -- and he's got plenty of material to work with. "Drums of War" and "Where Were You?" ask the innocent questions -- why, who gives the orders, who benefits, why is impeachment off the table, where were you? Sometimes the political correctness overwhelm Browne's febrile sensibilities.

But sometimes he's pitch perfect. "Off of Wonderland" looks back without nostalgia at the amazingly privileged life he's led as a mega-selling songwriter. And I love the little bounce to "Going Down to Cuba" as he figures out how to go to avoid the blockade. Yeah, it's tough, he says, but at least they "know what to do in a hurricane."



Joe Jackson
"Rain"
(Ryko)

Joe Jackson decamped from London to New York around the time of his mainstream breakthrough Night and Day (1982). Now he's moved to Berlin and sends back "Rain," filled with similar breakthrough ambitions.

His lyrics are still smart, his wry, slightly off-kilter sensibility is still sharp. But to my ear, Jackson's strength has been portraits

in miniature, capturing some elusive experience or emotion by seeing the world a bit cockeyed, with ironic detachment (like "Is She Really Going Out with Him?" or "Real Men").

Here, even reunited with his old band, he's grander, with more orchestral piano and symphonic arrangements. It's not so much that his reach exceeds his grasp. It's more that if you can "see the world in a grain of sand," as Blake famously put it, why would want to paint a whole beach?



John Mellencamp
"Life, Death, Love and Freedom"
(Hear Music)

John Mellencamp has always played rural country-boy to Bruce Springsteen's urban working stiff. But while Springsteen takes on "big" themes (police brutality, 9/11, teen pregnancy, father-son relations) through intimate lyrics and sonic surround-sound, Mellencamp has always advertised his themes broadly, with somewhat more grandiose claims. Need evidence? Take a look at the title of this CD. What does he leave out? God? Stay tuned.

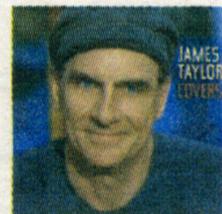
But portentous doesn't nec-

essarily mean pretentious. Produced by T Bone Burnett, this largely acoustic album is stripped down and immediate. Songs like "Troubled Land" use a swirling organ frill add a Dylan-esque groove to his gravelly vocals as he soliders on. "Jena," based on a true story of high school racism and murder in Louisiana, stabs through racism like a knife -- a serrated knife.

Mellencamp seems more concerned with mortality -- "If I Die Sudden" is lyrically unsentimental as a man looks to settle his cosmic tab, but the guitars sound like a wailing Greek chorus of mourners. And "Don't Need this Body" is stark and bare: his wife and kids are said to have cried when he first played it for them.

Yet several songs use the same traditional riff -- "the Cuckoo" -- which can grow wearying. And often, I don't believe Mellencamp's characters as much as Springsteen's -- I confess I never thrilled to either Jack or Diane -- but when he catches fire, he's as compelling as any. Like Springsteen, he puts the pop in populism.

[Note: both the Mellencamp and Jackson CDs come with a free DVD of live performances and interviews; nice bonus!]



James Taylor
"Covers"
(Hear Music)

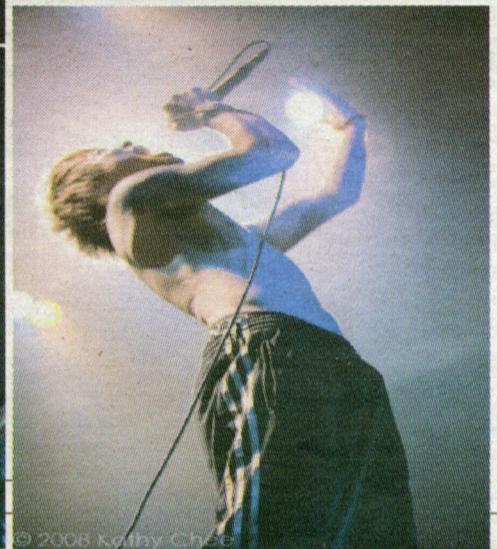
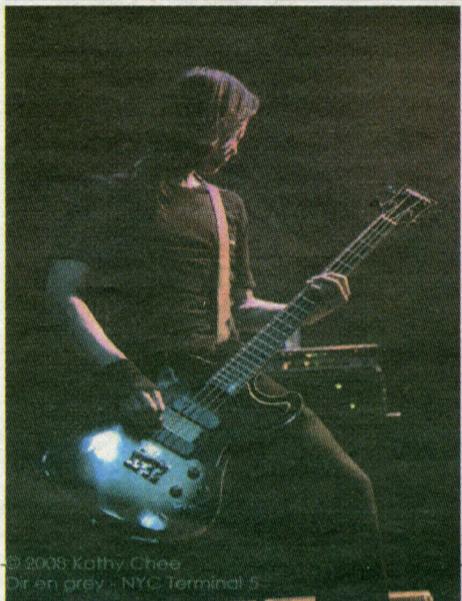
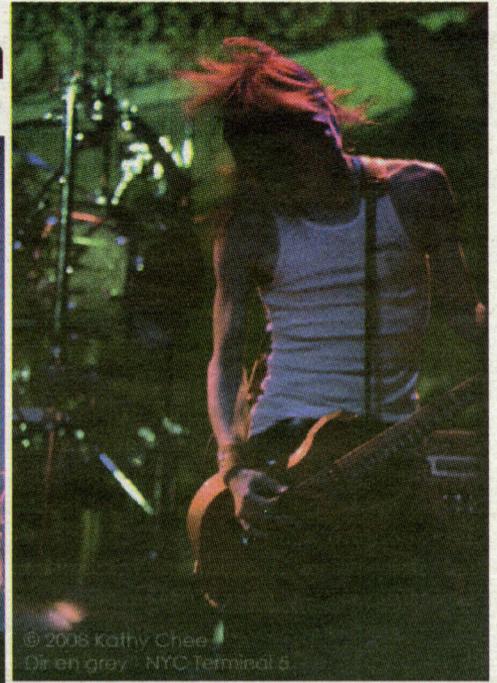
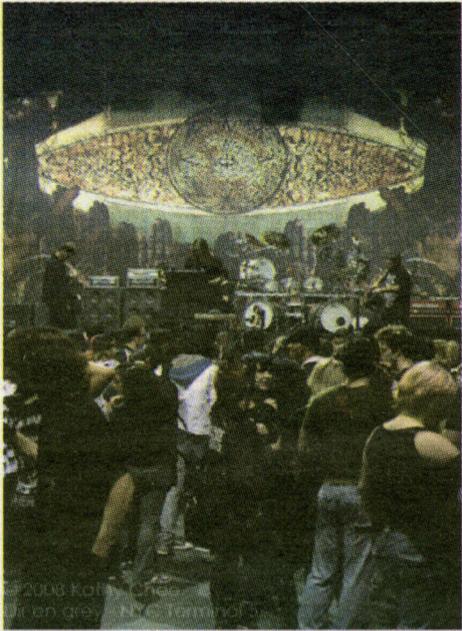
James Taylor has always seemed to know just who he is, and he seems so utterly comfortable being "Sweet Uncle James" in many a family. (My 80-year-old mother likes him!) But there is something so comforting to see someone so comfortable in his own skin.

The good news is that Taylor can turn just about anything into a soothingly Lite-FM classic -- including old soul numbers like "Road Runner." The bad news is that Taylor can turn just about anything into a soothingly Lite-FM number -- like a denuded rockabilly "Hound Dog" or the once-electric rocker "Summertime Blues." Still, "Seminole Wind" and "Why Baby Why" are delightful.

And it's a fitting coda to Taylor's record that he ends with Buddy Holly's upbeat assertion of love, which is really a comment on these veterans who will, we continue to hope, "not fade away."

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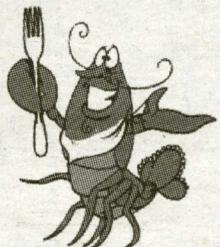
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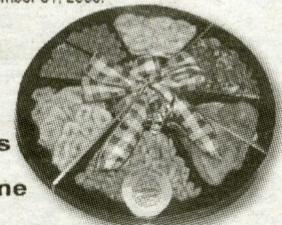
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WHO WE ARE

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

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By ALEXANDER CHAMESSIAN
Contributing Writer

It was a longstanding Thanksgiving tradition for my grandfather to make all the kids say what we were thankful around the dinner table. The tradition for us kids was to sing the praises of the many trivial things that amused us: television, video games, toys, etc. These kinds of answers must have certainly disappointed my grandfather and the rest of the elders, and so after more than a decade of failing to get thoughtful responses from us, they just quit trying. In recent years, the Thanksgiving feast has commenced without any declarations of gratitude.

For a long time, I just saw this tradition as a nuisance, and until going off to college, I didn't understand the purpose and importance of my grandfather's question.

Like many other young people who have only ever known the comforts and pleasures of America's prosperity, it rarely occurred to me that life should be any other way; that the life of man was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," for nearly the entirety of his existence and only very recently has he been able to escape that bleak and pitiful condition. I was equally unreflective of the fact that the way of life we enjoy in the United States is one that billions of people around the world dream of but do not enjoy themselves.

But things have changed. Now I marvel at and feel an over-

Much to be Thankful For

whelming gratitude for things I gave little consideration to before, things that free us up from the exigencies of the human condition in ways our forebears could have never imagined. I am most impressed by very basic things like supermarkets, with their seemingly endless abundance of food, everyday of the year. Now we need not spend our days toiling to produce our own food.

These are just the material things that make our lives much improved over those of our antecedents. As Americans, we must not forget how remarkable and improved are lives by the ideas and government we have inherited from the men who established our great country. Blessed are we to live in a place founded on that self-evident truth "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

We are equally fortunate to live in a country in which liberty and self-government are most highly valued and are protected by the supreme law of the land. And so we can say what we want without fear of punishment. We can practice the religion of our choosing. We have the right to bears arms to guard against those who aim to do us harm and can count on the protection of our person and our property from our fellows and our government.

Perhaps these don't strike you as anything special, but when it

is remembered that never before had a people been granted so much freedom, and also that in places all around the world today people are still not afforded the fundamental rights we take for granted, it is difficult to not feel a great deal of gratitude for our enviable circumstances.

Let me digress for a moment to respond to a criticism that might be made against what I have said so far. One could say that I have neglected the fact that here in the United States, not everyone enjoys the things I say I am thankful for, that there are people who cannot just go into the supermarket, or who do not have homes or who cannot receive medical attention when they need it.

It would be insincere of me to deny that there are people who are not so fortunate right here at home, but it would be entirely false to say that America's prosperity extends only to a small segment of society. On the contrary, it is undeniable that at no time in human history have so many people risen to the position of comfort, security and abundance that the American people as a whole have. And, in no other place and time has so much freedom and opportunity been extended to as many people as in the United States. Indeed, life for Americans with even the most modest means today in 2008 would be the envy of the nobility and aristocracy of centuries past.

Our current economic malaise has inspired much collec-

tive self-pity and lamenting, but such feelings are only possible when we dwell on the things we do not have than on the things that we do. Despite our present troubles, life is still much better than in most parts of the world and unequivocally better than it would have been in anytime before the recent past. This is why gratitude is important and why my grandfather tried to hard to teach us to feel it.

Realizing the fragility of our prosperity and understanding that life could be far more harsh and unforgiving than it is for us in the United States in 2008 must make one feel a sense of contentment and blessedness for the way things are, instead of a sense of resentment and dismay because of the way things are not. Gratitude inspires us to work to extend the joys and pleasures of our own way of life to those who do not know it now or who have never known it.

These are the lessons my grandfather wanted me to learn by asking me to reflect on what I was thankful for.

This Thursday, before we dig into our turkey, I will tell my grandfather and the rest of my family what I have just told you. But I don't want to do this alone, and so let me invite you to join me this Thanksgiving by telling your families what you are thankful for. And if you did not think you had anything to feel grateful for before, I hope that what I have said here will start you off on the right foot.

The Clinton Surplus Myth

By ZACHARY KURTZ
Opinion Editor

It is obvious that during elections in which the economy is the most important issue to voters, the candidate deemed to be "strongest" on the economy will get elected. As it happens, one of the arguments I most often hear in support of the Obama presidency is citing the budget surplus under the previous Democratic president, Bill Clinton. This is supposed to give evidence to the superiority of the Democrat's "economic plan" over Bush's disastrous "free market" policies. The only problem is the alleged budget surplus is a myth, a fabrication propagated by those who don't understand how the federal budget is accounted or how business cycles are created.

The fact of the matter is, by looking at publicly available data from the Treasury department, the federal budget under the Clinton years operated at a deficit of \$100-200 billion for most years, reaching a low point of \$18 billion during 2000, but leaving a deficit budget of

\$130 billion during Clinton's departing year, in 2001.

By definition, there could not have been a budget surplus; deficit spending defies the idea of the existence of a budget surplus or balanced budget. However, the lie isn't so obvious that Clinton wasn't able to use political maneuvering and clever accounting to sell the surplus idea; it's probable that Clinton was even fooled himself into believing that he was able to produce a surplus without cutting spending or significantly raising taxes. So where did the surplus myth come from?

While government spending was in a deficit, the U.S. public debt, better known as the national debt, was being paid off. The national debt accounts for money that the federal government owes to states, corporations, individuals, and foreign governments but not what is owed to intragovernment obligations, such as the Social Security trust fund.

So while the public debt was being paid off, the debt from intragovernment holdings skyrocketed

while general federal spending was relatively unchanged. Clinton pointed to the national debt as being paid off, but neglected to mention that the source of this money was debt owed to Social Security.

The dot-com bubble provided a temporary economic stimulus during the Clinton era, which allowed the Social Security Administration (SSA) to increase revenue through Social Security taxes, leaving Social Security with a surplus.

The Social Security Administration is legally required to purchase government securities with surplus funds, which results from having more funds than required to pay out Social Security checks. This results in a transfer of funds from Social Security, intragovernment holdings, to the Treasury Department, which Clinton used to pay down the national debt.

You may wonder what the problem is. If there is a surplus of funds, does it really matter where it comes from?

There is a difference between debt and surplus, no matter where

the funds are coming from. The government doesn't have unique sources of production, and must rely on external sources from which to extract capital. Therefore, a true surplus can only arise by reducing spending.

Even by raising taxes, this only represents debt owed to the public. Clinton relied on the dot-com bubble by funneling funds through the SSA, which allowed him to mimic a surplus by obscuring the source of his funds. This is a clever accounting game, but it is not a surplus.

So when the dot-com bubble burst, and Social Security was left in debt, the federal government couldn't give the SSA its surplus back. The money had been put towards the public debt already. By that time, Clinton was already out of office, so the effects of the dot-com crash could be blamed on the Republican George Bush anyway.

The bubble itself, which was caused by overspeculation in Internet-based start-up companies,

continued on page 3

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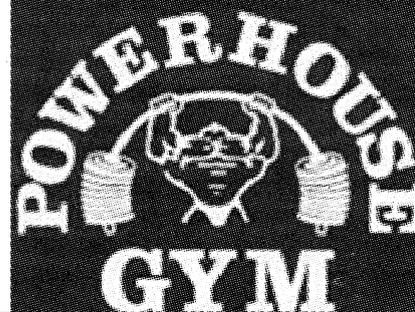
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Men's Basketball Outmuscled by Wagner

BY GENE MORRIS
Sports Editor

1,148 fans packed into Pritchard Gymnasium Saturday afternoon to witness a physical, hard fought game between the Seawolves and the Wagner Seahawks basketball teams.

"This was a football game," Stony Brook Head Coach Steve Pikiell said, noting the physicality of play.

"Wagner is the toughest team on film," he said. "They hit you on every screen."

Unfortunately for the Seawolves, they were not able to overcome that toughness and experience that Wagner brought with them.

The young Seawolves squad, which had four freshmen play significant minutes, picked up its first home loss of the season, 65-62.

Wagner's four seniors all played more than 33 minutes, and Pikiell believed that was a significant factor in the game.

"That's what it came down to," he said. "We were as tough as them, but they are an experienced team."

Pikiell changed his lineup for the game, giving senior guard Marques Cox numerous minutes, while sitting senior forward Demetrius Young.

"I wanted toughness," Pikiell said. "Marques Cox is our toughest player, and he

was terrific tonight. His numbers don't indicate it, but he plays with heart. He is what Stony Brook basketball is all about."

Cox played 29 minutes and connected on his only field goal attempt. He also had three steals, two rebounds, and two assists.

Cox's steal with five minutes remaining led directly to a Tommy Brenton three point play that tied the game at 53 points.

"I was just trying to cause havoc on defense," Cox said. "So we could come down and score."

But the Seawolves were unable to pull ahead.

They had another shot to tie the game on the last possession.

With 24.9 seconds remaining, the Seawolves inbounded the ball trailing by three.

The ball ended up inside in the hands of freshman Dallas Joyner, who was unable to convert. Brenton grabbed the offensive rebound but had the ball stripped away under the basket.

It eventually found its way out to Brian Dougher, who heaved a desperation fade-away three pointer that was off the mark.

Wagner's Doug Ewell grabbed the rebound and made both free throws when fouled, icing the game.

Stony Brook's trio of freshmen were involved the entire game.

Brenton led the team with 15 points and 10 rebounds. Joyner had 14 points, three rebounds and two steals. Dougher played a team high 33 minutes and had five points, two assists, and a steal.

Along with 6-9 forward Danny Carter, the Seawolves seem to have a good foundation in place.

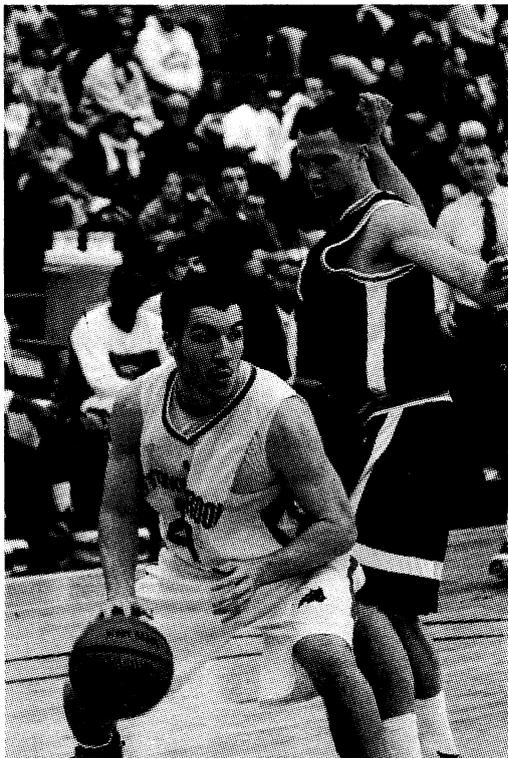
"They're getting valuable minutes," Pikiell said. "They're learning how tough it is to win any game, on the road or at home,

against good basketball teams."

"Guys are competing for minutes," he said. "It's the first time I had that in this program. You have to show up everyday and if you don't you might not find yourself playing many minutes that day."

"It's a long season," sophomore guard Chris Martin said. "We just have to execute better down the stretch in pressure situations.

"And, we have a young team," he said. "We're still learning."



Freshman Tommy Brenton led the Seawolves with 15 points and 10 rebounds Kenneth Ho/SB Statesman

Ice Hockey Pulls Out Another Comeback Victory

continued from page 12

The Seawolves power play, which was unable to score on the game, and 0-5 up to that point, nearly cost the Seawolves a goal.

Dan Capizzuto misplayed a puck at the point and his defensive partner Peter Zarella was forced to take a penalty in order to stop a Scranton breakaway.

Stony Brook killed that penalty off, but soon after defenseman Phil Borner took a tripping penalty.

"My defensemen like to pinch all the time instead of playing smarter hockey and not getting themselves in trouble," Head Coach Buzz DesChamps said. "As long as you have the lead you have enough goals to win."

But Captain Angelo Serse came to

the rescue with a short handed goal.

Initially breaking in on a 2-on-1 with Ryan Hodkinson, Serse blew by the defenseman and took the puck to the net by himself. After a quick deke that shook the goalie, Serse slid the puck into the open net.

Although they were able to win the game, the Seawolves still realize there are things to work on.

"I think we need to put more shots on net and capitalize on power plays," freshman forward Chris Ryan said after the game. "We had a lot of opportunities, we could have put them away earlier. It shouldn't have been a 3-2 game."

"At first they caught us by surprise," forward Greg Maggio said. "But we just got back to our game plan, and that did it."



Kris Deckenback played his usual physical game and helped spark the Seawolves to victory

Alex Berkman/SB Statesman

Meet The Seawolves



Photo courtesy of StonyBrookHockey.com



Name:	Mauricio (Moe) Torres
Number:	23
Year:	Junior
Major:	Business
Birthday:	December 17, 1986
Position:	Center, with the little guy (Deck) and the stud (Pacifco)
Birth place:	Orange County, CA
Grew up:	Fountain Valley, CA
Favorite Sport:	Golf is my favorite sport besides hockey. I also like Ping Pong and Volleyball. Played football and baseball in high school.
Why did you choose SBU?:	I came to SBU for the education and hockey program but definitely not for the weather
How did you get into your sport?:	My second grade teacher was the one who got me into hockey because her husband works for the LA Kings.
What do you do in your free time?:	I love playing sports, hanging out with my girl friend and friends, the beach, visiting family.
Goal this year on the ice:	Win Nationals
Goal this year off the ice:	Shoot in the 70's (golf)

STATESMAN SPORTS

Comeback Kids



After falling behind 1-0, two goals by John Wong and the shorthanded winner by Angelo Serse push Seawolves over Scranton

Alex Berkman/ SB Statesman

By GENE MORRIS
Sports Editor

Another sluggish first period saw the Seawolves trailing after the first twenty minutes again.

And as they have done before, Stony Brook put together a strong second period and pulled out the 3-2 victory.

"This team has a lot of character," Assistant Coach Pete Hall said. "They've done that a couple

of times this season. And tonight the goal tending was key."

Derek Stevens started in goal for the Seawolves, and played one of his best games of the season.

"He was galactic," Hall said.

"Our team showed some heart," Stevens said. "We needed the win after losing to West Chester last weekend."

The opponent, Scranton University, came out and played an absolutely perfect road period

in the first.

They limited the Seawolves chances and kept the crowd of 300+ out of the game.

When senior forward Joe Romano beat Stevens on a one-timer in front with just 31.9 seconds remaining in the first, the Royals completely took over the momentum.

Scranton came out quick in the second period, but Stony Brook's John Wong scored the Seawolves first goal with 17:49 remaining.

Wong took the puck down the right side and

drove a big slap shot past the Scranton goalie from the right circle.

Six minutes later Wong scored again for the Seawolves.

The puck came to Wong right off the face off. He wound up and for a slap shot, but didn't strike the puck cleanly. The puck found its way through the traffic in front and fooled the Scranton goalie.

continued on page 11