

# NEWS & BLUES

Volume 2, No. 2

The Newspaper of Stony Brook's Graduate Students

September 2001



Rembrandt *The Anatomy Lecture of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*

## Bacon and Earth

*A Stony Brook Medical Student Dissects the Body*

by Nova Panebianco

**H**e smells like bacon and earth. Formaldehyde too, but I expected that. I didn't expect the 70 year-old dead man on the steel gurney to have his own unique, and now unforgettable, smell. All of the bodies have their own signature smell and the teaching assistants, whose hands become contaminated with human grease, carry the smells of each cadaver to mine. The sick mingling of smells, my first sight of the grey-blue body, the slick greasiness of my fingers covered in human fat revealed to me that anatomy would traumatize all of my senses.

Doesn't death purge the individual? I thought this the first day. Is the smell of my cadaver his last effort to maintain an identity? Our lab dissector reads like a cookbook. It is "government issue" for all cadavers, which feeds the fallacy that once you are dead you are just a generic bunch of flesh. As I have come to know the cadavers, I have learned that every one of them had unique attributes. Internally, some have aberrant arteries, missing organs, and strangely colored tissues. Externally, the scars of life persist in death, as do little things like an IUD in the 300-pound lady two gurneys down, and chipped pink nail polish on the hands of an old woman.

I have grown to find dissection strangely pleasing. After a few ses-

sions with our body, I began to like the process of removing layers, exposing veins, arteries, organs; things which I will never have the chance to see again in such detail. As long as I don't look more than an inch in any direction outside of the area I'm working, I can ignore the truly gruesome nature of dissection. I found naming our cadaver much more disturbing than cutting into him. My lab partners chose the name "Herbie", and by naming him I could no longer forget that he was once alive. Out of respect for the gift this man has given to us, I agree he deserves a name; however it was easier for me to not give him an identity or personify him.

It is human to build defenses against traumatic events, so that the significance of reality doesn't become too much to bear. I have built such defenses, but in the gaps, when my guard is down, I have caught myself thinking about Herbie's life, and death. After weeks of dissection we found no obvious signs of death, and his body was not wasted like many of the other students' cadavers. I've imagined the scene of his death: dramatic, chaotic, and unexpected. In his stomach we found a last meal of kidney beans. If he had known this was going to be his last meal, would he have chosen kidney beans? He was about the same age and size as my grandfather when he died. I wonder if a

child cried for him when he died. I wonder who carries memories of his life, and what they would think if they knew how intimately I now know him. It's amazing what I think about as I strip skin off a dead man.

My mother, who is an artist, feels that art is anything that makes you look at the world in a new way. If this is true, then my experience with Herbie has been one of art. I don't look at people the same way I used to. For example, after the second week of lab, I went to a yard sale with my parents. I saw an old man there, and in a flash I envisioned his body dead on a gurney. I knew exactly what he would look like, with his stringy muscles protruding under his translucent ashy skin. I wondered if his body would have cancer, and what his unique smell would be. If this experience is art, or trauma, I don't know.

The effects of this experience continue to haunt me outside the lab, and my waking dreams have become more complex as I learn more. While watching television the other day, instead of seeing Julia Robert's beautiful face, for a brief moment I saw the muscles, nerves, vessels, and skin of her face contorting into its expressions. I now regularly find myself fixating on the components of a face while pretending to be in rapt conversation. What would they think if they knew? I'm

*Continued on page 7*

**WELCOME TO THE  
HARRY F. CHAPIN  
APARTMENT COMPLEX  
A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH  
COMMUNITY**



**PLEASE WATCH OUT FOR  
OUR CHILDREN**

## Graduate Housing Situation Unacceptable

GSO Housing Committee Minutes  
6:30-8:00pm, September 4, 2001,  
GSO Office

Present: Abigail McKay, Jasmina  
Sinanovic, Jean Cadet, Masa  
Prodanovic

**P**urpose of the meeting was preparation for the meeting with President Kenny on September 11, and therefore these minutes have specific form.

1) We request an assessment of the Fall 2001 housing process for graduate students and their representation in such assessment. Assessment and troubleshooting should be done in a timely manner, so that we do not encounter the same problems next year. Solutions could be implemented for the Spring Term, allowing a potential "trial run" prior to next Fall's anticipated mayhem.

### Explanation:

Although the GSO Housing Committee was watching the housing situation closely the past semester, meeting with Dean Martin and Campus Residences on a number of occasions, there have been

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## News & Blues

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EDITORS - Richard Yi and Marc Dempsey (newsandblues@hotmail.com)

GSO OFFICERS - President: Pegine Walrad; Vice-President: Tanya M. Smith; Secretary: Sherrye Glaser; Treasurer: Jasmina Sinanovic; Speaker: (vacant)

GSO CONTACT INFO - SAC 227, ZIP +4 2800, PHONE 632-6492, FAX 632-8965, EMAIL GSO@ic.sunysb.edu, WEB <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/gso>

*News & Blues is published by the Stony Brook Graduate Student Organization and serves the Graduate Student Community at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. It is currently being published on a monthly basis. We welcome submissions in the form of letters, opinions, poetry, news items, art works, photographs, announcements or anything else that could conceivably be of interest to graduate students and the larger University community. Please include your name and a way that you can be contacted with anything you submit. All submissions are subject to editing for length and content. Items may be submitted directly to the Editors by e-mail at newsandblues@hotmail.com*

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## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I would like to report one terrible case that I witnessed when I helped my friend's family to check in a Chapin apartment unit. My friend, who is a new grad student in linguistics, arrived at JFK from Korea, along with his wife and son (who is twelve years old) on Aug. 13. I gave them a ride to Stony Brook and we went to the Chapin complex office for the check in. When he finished all the document processes and got the key for his unit, we headed for the building K. When we came to the door of the assigned unit, I was so scared to find that the residence office assigned just one room (out of the two bedroom unit) to my friend's family. Another couple in that unit already checked in, and surprisingly, they also have a son who is ten years old. The terrible thing done by the residence office is that they did not consider those boys at all. (There was no bed for the child in the room, and the big queen size bed and two clumsy desks were already occupying three-fourths of the whole room. Can you imagine that this is a space for a normal couple with a grown child? Horrible, simply horrible!) How come can this couple sleep together with their already grown son in the same room?

Since this is their first time to come to America, they

seemed to be willing to put up with this situation. But, I cannot help reporting this case so that we can share the unjust treatment of the residence office. I asked my friend whether the residence office notified him of this room situation, and he said no. So, I asked him what information he got from the residence office, and he said that he only knew that his family was assigned to a unit but he could not know how it looked like. He added, if he had known this situation earlier, he would have contacted with me to ask find an one-bedroom apartment off-campus. (Everything got too late. It's almost impossible to get an apartment outside the campus by now.) And then, he asked me whether this type of housing is quite normal in America (or at least in Stony Brook), and I said YES as a cynical joke. I think it is definitely a shame that Stony Brook provides this type of terrible housing service to the new students, most of whom start their American life from this school.

Thank you for reading my angry message.

Sincerely,

Youngjeen Choe

Ph.D Candidate, Comp-lit

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\$300 full page

## Campus Events Calendar

**Saturday, September 15, 12:00 p.m.**

Stimson Field (Roosevelt Quad.)

**Korean Graduate Student  
Association Welcome Party**

The KSGA invites all to the 2001  
welcome party to promote friend-  
ship and understanding of Korean  
culture. Various games and gifts  
are waiting for you.

**Wednesday, September 19, 5:00 p.m.**

Alliance Room (Melville Library)

**Careers in Bioscience Industry  
Seminar: Careers in Corporate  
Research & Development**

Dr. David Webb, V.P. Technology  
Alliances, OSI Pharmaceuticals  
will be present.

**Saturday, September 22, 10:00 a.m.**

Staller Center

**Special University Convocation:  
Nelson Mandela to receive an  
Honorary Doctoral Degree in  
Humane Letters**

Nelson Mandela, former President  
of South Africa and 1993 Nobel

Peace Prize recipient, has accepted  
an invitation to come to our cam-  
pus. Tickets will be distributed on  
a first-come, first-serve basis at the  
Staller Center, beginning at noon  
on Friday, September 14. Limit of  
one ticket per person. Those  
attending should be seated by 9:30  
AM in order to assure their admit-  
tance.

**Saturday, September 22, 8:00 p.m.**

The Spot

**Graduate Student Organization  
Welcome Party**

The GSO invites all graduate stu-  
dents and families to the Spot for  
food, drinks, and entertainment.

**Tuesday, October 2, 5:30 p.m.**

Stony Brook Union, room 249

**Protestant Campus Ministries:  
Drumming Circle**

For more information on this pro-  
gram, contact Clarke Berge at  
cberge@notes.cc.sunysb.edu or call  
632-6563.

**Wednesday, October 10, 5:00 p.m.**

Alliance Room (Melville Library)

**Careers in Bioscience Industry**

**Seminar: Careers in Law**

Presented by Scully, Scott, Murphy,  
and Presser

**Saturday, October 13, 9:00 p.m.**

The Spot

**Queer Alliance Drag Show**

**The GSO Senate meets on the second  
Thursday of every month in SAC 302  
at 6pm (refreshments served at 5:30)  
All graduate students are welcome to  
attend (but not to vote).**

**Sept. 13**

**Oct. 11**

**Nov. 8**

**Dec. 13**

In theory, submissions to *News  
and Blues* should be made one  
week prior to each Senate meet-  
ing—or by the first Thursday of  
each month.

# Introducing the Graduate Student Advocate

**WELCOME!** Now that most of us have settled into the semester routine, I want to take the opportunity to introduce myself to those of you who may not know me, and more importantly, may not know what I can do for you. Those of you who attended the orientation for new graduate students or encountered problems early in the semester have heard from me already. For the rest, I want to be sure that you know the essentials of what the Graduate Student Advocate does, and how to contact me in the event you need to do so.

## WHAT THE ADVOCATE DOES:

Like the Ombuds Office, the GSA exists to help you resolve problems you encounter during your time at Stony Brook. In many situations, you might only need more information or some help finding and contacting the appropriate people within the university. Since navigating this bureaucracy can be overwhelming at times — especially for graduate students, who already have more than enough pressures on them — this office was created to ensure that graduate students' needs are specifically addressed.

## WHEN YOU SHOULD CONTACT ME:

Anytime you have a serious problem or concern that you don't know how to handle. It is always best to start close to home, talking first to your advisor, graduate secretary or support staff, graduate program director, or department chair. In most cases they will be in the best position to resolve your problems quickly and efficiently, especially since they should be more familiar with the specific procedures of your department or program. When this is not possible or if you are unsure of how to proceed, you should not hesitate to contact me. **Anything we discuss will be considered confidential unless you tell me otherwise.**

Typical kinds of problems in the past have included: conflicts with faculty or advisors, health insurance problems, housing problems, cases of discrimination, questions of academic standing, and problems with fund-



Graduate Student Advocate Maureen Langdon Shaiman

ing or other work-related issues. Note that the latter, with the exception of matters affecting Research Assistants, are always the jurisdiction of the Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU), and not matters in which I can get involved. If you are not certain about this, feel free to check with me.

## WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOU:

- Explain university policies and procedures
- Advise you of the best courses of action and help in pursuing them
- Refer you to the person best able to address your concern and arrange a meeting with you
- If necessary, intercede on your behalf or mediate for you if appropriate
- Recommend specific changes to the university so that problem areas can be corrected for the future

## WHERE TO FIND ME:

The Graduate School  
Computer Science Building 2401 (up the stairs at the main entrance and to the right)

Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 11-4

Phone: 632-1654

Email: sbugsoadvocate@hotmail.com

Email is generally the best and quickest way to reach me, but you are welcome to drop by during my office hours in the Graduate School. I spend a lot of time in meetings, so it is usually safest to set up an appointment in advance if possible, but this is not essential. If you are in the Student Activities Center, you can also leave a message for me at the office of the Graduate Student Organization (GSO), room 227.

I do hope you won't encounter any serious problems during the course of your studies at Stony Brook, but if you do, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Maureen Langdon Shaiman, GSA

## Vote on Activity Fee Coming up in October

### Hello graduate community!

We have a mandatory/voluntary vote coming up in a month or so. Basically, what this vote is about is the fiscal survival of the GSO. As you probably know, the GSO receives its financial support through a mandatory student activity fee that every student must pay as a part of their semester's bill. Every 3 years or so, we are required to give the graduate community the opportunity to stop paying this fee on a mandatory basis. We vote on whether GSO funding should be solely on a voluntary basis, or should continue to be mandatory.

Needless to say, our beloved Graduate Student Organization would run out of money extremely quickly if it were dependent upon voluntary contributions alone. We ARE grad students after all, and fiscal stability is not our collective calling card. Relying on contributions would inevitably dissolve the graduate student government on campus and likely place the control of our graduate activity fees in — YIKES! — the benevolent hands of the administrators. (Remember that computer fee?...)

Besides — the benefits one receives from the GSO far outweigh the \$20 or so/semester fee we each contribute. Take, for instance, the newspaper you're currently reading — compliments of your friendly neighborhood GSO — use a coupon from it & you've almost made up your fee for the year! The GSO-provided "RAP" money you get reimbursed for present-

ing your graduate work at conferences helps you to build your resume in ways your advisor could not otherwise afford! On-campus child care facilities, holiday parties, club allocations, speaker series, Survival Guide manuals for new inductees, University-wide committee representation, and graduate solidarity make the GSO something none of us can afford to lose.

So consider this when you vote next month:

**Mandatory (as it is now) = GSO Lives**  
**Voluntary = GSO dies**  
**(along with your strongest on-campus allies)**

### You decide.

**Why? Because your vote counts as long as the GSO is around to defend your graduate interests.**

Thanks for your support,

Pegine Walrad  
GSO President 2001-2




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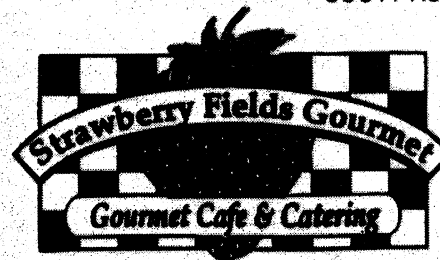
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# The GSO: Getting Involved in the Stony Brook Community

By Tanya M. Smith, Sherrye Glaser and Ashley Cohen

Choosing to attend graduate school is a major life decision. A first year graduate student has committed the next few years of their life to their education. Anyone who is motivated enough to dedicate their lives to knowledge and research should logically be just as enthusiastic about changing the environment around them. Historically, intellectuals have always been the catalysts behind social and political change. Graduate students are the intellectuals of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As students working towards graduate and professional degrees, we must be the driving force behind the much-needed change in our immediate realm of existence - we must mold Stony Brook into an archetype of a graduate supportive university and campus community. You chose to make SBU your home; you can now choose to spend your time here accepting less than satisfactory circumstances...or you can change them. The GSO encourages you to participate in any of the numerous university committees and graduate clubs. Your involvement may improve your life, and will likely make a difference for those yet to come.

The following is a list of some of the committees that need graduate student representation. Please contact the GSO if you are interested in learning more (gso@ic.sunysb.edu). *Editors note: we are in the process of updating this information. If you are aware of new contact info or committees, please contact the GSO. If you are no longer able to serve as a graduate representative, please let us know.*

## GSO Internal Committees

### GSO Board of Appeals

Needs chair  
Scott Grace, Mustafa Siddiq, Marvin Vasquez, Margie

### GSO Budget Committee

contact: Jasmina Sinanovic (Chair)  
Keith Metzger, Kostas Pentikousis  
Needs one grad volunteer

### GSO Election Committee

contact: Sherrye Glaser (Chair)  
Needs grad volunteers

### GSO GSEU Liaison Committee

contact: Ben Hirsch (Fall chair)  
Theresa Eddins, Jeremy Hubbell, Tanya Smith, Peg Walrad, Jasmina Sinanovic

### GSO Housing Committee

contact: Abigail McKay (Chair)  
America Canas, Masa Prodanovic, Jasmina Sinanovic, Ashaki Rouff, Jean Cadet, Ravindra Ravindra

### GSO Lounge Committee

contact: Jasmina Sinanovic (Chair)  
Petra Lammers, Jason Searles, Masa Prodanovic, Pegine Walrad, Jean Cadet (Non-voting: Godfrey Palaia)

### GSO Rules and Constitution Committee

Incoming Speaker (Chair)  
contact: Tanya Smith  
Needs grad volunteers

### GSO Social Concerns Committee

contact: Tanya Smith (chair)  
Jean Cadet, Jasmina Sinanovic, Regina Alandy, Rhonda Robbins

## University Committees That Need Graduate Representation

### Administrative Review:

contact: Robert Kerber  
rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Evaluates administrative structure and performance, is consulted in all proposed reorganizations, is represented on all search committees at the level of Dean and higher, runs biennial campus-wide review of the administration.  
Needs grad reps

### Arts and Sciences Senate:

contact: grad rep  
Grad Reps: Jasmina Sinanovic, Stephen Szolozsi

### Academic Standing and Appeals:

Needs 1 grad rep

### Academic Judiciary:

Needs 1 grad rep

### Campus Safety:

contact: 632-6350  
Grad Reps: Dawn Martin, Jean Cadet  
Considers safety issues on campus.

### Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA):

contact: Robert Kerber  
rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Grad Rep: Maureen Langdon  
Reviews academic planning, budgetary procedures, and priorities for resource allocation.



The Stony Brook Outdoors Club In Action

### Computing and Communications:

contact: Robert Kerber  
rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Grad Rep: Kostas Pentikousis  
Advises the Chief Information Officer for Computing on all matters that pertain to computing and electronic communication on campus.

### FSA Committees:

FSA Board of Directors  
contact: Judy Lum (Chair)  
GSO contact: David Spears  
Budget: Karol Gray (Chair)  
GSO contact: Jasmina Sinanovic  
Dining Services: Kevin Kelley (Chair)  
Needs 1 GSO contact  
Retail Service: Bill Weisner (Chair)  
Needs 1 GSO contact

### Graduate Council:

contact: Martha Furie  
mfurie@path.som.sunysb.edu  
Grad reps: Sherrye Glaser  
Advises the Dean of the Graduate School and monitors all aspects of Graduate Programs

### Housing Planning (HPAC):

Grad rep: Masa Prodanovic  
Coordinates and plans university housing. Needs as many grads to attend as possible.

### Library Services:

contact: Robert Kerber  
rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Advises the Director of Libraries on all aspects of the Melville and HSC Libraries; and in addition, advises the operation of the campus bookstore.  
Needs a grad rep.

### Research:

contact: Gail Habicht

to the SUNY Board of Trustees. Needs one grad rep.

### Student Health Advisory:

contact: Peter Mastroianni  
pmastroianni@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Serves as the students' voice on health related issues facing the university community, including such issues as mandatory health plans for all students.  
Needs 1 grad rep.

### Student Housing Committee:

contact: Daniel Melucci  
dmelucci@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Studies student housing demands and recommends strategies to the President to address unmet needs.  
Needs grad rep

### Student Life:

contact: Norm Goodman  
632-7750  
ngoodman@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Grad rep: Ashaki Rouff  
Advises the VP for students on all aspects of student life on campus, including graduates and professionals, commuters, and residents.  
Needs 2 grad reps.

### Undergraduate Council:

contact: Robert Kerber  
rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Grad rep: Kenneth Darling  
Advises the Provost and the Deans of various colleges involved in undergraduate education, and monitors the university-wide aspects of undergraduate programs.

### University Affairs:

contact: Robert Kerber  
rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Advises the VP of University Affairs on all matters pertaining to external relations, including fundraising, publicity, and public imaging. Needs one grad rep.

### University Senate

contact: Robert Kerber  
rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Exec Committee Grad rep: Tanya Smith  
Grad Senate reps: David Spears, Maureen Langdon, Jayesh Kotecha, Brian Verrelli, and Kostas Pentikousis. The senate is the chief governing body of SBU, and represents faculty, students, and professional staff. Senators represent their departments, academic units, and the undergraduate and graduate student bodies.

### Women's Safety Council:

contact: Sally Sternglanz

*Continued on page 9*

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# Housing

from page 1

numerous mistakes in the process of accommodating new students—which seems to be an inherent organizational problem in Campus Residences.

## Major objections:

- *No administrative contact was available in the Campus Residences office during the weekend of August 10-August 12 to assist when the majority of international students arrived (International Orientation began on the following Monday).* There were many cases of contracts not sent on time to the Chapin Office so instead of getting their space immediately, students had to be sent to temporary housing needlessly. Additionally, there were a few cases of over-assigning (in one case even 4 students to one spot). In outrageous contrast, during the weekend of undergraduate check-in August 24 – August 26, the Campus Residences Office was open.

- *Confusing, incorrect information was sent out via email.* By watching the situation in the Chapin Office during the mentioned weekend, around 20 students came in with printed emails from Campus Residences with very vague statements about housing accommodations. It is better not to send information at all than to send incorrect information. Some students turned out not to have housing, although from the email received it was implied otherwise.

- *Rudeness of Campus Residences personnel.* We do not expect special treatment, but polite, respectful treatment by personnel should be mandatory. Most of the international students complained that the personnel did not give enough explanation of the situation, and about the personnel's overall impatience. One student was even escorted from the CR Office by the police for merely asking for an explanation about why he wasn't assigned to the single room promised him when he registered. Arriving International students usually have language problems and the personnel need to expect this and be patient and compassionate.

- *Management of free spaces and efficient availability of information about the assigned ones was poor.*

2) We request graduate student representation on the Board that would address appeals put to Campus Residences. That is, additionally to the Graduate Advocate who presumably will assist the

grad student in their pursuit of the appeal itself.

3) We request further action to follow up on the "Proposal for priority listing for graduate students". The Graduate School and Campus Residences had supported our proposal, which was then presented to the Housing Planning Advisory Committee on August 17. We are wondering whether it has been approved by the President, and if a time frame has been established for its implementation.

4) We request graduate representation to work with the Graduate School and Housing Administrators in order to develop a proposal to have a central location on campus to direct graduate students during their move-in weekend before Orientation.

5) Problem of increasing graduate enrollment and non-availability of off campus housing.

The GSO still holds the position that the University should be responsible for providing enough housing for graduate students given that the majority of them are International and there is not enough off-campus housing available in the surrounding community. Furthermore, discrimination toward students of color is common off campus, complicating housing efforts. International students offered enrollment in the Graduate School should have a reasonable expectation of finding satisfactory housing accommodation in the area.

The Stony Brook area is very limited in off-campus housing opportunities and this year we again had nearly 60 international students without any housing accommodations. These students are still (illegally) living in other people's living rooms. The potential "solution" of such students utilizing undergraduate dorms as temporary housing requires paying rates of approximately \$750/month in shared rooms. This is simply too expensive for most graduate students given that they will probably stay in those spaces for up to a semester.

The University failed to provide any kind of temporary housing for people without assignments during the very rainy weekend of the International students' arrival. The fact that students were notified about the housing situation did not make it significantly easier. Moreover, hotels are very expensive in the area, and the tourist season peaks at the time when students are due to arrive!

# Bacon & Earth

from page 1

not the only one who is experiencing this. While watching a movie with medical school friends the other night I found myself fixated on the substantial platysma muscle in Ben Stiller's neck. As I was thinking about the muscle my housemate said, "nice platysma". I'm glad I'm not alone in my trauma. I'm glad I'm not the only one seeing dead people in beautiful living ones.

During orientation Dr. Stern, our anatomy professor, said that this would be the most bizarre and beautiful experience of our lives. There is truth in this paradox. I find my cadaver indescribably beautiful. The complexity of the system, the marriage of form and function, and the intricate detail of the organs are awesome. The body, to me, represents millions of years of evolution, of selection for perfection, and I hardly feel worthy of the right to excavate this man. I will never forget the way Herbie's heart looked. The organ was glossy, red with purple veins and yellow fat marbling its sides. The inside was textured in some places, and perfectly smooth in others. In my hands it rested like a freaky still-life waiting for the artist to translate its beauty onto canvas. We have dissected the body piece by piece; however it is clear that the total is greater than the sum of the parts. The complexity of the organs and vessels and nerves individually are no match for that of

the whole system.

This "rite-of-passage" has matured me, and separated me from my peers. How could I explain to my friends what it sounded like as we cracked our cadaver's pelvis, and why finding beauty in my cadaver makes doing these horrible acts possible. Like a soldier back from the war, I have images in my mind that can never be spoken, and I cannot explain the sensation of cut-

ting flesh just like a man cannot truly convey what it is like to pull the trigger of a gun. In this separation there is satisfaction, and I have, amazingly, grown to like my waking dreams of facial muscles and dead people because it reminds me of how much I've learned. These ghosts are my teachers.

**"I'm glad I'm not the only one seeing dead people in beautiful living ones."**

Anatomy has inspired the child in me that forever asks, "Why?", and I now enter lab with an excitement for the day's discoveries. I almost don't want the course to end because my hands will miss it. The experience of both the gruesome act of dissection, and the sublime beauty of the body exposed will stay with me as a doctor, and like the memory of a first love, Herbie will forever be my frame of reference. I imagine I will always associate the smell of bacon and earth to the traumas and the beauty of this class, to the uniqueness of the human condition, and to the awareness that I will never be the same.

## HELP

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# Getting Involved

from page 5

632-9176

sssternglanz@notes.cc.sunysb.edu  
Concerned with women's safety issues on campus. Needs one grad rep.

## Graduate Student Clubs

There are also a number of graduate student clubs that represent various special interest groups. The GSO has historically sponsored events, seminars, lectures, and holiday parties organized by these groups. We hope you look into those that are of interest to you. Editors note: there are several new clubs that are in the process of being formed. Please contact the GSO with your updated club information. If you are interested in starting a new club, please visit:  
<http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/Info/>  
or the Student Activities Office (SAC 219).

### Association for India's Development (AID)

AID at Stony Brook has organized several fundraisers in the past. All these funds have been used to support rural developmental projects in India. Contact [harish@math.sunysb.edu](mailto:harish@math.sunysb.edu) or [rhalathore@hotmail.com](mailto:rhalathore@hotmail.com) or check [www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/aidsb/](http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/aidsb/).

### Behavioral Ecology Discussion Group (BEG)

This is predominantly an interdepart-

mental club focused on discussions of readings in Behavioral Ecology and Primatology. They often invite speakers to talk on interesting issues related to Ecology and Evolution. Two past speakers were Richard Wrangham and Robin Dunbar. Contact Scott Suarez ([ssuarez@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:ssuarez@ic.sunysb.edu)).

### Chinese Students and Scholars Association (SBCSSA)

The major aim of the SBCSSA is to promote cultural, intellectual, and social activities for Chinese students and scholars at Stony Brook. Its goal is also to provide opportunities and benefits for its members by facilitating the exchange of information with various groups and organizations, by providing help on the adaptation to American culture, and by defending the rights of its members on campus as well as in the United States. For more info, e-mail [sbcssa@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:sbcssa@ic.sunysb.edu), or Wei Chen, SBCSSA President-[sbcssa@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:sbcssa@ic.sunysb.edu), or check [www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/sbcssa/](http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/sbcssa/)

### India Focus Group (New Group)

Contact: Prem Uppulur, [contact@indiafocusgroup.org](mailto:contact@indiafocusgroup.org), [www.indiafocusgroup.org](http://www.indiafocusgroup.org)

### Indian Graduate Student Organization

([igsa@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:igsa@ic.sunysb.edu), <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/igsa/>)

### Korean Graduate Student Association (KGSA)

KGSA is an organization consisting of Korean graduate students, faculties, and staff. They hold a welcome party

for newcomers in September, a Lunar New Year's party, and a graduation party in May. They publish and distribute an annual magazine "Yeo-Wool" on the Lunar New Year's party. (E-mail: [kgsa@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:kgsa@ic.sunysb.edu) or [kgsa\\_sunysb@yahoo.com](mailto:kgsa_sunysb@yahoo.com), or Jungnam Joo, KGSA Vice President, [jnjo@ams.sunysb.edu](mailto:jnjo@ams.sunysb.edu) or check <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/kgsa>).

### The Queer Alliance

A newly formed, social and political, all-inclusive student, faculty, and staff group. Past events include a Sit OUT for Queer Awareness and participation in the Long Island Pride Parade in Huntington. Join us at our Drag Show in honor of National Coming Out Day this fall at the Spot. (Amy Lu-President, [sbgrad\\_pride@yahoo.com](mailto:sbgrad_pride@yahoo.com))

### Stony Brook Ballroom Dance Club

All students, faculty and staff are welcome to regular meetings where various dances such as: the Cha Cha, the Salsa, the Merengue, the Tango, Swing, the Hustle, the Rumba, and the Waltz are practiced ([ballroom@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:ballroom@ic.sunysb.edu), <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/ballroom/>)

### Stony Brook Outdoor Club (SBOC)

The aim of this club is to create a place for outdoor-oriented students, faculty, and staff to get together for fun, recreation and adventure, to share experiences, skills, and good company in outdoor environments; and to help build a community aware of its surroundings. (contact: Peter Langfelder, [plangfel@grad.physics.sunysb.edu](mailto:plangfel@grad.physics.sunysb.edu),

<http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/sboc/>)

### Students for Peace and Humanity

([mathade@ams.sunysb.edu](mailto:mathade@ams.sunysb.edu), <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/sbdoves/>)

### Taiwanese Student Organization

([kchin@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:kchin@ic.sunysb.edu))

### The Toastmasters Club

This club is a chapter of a national organization that focuses on public speaking. (Contact- Joe Landry, [jlandry@asterix.bio.sunysb.edu](mailto:jlandry@asterix.bio.sunysb.edu))

### Underrepresented Graduate Student Organization (UGS)

The primary mission of the UGS is to increase the numbers of African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanic Americans who enter and successfully complete academic and professional programs. The goal of the UGS is to educate the campus community about the concerns of underrepresented groups within and outside the academic arena. UGS accomplishes its objectives through programs, seminars, and an annual conference. Visit our office (SAC 226), website ([www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs](http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs)) or e-mail us ([UGS@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:UGS@ic.sunysb.edu), or Abigail McKay, UGS President-[amckay@ssw.hsc.sunysb.edu](mailto:amckay@ssw.hsc.sunysb.edu)).

## Toastmasters Gives the Edge

by Joe Landry

I can still vividly remember my first "real world" speaking opportunity. I was a fresh college graduate working with a moderately sized company. My boss wanted me to present some work to a group of fellow company scientists at an informal lunchroom setting. Startled I realized that I had never had to give a presentation during my bachelor studies. It just wasn't part of the classroom curriculum for a science major. Some of the big decision makers in

research and development will be at this lunch meeting. I couldn't believe it! How was I going to pull this off?

About a week passed before the presentation day. During that time I developed a strategy for surviving my scheduled public humiliation. I was going to memorize my speech verbatim and, as a way of impressing them, hit the audience with a lot of solid numbers. A well-rehearsed stream of data would cover up, or so I thought, my lack of experience.

When the day finally arrived, I hauled my stack of data to the front of the room

trying not to trip over my own feet. I immediately wanted to dive into the heart of my speech—drowning my nervous energy in my by-now very familiar droning voice. Unfortunately it did not work out that way. About three sentences into my speech I drew a blank. I couldn't remember my lines. Desperate to break the silence in the room I started to spew data like a jammed tape recorder. During this whole spectacle I thought it would be best to belabor each point so as to seem more knowledgeable on the subject matter. That strategy resulted in my completion of only half of the material before the lunchtime meeting was finished. As a result, the audience did not hear the conclusion of the speech and left the room wondering what they had just witnessed.

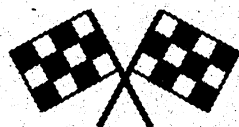
After the speech was finished my manager pulled me aside and started to accentuate the positive aspects of the speech. He concluded his evaluation of my speech with one word, Toastmasters. He thought I should consider joining Toastmasters as a way to improve my speaking skills, an absolute must for succeeding in the corporate world.

After doing a little research I discovered that Toastmasters is a nonprofit organization existing to help people develop public speaking and leadership skills. Toastmaster's international office provides a structured educational program designed to give the student ample practice in the basics of public speaking and leadership skills. In addition, as the student moves forward to more advanced lessons, the educational program becomes increasingly flexible to allow the member the ability to peruse focused personal objectives. I also discovered the membership of Toastmasters is composed of thousands of clubs worldwide each consisting of 10-20 members. Each club provides a supportive environment for improvements in speaking style and structure.

I felt Toastmasters International had so much to offer that I couldn't lose anything by joining. About 3-6 months after joining Toastmasters I did start to see an improvement in my comfort level during public presentations. Now three years into the educational program I can honestly say I have improved by leaps and bounds from where I was during my horrible first public speech. My comfort level during meetings, interviews and general public speaking is orders of magnitude higher than it was before joining. In addition, my leadership skills have improved greatly, this translates into knowing how to work effectively in groups and keeping people focused on desired objectives.

### GET THE EDGE

Top corporate executives agree that good speaking skills are vital to the promotability of employees:



A Toastmasters Club can give you the edge over others.

### GET THE TOASTMASTERS EDGE

#### Contact:

Joe Landry  
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# Check Out The SPOT

Our Graduate Student Lounge and the Place where Culture, Art of all Forms and a Wide Variety of Music Happen

The Spot will be open every Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The first Word Machine (poetry readings and literature) will be held on Thursday, September 20th. Cabaret will also be a regular event at The Spot, though no dates are set yet. Stony Brook can expect to see some of their favorite bands again this year such as Pumice, SuperHyperMost, South Shore Movement, A440, TheNow, Reckoning and Vermin Furley. Many more bands will hit the campus this year—this is just a taste.

The Spot- Vermin Furley September 14, 2001

South Shore Movement @ The Spot September 15, 2001

Grimshaw Reading & Word Machine @ The Spot September 20, 2001

The Spot- Toka September 21, 2001

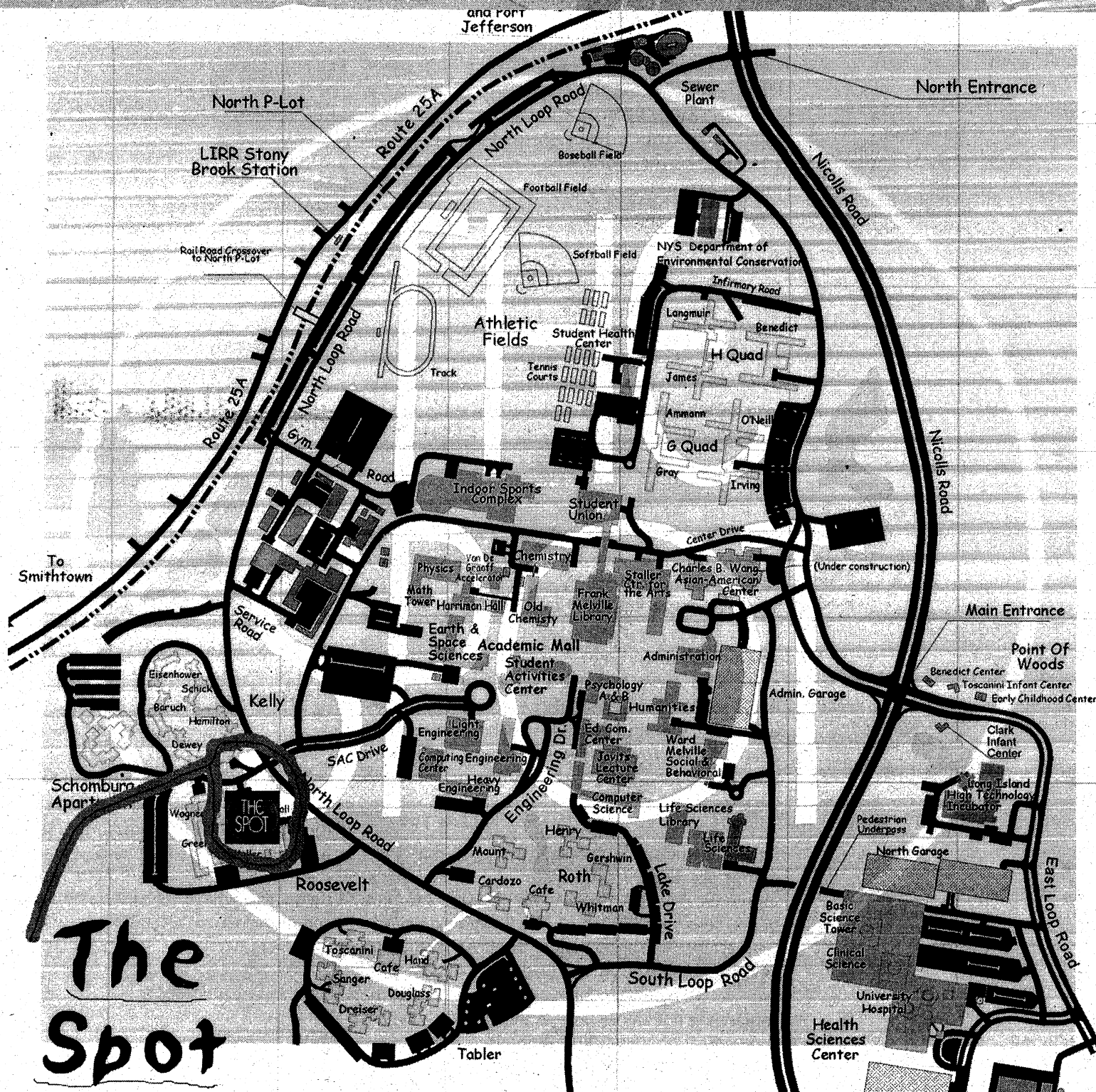
The Spot- Pumice - Grad Student Welcome Party September 22, 2001

The Spot- Reckoning September 28, 2001

The Spot- A440 September 29, 2001

The Spot- TheFreezer Showcase October 3, 2001

The Spot- TheNOW October 6, 2001





# DISTRACTIONS

*Only A Number* by Sue Denim

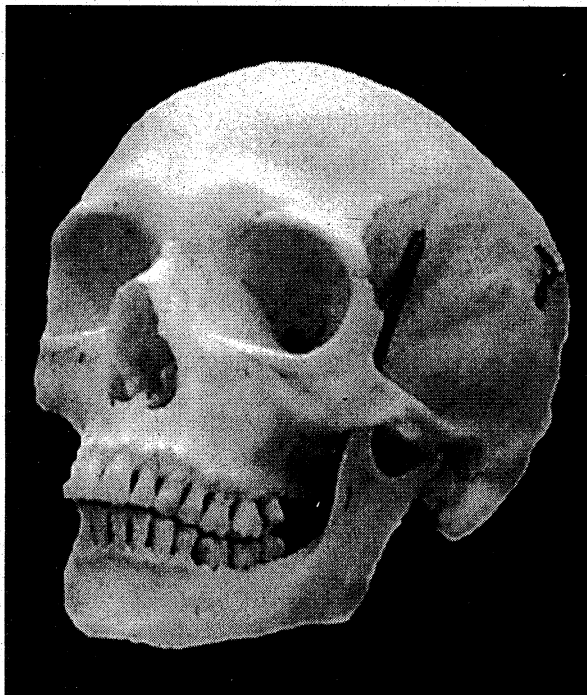
I'm getting older. "Aging" happens to the best of us, but I'm approaching another of those inconvenient milestones of our existence. My birthday is only days away, so yet again I must prepare myself to readjust my identity. Long painful looks in the mirror search for new indicators of my mortality, and time spent rehearsing the answer to the "If you don't mind me asking, how old ARE you?" question. "I'm ..... no, wait ..... I just turned ....." Inevitable. Painful. But should this really even bother me?

My friends, disguising their own inability to enjoy birthdays, reassure me that age is merely a state of mind. "It's only a number!" they cry. "Who cares?!" Well, quite frankly, **I DO!!** I think I just need a good cry, some time to reflect on the passing years, and see if I can remember a time when I wasn't a graduate student at Stony Brook. Birthdays overwhelm me with those grand philosophical thoughts about my own place in the world. Why am I here and where am I going to? How much of my life is left?

I've been thinking too much about death lately. Ok., right about now I should interject a joke to reassure you that I am actually a wondrously optimistic individual, that life is just swell, and all this ruminating is merely me reveling in my own "birthday-itis". My present mood would be best improved by a course of sex, drugs, and / or rock 'n' roll, but since I am soon to be too old to enjoy them, a seriously long period of sleep will do! Where was I? Ah yes ..... death!

When I'm not watching "Reality T.V.", as you will recall from the last issue, I am staring wide-eyed at what constitutes "News" on CNN, Fox, or other commercial outlets for dull, over-produced and under-informed "reporting" of current affairs. But as the summer vacation drew to a close the channels were filled with news that NFL football player, Korey Stringer, had died from heatstroke in training camp. Then came the shocking news that the singer, Aaliyah, had been killed in a plane crash in the Bahamas. She was only 22 years old. The last days of August rekindled the shock felt globally four years ago when Princess Diana died in a Parisian car wreck. "Much too young." All were rich and famous, and reaffirm my own sense that if age is "only a number", too often it becomes a final marker of much greater significance. Rather than indicate how much life we've lived, or what we are "qualified" to do, age stands for all the things not yet done.

So I should be grateful that my "number" keeps rising! We don't have control over when we ride off into the sunset, kick the bucket, bite the bullet, or start pushing up daffodils, so why not enjoy it while we're here?! After all, I am still years away from a legitimate mid-life crisis, and there are plenty of people who are worse off than me! Yes, that's the spirit! Positive thinking!! You're not old, Sue, you're experienced and full of wisdom! Ok, I keep thinking that most of the freshmen under-



graduates look like they belong in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, but I shouldn't be bitter that they were born when Reagan was President. That was Danny Almonte's problem! If he'd only been born when Daddy Bush was in the White House, the world of Little League baseball wouldn't be in such turmoil! There was a news story that was worth watching! As the country drooled over the amazing left arm of this young pitching prodigy, were dollar signs obscuring the vision of all those watching?? Couldn't the other 12 year olds in the locker room tell Danny looked a little older than them? Weren't they just a little concerned that he had to shave before games, and was dating their mothers? Here's a case where a 14 year old was "too old", and really his age may have been "only a number" but clearly warranted a national emergency. Not! Speaking of news stories that are getting old, and one that is ripe for my discussion, is anyone else sick of Congressman Gary Condit's face? As has been pointed out by more esteemed commentators than myself, this would not have been a media event if it was just about a missing woman called Chandra Levy. The alleged affair between Condit and Levy, combined with rumor and speculation that he was to blame for her disappearance, is much more about the old staples of sex, infidelity, and age difference than anything else. "Old man and young woman. Naughty behavior. Washington politics. Crimes and misdemeanors." Oh, this plot is too good! It's going to need 24 hours a-day news coverage for month after month!! Haven't we heard this story before? Déjà vu, anyone?

I think cynicism is one tangible sign that I am aging! At least I can enjoy those whimsical moments that life throws out. Danny Almonte being "too old" for the Little League and "too young" for the Big Leagues; the Bush daughters being too young to drink Daddy under the table (yet ..... allegedly); Gary Condit "too old" to be romancing a woman "too young" to know better. But then I stop to think about those who were "too young" to have their lives cut short, and despite all the insecurities many of us have about

getting older, age is the number that tells us we're alive. Abraham Lincoln once wrote, "And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Make the most of them, and I'm going to go and have myself a "Happy Birthday".

## *A Welcome (of sorts) for Incoming Students*

Dear incoming students,

You probably think how Stony Brook is not a fun place to be in but do not worry. The University will make sure you are homeless, hungry, and overworked just so you have no time to be bored. Remember, some of the greatest minds of the world lived in conditions similar to this. Just think of Marie Curie, Beethoven, Picasso,...

Let not present confusion worry you either. If you feel sane now you won't in a month. However, don't feel disturbed, in a year you will feel normal again. Since all the people around you will be in the same condition you will collectively believe that is a healthy condition, but perception is what counts not reality, right?

If you need to weep to somebody talk to our Great Darling. He will tell you he feels your pain and believes on humanitarian level you should be helped, nevertheless since you willingly came here and signed contracts and nobody forced you into this he will also believe you are the one responsible and will do nothing to alleviate your pain.

For those of you dear fellow students who still don't have housing: Stop and Shop has free cardboard boxes to give away around 11pm every day. You can schedule a pick up by calling S&S whose number you can find in the GSO Survival Guide (under housing). Beware, though, there may be a shortage of the boxes early in the semester due to unpredictable circumstances that unpredictably happen every year.

You can also come and talk to GSO. They might be able to help you, or at least weep with you out of purely selfish non-humanitarian reasons (they have the same problems). I won't tell you who they are though, nor will I tell you where to find them. You will find out who and where they are sometime when you find out that RAP is not a type of music.

That's all dear friends,

Your Comrade,

Yarusha.