

News & Views

Volume 4, Number 12 December 13, 1994

Published by the Graduate Student Organization at Stony Brook

Stony Brook To Receive Full Accreditation Despite Report

Last Thursday (December 8), USB President Shirley Strum Kenny received notice from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools that Stony Brook's accreditation would be extended through 1999 - the standard accreditation period.

This announcement comes despite the association's most recent report (covered in detail in the last, November 21, edition of *News & Views*), which was critical of several aspects of USB's undergraduate programs.

Notably, the report focused attention on the poor condition of many campus buildings and the existence of an academic environment which does not support undergraduates.

-M. Fagan

Source: December 9, 1994 edition of *Newsday*.

TA's Voice Concerns at GSO Town Meeting

On December 5, the GSO sponsored a Town Meeting on "The Changing Roles of Graduate Students: Opportunity or Exploitation?"

Shirley Strum Kenny, USB President, and Lawrence Martin, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, were among the featured speakers. Kenny focused her comments on the university's Undergraduate Initiative, which places a renewed emphasis on teaching.

According to Kenny, the initiative allows TA's to obtain a greater amount of preparation and training, and will benefit both graduates and undergraduates.

Many of the graduate students which attended agreed with these points, but pointed out that the initiative also has caused many departments to increase the teaching load of TA's in order to accomplish lower student/teacher ratios. And, although these lower ratios have positive ef-

fects on undergraduates, it forces TA's to take on additional work while receiving no additional compensation.

Many TA's complained of feeling "burnt out" as a result of their teaching load, course work, and other responsibilities. TA's pointed out this "burn out" may in effect negate, and possibly even reverse, the intended effects of lowering student to teacher ratios, and suggested the hiring of more TA's and/or adjunct professors to alleviate the problem.

Kenny seemed sympathetic to the concerns of TA's and stated that the concerns of graduate students would be addressed as she worked developed the Five Year Plan for Stony Brook. The plan will be based on the work of task forces composed of students, faculty, administration, and staff.

-M. Fagan

Student Killed By Suffolk County Police Officer

On Saturday, December 3, a Stony Brook student, Eneea Moldovan, was shot to death by a Suffolk County police officer in the parking lot of the Smith Haven Mall. Moldovan was a junior pre-med student.

The shooting occurred after police chased and caught Moldovan, and two friends, after they allegedly attempted to use a credit card which was stolen.

According to *Newsday*, December 9th edition, the police account said "he offered no resistance, had no weapons and was face down on the pavement as the officer held the gun to the back of his neck".

The incident has received media coverage throughout the NY area. An investigation has been launched by the Suffolk County Police, and other agencies, in order to determine the appropriateness of the police officer's actions.

-M. Fagan

It's More Than a Lounge -- It's "The Spot"!

by Wilbur Farley,

The Spot's "Man At Bar"

If you haven't been at "The Spot" this semester, you've missed lots o' fun stuff, like live musical acts which included "The Boys on Bongos" (Latin percussion and rhythm), "The Guys from the Quad" (music that's loud and good--or, at least, good and loud), Reckoning (a Grateful Dead Cover band), and The Stun Mats (original kick-butt rock 'n' roll). In addition, we've hosted poetry readings, a GSO Town meeting which featured Stony Brook's president, Shirley Strum Kenny, as well as musikfests co-sponsored with the German Club. Hey: where else can

you go to find a "spot" that caters to your social, academic, intellectual, musical, and alcohol needs all at the same time? Checkmate? EOB? The Park Bench? or some other off-campus money pit?

We don't think so.

We don't have surf rats, frat rats, or annoying top-forty DJs. What we **do have** is a friendly manager and staff, a relaxed atmosphere complete with billiards, darts, table tennis, television, and a juke box, as well as an interesting mix of your fellow graduate students. And hey: if you take a look at our reasonable prices and wide variety of imported and domestic beers, you may just surprise yourself

and find a friendly and comfortable (not to mention cheap!) place to hang out. "The Spot's" following has steadily increased during the semester, and the people who've already discovered how much fun "The Spot" is just wanna know: why haven't YOU joined us?

"The Spot" is open Thursday through Saturday, 6:00pm to 2:00am. December 15th through 17th will be our final weekend for the fall semester; we hope you'll come out join other grad students who, like yourself, aren't quite ready to go home and spend three weeks with mom, dad, and crazy Uncle Elmo.

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Short News

A Collection Of Seemingly Random Short Pieces Which May Be Of Interest To Graduate Students.

Winter Weather Information Lines

USB now has two new winter weather emergency information lines. The numbers 632-SNOW (west campus) and 444-SNOW (HSC and East Campus) will inform callers of the latest information about parking, cancellations, delays, etc. which are bound to occur as a result of winter. Each line will be able to handle several hundred calls a minute. This new service will exist in addition to news bulletins on area radio stations (WUSB 90.1, WALK 75.5, WOR 710 AM, and WCBS 880 AM).

Stony Brook Union Crafts Center

The Stony Brook Union Crafts Center is offering over 25 classes during the Spring Semester. The center offers classes in Photography, Ceramics, Fiber Studio, general "Art", and Leisure classes. Everything from Raku Pottery to Wine Appreciation and Scuba Diving. A schedule of classes can be obtained by calling 632-6822 or 632-6828.

Soon, You Too May Be Able To Rent A Car

Are you're less than 25 years old? If so, you can vote, be drafted, drink alcohol, have credit cards and do everything else but rent a car. Currently most car rental companies require renters to be a least 25. If a NY State Judge has his way, this will change. The final "privilege of adulthood" may be soon be lowered to 21. (Source: Newsday 12/6/94).

The USB Directory

The 1994 - 1995 USB Directory is now available. The directory (which lists the numbers of USB offices, faculty/staff, and students) is available at many campus locations, or by calling 632-6885.

Should the Ritz Carlton Be Worried?

USB may be getting into the hotel business. According to a recent (12/6/94) Newsday article by Alan Wax, campus officials have been meeting privately with the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau to discuss plans to build an on-campus hotel and conference center capable of hosting up to 600 people. The center would reportedly be build on a tract just south of the Main Entrance.

Bad News

A recent report by the Economic Policy Institute showed that the real hourly wages of college graduates declined by 7.5% (\$16.99 to \$15.71) between 1973 and 1993.

If Ever Get Around to Starting Your Thesis:

"Dissertation News and Thesis

News" (published by The Association for Support of Graduate Students) is joining the cyber-space world. The new service promises to provide "information of value to graduate students involved in doing master's and doctoral theses; it will make available articles focused on how to do a thesis, reviews of resources, and answers to students' questions pertaining to their theses, as well as providing current notices of deadlines for thesis-related grants and conferences at which students can present thesis research." Students can get information about the service by calling (702) 831-1399 or by fax at (702) 831-2199.

Life in Cyberspace:

Virus Alert:

Check your Disks! The virus "Stoned" is alive and well on campus. If thoroughly infected, your computer will be rendered unusable. Those of us at the GSO unfortunately know this to be fact.

Also, there is a virus on America Online being sent via E-Mail. If you receive any document titled "Good Times", DON'T read it or download it. It too will cause great havoc in your life ...it erases hard drives.

Did You Hate The GRE's?

If "Yes!", then reform the beast: The Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board has up to ten graduate research assistantships for psychometric programs for the 1995-1996 academic year. Graduate research assistants will serve as on-site data coordinators for a variety of research studies related to the development of a new, modular, computerized GRE General Test and other new GRE testing initiatives, and/or other research projects of relevance to the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

Funding will consist of a student stipend paid to the assistant and a fixed cost-of-education allowance paid to the institution. The stipend will be \$12,000 (\$1,200 per month) for a period of ten months. The cost-of-education allowance to the institution will be \$7,500. Assistantships are for a ten month period (Sept 1, 1995 - June 30, 1996). Nominations must reach the GRE Program at ETS by February 1, 1995. Notification of awards will be made by March, 1995. Nomination information and application materials can be obtained by contacting Maria Potenza, Educational Testing Service, Mail Stop 32-V, Princeton, NJ 08541, (609) 951-1522, or mpotenza@ets.org.

Do Not Open Until After Christmas

Health Science Center students and employees are in for a post-holiday surprise. The food prices in the HSC cafeterias will increase an average of 15% starting January 1st. The increase is reportedly needed to off-set a 1.6 million dollar short fall in the East Campus Budget.

A Fancy Restaurant In The HSC?

A proposal exists to build a multi-purpose restaurant/banquet hall on the second floor of the HSC. No word on whether it will happen any time soon.

SUNY at Stony Brook, 11794

Send those Holiday gifts right from campus! USB now has its own, official, full-service, U.S. Post Office. It is located in the basement of the main library, across from the Meal Plan/ID Office. Hours 10 - 2, Monday - Friday.

GRADUATE STUDENT News & Views

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 12, December 13, 1994

A Publication of the
Graduate Student Organization
Room 2105, Computer Science
SUNY Stony Brook
Stony Brook, NY 11794
(516) 632-6492/6965

Ida Fuchs, Office Manager
Editor: Mike Fagan

The GSO Executive Council
President: Anne Mayer
Vice President: Josh Billig
Treasurer: Susan Kratrina
Secretary: Wilbur Farley

News & Views is published by the Graduate Student Organization, which is solely responsible for its content. Executive editorials are written by a member of the GSO executive council or its designee, but may not represent the opinion of the entire council. Letters for publication, comments and items for submission may be mailed or delivered to the GSO office, Room 2105 Computer Science Bldg. The newspaper's phone/fax # is 632-8965; to leave a message, call the GSO at 632-6492.

Congratulations December Grads!
We wish we were you.

The Graduate Student Organization's Budget For The 1994-1995 Academic Year

90% of the GSO's total budget comes from student activity fees, the other 10% comes from Funding from the Faculty Student Association (FSA), University Grants, and Advertising.

Where's this money go? ...Lots of places. The following statement lists the budget item allocations for the Academic year.

New Office Equipment	1000	Newspaper Printing	2550
NYPRIG	12500	Newspaper Editor Salary	4600
NAGPS	125	Newspaper Reporter Salary	2000
Student Clubs	2000	Senate Meetings	
Chinese Club	1500	and Election Expenses	3500
Programs for Residential		Travel	500
Students	1000	Officer's Stipends	10500
RAP (includes \$8000 grant)	18000	Office Staff Wages	5000
Social/Cultural	3500	Payroll Tax	2000
Social/Cultural		C&D Agent	30000
Lounge Subsidy	15000	Accounting and Auditing	3300
Lounge Events	2000	Legal Costs	1000
General Programs	500	Other	1500
Programs			
Child Care	8500	Sub-Total	152825
WUSB		Cash Reserve	30000
Pacifica News	3000	93-94 Lounge Deficit	7700
New Student Orientation	1000		
Women's History Month	400	Total	190,525
English Dept. Conference	400		
Legal Clinic	1500		
Ambulance Corps	1500		
Departmental Allocations	5000		
Office Supplies	3500		
Office Telephone	2500		
Office Postage	200		
Service Contracts			
for Rental Equipment	500		
Newspaper Misc	250		
Survival Guide	1000		

Want to know more about the GSO? Are you a member of a student club, department, or organization that has graduate students and could use funding? Give us a call. Get involved.

Views On Life As USB Grad Student

Grasshoppers, Butterflies and Graduate Students: The Text Of a Town Meeting Speech

by Sally Kuzma

Sally Kuzma graduated from USB last year with a Masters in Fine Arts. Sally was a feature speaker at the recent GSO Town Meeting.

I'll start with a metaphor: the grasshopper and the butterfly models of development. It's not an original one. Tim Morton, a past GSO president, used it to illuminate what he saw as outmoded administrative relationships. He argued that grad students are not like the butterfly larvae who spin themselves into a cocoon and then emerge, miraculously transformed into winged, full-fledged, tenure-able "adults". Instead, they're more like little grasshoppers who possess all the attributes of big grasshoppers who gradually and incrementally develop their wings.

I'm no longer a grad student, and am speaking now as a teacher, as an artist whose work is about making certain relationships visible, and as someone who has also worked a long time outside of academia (Note that as a grad student I also taught, worked in my studio, and took an extra job to pay the bills -the grasshopper model).

I'm now teaching part-time at a community college, and learning what it's like to be a part of the adjunct pool, those part-timers who (according to the American Federation of Teacher's "Part-time Faculty Report, 1994") make up more than half the faculty at community colleges and state universities in New York (the figure is 61% for community colleges and 57% for university centers), and at least half the faculty of private colleges and universities in the state ...a group

that has little or no say in administrative decision making, a substantially lower pay scale and few of the privileges accorded to other people doing the same work.

Graduate school at Stony Brook prepared me well for this.

And, once again the issue of employment rights is beginning to take up my time, time that I spend writing this, time that is already frustratingly divided between teaching, studio work, and miscellaneous wage-earning activities.

I was not a union activist on campus. But I found in my second year that employment issues had a disturbingly large impact on my academic life and on my standing in the department, and so I began to pay attention. (I might add that I was initially very skeptical of the student leaders who were calling for health care benefits and, at a time of drastic budget reductions; they seemed hopelessly unrealistic.) I heard talk among faculty that unionization would pollute the innocent eden of academia with petty and irritating employment regulations. And I heard talk among students (fully funded students) that getting involved in administrative battles is a waste of time, that the only way to get through school is to close the door to these "distractions" and do your own work. Both deplored the invasion of business-mindedness into the academic environment, a place presumed to be purer and more ethical than the world at large, a place where faculty and administrators are presumed to be working in the students interests....

For those of us who found

Stony Brook to be *not* such a paragon of ethical community, the ethics of labor relations can actually be useful, as well as threatening to academia-as-usual.

It's no accident that labor organizing for part-time faculty is coming on the heels of grad student unionization across the country. Those same students are going out into the work place and finding they have to fight some of the same battles again. The issues for adjuncts and grad students are startlingly similar and include:

Job security and seniority status for time served (for grad students this would mean continuation of support). Like a good employer, administrators need to be accountable to students who have invested their time and money into the department with a return commitment of job security during their time here as students. Using TA/GA lines as recruitment lures and then cutting off students in the third or fourth year is not only bad employee relations, it poisons the academic environment as well, pitting students against each other and making their stay here unnecessarily unstable. Also, the university's overall commitment to its grads (including health insurance and other benefits the GSEU has won and is fighting for) can be more attractive to applicants than simply a promise of entering with a full line.

Equal pay for equal work. For part-timers and adjuncts this means pro-rated salaries, based a fraction of the average starting salary of a full time professor. For grad students, this means making sure the new workload definition of a 20 hour week for a full TA lines is enforced, and that no time is exploited by virtue of being a student.

It may also mean grad students being good employees, and putting an end to those few positions that are created to give someone a free ride, even though we'd all like to land one. It's not fair to other students in the department if someone gets a line for doing little of no work while others have to put in 10-20 hours a week for the same money.

Benefits. While grad students have made some great progress in this area, as adjuncts or part-time faculty they may no longer have the option of buying health insurance for \$90 a year.

The two class structure of academia - the tenured "haves" and the part-time/adjunct/TA/GA "have nots" is deeply rooted, as a recent book titled *"The Invisible Faculty"* (by Judith Gappa and David Leslie, San Francisco, 1993) points out: "One sustains the other: the low costs and high teaching loads of the have nots help make possible the continuation of a tenure system that protects the jobs and prerequisites of the haves ... Tenured faculty benefit directly and personally from this structure, and have a vested interest in maintaining it."

Going back to the grasshopper and the butterfly, it's easy to see how grad students who become adjuncts or part-time faculty, are really just bigger, older grasshoppers, struggling with many of the same issues. It's also clear that some dramatic transformation is still needed for them to become fully human, full-time tenured faculty. It may, however, have less to do with spinning a cocoon than with organizing and speaking up for ones rights as an employee.

The Spot

Open: Thursday - Saturday nights 6 pm - 2 am. Located in Roosevelt Quad
on the second floor of the Fannie Brice Building.

Beer, Food, Espresso, Pool, Darts, Music.

Sparing the Rod(denberry) Doesn't Necessarily Spoil the Child:

Star Trek and the next *Generations*

By Wilbur Farley
English Department

If you're only going to see *Star Trek: Generations* in the hopes of finding the answer to the seven-year-old question "Who's the better captain, Kirk or Picard?" don't waste your \$7.50. Yes - the two do meet, and even work together to save the universe (or at least a sizable portion of it) from certain destruction, but *Generations* contains far more than a "who's better-fest". This movie, perhaps more than any of its predecessors, takes the human condition fully to task, and does so in an adult (and somewhat depressing, because of its realism) manner.

I've been a "Trekker" from about the time I could walk and fire my toy phaser at the same time, and I was simply blown away by the potential scope of this film: the "Next Generation" crew (or, at least the few of them we get to see here) look big and bold and brash, and seem to be heartily enjoying their jump to the big screen. Worf (Michael Dorn) gets promoted and enjoys it with the bravado we've come to expect from the Klingon representative, Data (Brent Spiner) gets an emotion chip (and alternates between being funny and annoying -- much like any other human being), and Geordi (Levar Burton, only a passing relation of Richard and Tim) gets kidnapped (which ends up having one rather surprising consequence). But these events just turn out to be all in an hour and forty-odd minutes work for the crew of *Enterprise D*.

One of the biggest criticisms I've heard of this movie from others who've seen it is that it's really nothing more than another two-hour episode (only not quite as good as "All good things . . .," or "The Best of Both Worlds," or "The Inner Light," even), and they may be right. But was *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* any better than "The Corbomite Maneuver," or "Amok Time," or "The Trouble with Tribbles"?

If for nothing more than its acting, *Generations* easily sur-

passes any of the previous *Trek* movies (and that might even include Ricardo Montalban's "rich Corinthian leather" effort in *The Wrath of Khan*, if any *Trek* actor could ever *truly* surpass the tastefully bad aplomb with which he so lovingly delivers the "He tasks me, and I shall have him. . ." and "For spite's sake I spit my last breath at thee. . ." speeches) simply because of Patrick Stewart's presence. We've seen his Picard character grow from a tight-assed, child-hating autocrat in *The Next Generation* pilot into a man -- a *captain* -- deeply concerned with issues of family (including children -- the "next generation," in a sense) and duty here in *Generations*.

The plot is practically nonexistent in this movie, so let me quickly run it down for you: Dr. Soren, a mad scientist (played rather woodenly by Malcolm McDowell) with a long lifespan (he's of the same race as Guinan, *Enterprise D*'s bartender and non-empathic busybody [Whoopi Goldberg]), is trying his damndest to get back to the Nexus, a place outside of time where a being can experience "unending pleasure." In Kirk's (played by William Shatner, in case you've been living under a rock for the past twenty-seven years) time (the 23rd century), the newly-christened *Enterprise B* encounters an energy ribbon containing the Nexus and would have been destroyed except that Kirk, being the brave soul that he is, seemingly sacrifices himself to save the young captain (that's right: Kirk was merely a decorative "observer" aboard the new ship) and crew of this starship (a crew which includes Mr. Sulu's daughter at the helm). It is also in this century, aboard *Enterprise B*, that we first encounter both Soren and Guinan. (Or was it on 19th century Earth when Data lost his head, we met a young bellhop named Jack London, and Mark Twain took a trip aboard *Enterprise D*, that we first encounter Guinan?)

We jump sixty-odd years into the future (the 24th century) only

to find ourselves aboard a clipper from the 18th century. Not to worry though, the makers of this movie are only showing off the holodeck of *Enterprise D* (which we've seen just as well showcased in any number of "The Next Generation" episodes. It must be nice to have lots of money to spend on special effects when you make the initial warp engagement from television to motion pictures; wouldn't it be equally as nice to, just once, spend it on writing?). Soren is alive and well in the 24th century (those pesky non-terrestrials and their damned-long lifespans!) and attempting to destroy a large portion of a remote solar system just to get back to the Nexus, and Picard receives bad news from Earth: his brother, Robert, and nephew, Philippe, (both of whom we saw when Jean-Luc went home to France in the 'Borg epilogue episode from *The Next Generation*) have died in a fire. Picard is devastated, and suddenly finds himself thinking about the "next generation" now that he is the last surviving male of his line, much the same way Kirk thought about it when he meets Sulu's daughter.

Got it? That's pretty much all there is to this flick. The upshot of this plot is pretty transparent: Picard'll eventually meet Kirk in the Nexus; the two will team up (after Kirk has his moment of trying to recapture a past life that, thanks to Star Fleet, never existed) to save the known universe (or a sizable portion of it) from ceasing to exist, and Picard will learn the value of his own humanity, and his place in history, from the man who "was out saving the galaxy while" Picard's grandfather was "still in diapers". Kirk cautions Picard never to let anyone or anything (like a promotion, or fears that his family name will die with him) take him off the bridge of the *Enterprise* because, while he's there, he can "make a difference"; but, in perhaps the greatest irony of the movie, Picard's *Enterprise* is destroyed while he *isn't* on her bridge. Everybody knows that Kirk "dies" in this movie (but does he *really*, since he's part of the

Nexus and nothing that is part of the Nexus ever truly dies?), but I didn't find his death isn't nearly as upsetting as the destruction of *Enterprise D*.

There are holes in *Star Trek: Generations* through which you could easily navigate the *U.S.S. Excelsior*, but don't get me wrong: I quite enjoyed immersing myself in the twists and turns of this movie. Audiences must realise that, much like *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, this is a transitional phase; we've finally laid Kirk and Bones and Scotty and Chekov (and perhaps, even Spock) to rest in this movie, and cleared a path for stories that can fully involve us in Deanna Troi's and Worf's impending romance, as well as a myriad of other scenarios that *The Next Generation* only began to explore before it so abruptly (yes -- *even* after a seven-year run) ended.

I viewed *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* again a day or two before seeing *Generations*, and walked into the theater expecting an entirely different film from the one I got. Don't look for the neat, "all is right with the universe because the *Enterprise* still flies" ending here, and I guarantee you won't be disappointed by the next chapter in this book of our cultural heritage. The torch has been passed, even though Kirk is still the master of his century's *Enterprise*, and Picard is the master of his (or, at least, will be again soon).

Who can ask for more?

The *Enterprise* (s) will always sail in our memories, and it (they) will always have a master whom we can admire and in whom we can believe (and can any of us who care about such things really wait to see *Enterprise E* in the next movie?), so I'm sure the *Star Trek* legacy can easily say to *Generations*, as Kirk did to David in *Wrath of Khan*, "I'm proud to have you as my [child]."

Hey: this may not be your father's *Enterprise*, but it ultimately rides just as smoothly.

Staff Columnist

Meaning Versus Other: The Battle For Political Ethics Wages On

By Barry Joseph.

Barry Joseph, a first-year MSW student, has agreed to write a regular column for News & Views.

Two years ago, President Clinton was elected on a liberal platform which spoke to people's ethical, spiritual, and psychological needs. Once in office, his friends and staff convinced him to take a "pragmatic" approach as his wife was being roasted by the press for daring to combine values and politics.

This past November, Republicans rose to prominence through their conservative platform which again spoke to people's ethical, spiritual and psychological needs. And again, the Right has quickly distanced itself from social issues and values so they can pragmatically focus on "real" economic issues.

Does anyone see a pattern here?

I do not find it surprising, in an age where cynicism is chic and idealism is ridiculed, that those in the mass media are terrified and confused by any discussion of ethics and morality (unless they are being broken, that is). USA Today, for example, wants something they can count and/or display via a multi-colored chart, lines, arrows and pull-quotes. But how do you quantify compassion or elucidate love in a pie-chart?

Rather, what does surprise me is that the Democrats stumbled upon this approach and gained the presidency. And what disappoints me is that they have given up this approach and will lose the presidency once again.

As a young adult, I have watched the Right dominate national politics ever since I could vote. The Right has done this by successfully articulating a clearly defined moral ideology; the rhetoric collapses at any level deeper than Reagan's hairdo, but few bother to look that far.

The Left, meanwhile, has attempted to keep morality out of the U.S. political sphere but has only succeeded in keeping out their own, creating a vacuum for the Right to fill with selfishness, fear, and hatred.

Look, for example, at the latest policy to come out of the Newt Gingrich Camp in Congress. They are proposing to reform (re: destroy) the welfare program Aid For Dependent Children (AFDC) so that no unmarried mother, regardless of her condition, could receive benefits after two years. The effected would include all mothers whose child's paternity is not clear and, most outrageously, all women under the age of 18.

If you happened to be concerned about the fate of the impoverished children, don't fret: the money saved will reportedly be spent on shiny new

government run, and/or funded, orphanages. Whose "Family Values" could support the separation of child from parent?

The Republican's call for less government involvement is clearly designed solely to effect the wealthy which filled their election coffers. If the rhetoric of Republicans were as solid as their bank accounts, maybe they would bother to notice that less than a third enter AFDC because of the birth of a child while the most frequent reason, at one and a half times the rate, is for divorce or separation. The average continuous stay of families on AFDC is only 2.2. years and, 60% of those who leave the roles do so because of marriage or increased income (only 10% due to the removal of the child).

The image of poor, child abusing, women which perpetuate generations of welfare recipients themselves only describes only a small portion of the poor, yet is used to portray them all. The Right takes this insidious approach because behavior plays into the language of conservative morality and allows the right to turn reality inside out. Right wing ethics allows one to blame the poor for their status and, hence, free to accuser from any feelings of obligation of responsibility.

Following this rhetoric, many argue that welfare programs like AFDC, which takes up only 1% of the federal budget, are actually the cause of America's economic woes. This rhetoric is the "politics of the other". The "other" used to be communists.

But, with the end of the cold war, "politics of the other" required that the "enemy" be found/created within our own borders. Who could be successfully blamed for destroying America? ...Those who lack the political and economic resources to fight back against their accusers/attackers: Racial minorities. Homosexuals. The Poor. Immigrants.

That's how the right acts, like bullies who pick on the victims of their own policies.

Their tactics are so successful that even Latinos in California voted in large numbers for Proposition 187 (which denies all education and health care to immigrants and their children). And in New York, African-Americans stayed home or helped elect a governor who ran on, among other things, a pro-death penalty platform, which (due to it's selective implementation) is often a modern day version of lynching.

I in no way intend to accuse these groups for the ills that will now fall upon them but, instead, marvel at the ease with which the Right has been able to successfully use the "politics of the other" and feel anger towards the Left for having allowed the Right to utilize such tactics/rhetoric without substantial, meaningful challenge.

Many from the left (if you will allow

me to call the Democratic Party "left") were out organizing and educating, but why did they fail to speak to the needs of the people? Why couldn't they counter the lies and distortions of the Right? Many California voters actually believed the minimal support provided to immigrants was draining the state's economy and that, by cutting off such support, the increased costs of uneducated, malnourished, unhealthy children would cost the state less.

Still, I recall the words of Martin Luther King, "despair is a poor chisel to carve tomorrow's justice," and indeed there are many reasons to have hope that were not given the attention they deserved. State-wide ballots to deny civil rights to lesbians and gays were voted down in Oregon (for the second time) and Iowa. Of the Democrats who won reelection in Congress, those more liberal won over those more conservative in their party.

More importantly, the monumental political shift that the media and the Republicans are holding on to is more illusory than real; the shift in the popular vote was only 2%. Only 38% of the people even voted. In other words, approximately one out five people of voting age voted for each party while three out of five didn't bother to vote at all. The Republicans were voted in by only 20% of the public.

These facts may cause the left to feel better; but the election was undeniably a setback for them. Those on the left must respond to this setback by fundamentally challenging the content of their politics. The left must force the itself, along with the media, to consider the powerful significance of the ethical implications which underlie politics and social policies. Democratic Party politicians need to realize that people will not support national policies which reflect genuine caring and concern for the less fortunate unless they feel a part of some larger ethical or spiritual framework which speaks to a sense of meaning in their lives.

Tikkun magazine provides a powerful and accurate critique of the Left's failure to communicate a progressive message to the mainstream American electorate. Tikkun argues that while the Left has traditionally focused on economic entitlements and political rights, "most people need something more: to be part of loving families and ethically and spiritually grounded communities that provide a meaning for our lives which transcends the individualism and me-firstism of the competitive market."

Clinton was elected because he was able to convince people to move beyond their own narrow self-interests and dare to hope he could bring such a change throughout the nation. Once elected, however, instead of courageously fighting for the clear ethical perspective

he ran on, he took the "practical" route, which resulted in not only losing most political battles, but the loss of his initial supporters who now feel betrayed.

Tikkun argues that most Americans struggle with self-doubts and feelings of worthlessness because they live in a culture dictated by a market system that judges people by how much money and power they have accumulated. The right understands this condition. The left, meanwhile, focuses myopically on the dis-empowered members of society and fails to realize and respond to the validity of this American condition.

When all the left does is say, "Hey, we need to focus attention on the underprivileged now," room is left wide-open for the Rush Limbaughs and the Newt Gingrichs to rush in with regressive ethical posturing.

A progressive vision of society will remain solely in the pages of the alternative presses and in the halls of certain universities until the left can learn how to articulate its vision of a social and economically just society within a framework which address the lack of meaning in people's lives. Instead of criticizing the right for daring to combine morals and politics, the left needs to respond by giving voice to our own morality which argues for diversity, tolerance, nurturance, compassion, and community, instead of xenophobia, intolerance, cruelty, rigidity, and selfish individualism.

Michael Lerner (the editor of Tikkun) believes when idealism seems impossible, that people will move either towards a narrow cynicism or toward right-wing versions of idealism (with all the attendant racist, sexist and at time even fascist possibilities). The recent election was a time when idealism indeed felt impossible.

Until the left learns to incorporate a politics of meaning to counter the politics of the other, the electorate will dare not risk being hurt again; society will slowly be transformed into a giant orphanage, where each lives in isolation and must fend for him or herself.

**Have a different
point of view? Your
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accepts signed, well
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letters to the editor
from members of
the USB campus
community.**

Information From the GSEU and GSO

What's the Difference Between the GSO and GSEU?

By Anne Mayer, (GSO President and Member of the GSEU Steering Committee) and Annulla Linders (Chair, GSEU Steering Committee and GSO Senator)

We have written this article as a response to some of the confusion expressed by graduate students, faculty and administrators regarding the difference between GSO (the Graduate Student Organization) and GSEU (the Graduate Student Employees Union).

At one level we would like to say there is NO difference, at least not an important one, or one that would require graduate students to keep the distinction clear in their minds - that is on the level of concern for graduate student issues and commitment to doing what we can to help solve problems. Our jobs are virtually identical in their duties to watch out for and protect graduate students' interests and rights.

We work closely together (with some executive overlap), exchange information, and often jointly discuss how best to solve a problem. In addition, both organizations work closely with the Graduate Student Advocate, Chuck Wright, in order to receive information about issues brought to his attention. At times we end up working like a triumvirate.

But at other levels we are different and distinct. The GSO is the elected graduate student government at Stony Brook. All graduate students are members of the GSO by virtue of their graduate student status (full-timers, part-timers, teaching assistants, research assistants, graduate assistants, and non-funded students alike). All graduate departments have the right (and duty, we would like to add) to select a senator (or two) to represent them in the GSO senate.

Graduate student representation on numerous important university committees is secured through and administered by the GSO senate.

The GSO is a liaison between graduate students and university administrators. The executive council meets monthly with the President,

Provost, and Vice-Provost for Graduate Studies. The GSO participates in the University Senate, and the GSO President is a member of the University Senate Executive Committee. Additionally, the GSO sends representatives to ALL university committees, plus the FSA and child care boards. The GSO, in other words, is the organization through which we as graduate students can have an impact (however slight) on matters relating to local policy making.

All aspects of graduate student life are the business of the GSO, such as the quality of housing, campus safety, parking, the library, child care, academic dishonesty, program requirements, department policies, computing, campus environment, etc., etc. The GSO, through the mandatory student activity fees, helps fund numerous graduate student organizations, clubs, and activities on campus, among them the RAP-program, which helps defray the costs associated with presenting one's work at a conference (for details see budget on page 3). The most recent undertaking (open Thursday through Saturday night) is the newly renovated graduate student lounge (the Spot).

The GSO publishes a monthly paper, *News & Views*, (submissions always welcome) and the annual *Graduate Student Survival Guide*.

Now, on to the GSEU.

The GSEU is the local chapter of the statewide graduate student employees union, representing all TAs and GAs in the SUNY system. The GSEU is affiliated with the Communication Workers of America. At Stony Brook, all members of the GSEU bargaining unit are also members of the GSO, but statewide we are joined by thousands of other graduate student employees. Every TA and GA has a right to join the GSEU as a member (by signing a membership card), thereby getting the opportunity to influence GSEU policy and contract negotiations, and to take advantage

of GSEU benefits (which include loans, scholarships, and legal aid).

As a TA/GA, whether or not you sign a membership card, you are automatically part of our bargaining unit, which means you receive all the benefits secured in our contract with New York State, such as access to state subsidized health insurance, the recent 4% pay increase (followed by another one in March of 1995), and a grievance procedure. All graduate departments have a right (and duty) to select a steward (or two) to represent them at the steward assembly.

The elected local steering committee meets frequently with Human Resources to discuss workplace issues. We have representation on a number of university committees, including Campus Women's Safety Committee and Child Care. The local GSEU publishes a monthly newsletter (*Gradline*). In addition we distribute the statewide newsletter (*Union Times*).

All concerns related to the work graduate students do as TAs and GAs (work load changes, interrupted funding, job descriptions, job requirements, problems with payroll, problems with supervisors, job posting, problems with the health insurance, etc., etc.) are the business of the GSEU. Our contract with New York State gives us a number of legal rights and recourses, which it is our job on the local level to protect and uphold.

So, although the GSO and GSEU are distinct, and have different official areas of responsibilities (academic versus workplace issues respectively), we work together. Since many graduate student problems do not fit "neatly" under either umbrella, we are convinced that the graduate students at Stony Brook are best served by a close working relationship between the GSO and the GSEU. That way, should you have a problem and don't know where to go, by contacting either organization, you will eventually find what you need.

Current Events

A selection of events that may be of interest to graduate students. All events are free unless noted.

Tuesday, December 13

A Blood Drive will be held in Endeavor Hall (South Campus) and the Indoor Sports Complex. 9 am - 2 pm.

Friday, December 16

Last day to view a one of a kind, large scale, site specific exhibit by Maura Sheehan titled "Dora: Big Girls Don't Cry". University Art Gallery.

The film *Natural Born Killers* will be shown by COCA in the Union Auditorium. 9:30 pm & midnight. Also shown Saturday. Admission \$2 with USB ID.

Saturday, December 17

A "Magic World of Chemistry" held. The program will feature mini-explosions, fire, steam, smoke and an array of fascinating and fun hands on activities and laboratory demonstrations that range from creating foam to concocting crazy colors using simple household ingredients. Activities start at 10 am in Room 402 - 406 of the Chemistry Building.

The Classified's

Give a gift of fun, learning and a new experience. Give someone special a class at the Union Crafts Center. Gift Certificates are available for classes in Ceramics, Fiber Arts, Photography, and Leisure. Call 632-6822 for more information on gift certificates or how to register yourself.

Room for Rent. Share a roomy house with 3 other USB students. Close to campus, Eat in Kitchen, Washer Dryer, Cable TV. ...What more can you ask for? Available now! Call Johanny at 366-0705

Happy Hanukkah,
Merry Christmas,
Happy New Year, and
Have An Excellent
Semester Break
from all of us at the
GSO. See You All
Next Year. One Less
Semester To Go!

*Josh Billig, Wilbur Farley, Mike Fagan, Ida Fuchs,
Susan Kratina, Anne Mayer, Chuck Wright.*