

# REPORTER



04 | 17 | 09 | [reportermag.com](http://reportermag.com)

YOUNG  
PARENTS  
IN COLLEGE  
JUGGLING FAMILY  
AND EDUCATION

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ABSTINENCE  
WHY SOME CHOOSE  
TO REFRAIN

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UNION  
CONTROVERSY  
RIT WORKERS  
ARGUE OVER  
UNIONIZATION



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The College of Saint Rose



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# EDITOR'S NOTE

By the time you read this, it'll all be over. Every year, for two weeks in spring, Student Government (SG) holds their elections. For the most part, it's an under-publicized, under-attended affair. The votes will have been tallied and we'll know which candidates will be representing the student body next year.


Last year, approximately 3,400 votes were cast in the presidential race, a little more than 20 percent of the voting population. Now, I'm not sure what the numbers will look like this year, but I can't imagine that they will have changed very much. The problem is not just low voting numbers. There seems to be a general lack of interest in Student Government.

Three of the seven senate seats were uncontested this year. I have nothing against the people who ran for those seats, but being unopposed doesn't lend itself to the democratic credibility. These three senate seats, representing the College of Applied Science and Technology, the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences, and Women, collectively represent a sizable portion of the student body. It just seems wrong.

Part of the problem is what sort of information is available to the voting public. The only voices commenting on this year's election were those of the candidates. *Reporter* was strangely silent. We dropped the ball. I might take flak from *University News* for saying this, but we're the only media outlet on campus. Our job is to report on government. It's not that we don't want to cover the elections. We do. It's that between the current guidelines and our publishing schedule, we can't. At least not in print. We do our best to cover the election online, but it's not enough.

This year, *Reporter* helped moderate the SG debates. The audience consisted of about 30 people in a conference room. Of this small group, a good number of them were current members of SG. We had an opportunity to ask questions submitted by our readership and were able to bring a few outside voices into the conversation. However, it was a last minute idea and we didn't have the publicity we wanted. During a break, somebody pulled me aside and said, "I think *Reporter* moderating the debates was a really good idea, we got a lot of turn out this year." I looked around the room and frowned.

This is what I'm worried about: A generally uninformed public filling out a form on a website, making decisions based on fliers and Facebook groups. That's unacceptable and in large part, it's institutional. I understand that people don't care about what SG does and that very few people read the SG update. You should care and you should read, because on occasion these people do things that matter.



Andy Rees

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

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Above photograph by Eric Drummond.

Lynne Stocum cleaning in Sol Heumann.

Cover photograph by Jeffrey Porter.

Third year Danielle Gatti plays with her five-year-old son, Daemon at their home in Greece last week.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## NOTE

Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are solely those of the author. Reporter reserves the right to edit submissions on the basis of content, length, grammar, spelling, and style. Letters are not guaranteed publication. Submissions may be printed and reprinted in any medium. Reporter will not run responses to letters that are responding to a letter.

## DEAR REPORTER,

Administration and the student body have complained for some time that RIT has no school spirit. It has been debated about why this is. Is it because of the quarter system? Are students lackluster due to the weather? Maybe if we had a football team, then would RIT have school spirit? A college has an atmosphere, a feel to it, and when walking the quarter mile, you can almost feel the estrangement and tension. The weather, the nature of the majors and the quarter system may all play a role in how the campus feels; however, it may be as simple as how the students feel about themselves and the college they attend.

Annually, the RIT publication *Reporter* puts out a special edition of the weekly magazine in honor of April Fools Day. The issue is cleverly named the *Distorter* and it is filled with faux articles that are meant to be jokes. This year, the *Distorter* was released and then abruptly pulled from the stands. The administration made no effort to explain their choice to pull the issue but many speculations were made. Some assumed the magazine was pulled because of its crass humor, others guessed it was simply bad timing, since the issues was released the same day as an Open House. A few days later *Reporter* released its own statement informing the campus that the issue would not be re-released to stands but could be obtained in their office, in the basement of the SAU.

The issue included many articles. Some titles included: “4th Floor Prostitution Ring Run By Librarians Exposed,” “12 Ways to Please Your Professor,” and “Hot Looks for Widows.” Have you picked up on the pattern yet? These are just the articles and images that were deprecating of women. The *Distorter* also made sure to make their bigotry known towards the Jewish community and transgender individuals.

By far the most offensive article was the “Expanding Options for Young Women.” According to the Women’s Center website, their mission is “to foster an educational environment in which women can be personally, academically and professionally successful.” The article jests that in addition to offering condoms at the Women’s Center, they will also offer free wire hangers. It was not until the late 1960s that abortion was legalized in Mississippi in cases of rape. Abortion was not legalized for all of the U.S. until the Supreme Court handed down *Roe v. Wade*. This was in 1973. Until 1973, wire hangers were the common self-induced method of abortion and often caused illness, infertility

## TO SEND LETTERS

Email [reporter@rit.edu](mailto:reporter@rit.edu).

Reporter will not print anonymous letters.

# UNION CONTROVERSY BRINGS BOTH SIDES TO THE SAME TABLE

by Michael Conti | photographs by Eric Drummond



“Will I have a job?”  
“Where’s all this magical money going to come from?”  
“I think it’s crap that you guys don’t make a living wage!”  
“We don’t want no union!”

Words were heavy on Monday, April 6, as a panel of RIT administrators, a local Service Employees International Union (SEIU) organizer and other interested parties participated in an open forum concerning recent union activities on campus. Ingle Auditorium was packed, crowded with questioning and lively voices from RIT employees in dining services, facilities and maintenance and custodial services. Student managers and seasoned veterans were present, representing a strong interest in an issue that has become the talk of the workplace on campus. “The stakes are very high,” remarked Patty Spinelli, vice president of Human Resources.

But things weren’t always this tense. It began on a crisp Friday morning, March 27. An empowered band of students took to the pavement outside of Gracie’s, raising their voices and their signs in support of bringing labor unions

to RIT. The United Student Labor Alliance (USLA), formed in mid-March, is a student group not affiliated with RIT who “supports the workers in their unionization effort and demands that RIT recognizes a potential union and halts its illegal interference.” The demonstration was peaceful and generated a significant amount of discussion over the next few weeks.

RJ Bean, who has a BS in Computer Science and is a current graduate student, is an active participant in the USLA and the International Socialist Organization. He outlined his intent, “If the workers feel that a union is what’s best for them but can’t discuss because of fear for being terminated, then we would like to be the voice of the worker.” The notion of the worker is an ever-present yet somewhat abstract entity at RIT, in the sense that not one person can truly purport to speak for all that work done tirelessly on behalf of the school. The people who labor for RIT are from a variety of educational, economic and ethnic backgrounds, each coming in with their own expectations of what constitutes a proper workplace environment.

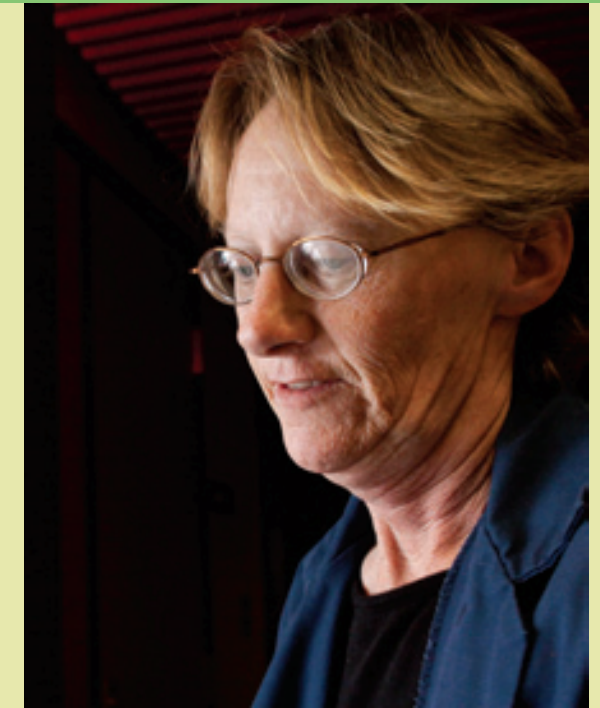
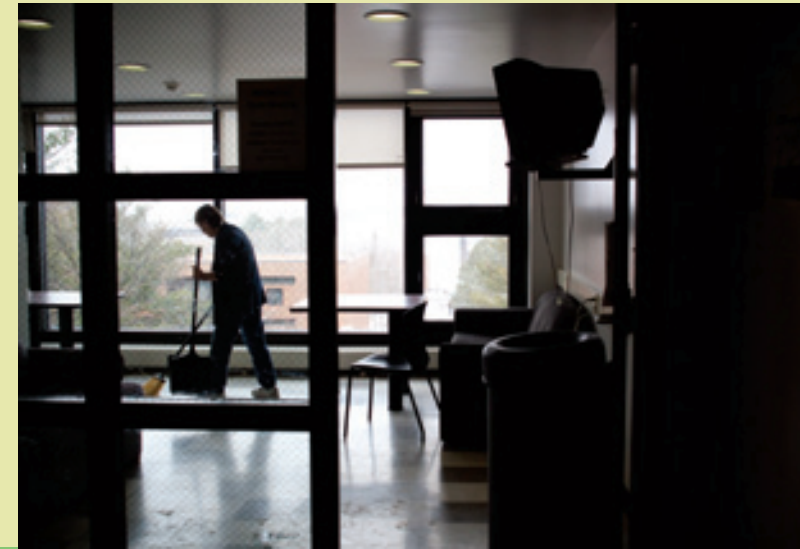
With rumors flying on both sides and USLA members



Pages 7 and 8: Students and workers gather outside of Gracie's to demonstrate Unionization.



Lynne Stocum cleaning in Sol Heumann



requesting action at a Student Government (SG) meeting, Ed Wolf, SG president, decided to bring everyone to the same table. Panelists during the forum included Spinelli, Bean and Calvin Ott, an organizer for SEIU local 200United, which represents service workers of Upstate New York. During the panel discussion, students and RIT employees were invited to come down and share their opinions and ask questions of the representatives. Lasting two hours, the talks were often emotional and pointed.

"We're like a family here," commented Lynn Stocum, a custodian working in Sol Heumann hall, "RIT has stood behind me in the worst of times." The sentiment was reiterated on both sides that the relationship between employees and administration was healthy. With that family spirit in mind, the first employees that spoke seemed to view the presence of labor unions as an unnecessary intrusion into their work life. "Why were people being harassed?" questioned Stocum.

Reported incidents of harassment on the part of union officials elevated the tension on campus. Pro-union representatives stated that they were trying to help people make informed decisions, but many expressed that they felt hounded by frequent encroachments on their privacy. Surely there was a reason for the persistence of those who were involved with pro-union activities. In fact, there exists an amount of disgruntlement among RIT staff members, who feel that their relationship with management and administration has not been as warm as it has been reported to be. While those who represented the union spoke of increases in wages and benefits, much of what dissatisfied workers had to say were related more to the improvement of communication in the workplace. "Management as a whole needs to change the way they

relate to custodians," said custodian Tasha McKenzie. Charles Phillips, a deaf custodian, spoke of struggling to understand meetings when no interpreter was provided for him. He also commented, "I did not feel comfortable when the HR [Human Resources] mandated that those working night 'C' shift had to either move to 'A' shift or find another job." Since talks of unions began, a new program has been implemented to take one custodian from each crew and sit down with management to talk about issues in the workplace. Spinelli was eager to confront the issue: "Those are things every employer needs to work on ... the issues of respect and communication."

On Thursday, April 9, only non-management employees were invited to a meeting with RIT human resources to open a dialogue. Issues that were raised included the possibility of layoffs, what RIT could guarantee, and more avenues of raising grievances against management. While there is a certain amount of agreement concerning some workers' dissatisfaction, a major point of divide was the issue of wages and benefits. A spokesman for the disgruntled workers was Garret Davis, a custodian, "Sometimes when you don't have what you want, you join together in order to get more."

This is also an important issue for many interested students who have rallied for the cause of workers trying to unionize. A fact frequently quoted as incentive to give workers better wages is the average salary determined to be the national poverty line. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the 2009 poverty line is set at a wage of \$22,050 a year for a family of four. The starting salary of a custodian at RIT is approximately \$10 an hour, which roughly adds up to \$20,800 a year. This is perceived to be the problem by union supporters and is expected to be the target of improvement through collective bargaining.

Not all are convinced that these wages are inhumanly low. Furthermore, many more see RIT as a place of opportunity where they have been able to acquire more skills and increase their own wage. Bill Drum, an employee of RIT for 27 years and current senior electrician, lent his perspective to the issue of wages and career development. "When I started working in the Greek tunnels ... when alcohol was legal on campus, I don't have to tell you what I found down there. Then I moved to maintenance ... got some training in electrical, took some night courses [through RIT's career services], then took the four year course, then took my masters test

and passed it and now I'm a licensed masters electrician, all due to RIT." Paula Guadeloupe, a senior custodian, was able to take English courses on RIT's dime. Ten year RIT electrician Ryan Crittenden elaborated, "Any trade-specific type [courses], RIT is willing to pay for if it means doing our job better."

While RIT pays "competitive" wages, the reality is that the wages and benefits offered for entry level positions do fall fairly well within national averages. While this may not be the kind of living wage requested by the members of the USLA and the pro-union reps, it is a policy that was defended intensely by the workers themselves. A rarely reported benefit of working at RIT is the tuition waiver policy, which allows RIT employees to enroll themselves, their spouses and their children in RIT at discounted rates or for free, dependent upon the amount of years of service they have put in. There also exists a tuition exchange program that allows workers to take classes at MCC or other universities for free. These systems have allowed workers to put their entire families through school, amounting to millions of dollars of education put towards the interests of the employees. Some tuition waivers are tax free, further benefitting the employee. Of note is the fact that the rates for tuition waivers were changed so that workers hired on or after January 1, 2006 have to work a full five years before seeing any kind of benefit, while workers hired before then may be benefitting from other rates.

A sentiment that was often expressed was that the SEIU is another expensive level of interference that isn't interested in the workers' specific needs. John Hrmoi, a senior custodian and staff council member, commented, "I was with the UAW [United Auto Workers], and they did absolutely nothing. I don't think we need a union at RIT." Crittenden went on to say, "You know, it's times like this, when people are getting laid off, when you do realize you have a strong leadership team. We're [RIT] not in a crisis ... we're going to weather this just fine, we're going to have to tighten our belts a little ... but I'm happy to forgo a raise so we can keep our jobs."

A revealing moment came towards the end of the panel discussion on Monday, when Bean was asked why "they [the USLA and ISO] were so passionate about the cause of the workers." Bean responded by citing the current economy and the contemplation of their own careers as reasons for their empathy. Bean would later say, "When RIT needs to tighten its belt, it's going to need to fire workers ... if RIT is such a great place to work, let's keep it that way." From their perspective,

the potential advantages of collective bargaining are considered necessary in uncertain times. At the conclusion of the first panel discussion, it appeared that those opposed to the SEIU coming to RIT were the most numerous, if not the most vocal. The answers provided by Ott were speculative, as he was at the disadvantage of representing the possible yet unknown outcome of unionization.

Questions remain about the status of student employees under unionization, but all rumors are unconfirmed. However, the talk of collective bargaining, legal contracts and employee rights have indirectly shed light on many inner-management grievances that might have not otherwise received attention. The talks that were held on the sixth and ninth of April were as much education for employees about how to report grievances as they were information about unionizing at RIT.

The debate is not over. The local SEIU continues to get union cards signed, while those who do not think a union is necessary continue to be more vocal than ever. The talks continue, from the lips of President Destler to the open mouths of socialists outside the Wallace Library. In the middle of the talk is the worker, whose voice may come to collectively speak in the form of democratic process. •

On Friday, April 10, SG voted unanimously to approve Resolution 0809-1, in which SG censured the formation of a union, citing that unionization was not necessarily in the best interest of students (see SG Update, pg 11).





## SG UPDATE

by Alecia Crawford

### STUDENT UNIONIZATION EFFORTS CENSURED ON CAMPUS

Student Government (SG) voted unanimously to approve Resolution 0809-1, in which SG censured the formation of a union, citing that unionization was not necessarily in the best interest of the students. This decision was based on “no guaranteed benefits as a result of unionizing for students, specifically student employees” and “no ability to forecast the effects unionization will have on student tuition and how it will affect the shared governance system of the institute.”

### ORGANIZATIONS PRESENT EVENTS

Two representatives from Alpha Sigma Alpha came before SG to talk about their fundraiser with Phi Kappa Psi for the Imagine RIT festival on May 2. “So You Think You Can Act?” is a talent show and will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. It will be a fundraiser for the Fisher House Foundation, which relocates families of injured serving military persons.

The Caribbean Student Association (CSA) President and Vice President came before the Senate as well to promote their upcoming events for CSA Week, during week seven. Their main event is the carnival on Saturday, April 25, when all clubs and major student organizations will parade their school pride on the quarter mile.

### ROLLOVER DEBIT SUGGESTIONS

Phillip Amsler, RHA Representative wanted to get a general consensus on how or if leftover food debit should be carried over. One of the problems is that food debit, according to New York state law, must be spent each year, meaning that it has a shelf life of one academic year. Another problem is that many students have large amounts of debit left over at the end of each quarter. With rollover debit, that large amount (for instance, \$400) rolls over to the next quarter and again the next quarter. That student could end up with \$1,200, defeating the purpose of it rolling over in the first place.

Amsler proposed that a small amount, like \$100, of unused food debit be rolled over to the next quarter. Kiersten Shinrock, Director of organizational recognition and Adam Richlin, CIAS Senator both suggested that a percentage of the leftover debit be passed on rather than at a set amount. Before a decision to approve or deny can be passed, exact numbers of the amount of students with leftover debit and the amounts would need to be presented.

### CONSTRUCTION CAUSES PROBLEMS FOR GREEK HOUSES

The Greek Council representative voiced the concern and dissatisfaction of his constituents who are directly affected by the Global Village construction. Residents weren't notified in a timely manner about the construction that would happen around them. As a result, one of the fraternities' memorial tree for one of their deceased brothers was dug up and almost thrown away. Greek Circle, where most of the Greek events happen, is blocked, walking paths from the houses to campus varies from day to day and the list goes on. After the rep voiced his concern, more members of the Senate voiced their opinion about their dissatisfaction with the construction. As a solution, Dr. Heath Boice-Pardee, SG Advisor will arrange a meeting with those responsible for the problem. •

## RIT FORECAST

compiled by Alecia Crawford

### 18 SATURDAY

#### PEP BAND PRESENTS COMEDIAN KELLEY DOANE

SDC Rooms 1300 and 1310. 7 – 9 p.m. The RIT pep band, our musical entertainment at hockey games, tickles your funny bone with Comedy Troupe and Kelley Doane. Cost: \$3.

### 19 SUNDAY

#### RES LIFE'S BAKER & GLEASON KICKBALL AND BBQ

Behind Residence Halls. 3 – 5 p.m. Don't be the last one picked, or the last one to get to the food table for this event! Cost: Free.

### 20 MONDAY

#### HUMANS VS. ZOMBIES

Entire Campus. Until the end of April 23. To the participants: Good luck and keep those Nerf guns stocked at all times. To everyone else: BEWARE AND TAKE COVER!!!

### 21 TUESDAY

#### FREE CONE DAY

Any Ben & Jerry's. All Day. Forget Christmas, this is the day everyone has been waiting for: A free cold and sweet treat. Cost: Free.

### 22 WEDNESDAY

#### BREEZEWAY BATTLE OF THE BANDS

Clark Gym Breezeway. 9:30 p.m. This interesting fundraiser is raising money for Hole in the Wall Gang Camps, a camp for children with terminal and serious illnesses. May the best band win. Cost: Students: \$3, Others: \$5.

### 23 THURSDAY

#### RITMO SEIS

RITz. 9:30 – 10:30 p.m. Bailando and hips swaying from live salsa music will fill the RITz for one night. Cost: Students: \$3, Others: \$5.

#### BATTLE OF THE SEXES

Café Underground Railroad. 480 W. Main St. 6 – 9 p.m. Can't live with them and can't live without them, so why not test each other with facts about the opposite sex? Cost: Free.

### 24 FRIDAY

#### THE SOLOIST

Any Theater. Check for movie times. Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey, Jr. star in this film based on Nathaniel Anthony Ayers, a real life musical prodigy who became homeless after dropping out of Julliard. Cost: Varies.



The RIT College of Liberal Arts and the RIT Players Present

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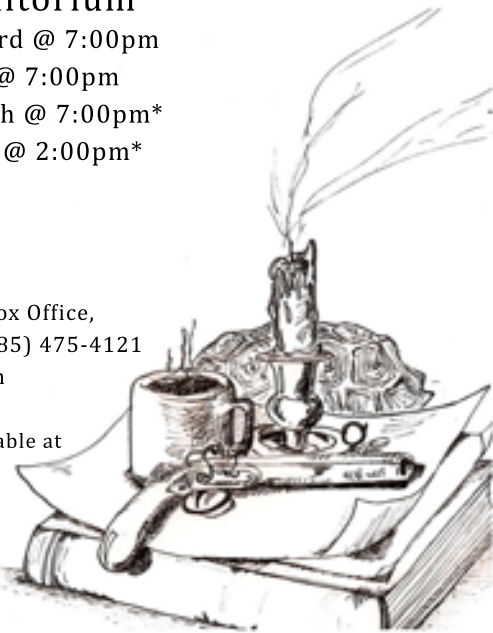
by Tom Stoppard

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Friday, April 24th @ 7:00pm  
Saturday, April 25th @ 7:00pm\*  
Sunday, April 26th @ 2:00pm\*  
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# REVIEWS



Album  
**BENJY DAVIS PROJECT**  
DUST  
by Jim Cottage

## RATING / SKIP IT

Speaking of things that aren't spectacular, Benjy Davis Project seems to want to be the Nickelback of country music. If you don't like either of those things, then stay clear of this band. In their defense, they are good at what they do; their instrumentals are seemingly flawless and the vocalist isn't horrible at singing with

his creamy voice that's sure to target a primarily female crowd. Those same females who find themselves liking the Plain White T's might also like Benjy Davis Project. Both bands have a tendency to use an upbeat melody to accompany songs with a longing, sentimental quality.

The songs, especially the choruses, have the same bouncy and twang-y rhythm that most people recognize from listening to country music, even just by accident. However well crafted, the tracks are incredibly mediocre, which is a quality many attribute to Nickelback.

Not to bash country music, it does have its place. However, country's definitely a niche

market. Understanding that "mainstream" generally means "watered down," Benjy Davis Project might have a role to play in serving as a segue for many people into an appreciation of the genre. It may also force the genre's market to expand into the "pop culture" world. If that seems like a good idea to you, buy this album and help with the cause. •



Console  
**NINTENDO DSi**  
PORTABLE GAMING DEVICE: \$170  
by Chukwuma Morah

## RATING / SKIP IT (for now)

What do you do when the iPhone threatens your handheld gaming empire? Well, if you're Nintendo, you make a new version of the popular DS handheld with features to combat the "Jesus Phone." Ladies and gentlemen, say hello to the Nintendo DSi. So what makes the DSi different from the old DS Lite? It has bigger and brighter screens, low-

res internal and external cameras, SD card support for pictures and music files, a more accessible operating system and access to a wireless store for digitally delivered video games (*Wario Ware: Snapped* is an absolute must-play, by the way).

A bit wider than the DS Lite, long fingers and large hands will come to appreciate it since they don't feel cramped while playing. Although you won't notice at first, you'll come to value the larger dual-screen real estate while playing games like *Elite Beat Agents* (my personal favorite). All of this doesn't mean the DSi is a must-buy, though.

My real problem with the DSi isn't with the gadget itself but with the lack of software support Nintendo has provided for this

new portable device. There are no original DSi-only retail games that harness the gadget's unique features that accompanied the handheld at launch. For now, I'm stuck playing the same selection of titles that were available on the DS Lite. So then, what do I need the two new cameras and higher price point for? Fortunately, this was the same case when the original DS was released in 2004, so expect the handheld's truly defining titles to appear a year from now.

Should you buy it? No. Not right now at least. Your cheaper DS Lite will do just fine for now. Save your money for the time when titles that make good use of the DSi's capabilities start rolling in next year. Go buy food instead. Food's good for you. •

# 04.17.09 AT YOUR LEISURE

by John Howard

## REPORTER RECOMMENDS

The Victorinox SwissMemory 1 GB. This is about as RIT as a Swiss Army knife can get. A 2¼ inch keychain accessory consisting of such features as a knife blade, a nail file with screwdriver, scissors, and a thumb drive! Upgrade to the Translucent Ruby model (just \$49 on Amazon) for an additional LED mini light component. With both versions, the drive itself flips in and out as if it were any traditional Swiss knife attachment. You can argue privacy protection settings all you want but, at the end of the day, there's really no better way of protecting your personal files than strapping a blade to them.

## STREAM OF FACTS

Kale, a green cabbage, is also known as Borecole and *Brassica oleracea*. This species includes such variations as broccoli, cauliflower and **BRUSSELS** sprouts.

**BRUSSELS** is the capital city of Belgium, as well as the country's largest urban area. The city is also home to the European **UNION** and NATO headquarters.

Completed in 1908, **UNION** Station's construction in Washington D.C. cost \$125 million. Eisenhower was the last of 17 presidents to use the station's presidential **SUITE**.

The penthouse **SUITE** in the Las Vegas Hilton was home to Elvis Presley for seven years after his return to live performance in **1969**.

In **1969**, nearly a half million people attended the first Woodstock festival. Rod Stewart generated seven times that number at Copacabana **BEACH** in 1994.

The **BEACH** area at Fig Tree Bay in Protaras, Cyprus was covered last June with over 20,000 square feet of cotton as the world's largest beach **TOWEL** was constructed.

**TOWEL** day has been celebrated on May 25 since 2001. On this day, fans of Douglas Adams carry towels in reference to the author's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the GALAXY*.

**GALAXY** chocolate of the Middle East and United Kingdom is the same as Dove chocolate, which is sold in the U.S. Galaxy's name plays off the astronomical theme of the brand's manufacturer, Mars.

## QUOTE by Daffy Duck

"RIDICULE IS THE BURDEN OF GENIUS."

## OVERSEEN AND OVERHEARD

"I don't need to get laid. RIT fucks me every day."  
Male student to friend in SAU

"I've come to the conclusion that splatter painting is good."  
Woman to colleague over lunch

"They were legit handicaps"  
Girl to group of friends near Crossroads

## CARTOON by Kory Merritt



## SUDOKU Difficulty Rating / Hard

7							5	
6		4	3				1	
							6	
						8		
		1	6					
3			8	5		7	4	1
	3	6		9				
		2		8			9	
			2	7		4		





# young parents

in college

College is the time when many students begin to grow up. We learn to be critical, ask questions, make deadlines, and take care of ourselves. We learn to party. We learn about friendships. Some of us learn about love. At first glance, many of us seem to be seeking similar goals: Beaming at that camera, degree in hand.



On graduation day, each of these smiles will mean something different. Some will reflect how proud someone has made their families, while some will smile with the thought that work is over. This May, Elissa Nyerges, a sixth year Profession and Technical Communications major, will smile because she is one step closer to giving her two young sons the life she dreams they'll have.

She sits alone in Java Wally's, hunched over her computer wondering why she can't log on to her email. As she peers over the screen, her young 24 year-old face reveals a frustrated look. The back of one hand is covered with written reminders scribbled in different colored inks. "I call it my palm pilot," jokes Nyerges.

"All of my friends voted me least likely to get married and have kids ... unanimously," said Nyerges. "I actually never wanted to have kids. The old me didn't like kids and never wanted to get married." At 18, her life changed when she found out she was pregnant. After her son, Ian (named after his father) was born, the two parents decided to marry. As if becoming a student parent wasn't hard enough with one baby, nine months after getting married, Nyerges found out she was pregnant again, this time with her second son, Daniel. "I would never consider not having my kids though," declares Nyerges.

As an involved RIT student, Nyerges maintains her position as President of the Xi Upsilon chapter of the National Communication Association Honor Society (Lambda Pi Eta). This quarter, she has committed to 20 credits — more than a full course load. She is keeping up her status as an active sister of the Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity.

Somewhere between this schedule, plus a weekly Yoga class, Nyerges manages to find time to be a mother. "A typical day is like me running around, not eating very much or sitting down very much unless I'm in class," says Nyerges. Ian, four, and Daniel, who just turned two in March, are "very well behaved." Nyerges explains that she is strict with her boys because she needs to be.

Nyerges's biggest struggle in college is attitude. Society sees college students as people who are broke and up late doing homework. "I'm a college student who's broke with two kids." While reflecting on her own attitude, she explains that "you still need to get up and not let the drama, the work, and being tired affect how you treat your kids."



One morning, after giving Ian a bowl of cereal, he decided that he wanted something else. "Sometimes I say, 'Why can't you just eat what I put in front of you?'" says Nyerges, looking guilty. "But then he feels sad, and I feel bad that he's upset because he's only a four year-old and four year-olds do change their mind." Nyerges explains that she frequently reminds herself that "they have nothing to do with the fact that you decided to have kids when you were eighteen. It's not their problem, so you can't make it their problem."

"I'm married although separated right now," explains Nyerges of her ailing relationship. "For the longest time it was 'let's do what's best for the kids and stick together' because that's what I was taught. So, that's what I did." Coming from a large religious family, Nyerges explains that only two people in her whole family have divorced. Her family, especially her grandparents, looks at divorce as something very sad and it's something that is not often talked about.

"This was the last option for me," she says. "But what we both wanted from [each other], was something that the other one wasn't fit to give." Nyerges explains that, even though her mother-in-law makes a wonderful grandmother and Ian makes a great dad, the couple never fit personally. They plan to stay close friends and be that couple who isn't together but can attend family get-togethers with each other. Right now, they share custody; she has them one week and Ian has them the next. Although the separation was

her idea, she is still having a difficult time dealing with a roller coaster of emotions. Still, she looks to her future with optimism.

Nyerges brings her children to Margaret's House, the on-campus day care center. "I tried a couple of other day cares first and had horrible experiences," explains Nyerges. "This is the first place where I've dropped my kids off and go to class and, as bad as it sounds, I don't think about them." Nyerges feels that Margaret's House is the most secure daycare that she has ever seen. This could be due to the fact that everyone who enters needs a valid RIT ID to swipe before the front door will unlock.

One thing that sets Margaret's House apart is its focus on students. "Because we are part of student affairs, students have top priority," says Margaret's House assistant program director Deborah Bullock. The daycare encourages student parents to spend time at the library after class and do their homework, so that when they come to pick up their kids, time can be spent together. Bullock remarks, "I don't know how student parents do it ... I have kids and I was a student, but putting the two together — I can't imagine."

For the amount of money a parent spends sending a toddler to daycare, they could be sending their baby to an in-state college. "I actually did a call around at the end of the winter asking about prices because we want to stay as competitive as we possibly can," says Bullock. "We're not the highest but we are probably more expensive than some places."

For \$2,640 per quarter, infants or toddlers can be part of the Margaret's House program, while for \$2,568 per quarter, preschoolers can attend too. "It's definitely the most expensive daycare I've sent my kids to even though students get a discount," says Nyerges, who gets \$840 off per quarter from United Way, which gives scholarships and grants based on financial need. Margaret's House also offers a 10 percent discount to families who have one or more children enrolled at a time. Tuition includes a morning snack, hot lunch and an afternoon snack.

So, how does a student parent pay for all of this? Nyerges did grunt work for the *Democrat and Chronicle's* sports section while she and her husband were still living together. She would work from six to midnight, "but it got to be too much and [she] ended up giving up a lot of things." Nyerges stopped going out more than once a month, buying clothes and ordering pizza. She bought a really inexpensive car and started working as a notetaker, which earns her just enough to pay her car payment.

"It helps having family close by. It makes a huge difference if you're a student and have kids," says Nyerges. Danielle Gatti, a fellow Lambda Pi Eta member and third year Advertising and Public Relations major, longs for the convenience of being surrounded by family.

Looking at the time on her phone, Gatti prepares for a presentation for her Campaign Management class, where she is the group leader. The 23 year-old glanced down at her hand. One finger in particular glistens with a diamond ring. She has just gotten engaged to her fiancé, Robert Hainsworth, a Toronto resident.

For Gatti, it was a long road to get to RIT and she doesn't take it for granted. Gatti doesn't have any family here, except her five year-old son, Daemon. She got pregnant in high school while living in Delaware. She was 17. She had moved to Delaware when she was 15 to live with her father but moved back in with her mother in Buffalo to have the baby. Afterwards, she jumped back and forth between living in either her mother's or sister's house. Since then, both her mother and sister have moved out of New York, and Gatti raises Daemon without his biological father.

Right now, Gatti's course load consists of all core requirements. "Right now I'm taking 12 credits so I'm not too overwhelmed, but I take summer classes, so it makes it even." Because Daemon is now in kindergarten and takes the bus to school, she is unable to take classes

before 10 a.m. and after 2 p.m. because she needs to be there for him when he gets home from school. "My neighbor has a daughter in my son's school. So on days when I have class until 4 p.m., my neighbor helps out," explains Gatti.

Before kindergarten, Daemon was in an off-campus daycare, which cost \$200 per week. She didn't enroll him in the Margaret's House kindergarten because she lives in Greece and wanted to stay in that school district. "From what I hear, they have really, really good schools," says Gatti. The Greece district has the Signature school program, where the curriculum puts a greater emphasis in one area. Daemon is enrolled at the Technology and Communication Signature schools. "I find [it] ironic because I'm a communication major at a technology school," jokes Gatti.

Gatti looks forward to moving to Toronto after graduation and settling down with her fiancé. "As far as middle and high school goes, everyone tells me to get the hell out of there [Greece]," explains Gatti, as one of the many reasons why she is leaning toward living in Toronto.

When Gatti lived with her sister, she worked the night shift at a gas station for 60 hours a week. Her schedule was so hectic that she never got to see Daemon for more than a few hours per day. Because she wasn't making that much money while working there, she was on the Women, Infants, Children Nutrition Program, "which isn't really food stamps — but they give you checks for things like formula and juice and cheese because they want you to be healthy and have a healthy kid."

The plan wasn't working out, so she "quit the job and went back to school." She began taking classes at Everest Institute and eventually graduated from there with a 4.0, which is what got her into RIT. "If you're relatively smart and you do good work, it will be a breeze." Gatti explained that she didn't do well in high school and has been making up for it ever since. At RIT, she holds a cumulative 3.8 GPA.

Her social life is not that of an average 23 year-old. "It's not like I'm going to the bars or clubs. I don't have the time or the money." Her family is all over the place. Her mother and sister now live in South Carolina. She has another sister in Australia and her father lives in Delaware.

One thing that Gatti has that most college students don't is a fully-paid college tuition. "So I'm going to start off fresh when I graduate.

(Pages 16-17) Danielle Gatti, plays Candyland with her five year-old son, Daemon, at their home in Greece after spending the entire day on a field trip with his kindergarten class.

(Left) "Playing with him is like a work out," says Gatti about her son.

I won't have any student loans. I would never take that for granted because there are a lot of students with \$80,000 in loans when they graduate from school and they spend the next 10 or 20 years paying it off." Gatti has a trust fund set up for her from her grandparents. On top of that, she had saved up almost \$10,000 from working at the gas station. "I didn't really buy anything except formula," explains Gatti. "I got lucky with the trust fund, though. Really, really lucky." Gatti's trust fund pays for tuition and rent, but doesn't cover food, books or her car.

Gatti's biggest struggle with being a student parent is balance. "It's not so much balancing my workload, but balancing my time. I feel bad when I'm sitting there doing homework and Daemon's like, 'Mom, watch a movie with me' or 'play with me,'" explains Gatti. Her personal goal is to get her Ph.D. in communications, but she doesn't know "how feasible that is with the whole family thing."

She adds, "My fiancé wants to have kids but I want to finish school." Gatti plans to have at least one more child with her fiancé. "I had my child at 17 and I kinda lost my whole life when I had him," says Gatti. Daemon calls Hainsworth, Gatti's fiancé, "dad." He comes to New York to visit almost every weekend.

Both mothers are students, struggling with payments, schoolwork and time. Though the two are very different, they face similar challenges every day. Their situations are not tasks that they are simply trying to get through, but lifestyles that they are learning how to balance and enjoy. Both have high expectations for their sons' futures, as well as their own. It seems that Gatti and Nyerges have learned that life is unpredictable and have learned to embrace its surprises, which many of us won't ever learn how to do. •

by Caitlin Shapiro | photographs by Jeffrey Porter





# abstinence

**SEX.** Three little letters flaunting a ten letter emphasis. TV shows like *Nip/Tuck* and *Californication* romanticize a life of indiscriminate sex. Like little whispers softly nibbling at our ears, our libido-driven society tells us it's okay to take an expression of love and call it *casual sex*. Referencing popular magazines like *Maxim*, *Vogue* and *Esquire*, sex clearly sells. Unfortunately, not all of us are buying.

The ring on his finger or that extra bracelet on her wrist isn't just for decoration. Some are expressions of abstinence. These trinkets serve as little reminders to save one's self for a romantic counterpart comparable to no other. Many people practice abstinence as either a personal conviction or as an expression of their faith. For some, it is a matter of perspective. Imagine the things you do with your significant other. Then, imagine what someone else is doing, at the same time, with your future wife or husband. Would this disturb you? After all, that conversation regarding how many people your current love interest has dated (or slept with) is never something you're going to look forward to.

## • making it count

Sexuality is a powerful and inspirational force. We've all heard of Helen of Troy, the catalyst of one of the most famous wars in history. Similarly, sexuality has led to some of the most moving and creative musings. Consider practically any of Shakespeare's sonnets. "I don't believe that sex is just an act," states Catherine Gudaitis, a second year Theatre Performance major at Nazareth College. She likens sex to a powerful commitment with all the formalities of a promise of a lifetime of love. "I only want one man, and that one man is the person I want to spend the rest of my life with." It seems, for Gudaitis, that to not be abstinent would tarnish the sacred commitment expressed through sex. To her, it is as if having sex trivializes the future commitment she will have with her husband.

"I haven't always been abstinent. I decided to abstain when I was in high school," informs Gudaitis. She continues, "It is not solely for religious reasons, though my choice has been influenced by my faith." Gudaitis continued to discuss how the decision was more instinctual and personal for her. She couldn't let herself become physical with someone unless she really cared for him. "If I didn't have feelings for the person and got physical, it felt like I was lying," she mentions. The decision hasn't always been easy for her and she has lost friends over it.

"My last relationship ended in November. Our first big argument was about sex," she says. Her partner wanted to express their love physically as a testament to his commitment. "Respecting my desire to wait for marriage would have been the greatest testament he could have given to prove that he loved me," states Gudaitis. The relationship ended shortly thereafter. Even though abstinence has led to some arguments and lost friendships, she defends her decision as preparation for the future. Gudaitis concludes, "It's a choice that I've made for me and my future spouse."

## • being safe

Along with the pleasure of having sex, there are some less enjoyable medical concerns. AIDS, herpes and HPV are all common sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Condoms work to an extent, but STDs, especially all three mentioned prior, can be and are sometimes transmitted with contact, not necessarily genital contact. This renders a condom mpotent.

"The big benefit of being abstinent is you don't have to worry about getting any STDs," states Eric Delmedico, a second year Electrical Engineering Technology major. Being abstinent, for Delmedico, is part of his faith. He feels that sex should be the result of a relationship between spouses, not the cause. His religion calls for him to observe abstinence until he is married, which he feels makes the bond of marriage even more sacred. The downside, for him, comes in the form of negative stereotypes associated with his belief.

"Being a virgin is sometimes met with contempt and regarded in a negative light," adds Delmedico. We've all heard the statement that a boy doesn't become a *man* until he has sex. Of course, whether someone is abstinent or not has no bearing on how mature they are and, in some cases, having sex is a clear indication of immaturity. He tries to ignore the negative aspects of virginity and focus on his commitment to the sanctity his faith places on marriage.

Some people use the phrase, *Crazy Christians*, in regards to practices like this. Delmedico disagrees. He believes that the level to which one observes his faith is completely up to a parishioner. Grouping Christians together based on practices of others is as accurate as saying that everyone in Hawaii surfs. Avoiding religious stereotypes has been a difficult aspect of being committed to abstinence for Delmedico.

"I have always been abstinent," says Delmedico. He started this practice as a personal choice and as a product of his religion but continued through personal conviction. "Even if I were, all of a sudden, not religious, I would still be abstinent until marriage," he mentions. He went on to discuss pregnancy. As a student, he isn't ready to provide for a family, let alone a child. "Abstinence is a good way to avoid accidentally becoming a father before I'm ready. I plan on being abstinent until I am out of college and married," imparts Delmedico.

## • social abstinence

Some look to abstinence for inspiration and purity. Consider Rivers Cuomo, a multimillionaire who has sold over seven million albums with his band, Weezer. He stayed true to a two-year commitment to celibacy as part of a meditation in Vipassana, a Buddhist tradition. He hoped to become more at ease with his songwriting, his band mates and the universe in general. Here, we see a performer with a profitable, world-famous band rejecting countless women (and probably men) to gain purity of thought. People practice abstinence for many reasons — religion, personal commitment, and to gain peace. They do it because they believe the future reward will be more valuable than any physical embrace of fleeting pleasure. •

by Michael Barbato  
photograph by Ben Liddle



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**MARLEE MATLIN**  
Academy Award  
Winning Actress  
& Activist

Marlee Matlin received worldwide critical acclaim for her motion picture debut in Paramount Pictures' *Children of a Lesser God*, earning her the Academy Award for Best Actress. At age 21, she became the youngest recipient of the Best Actress Oscar, making her one of only four actresses to receive that honor for a film debut. In addition to the Oscar, Matlin was honored by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association with the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in a Drama.

In 2007, Matlin joined the cast of Showtime's cutting-edge drama *The L Word* starring opposite Jennifer Beals. Marlee has penned her autobiography, *I'll Scream Later*. It's scheduled for publication in April 2009.



Arrangements for the appearance  
of Marlee Matlin made through  
Greater Talent Network, Inc., NY, NY





# BROOMBALL

A Tournament That Sweeps Teams Off the Ice

Upon entering the Frank Ritter Ice Rink on Friday April 3 to watch a broomball tournament, a question immediately arose in my mind: where are the brooms? The idea that a sport so clearly called broomball (as opposed to say a sport called curling) does not include brooms at all baffles me. I was informed that players used regulation broomball sticks: essentially little plastic wedges at the end of shorter-than-broom handles.

In many ways, broomball is like hockey, where hockey sticks have obviously been swapped out for the “regulation” broomball sticks. In place of a puck, there is a ball that looked like it was sized in between a soccer

A RIT broomball player shoots on goal during the Alpha Phi Omega broomball tournament April 3.

ball and a softball. There are five players to each team, plus a goalie, making for a total of twelve on the ice at once. Unlike hockey, players sport sneakers instead of skates. On sneakers, players are unable to move in a straight line as quickly and have a far greater inability to turn. Sliding collisions were common.

Regulation broomball lies closer to hockey than the brand that was played in RIT’s tournament. In hockey, there’s a myriad of possible penalties, ranging from illegal types of contact to passing over too many center lines to icing. Official broomball across the USA and the world contains these types of penalties, but not at this tournament. In the Frank Ritter Ice Rink, there were three or four penalties called the entire tournament, focusing mostly on penalizing overly aggressive contact.

The games were played with two five-minute halves. Rather than overtime or a shootout, in the event of a tie, the winner was determined by possession. Possession does not mean who had the ball in their direct control, rather it was determined by where on the rink the ball was. If a team’s players could keep the ball on their opponent’s side of the ice, they could win the entire tournament without ever scoring a goal.

Although most players I talked to had embraced this oddity as a necessity for victory, it didn’t mean they were very happy about it. The goalie of the Engineering House Alumni team expounded that the previous year their team lost the tournament on possession twice, despite several shut-out games defensively.

The first two games were decided exclusively by possession, as both ended with a score of 0-0. Based upon these first two games, it looked like watching the tournament would be a rather dull affair. Then the team Low Budget Ballas, mostly made up of second year Mechanical Engineering majors, made a statement on the rink to the other teams in the tourna-

ment. In the first round, they played one of the two Computer Science House (CSH) teams and not only won by goals, but pounded the CSH team, 4-0. When asked about their dominance, Trevor Fabian, a second year Mechanical Engineering major guessed, “Beginner’s luck?”

The Low Budget Ballas, along with the Engineering House Alum, continued to play well through the tournament. It was a double-elimination affair, so Engineering House losing one game on possession did not stop them from meeting the Ballas in the championship game. Ballas had not lost a game so if they did lose the “first” championship meeting, there would be another immediately following it.

The lack of refereeing was blatantly apparent during the championship game. One player dominated the game: The Engineering House Alumni goalie. In regulation broomball, goalies count as regular players when not in the crease. In the RIT tournament, there was absolutely no limit on goalie movement. This led to the Engineering House Alum goalie sure-footedly zooming around one third of the ice to catch the ball, making it unplayable for the Ballas. The Ballas’ goalie was not so bold and generally remained within the crease. Not only would this difference have made it nearly impossible to win by position, it also enabled the goalie to clear it away from the offense too easily.

It was very disappointing for such an exciting tournament to watch end in such boredom. Sure, it was impressive that the Engineering House Alum goalie was so active and dominated so surely, but in the same way that it would be exciting to see someone ride a bike through a track meet. Engineering House dominated both the championship and championship rematch, winning them the trophy.

I had never seen broomball before and this was a fun first experience. That being said, RIT and the Frank Ritter Ice Rink could help make it so much more. This event was held from 10 p.m. to approximately 3 a.m. on a Friday night, but did not appear widely publicized. This was just not enough forewarning and too awkward a time to gather a big crowd. If this was advertised further in advance, possibly as a two-day affair like it used to be and held at a more reasonable time for the general public, this event could be much more popular. The Alpha Phi Omega members who sponsored the event said it was difficult to get rink time at the ice rink so they could not get much warning for advertising purposes. With some help from Ritter, the broomball tournament has the potential to be much more than it was this year. •

by Jack Reickel | photograph by Rob Weber



# WORD ON THE STREET | WHAT WAS THE FIRST THING YOU REMEMBER BUYING WITH YOUR OWN MONEY?

photographs by Robert Carr and Robert Luessen



"Red power ranger. A guy's Barbie doll!"

Ben Gage  
Graphic Design,  
First year  
Left

"Smashbox CD. I would carry around a boombox everywhere I went just to listen to it"

Jon Weed  
Business Management,  
First year  
Middle

"Street Sharks toy with rollerblades. Intense spinning action!"

Seth Gersbach  
Business Management,  
First year  
Right



"Bass Guitar, a FERNANDEZZZZZZZ..."

Alec Johnston  
Electrical Engineering,  
Fifth year  
Left

"GI Joes!!!"

Will Stanton  
Electrical Engineering,  
Fifth year  
Right

"Baseball cards. They materialized my love of the game."

Nicholas Conn  
Electrical Engineering,  
Fourth year



"A Spice Girls CD!"

Laura Slotkoff  
Fine Art Photo,  
Third year  
Left

"A Betsie Smith Vinyl. Or an electric saw, I'm not sure which."

Tito Chavez-Nguyen  
Psychology,  
Third year  
Right



"A Fairy Dream Castle Polly Pocket. I still have it."

Tara Thorn  
Interpreting,  
Fifth year

# RIT RINGS

## 585.672.4840

NOW TAKING  
UR TXT MSG!

compiled by Neil DeMoney

All calls subject to editing and truncation. Not all calls will be run. Reporter reserves the right to publish all calls in any format.

MONDAY, 9:18 P.M.

Booo! Rings, you don't have Verizon and I sent you a long, awesome message that you only got the first 160 characters of :( You should fix that! Thanks!

SATURDAY, 9:16 P.M.

Ugh... RIT Rings, I just had a heavy night partying. It's like 7 something in the morning and all I can hear are [jumbo] geese outside [flippin'] honking their [lovin'] honkers. Could you please tell them to stop before I puke everywhere? [Lovely] geese.

FRIDAY, 2:06 P.M.

# 80085!!!! I mean BOOBS!!!!

MONDAY, 6:23 P.M.

Rings, help! I need a ride to Toronto for a rave. I swear I'll give you gas money. I'll give you all the hookers you can eat. Please, Rings, help!

SATURDAY, 3:43 P.M.

I just wanted to let you know that we just got flashed at the Commons. Um... yeah. Don't know what to say about that.

SATURDAY, 4:49 P.M.

**Pro tip: Don't date CS majors, you'll lose them to their computers. Date the SE majors: They shower, are way cuter, and they will care about you. <3**

FRIDAY, 3:36 A.M.

Now that Rings can get text messages I should reprogram my friend's phone to send his tweets to you instead of Twitter... I'm tired of reading them.

SATURDAY, 1:16 A.M.

**RIT Rings, I just want to let you know that I play techno music every Thursday because that is the beginning of my weekend and I'm a Photo major and it is a real major as opposed to what people said about me in Rings last week.**



# ARTIFACTS

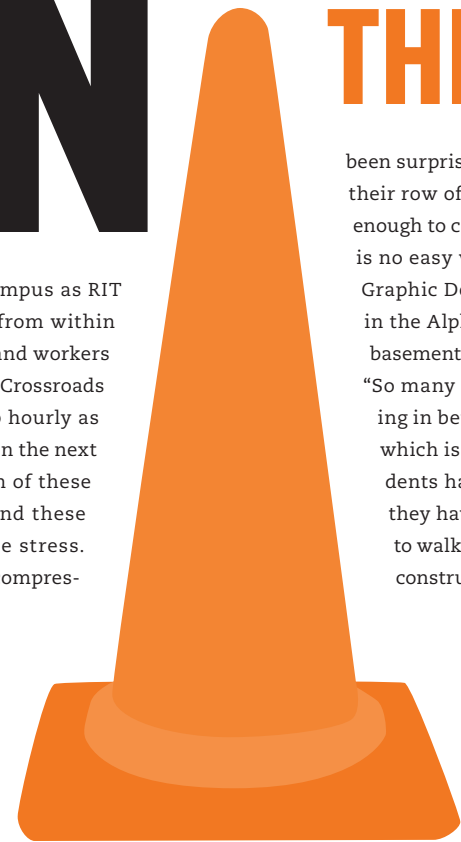
**FIND SOMETHING COOL?** Slide it under the door of the Reporter office, along with a note about where you found it. We're located in the basement of the SAU, room A-426.



Due to student demand after the Digital Den stopped carrying batteries, a compromise was reached in the vending machines. Photograph by Christopher Valites.

# CONSTRUCTION

## STUDENTS FEELING THE SQUEEZE



**CONSTRUCTION** can be experienced all across campus as RIT continues to expand. Every day, sparks shoot from within fenced-in zones and sounds of crashing metal and workers shouting to each other can be experienced from Crossroads to the Clark Gym. New fencing seems to go up hourly as construction projects race to be completed within the next few months. Just as the workers feel the pinch of these hazardous areas also experience considerable stress. Those venturing to or from dorm-side feel the compression while trying to shimmy by the chainlink fence protrusion between the Clark Gym and the old swimming pool. People with backpacks, portfolios, 3D models, bags and other necessary items fight for space as they squeeze past each other in attempt to make it to their destination. Prospective students and their families get separated from their tours amidst the brisk shuffle. Evenings on the Quarter Mile pose another challenge when students on their bikes, skateboards, scooters and rollerblades attempt to navigate through the narrow passage while avoiding obstacles such as the fencing, brick walls, trash cans and the trickiest of all: Other humans. While biking from Colony Manor to class, I nearly stumbled, bike and all, into a massive hole outside Gracie's.

*The opinions expressed in the Views section are solely those of the author*

been surprised by construction, as they have been fenced into their row of houses. While the sense of confinement may be enough to cause stress, many fear that in an emergency, there is no easy way to get to help. Shannon Patrick, a third year Graphic Design major, considers herself lucky to be living in the Alpha Xi Delta house since it has back doors in their basements which allow for escape from the dreaded fencing. "So many [people] have been jumping the permanent fencing in between Phi Kappa Psi, Alpha Xi Delta and Triangle, which is a safety hazard." At the very least, dozens of students have had their routines completely interrupted as they have to head away from academic buildings in order to walk around the fencing to get to class. When all of this construction is over, RIT will have shiny, new buildings for

students and faculty to enjoy. However, this future seems increasingly farther away as these hazardous areas seem to intrude even more into our daily lives. I worry for the prospective students that have only seen the campus in this disheveled state. They have a more stressful view on travel in between classes than those of us that know that RIT will return to a less congested foot traffic pattern. I look forward to the time where all RIT students, from Riverknoll to Colony, will be able to peacefully travel to and from academic buildings with only limited obstacles. Until this construction begins to shrink, I suggest leaving a few minutes earlier to get to class on time. •

This freshly dug area was not marked off except for a piece of orange fencing against the dining hall's wall, just out of my sight as I passed by. My seemingly efficient mean of transportation took an immediate halt as I was forced to pick up my bike over the newly rocky terrain, all while trying to get to class on time. The sororities and fraternities on campus have also

by Emily Bogle



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