

THE STATESMAN

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ALESSANDRA MALITO / THE STATESMAN

President Stanley, with bullhorn in hand, speaks to Southampton students after a 15 mile walk.

15 MILES FOR SOUTHAMPTON

By ALESSANDRA MALITO
Contributing Writer

As 7 a.m. arrived and the sun began to shine across the Kohl's building in Rocky Point on Rt. 25A, a procession of cars entered the parking lot and stopped far away from the future customers of the day.

More than 200 Stony Brook Southampton students congregated in a corner of the lot on April 12 eating bagels, granola bars and drinking from a surplus of water bottles.

Some clutched handmade signs that read, "don't let SBS sleep with the fishes" as they lined up begin a march that would take them 15 miles west - to Stony Brook University's main campus.

Stony Brook Southampton, a campus that opened in 2006 and is devoted to environmental studies, was recently informed through a press leak that parts of the campus would be closed down after this semester.

The state's decreasing financial support -- that is being reduced by 20 percent -- will cost Stony Brook approximately \$55 million, and the administration said closing SBS will give \$6 million back, according to a report on the school's website. However, as was seen on numerous signs that day, \$78 million of taxpayer's money was invested into the campus.

The cut will put force many of the students to make touch decisions about their futures, such as transferring, switching

majors, and possibly dropping out.

Students and faculty have been using social networking groups, petitions, online donations and have even written letters to University President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., politicians and even President Barack Obama to get the word out.

Students began the march on Rt347 and were soon followed by police officers from the sixth and seventh precincts that escorted the students for the entire trip.

As they walked down the route, trucks and passenger vehicles honked their horns and slightly confused passersby cheered on the group.

Meanwhile, students walking together talked mostly about the current situation.

"Why should I change my major when I'm paying for what I want to do?" said Caroline Burghardt, 25, a junior at SBS. "I'm being forced to do what I don't want to do."

Burghardt is one of the students whose graduation is now tentative. Her major, coastal environmental studies, along with environmental humanities, are non-transferrable.

"They're legally bound to give the classes but there's no timeline," she continued.

Other students had transferred to attend the Southampton campus.

"I think it was a premature decision by Stony Brook to close the campus in light

See MILES on 3

According to a Commuter...

Different perspectives about life on campus

By DOMINIQUE BATISTE
Contributing Writer

Judd Groden is finishing up his last semester at Stony Brook before he graduates with a bachelor's degree. Five days a week he drives from Huntington to Stony Brook for classes.

"It was the most feasible solution for me at the time," he said. Spending \$40 to \$50 on gas, in addition to required college expenses is steep for a college student. "Gas is expensive. I use like one tank a week of gas," Groden said.

Although being a commuter has perks, for many Stony Brook commuter students, the challenges overshadow the benefits. Leaving home hours before class to ensure arriving on time, battling traffic to get to campus,

paying for gas or traveling on public transportation and finding parking in the overcrowded student parking areas are a few burdens that commuter students face daily.

Sophomore Philly Bubaris commutes from Nesconset, about five miles away from Stony Brook. The drive is roughly 15 minutes but Bubaris has to leave her house at least one hour early to ensure she gets to class on time. "In order to find parking I have to be on campus at least a half hour before my classes," she said.

Stony Brook University offers three designated free parking areas on campus, South P Lot, North P Lot and Gym Road Commuter Lot. According to Catherine Rehman, director

See BATISTE on 9

By BERNIE LUBELL
Staff Writer

Before she came to Stony Brook University as a commuter student, Kirin Mahmud said she was repeatedly told she was making the wrong decision and would be miserable for the next four years of her life.

Mahmud said she consistently proves these critics wrong.

"I really love Stony Brook," said Mahmud, a junior economics and business double major. "I don't know why people make such a fuss about it. I have the drive and motivation to make sure that I'm not going to be miserable and that these are the best four years of my life."

Mahmud is just one of the 7,983 undergraduate commuter students at Stony

Brook University, according to the most recent statistics provided by the department of Institutional Research. The undergraduate student body is comprised of about 48 percent commuters, establishing an almost even keel between residents and commuters.

A 2007 valedictorian graduate of Longwood High School in Middle Island, N.Y., Mahmud said she has far too much drive to fall victim to the "false category" often applied to commuters.

Citing that she has had the "ultimate" college experience thus far, Mahmud said the assumption is that commuters are at a great disadvantage and don't have the ability to enjoy their four years of college as much as residents.

In her second academic

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The notion that "there is no money" for SUNY has been a common refrain lately. It is certainly true that New York, like other states around the country, faces a severe budget crisis. But like other states and

the federal government, it has choice: it can either increase the financial burden on students, workers, and the poor, or force large corporations...

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Discussing The Play Figaro, Figaro

Theater Arts student Overmyer's adaptation displays a combination of the 18th-century Beaumarchais classic "The Marriage of Figaro" and its so-called follow up "Figaro Gets a

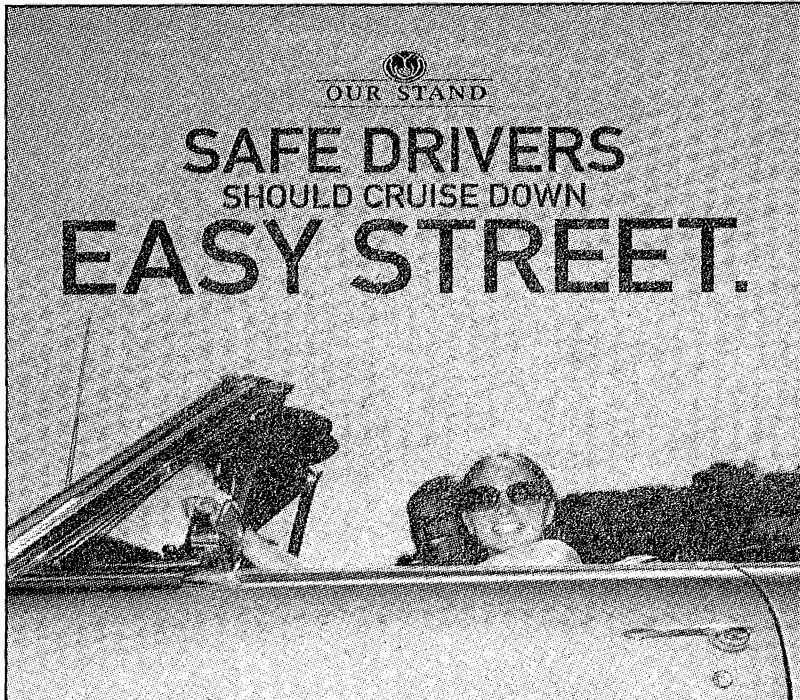
Divorce" written in 1936 by the Hungarian playwright Odon von Horvath.

He took these two plays and cut them down...

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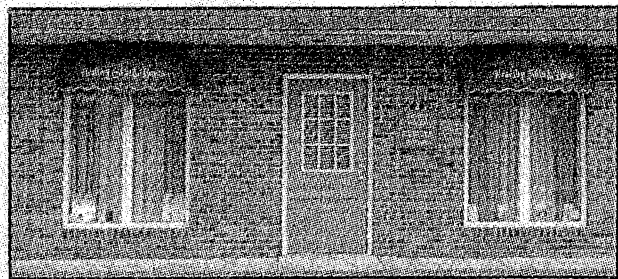
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NEWS

From MILES on 3

15 MILES FOR SOUTHAMPTON

of the fact that they don't know how much money is coming from the state," said onlooker Tom Barry, a graduate of Stony Brook and a parent of two Southampton students walking in the march. His two children, junior Kaitlin and senior Patrick, left St. Joseph's University and Dowling University, respectively, to be Southampton students.

About a quarter of the way into the journey, the students were told by the police to change their planned route and take Rt 112 into Rt 25A. Throughout the 15 miles, students were able to stop, as fellow students driving the route periodically parked nearby to distribute granola bars and water bottles.

One of two cars that stopped was decorated with paint and a sign, and students kept the windows open in order to pump their fists, yell out to entice the crowd, and sometimes sit on the window to grab attention. Music was also loudly streaming through the windows.

Students were met along the way with more supporters, including campus professors and local news media.

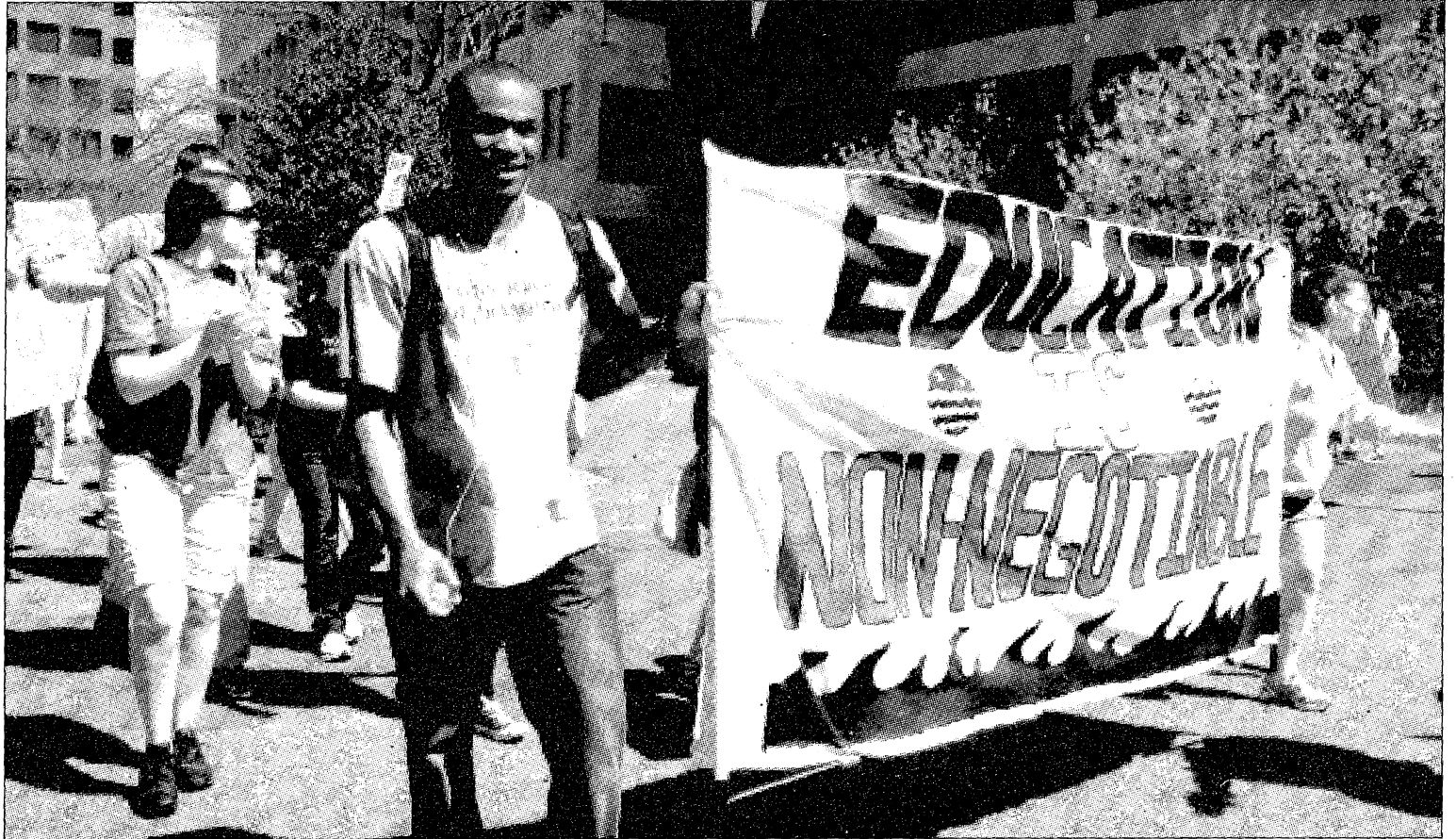
The universal resting area for the group was at Wild by Nature in East Setauket, where more supporters joined to walk the last two miles. One more marcher added to the group was Southampton professor Heather Dune Macadam.

"President Stanley said he would open it again when it became academically significant," she said. "Our school is mostly freshmen. Since when is freshmen education insignificant?"

"I'm concerned for my students. My students are dropping out," she added. "They can't go anywhere else and they don't want to go anywhere else."

Although the students have three options - to transfer, change majors, or West campus - they'd rather stay with what they have.

If however, no change is made and the students



ALESSANDRA MALITO / THE STATESMAN

must compromise their education, many inconveniences and obstacles apply.

Students are not capable of transferring to another university, because the date for many applications has passed. They also will not have housing on the Southampton campus, effective Aug. 31. School of Marine and Atmospheric Science (SoMAS) labs will be left on their campus, but courses and lectures will only be available on West campus. Residents who move to West campus will receive priority housing, and transportation to Southampton will still be provided.

At 12 p.m., the students reached the commuter parking lot by the train station.

"S.O.S. SBS," they shouted.

They moved on to Gym Road and marched up the zebra path to their destination - the Administration building. When they got to the lawns of the building, their signs went up and the volume of the shouting increased.

President Stanley emerged from the building with security and briefly

spoke to the hundreds of students and onlookers, some climbed atop the fountain to get a better look.

"I respect your anger about the budget," he said to the crowd. "I feel the same amount of pain."

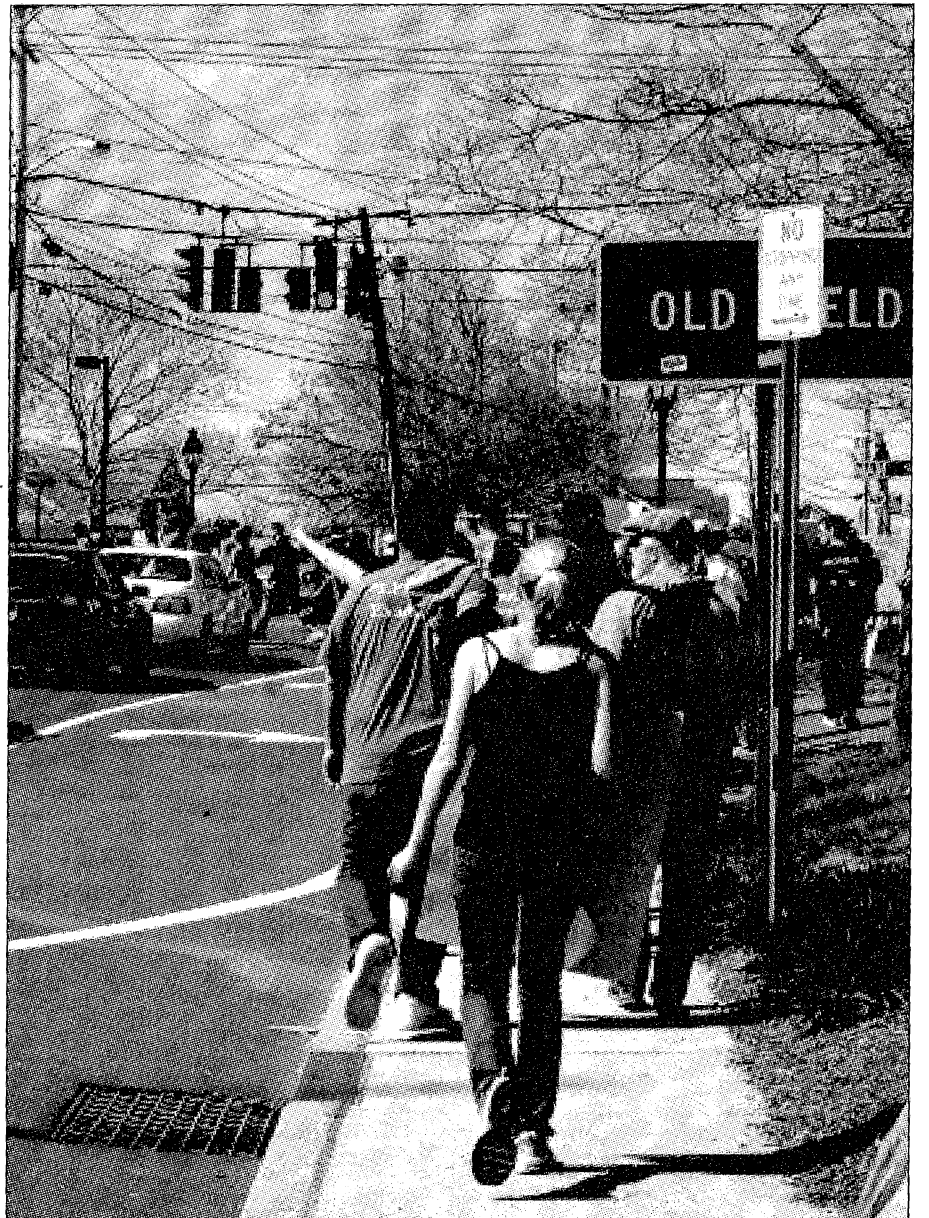
He asked for the letters the students had written to him, and disappeared back into the building with student leaders.

For the next five hours, the students waited on the lawns until the leaders emerged.

There were those who were unable to attend the march but supported the students, such as Assemblyman Fred Thiele.

"I think the Stony Brook administration, with the president in particular, treated the students extremely unfairly," he said. "We're looking at all actions - we're not giving up. I think students have a great cause and I support them."

"We believed in something. We all believed in the same dream. And we all believe we can change," said the 25-year-old Burghardt. "If we wanted to go to Stony Brook, we could have."



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- Store your Social Security number and/or passwords in your wallet or purse.
- Disclose account numbers or personal financial data on any website unless you receive a secured authentication.

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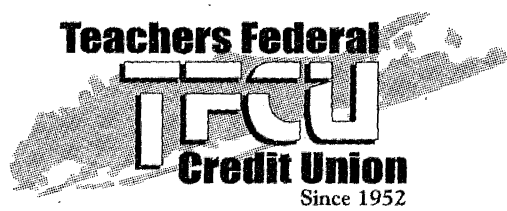
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WHO WE ARE

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

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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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To War, To Jail, But Not To College

By KEVIN YOUNG
Contributing Writer

The notion that "there is no money" for SUNY has been a common refrain lately. It is certainly true that New York, like other states around the country, faces a severe budget crisis. But like other states and the federal government, it has choice: it can either increase the financial burden on students, workers, and the poor, or force large corporations and the wealthiest taxpayers—many of whom played a big role in creating the current crisis—to pay their fair share of taxes.

If they opted for the latter course of action, state legislators could enact a 1-percent tax increase on personal income over \$1 million; this tiny increase would generate \$1 billion a year in extra revenue, about ten times the proposed cuts to SUNY.

A tax on stock-market speculators and the use of New York State's bargaining power to negotiate lower prescription drug prices would increase state revenue by hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

These and other cost-saving and revenue-generating alternatives proposed by the New York-based Fiscal Policy Institute would together provide billions of dollars each year for use on public education, health care, affordable housing, and the creation of green jobs.

Moreover, the FPI alternatives refer only to the state level. The federal government, which provides about one-third of the N.Y. state budget, could save hundreds of billions each year by reducing wasteful military spending.

By conservative estimates, the money that the US has spent waging immoral, illegal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001 could have provided 133 million one-year university scholarships or 189 million Pell Grants for working and middleclass students, including 17 million in New York State.

Expenditure on the wars is just a small fraction of total military spending, which constitutes 48 percent of all federal expenditures.

Taxing the rich also makes good economic sense. As Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz points out, taxing the wealthy is "the least damaging mechanism" for state governments to enact during a recession; far more damaging to the economy are "reductions in government spending on goods and services, or reductions



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in transfer payments to lower-income families."

Spending money on education and other social and infrastructural projects is also far more effective than military spending at promoting economic growth. As economists Robert Pollin and Heidi Garrett-Peltier comment, "every \$1 billion spent on a combination of education, healthcare, energy conservation and infrastructure investments creates between 50 and 100 percent more jobs than the same money going to Iraq." Military spending also tends to promote greater concentration of wealth in society, channeling public money upward to private corporations that reap enormous profits while contributing little to public welfare.

So slashing the SUNY budget is a political choice, not a fiscal imperative. The latest cuts to SUNY come in the context of a nationwide assault on public education by government officials and those who deem education a privilege rather than a basic human right to be provided by the government.

Indeed, the current battle over public education says a great deal about our government's priorities and the role of the rich and powerful in influencing social policy. In a recent online petition against their school's closing, Stony Brook Southampton students noted that "this nation will send its citizens to war, it will put us in jail, but it will not educate us."

That simple assessment captures one of the most fundamental realities in our country today: the wealth and profits of the rich take priority over human well-being. As predicted by political economist Thomas Ferguson's

"investment theory of politics," in "money-driven political systems" like that of the U.S., corporations exert preponderant influence over politicians. As a result, economic policy, and particularly the federal budget, is primarily a reflection of the interests of the corporate and financial elite.

Corporations and the wealthiest taxpayers favor "small government" when it comes to the provision of basic services like health care, education, and affordable housing, but simultaneously demand extensive government intervention in the economy on their own behalf.

The most blatant example of this intervention is the nation's gargantuan military budget, most of which consists of massive transfers of taxpayer money to corporations that make missiles, tanks, guns, airplanes, night-vision goggles, hi-tech computers, and numerous other war-related technologies.

A second example, as the Southampton students note, is the U.S. prison-industrial complex that incarcerates 2.3 million people—the most of any country in the world.

While these two "complexes" directly or indirectly ruin millions of lives each year, they are extremely profitable for a small but wealthy and well-organized sector of the US population.

Despite last year's stimulus program, President Barack Obama has essentially continued this basic trend. In his State of Union address, Obama promised a freeze on most forms of social spending—in the areas of housing, the environment, health and human services, etc.—in order to cut the federal deficit. In contrast, the

president has explicitly promised to keep expanding the military budget.

On January 13, Obama's Secretary of Defense Robert Gates met with private military contractors and promised that he will work to forge "a closer partnership" among the Pentagon, White House, and corporate war contractors, in order "to secure steady growth in the Pentagon's budgets over time."

Thus far Gates is following through on that promise: Obama's 2011 budget proposal requests \$708 billion in direct war and military spending, including a baseline military budget that is 7 percent higher than Bush's last budget.

The values and priorities of the U.S. public are quite different. An August 2008 poll by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) found that "at least three-quarters of Americans say the 'US government should be responsible for ensuring that its citizens can meet their basic needs' for education (83%), health care (77%), and food (74%)."

This opinion is consistent regardless of the party identification of respondents. Even 72 percent of those who planned to vote for McCain in 2008 agreed that the government should be responsible for ensuring universal access to education.

Not surprisingly, then, the federal budget would look rather different if the public controlled it. According to detailed polls conducted in 2005-06, the U.S. public would cut the military budget by an average of 31 percent (registered republicans would do so by 20 percent, and registered democrats by 48 percent).

Sixty-five percent of respondents agree with the general notion of reducing the military budget and using the extra money for "education, health care, housing, and cutting the deficit."

But public opinion is of little importance when the fundamental interests of corporate elites are at stake.

The money is there, but government policy prioritizes the further enrichment of the wealthy over the provision of education and other basic human rights. In New York State, Governor Paterson has cut state funding for SUNY while proposing an "Empowerment Act" that would further privatize the SUNY system, shifting more of the financial burden of sustaining SUNY onto students, workers, and families.

In New York and at the national level, only an intense, non-partisan grassroots movement will make politicians change their priorities.

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.sb-statesman.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.

ARTS

Figaro, Figaro Cast and Crew Discuss The Play and Opening Night Performance

By ANA LLÁCER-ALVENTOSA
Contributing Writer

After more than two months of hard work, the Department of Theatre Arts at Stony Brook University has presented "Figaro, Figaro," a play by Eric Overmyer adapted from Beaumarchais.

The opening performance was Friday, April 7.

Theater Arts student Overmyer's adaptation displays a combination of the 18th-century Beaumarchais classic "The Marriage of Figaro" and its so-called follow up "Figaro Gets a Divorce" written in 1936 by the Hungarian playwright Odon von Horvath.

He took these two plays and cut them down to shorter and then put them together.

"The second act was inspired by the first one, but it really is a whole play on its own," said Matthew McMahan, the theater graduate student who plays Figaro, the main character.

The first act is inspired by the period just before the French revolution. Beaumarchais was arrested during the revolution for being an aristocrat, which is ironic because the play

is essentially mocking the aristocracy.

He was part of the bourgeoisie class, making fun of the upper class. But when the French Revolution happened, Beaumarchais was considered by the lower classes to be upper class and he was imprisoned.

The play is set in Count Almaviva's castle in Seville, Spain and the second act is in Germany. They return to Spain eventually, later in the act. It's really difficult to figure out where the setting of the play is. According to McMahan, it's actually irrelevant that it takes place in Spain.

"That's because it's an adaptation. I'm sure that the Beaumarchais play is more evident, but now it doesn't really matter," said McMahan. "The second act, it's a little bit clearer that is in Germany."

The main characters are Figaro and Susanna, both servants to the Count and Countess Almaviva.

Unfortunately, the Count likes Susanna and is planning on reviving the 'droit de signor,' which allows him the right to deflower any virgin in the town. Figaro wants to get married to his fiancée, Susanna, and the Count wants to sleep with her. Figaro is furious and

vows to get his revenge on his master.

He tries to embarrass the Count, so he doesn't get the right of 'droit de signor.'

The Countess feels neglected by her husband and is aware of his 'droit de signor.' The Count promises to her that he is not going to use that right anymore. However, he is going behind her back trying to sleep with other women.

The first act is highly farcical. It's very physical and goofy, according to McMahan. The audience originally has difficulty reconciling the second act because they see the first act, which is really funny and they enjoy laughing. Then the second act occurs.

"They want to laugh but there is no any moment to do it. There is no comedy at all," said McMahan.

This is the first time that McMahan is the title character in a play. He has had big roles in other plays, but this is probably the most dominant he has ever been. Figaro likes to talk. It's very central to his character and he rambles frequently.

"I think the most difficult thing, was trying to deliver some of these extremely long monologues that have seemingly no point and make them sound conversational,"



Frank Posillico / Statesman File Photo

Students in the department of Theater Arts premiered their spring show "Figaro, Figaro" on April 7 in the Staller Center's recital hall. Music was composed by Peter Winkler of the department of Music.

said McMahan. "As an actor, it's your job to somehow motivate and move the story. According to McMahan, Figaro is an interesting character because he is so layered, especially in this production. He is so farcical and silly in the first

act, but then he becomes so cynical and serious in the second act. McMahan feels like he has almost lived his whole life playing Figaro, going through those levels like dreams, illusion and then disillusion in the end.

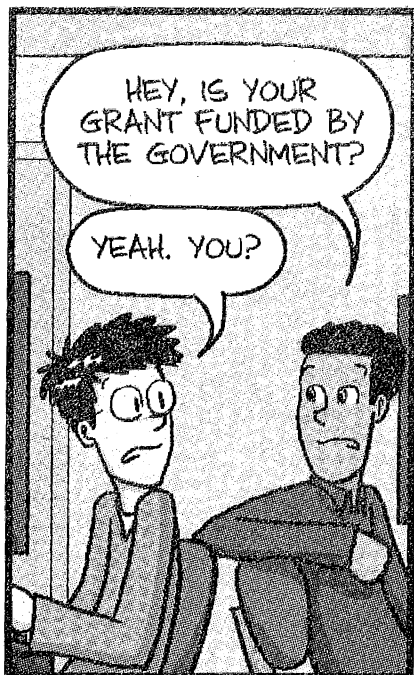
"And plus I think his

personality is very similar to mine in a lot of ways. He is just a joker and always trying to look at the positive side in the first act," McMahan said. "And then in the second act, he is just super rational,

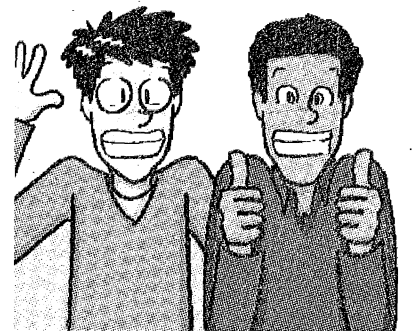
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Figaro, Figaro Cast Discuss The Play

From FIGARO on 6

which I can be too. I relate with him in a lot of ways."

In the second act there are big fights, they are tough scenes and very emotional and sad according to McMahan.

"I really enjoy playing those moments because I feel very connected to the moments, they feel real to me. I don't feel like I'm acting on those moments," McMahan said.

"That's what excites me about this play. I found myself experiencing it in a lot of moments."

McMahan said he thinks Deborah Mayo, the director, is wonderful. He said she is a experienced and an excellent teacher and director. She is very compassionate so you feel like, you are completely safe. You can do anything on the stage and even if it's

completely wrong or terrible, you know that she'll make something constructive out of it.

It's very rare in theater yo get a group of people together that you jell with immediately, according to McMahan.

"I felt that this cast, we were all best friends within the first week. It was very easy to work with everybody," McMahan said.

It was very easy to do a lot of different things. There is a lot of touching and groping and weird physicalities that normally would be very uncomfortable, but in this cast there was never ever any issue.

Allyson Clancy, 23, theater major and Figaro's wife, Susanna, in the play feels well after the premiere. She is happy that they got through opening.

"I'm so excited for tomorrow night. Now that

we have one under our belt I feel fine," she said. "I was freaking out today. I was so nervous. There was a lot of people in the audience, and it's scary. The opening night you never know."

According to Clancy, in their rehearsals, they had really good nights but others weren't that great. "We had a very fun, easy rehearsal process. We just had a lot of fun together and playing around with each other."

The whole class of THR 321, a set production class that has about 13 students, put on the show. "It takes a lot of time. The other night I got home at 4:00 a.m painting," said Anna Aguilar, a theater art student and one of the assistant stage managers of the play.

"I think the play was really positive," said Aguilar. "Everything was good today. I felt a lot of energy and I thought the show went well."

Arts at the Brook

STALLER CENTER:

The Stony Brook Department of Theatre Arts is presenting a performance of Figaro Figaro, Eric Overmyer's adaptation of Beaumarchais' "The Marriage of Figaro" and Odon Von Horvath's "Figaro Gets Divorced" at 8 p.m. in Theatre 2 of Staller Center.

The show begin Thursday, April 8 and will run on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays until April 18.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday shows will begin at 8 p.m. in the Staller Center. Sunday shows will begin at 2 p.m.

Colin Carr and Thomas Sauer will perform the complete works for cello and piano of Brahms, Schumann and Mendelssohn in the Staller Center's Recital Hall on Monday, April 12 and Thursday, April 15 at 8 p.m.

SSK FESTIVAL:

Thursday, April 15:

There will be a performance of "Wounds Unkissed" by YaliniDream in the Wang Center Theater at 7 p.m. YaliniDream is a Sri Lankan dancer who uses a hybrid of contemporary dance forms and classical South Asian dance forms.

The performance is currently still evolving and YaliniDream will give the audience an opportunity to develop her stage performance.

Friday, April 16:

The Staller Center Recital Hall is hosting a "Music on a Spring Night Concert" at 8 p.m.

There will be a Lation

Fashion Show from 8:30 p.m until 11 p.m. in the SAC Auditorium.

Children's writer, Sarah Beth Durst will speak in the Tabler Arts Center as part of the Career Center's Coffee with the Arts series.

Saturday, April 17:

The SB Belly Dancers will perform in the Student Union at 8 p.m.

Also in the Student Union at 8 p..m. will be the "Dawn of the Monster Attack" Film Festival.

The Latin American Student Organization (LASO) is hosting a concert at 11 p.m. in the SAC as part of Latino Weekend.

Sunday, April 18:

WUSB-FM and SBU-TV will have workshops and give tours in the Student Union.

The Department of Theare Arts Gallery Exhibit will go on display on the third floor of the Staller Center.

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Carl Safina, President
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Endeavour Hall
Room 120, 5:30 pm

TUESDAY, APRIL 20

- Benefits of Organic Agriculture
Whole Foods Market
Lake Grove, 6:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21

- Green Bag Design
Student Activities Center (SAC)
Lobby, 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm
- The Great Debate: *Be It Resolved—Humans Can Control Catastrophic Climate Change*
Humanities Room 1006, 4:00 pm
- Green Industry Trends
Wang Center, Room 301, 5:30 pm
- Poetry Slam: "Tapped Out: Words About the Water Crisis"
Wang Center, Lecture Hall 2,
7:00 pm

Earth Day

THURSDAY, APRIL 22

- Lecture and Panel: "Women and the Environment in Developing Countries"
Featuring Asha-Rose Migiro,
Deputy Secretary General of the
United Nations
Wang Center, Lecture Hall 2,
3:00 pm
- Do It in the Dark: Solar-Powered
Rock Concert
Mendelsohn Quad, 7:00 pm

FRIDAY, APRIL 23

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- Environmental and Educational Displays and Exhibitors
10:00 am to 3:00 pm
- Opening Remarks/Green Pledge
12:15 pm
- Duck Races, 2:00 pm
- Ice Cream Social, 2:30 pm

Charles B. Wang Center

- Environmental Exhibition of Student Research, 6:30 pm
- Provost's Lecture: "In the Same Net: Ocean Life, Ethics, and the Human Spirit"
Carl Safina, President
Blue Ocean Institute
7:30 pm

University Café, SB Union

- Stony Brook Green Drinks
6:30 pm *For those 21 and older*
- Music by the acoustic sounds of Jack's Waterfall, 9:00 pm

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NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

According to a Commuter...

Different perspectives about life on campus

From LUBELL on 1

year as the president of the Commuter Student Association or CSA, Mahmud said her philosophy is, "My life at Stony Brook is great, what can I do to make you happy?"

She is currently working on renovating the commuter lounge in the Student Activities Center. "There's not a single piece of red in it!" she said of the lounge. The red will provide "tradition" and "pride," she said of Stony Brook's ubiquitous color.

Aside from her involvement in CSA, Mahmud is a commuter assistant, a USG senator, a student ambassador, and also works part-time. This semester, Mahmud is also an intern in the Office of the Vice President for Economic Development at the University.

Mahmud lives in Yaphank, N.Y., approximately a 25-minute drive, one-way, away from campus. She typically wakes up at 6 a.m. and spends nearly an hour a day driving to and from the University, often spending up to twelve hours on campus daily.

Citing her long days, she said it can be difficult because she "doesn't have a place" to go on campus. "I make it fun," Mahmud said. "The key part is making it fun."

When Mahmud isn't in class, she catches up on schoolwork, interns, conducts executive board meetings, sits in on committees, and even finds the time to maintain her continuously blossoming social life.

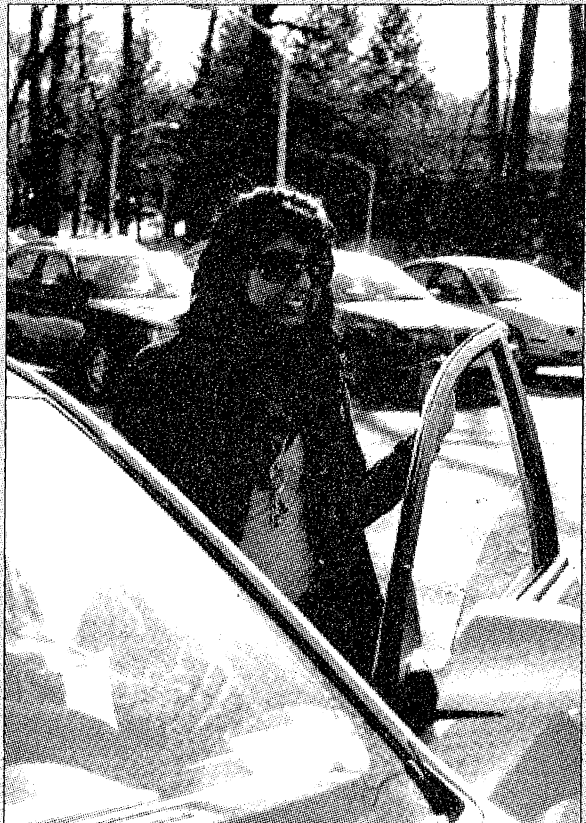
Maansi Amin, a junior health science major and campus resident, has been friends with Mahmud since their freshman year. "Being friends with Kirin is no different than being friends with anything else," Amin said with a laugh. "I spend more time with her than anyone else."

The pair reflected on how they met, sharing a laugh over the sheer coincidence of their meeting.

"We met in MAT 131 together freshman year, Amin said, recalling the large calculus lecture. "[Kirin] came up to me in the engineering lobby before class and introduced herself. We sat together and have been friends ever since."

Mahmud emphasized the importance for commuters to have friends on both ends of the spectrum—resident and commuter.

"Being a commuter isn't



KENNETH HO / THE STATESMAN

Kirin Mahmud arrives on campus one morning.

easy," Mahmud emphasized. "I'm not going to lie." She said that commuters often have a plethora of responsibilities in addition to their lives as a student.

Emily Resnick, senior adviser of the Office of Commuter Student Services or CSS, agrees. "Commuters are a diverse and dynamic community who come to campus with all different types of life experiences," Resnick explained. "There are traditional students like Kirin, and non-traditional students. Non-traditional students are adult learners over the age of 25, who may have full time jobs and families of their own."

The Office of Commuter Student Services with which Resnick has been affiliated for three years, is one of the main sources of commuter support on campus. "In a nutshell, we provide services, programming, advocacy, research and outreach for commuter students," she said.

A key service offered by the office is the Commuter Assistant Program—now in its 12th year—which helps new commuter students get acclimated to campus by developing connections with current Stony Brook students.

"The CA program helps to provide commuters with that first connection here on campus," Resnick said. "Commuter Assistants show their new commuter student

partners 'the ropes' and provide them with each of their own unique student perspectives."

According to Resnick, there is an abundance of opportunities available to commuter students, not solely within her office. She says, however, that their use of these opportunities is at their discretion.

"As is true for all students, it's up to you to do what you want with your time," she emphasized. "There are plenty of role models, like Kirin, who are a prime example of taking advantage of what we have to offer as a campus."

She said students like Mahmud enhance commuter life on campus and provide an example for the possibilities of commuter involvement. "She is a true leader," Resnick emphasized. "She really is an ambassador to students, showing them what is offered on campus."

Mahmud, who is described by her friends as, "the most positive person" they know, describes herself as ambitious, imaginative and innovative. She said her word of advice to all students, including commuters, is to be positive.

"Get yourself out there and make the most of your experience at Stony Brook," she said emphatically. "Enhance your experience and make memories. Make sure when you look back you say, 'Wow, I made the most of it!'"

From BATISTE on 1

of Parking Services. "It wasn't until these past two years I've really noticed students taking advantage of the free parking services on campus...we also offer permit parking in the stadium if students want to pay for closer parking."

Pay parking areas on campus, such as the Stadium Lot, is a convenient option that some students are reluctant to use. The \$150 additional fee for each academic school year and long waiting list is what deters them from signing up. "I'm not paying for parking; I pay enough in tuition so that's out of the question and it's not even a guarantee you'll get a spot in there," Bubaris explained.

There are roughly 22,000 students at Stony Brook University and almost half commute, Commuter Student Services senior advisor, Emily Resnick explained. In many cases, students commute either because they couldn't secure housing on campus due to limited space and overcrowded dorms or commuting may be economically beneficial.

According to the Stony Brook campus residents website, housing on campus for undergraduates can be

anywhere from \$3,056 to \$3,776 a semester and \$353 to \$1,152 monthly for graduates. "Taking care of my kid isn't cheap so I've got to work," said Jessica Ramos, an undergraduate, 22, who commutes from Port Jefferson. "Living on campus is way too expensive for me and him so I'm living with my parents until I graduate."

Commuters frequently find it challenging to develop a social life on campus because the time spent interacting with other students is limited mostly to the classrooms. On the other hand, residential students live, eat, study, and socialize together in dorms and at campus functions. Therefore they have more opportunities to make friends and become socially involved in the campus community.

Karolina Wojcicki, senior, commutes from Flushing, Queens twice a week to

Stony Brook. She once lived on campus but ever since she moved, it's been difficult to get involved. All her time on campus is accounted for, leaving little to no room for recreational activities and a social life. "I used to live on campus and it was great because you know about everything going on," she said. "Now I don't really get involved."

In addition, commuters are often faced with limited opportunities to meet with faculty and staff. The ability to go to after hour study groups or office hours is a simple advantage that residential students have. Commuters must make additional trips to campus or schedule individual meetings with faculty members. "That's a big problem for me. I had a couple of tests already and I couldn't make study sessions and it's a lot harder to do things over the Internet," Wojcicki said.

To help bridge the gap between students who commute and campus life, Stony Brook implemented a dedicated administrative office known as Commuter Student Services. During new student orientation, students are introduced to the programming, advocacy

"I'm not paying for parking; I pay enough in tuition"

and research it provides for commuters, such as the monthly "Lunch and Learn" workshop series. It offers commuters a comfortable and friendly environment to learn about important topics such as time management and stress relief techniques, as noted on its website.

There's also a student-run commuter group, Commuter Student Association, or CSA. "CSA is put together by students, run by students, have an executive board of students, has student members and no decisions are made unless the students members vote on them," said Resnick, who doubles as Commuter Student Association's Program Advisor and Commuter Student Services Senior Advisor.

Both the CSA and Commuter Student Services are beneficial in what

services they provide. But one common complaint among commuters is that Stony Brook offers almost no direct financial assistance for commuter students. "We don't have anything specifically through our office that can assist financially but we do serve as an advocate for commuter students to help them find answers to their questions that they want about financial assistance," Resnick said.

Transportation issues are a large part of commuter concerns as well. The cost of gas and public transportation is consistently increasing. Once a month, the undergraduate student government provides round trip Long Island Rail Road, or LIRR, tickets to Penn Station and Jamaica for students who travel during off peak hours into the city. Full price round trip tickets would cost from \$12 to \$22 but they are discounted half price for students. The tickets are available on a first come first serve basis and have a limitation of one ticket per student. For the rest of the month students who travel by train are stuck paying for full price tickets.

Elyssa Infuna, senior, commutes from Franklin Square. She takes the LIRR from the Mineola station five days a week. Infuna wished

she lived closer because her total commute time is roughly two hours each way. "I used to drive but I started taking the train because it was more economical...a monthly ticket for me is \$170."

Commuters often find themselves adjusting their course schedules to attend classes in large blocks of time. But with recent cuts in class sections due to budget cuts, even that has become difficult. Commuters at times end up having to take classes that are scattered throughout the day and waiting around campus in commuter lounges and in friends' dorms until their next class begins.

"It sucks because on Mondays and Wednesdays I have class at 12:50 p.m. and at 5:20 p.m. so I end up staying on campus all that time... I live in Huntington, rush hour traffic is a mess coming to Stony Brook," said Groden.

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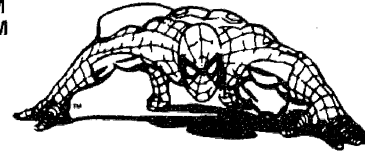
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who we are

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Colleges For Change Programs focus efforts specifically on those aspects of the community and college environment that most influence tobacco use among young adults.

what does that mean?

1. TOBACCO INDUSTRY SPONSORSHIP AND PROMOTION:

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~Develop and implement policies that completely ban the distribution of free tobacco products on campus and at community events.

~Educate the colleges and local community about the impact of tobacco industry sponsorship and promotion.

2. SMOKE-FREE MULTI-UNIT DWELLINGS:

~Work with management of college off-campus housing to enact smokefree policies.

~Educate target audiences about the impact of secondhand smoke and benefits of living in smoke-free housing.

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Continued from 12

Ok, ok, it might be a bit too late for an April Fools joke but a girl can dream, right?

The Knicks are not in the playoffs, but the Cleveland Cavaliers are, rallying the best record in all the land and being steered by the reigning league MVP, LeBron James.

Three games behind them are the Orlando Magic, with the beastly Dwight Howard down low and a healthy Jameer Nelson in the lineup.

There's a six game drop between the Magic and the Atlanta Hawks, who sit in third-place and are reaping the benefits of seeing all those young guys develop and grow.

Al Horford, Josh Smith and Joe Johnson are reminding ATL hoops fans of the eighties, when Dominique Wilkins and the rest of the Hawks were legitimate championship contenders.

The Boston Celtics are the fourth seed, not playing the way they did last year but still armed with one of the best guard trios in the league and an ever-hungry Kevin Garnett.

The Miami Heat and

Milwaukee Bucks are still jockeying for the fifth and sixth slots, with the Heat holding a slight edge.

The Heat are right back where they were last year, looking to get over the first round hump this time around. The Bucks, led by Brandon Jennings's interesting haircut and dizzying dribble, are in the playoffs for the first time since the 2005-2006 season.

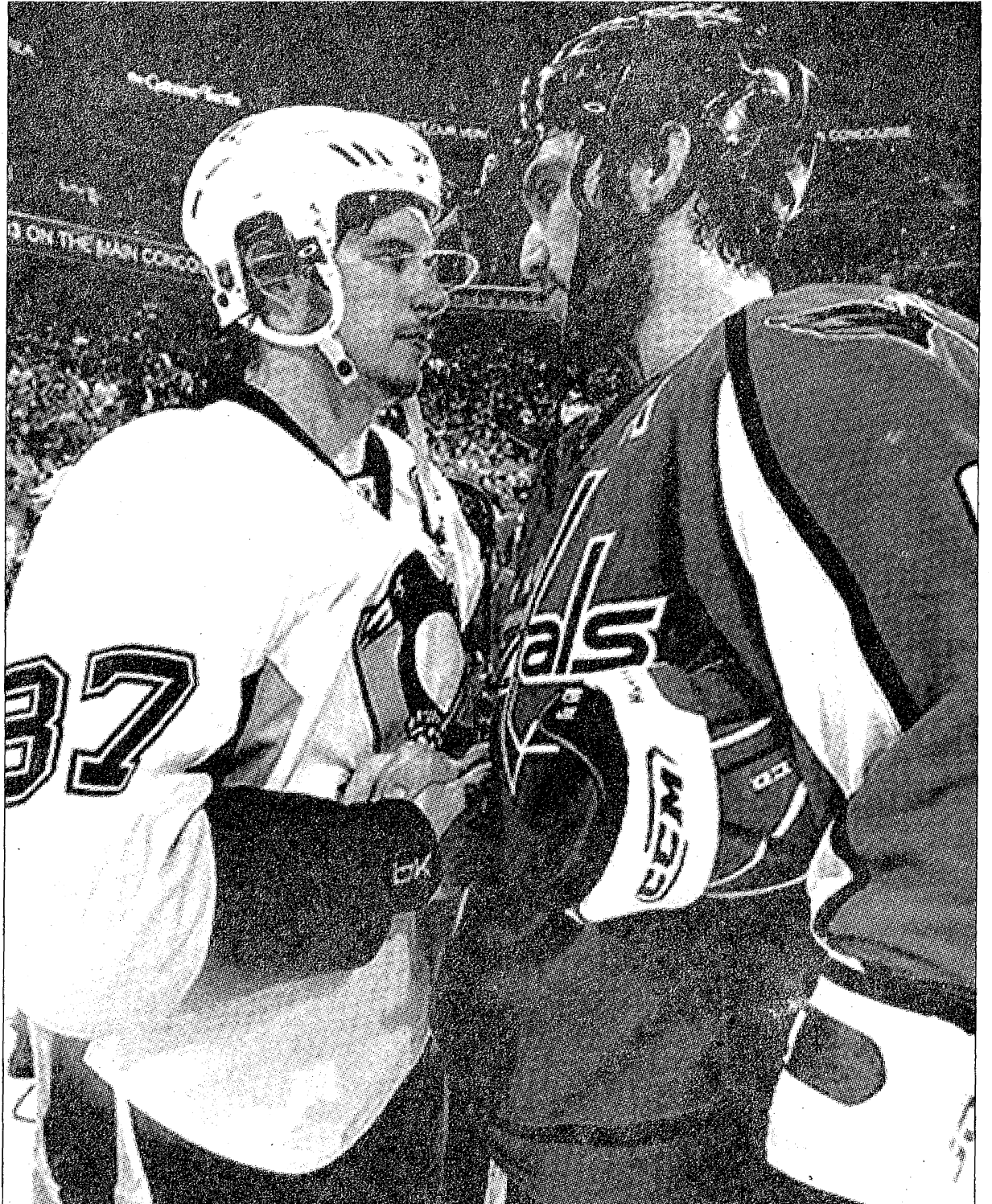
The Charlotte Bobcats are the seventh seed in the conference, joining the Thunder in making their first-ever postseason appearance.

The Chicago Bulls are the last team on the list, hoping that their young all-star guard, Derrick Rose, will help them pull off the first round upset.

This postseason should be an interesting one. Feel free to loaf around and do nothing this weekend, other than having your eyes glued to the television screen.

Get ready for 40 games in 40 nights on TNT. Be prepared for buzzer beaters and upsets. When it's all said and done, expect tears, both of pure elation or heartache. Whatever you do, just make sure you watch.

NHL Playoffs Underway



Media Credit: i.cdn.tuner.com

The rivalry between Crosby (left) and Ovechkin (right) will pick up where it left off this postseason.

SOFTBALL RACKS UP A.E.C. HONORS, CRUISES PAST COMP.

By DAVID O'CONNOR
Staff Writer

The Stony Brook Softball team (18-11-0, 6-3-0) featured both the America East Conference's player and pitcher of the week, and it isn't the first time this season that seniors infielder Vicki Kavitsky and pitcher Alyssa Struzenberg won the awards this season.

The entire team reaped the benefits of their stellar play, going 5-0 in a week where they swept their division rival Hartford (13-11-0, 2-7-0). Kavitsky led the Stony Brook bats with a .553 batting average and 7 runs-batted-in. She leads the Seawolves in both of those categories with a .407 overall batting average and 18 runs-batted-in.

Struzenberg also had a busy week. She struck out 13 batters in Sunday's game against Hartford and almost threw a no-hitter

against Lafayette. She limited her opponents to a .113 batting average, or 7 hits over 19 innings. She also leads the team in wins with 12 and an overall ERA of 1.61.

The Seawolves will play six games against Iona, Rider, and Rhode Island before returning to conference play in a home series against Albany (12-15-0, 5-4-0). It will be the first time that Stony Brook will play Albany this season.

Stony Brook will then head down the stretch for the season with all but four games being in-conference confrontations.

The Seawolves currently have the most conference wins with six, closely followed by the five of Boston University (20-14-0, 5-1-0) and Maine (16-20-0, 5-1-0) and Albany (12-15, 5-4-0). Stony Brook will play a three-game home series against Maine to finish out the season.

By DAVID O'CONNOR
Staff Writer

The National Hockey League (NHL) playoffs launched Wednesday evening, as the defending Stanley Cup champion, Pittsburgh Penguins, began their hunt for another title once again as the fourth seed. They amazed many by making it to the finals again and defeating the revered Detroit Red Wings on their home ice to win the cup.

Anyone who thinks that these playoffs will be any less interesting is in for a surprise.

Perhaps the story of the NHL playoffs is how many stories there are going into it.

From the old guard of the Red Wings to the

young guns of the Chicago Blackhawks, all sorts of teams will take part in the big dance this year.

The budding rivalry between Penguins captain Sidney Crosby, the youngest captain to win a finals MVP trophy last year, and Washington Capitals center Alex Ovechkin will be burning with intensity.

The Capitals secured the top seed in the east, but Ovechkin hasn't forgotten how Crosby's Penguins defeated his Capitals in last year's conference semi-finals.

One team that has surprised many hockey fans with a playoff berth is the Phoenix Coyotes. There were rumors before the start of the season that the Coyotes might move to Canada due to monetary problems. The

only monetary problem for the Coyotes at the moment will be handling all of the money that they'll bring in during their series against the experienced Red Wings.

The Red Wings offer yet another interesting story. Having played in the last two Stanley Cup Finals, many believed them to be a shoe-in for the playoffs. But the road hasn't been so easy for Detroit. The team finished the season on a hot streak, winning 13 of its last 15 games.

The Chicago Blackhawk fans have watched those Red Wings and their repeated success for years.

Being two of the original six teams in the NHL, there is no love lost between the Hawks and Wings. Now the Hawks have their own rising

team, and their fans are hoping that Detroit's era of dominance is in its twilight years.

Another lost era of dominance is the Canadians over the NHL, though that may be hard to believe. The last team from Canada to win the Stanley Cup was the 1993 Montreal Canadiens. Those same Canadians and the Vancouver Canucks are the only Canadian teams in the playoffs, so they will be bearing the burden of a nation ripe with hockey fans.

From the newcomers to the veterans, this year's NHL playoffs will leave no hockey fan bored.

There is a storyline behind every team, and every team wants to hoist the Cup in June when it's all said and done.

SPORTS

It's That Time Of Year Again...

NBA Playoffs Begin Saturday

By SARAH KAZADI
Sports Editor

Now that March Madness is in the books and the Duke Blue Devils have been crowned NCAA champions, hoops fans can quench their postseason basketball thirsts starting this weekend. The NBA playoffs will kick off, as 16 teams battle to be deemed champions in June.

For the first time in a long time, squads are still battling for playoff positions, with the lengthy 82-game season coming to a close.

In the West, only four games separate the second and seventh seeds, which is a testament to how competitive the conference has been this year. There are a slew of stories waiting to

unfold, each team hoping for a fairytale ending.

The Los Angeles Lakers, though not as dominant as last year, have clinched the top spot and are looking for a hobbled Kobe Bryant to play his natural role of Savior and carry them to the promise land. The Phoenix Suns have returned to the level of play that made them one of the best teams in the league a few years ago, currently tied for third place with the never-aging Jerry Sloan's Utah Jazz.

After a series of trades, the second-place Dallas Mavericks have gotten a defensive facelift and a rejuvenated Jason Kidd to take some pressure off Dirk Nowitzki.

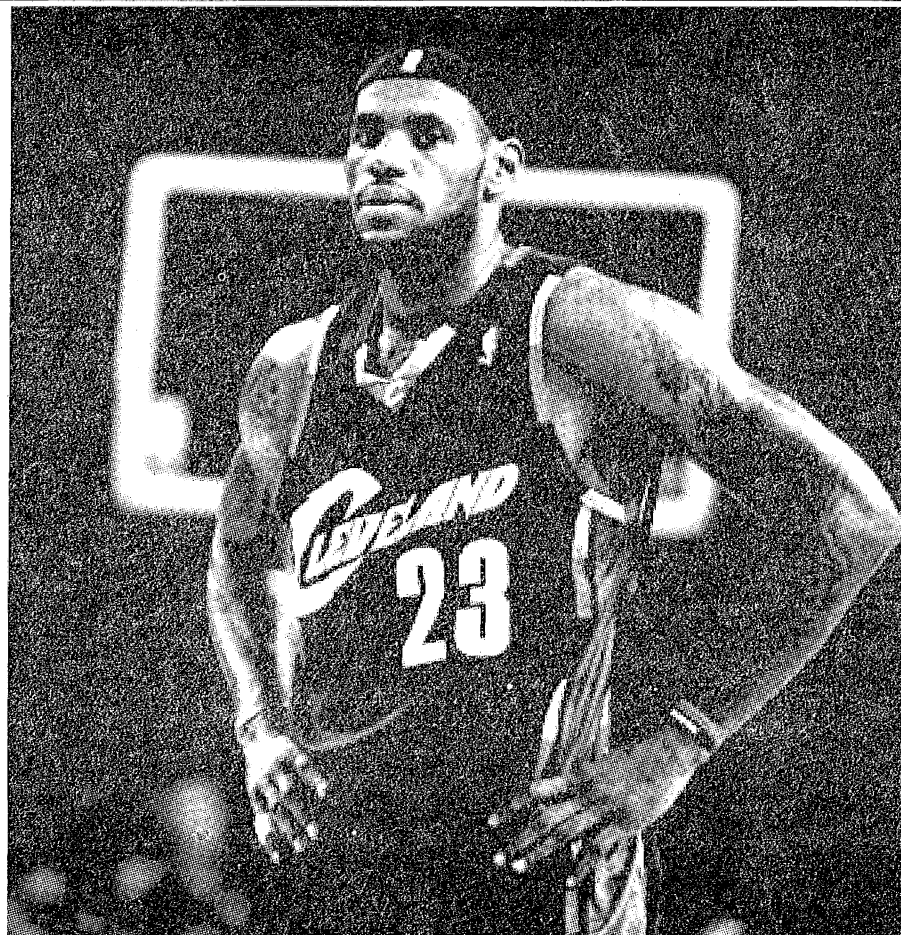
The Denver Nuggets, Portland Trailblazers,

San Antonio Spurs and Oklahoma Thunder fill up the rest of the conference standings, respectively. The Thunder are making their first-ever postseason appearance, primarily because Kevin Durant has molded into a legitimate superstar and placed the team on his shoulders.

These different plots give the West a new and unpredictable feel this year, and it will be interesting to see how it is won.

In the East, the New York Knicks have rewound time, bringing back Patrick Ewing and Latrell Sprewell to dominate the conference and guarantee an NBA Finals appearance.

Continued on 11

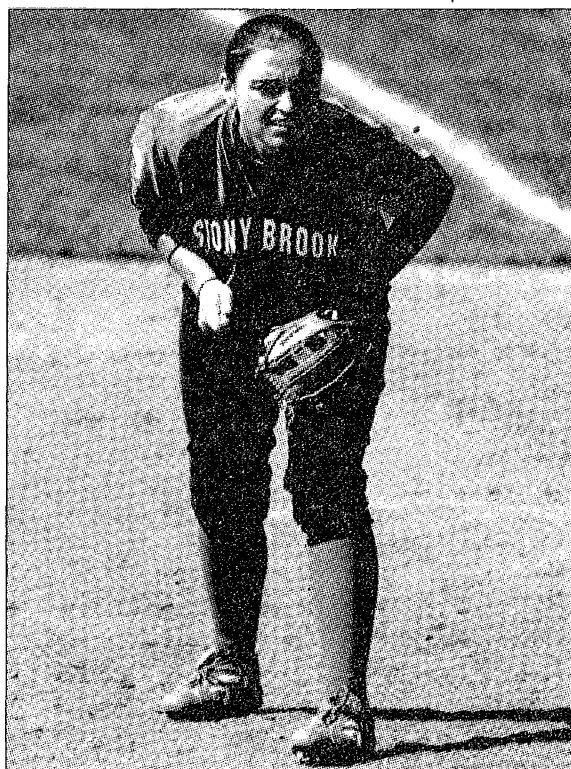


Media Credit: sportsguyby.files.wordpress.com

LeBron James (above) will try to get his Cleveland Cavaliers over the hump this postseason by making a return to the NBA finals.

SOFTBALL
RACKS UP
A.E.C.
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PAST
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Seawolves' senior Kendall Blumenthall gets ready for a grounder in another Stony Brook win.



Kenneth Ho / THE STATESMAN

Men's and Women's Tennis Stretch Winning Streaks

By CONSTANTINE LOIZIDES
Staff Writer

Seven is heaven for the Stony Brook women's tennis team, after a 5-1 victory over the Quinnipiac Bobcats on Tuesday extended its winning streak to a whopping seven games and 16-3 overall.

The squad won the first singles slots with freshman Nini Lagvilava and sophomore Prerana Appineni, each winning in straight sets at No. 1 and No. 3, respectively. Sophomore Anna Pieschl won in three sets - 6-1, 2-6, 6-2 - at No. 2. Senior Paola Rodolfi lost

at No. 4 but freshman Aylin Mehter did not drop a game in winning at No. 5. Junior Gayatri Krishnan coasted to a 6-2, 6-4 win at No. 6.

On the men's side it was a similar day at the office, as the men beat the Quinnipiac Bobcats by the same margin of 5-1 en route to their eighth straight victory and 15-4 overall.

Junior Ivan Rummel dropped his match at No. 1, 7-6(4), 7-5 but the Seawolves picked up the slack in the following five positions, winning the next four in straight sets. Seniors Jon Epstein - 6-4, 6-4 - Halvar Dil - 6-1, 6-2 - and Ilan Shvartz - 6-2, 6-0 - dropped

a total of only 13 games to their victories in matches 2, 3 and 5 respectively. Sophomore Mitch Wong won his match 6-3, 6-3 at No. 4 and Freshman Palash Tiwari won in three sets, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 at No. 6.

Doubles matches were not played on either side.

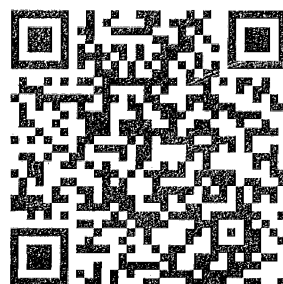
On Monday, prior to their victories over Long Island rival Hofstra, the Seawolves men and women's teams honored their four seniors - Paola Rodolfi, Halvar Dil, Jon Epstein and Ilan Shvartz, for senior day.

Both teams return to action on Saturday, traveling to face Binghamton.



Media Credit: goseawolves.org

NHL Playoffs Underway



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