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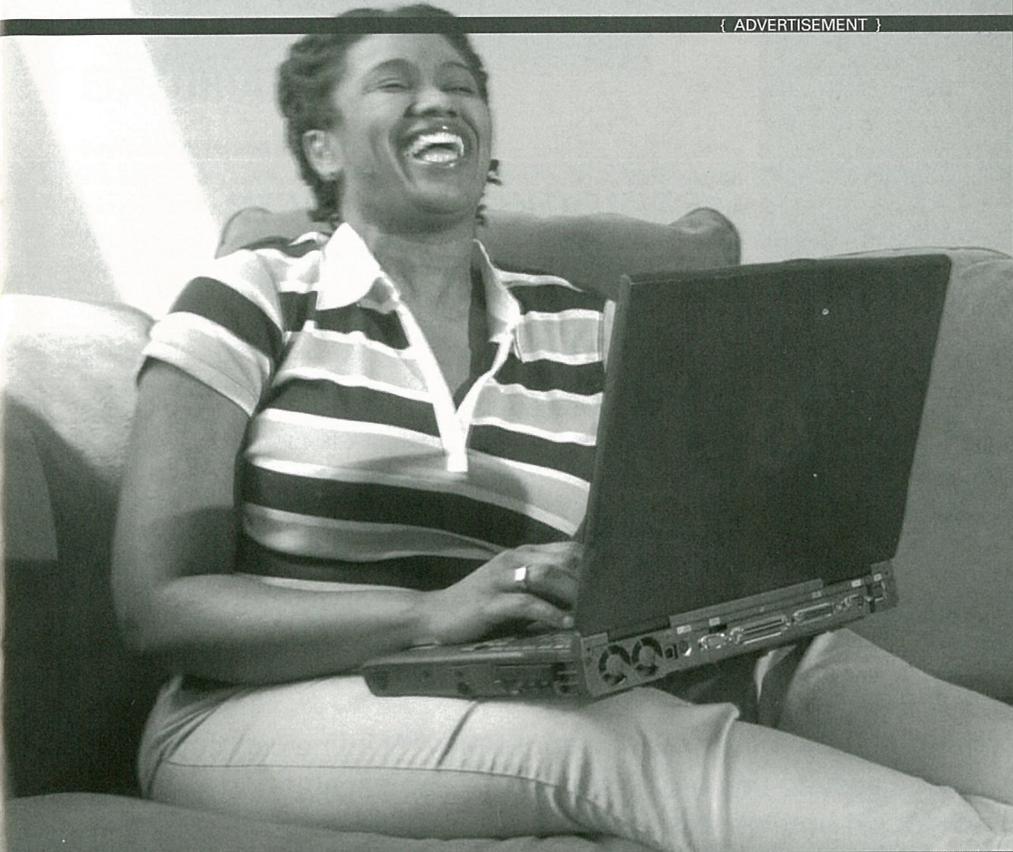
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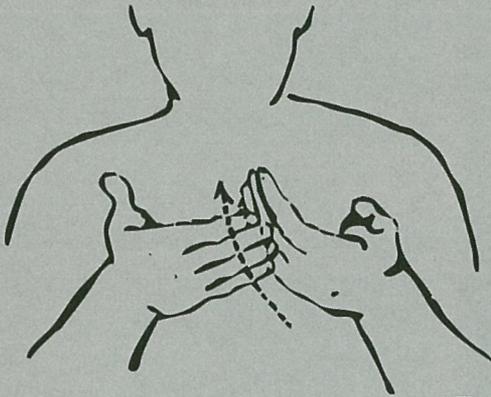
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# EDITORIAL

## Say Your Piece and Make Your Peace

We are coming upon what I like to refer to as “open opinion season,” a time where everyone suddenly has something to say about gay marriage, abortion, foreign policy, and taxes. It is during this season that even the most unpolitical of individuals pick up on political catch phrases such as “lock box” and “strategy,” and when MTV tells us to “Rock the Vote” and use our voice to inspire change. While this campaign is perhaps the best thing that MTV does, period, I say it’s not enough.

I believe that it is impossible to make a difference in how one’s neighborhood, community, or country operates by simply showing up in the private confines of a voting booth once a year and casting a vote, often along party lines. In “open opinion season,” it won’t be my singular vote that will make a true impact—fewer and fewer actual votes count with every election as it is. My “impact” will be my voice in the months before and the months that follow, as I truly believe that true change comes from the spreading of knowledge, the raising of issues, and the open dialogue of thought.

The students who wrote for this special issue were contributing to this dialogue by sharing their opinions on a wide variety of issues—some global, some national, and some about the campus community that they are a part of.

I encourage you to do the same. Share your opinions, thoughts, stances. But before you do, please remember that an uninformed opinion is more obnoxious than holiday music in July. Read. Read everything you can. Once armed with the whole picture, not only can you pick a side intelligently, but you will also be left have the tools with which to formulate a custom-made defense.

I only suggest that, once armed, you use your powers for good, not evil. Opinionated dialogue should not be used to fuel conflict of any magnitude, great or small. The worst thing that a strongly-opinionated person can do is share their views in an antagonistic way—it is these people who are taken the least seriously and do the most damage. Say your piece and then make your peace—we have enough war on our hands as it is.

Ren Meinhart  
Editor in Chief

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# There's Life Beyond Henrietta

submitted by Alex Cheek  
photos by Elizabeth Oporto

"Rochester is a great place to live, but you wouldn't want to visit here," is a fairly common, mildly joking, mostly valid saying among long time Rochester residents. Usually around RIT, I only hear "Rochester blows," and you might be someone who subscribes to that viewpoint. But hang on just a second please. The old out-of-touch Rochester residents might have a point—Rochester can in fact be a great place to live.

First of all, let me say that I've lived here for 22 years, and I did try to leave once. In September 2000, I packed my bags for college, saying goodbye to Pittsford for a small school 1,500 miles away in a warm, friendly southern town. And it was great. But, one of the reasons I transferred to RIT in my second year was because I actually *missed* Rochester.

Absence made my heart grow fonder. For the size of our fair city, nobody matches the cultural opportunities downtown, in the suburbs, and at the outlying hills. Our museums and galleries, our theatre, our rich history, and yes, our grocery store, make Rochester stand out not only among other upstate cities, but other medium-sized ones around the country.

We have had our fare share of problems, just like the other upstate cities: job layoffs, crime, deteriorating downtown centers. But what are other cities doing about it? Nothing, while Rochester is developing new cultural districts, revitalizing neighborhoods, and trying to bring new jobs to town despite blow after blow by our biggest company. Rochester has great incentives for companies to set up shop here: a wealth of graduates from area colleges, affordable living for their employees, room to spread out, a view of the Finger Lakes.

A friend of mine who moved to Southern California longs for his visits back to Upstate. It's the rolling hills of the Southern Tier, the unpredictability of our weather, picking pumpkins and hiking through crisp autumn air. It's sailing on Lake Ontario, and



swimming in Canandaigua. A short 15-minute drive will get you to the country—without any traffic either.

Probably most importantly, the region is a great place to raise a family. It's affordable to live in, and the public schools of our suburbs are top rated. In fact, 5 of the top 100 high schools in America are here in Monroe County, and Monroe County is home to excellent elementary schools and private schools. The communities are close-knit, and the suburbs take pride in their districts, having faith that they'll provide a rich education for their kids.

The residents really treat our area like a small town: mild mannered attitude, courteousness to others, and a willingness to give back to the community. Rochesterians are a breed apart. We have an eccentric taste for life that you find at Parkleigh, Nick Tahoe's and the Lilac Festival.

We are lucky to have so much history and so much diversity in a community as small as ours. I am proud of our premier universities and research centers, our orchestra and theatres, our companies small and large, one of the nations premier schools of music, and our centers for photography. The weather can be a drag sometimes, but at least things stay interesting here. ■

## Just Don't Live it Up While You're Going Down

by Hope Kendrick

I don't usually take the elevator. Most of my classes are on the fourth floor of building seven. I'm 21 years old, perfectly capable of taking a few flights of stairs, and maybe I like the burn I feel in my legs as I reach my destination. But one day last quarter, I had class in the basement, and then needed to get up to the fourth floor. Normally, I would have still taken the stairs, but it was the end of the quarter—I was tired. I opted for the elevator. I rolled my eyes as the elevator stopped at the first floor on the way up. Two women got on. Although I don't know them, and I don't know their respective health histories, they looked young and agile, but they got on the elevator on the first floor and got off on the second floor. Come on now. You can't walk up one flight of stairs? This general abuse of the elevator has been irking me for some time now.

According to research done on my local Stairmaster, climbing one flight of stairs burns about two calories. We can look at this from two perspectives. One: Cool, if I burn two calories every flight of stairs I climb, imagine how many calories I would burn if I always took the stairs. Two: It only burns two calories per flight of stairs? Damn, I must be really lazy to take the elevator up one or even two floors.

Alternatively, it burns about one calorie to walk down a flight of stairs. If you thought I had an unnatural annoyance of people who take the elevator up a floor or two, it irritates me even more when people take the elevator down. I mean, really, how hard is it to take the stairs down? You've got gravity on your side. You hardly have to do any work at all.

People who take the elevator down take precious time away from those who are waiting on the first floor to go up several floors while you are getting on and off the elevator on descending floors somewhere in the middle. That's not very fair to that poor, tired person down on the first floor who just wants to get to class or work or has a doctor's appointment on the top floor, besides the fact that it's damn lazy!

I'm not saying never to take the elevator, just give it a second thought before you push that little light-up button. Have a little more respect for this machine we've all come to take for granted, and have a little more respect for your body, which might appreciate a little exercise. Or, just imagine how lazy you appear to everyone else when you take the elevator down or up one or two floors.

And the next time you're on the elevator, going up seven floors, and it stops on an intermediary floor and someone asks "Going down?" tell them to get their fat ass down the stairs—unless they're in the wheelchair or something, because that's just mean. ■

# Beware the Pushers

by Sean Hannan

It appears that we are entering a very interesting presidential election season. I, for one, will be sitting around watching the coverage with a big bowl of buttered popcorn. Apart from the ridiculous in-fighting during the Democratic primary, new and more damning accusations about the candidates fly everyday.

As with all political elections, it turns into a battle of popularity. Those who do not care about the political process are less likely to vote, but if they are going to vote, they usually cast their ballot in favor of who is the cuter of the two. For those who actually care about the issues, rather than how straight and white the candidates' teeth are, their minds are already made up.

With seven months until the election, the millions of dollars in campaign funds go towards producing the sort of gut-wrenching sympathy ads such as the ones George W. Bush recently premiered. However, unless you reside in a so-called "swing state," a state whose electoral votes could go to either candidate, you are less likely to see most of the despicable dirty campaigning that will occur.

"Push polling," one of the most devious campaign tricks, also happens to be a Bush favorite. This technique is essentially political telemarketing. Push polls masquerade as legitimate polls, such as those conducted by The Gallup Organization or *USA Today*. In push polls, however, there is no armada of statisticians waiting to breakdown the responses of the poll. Instead, push pollers ask specifically formulated questions with misleading or flat-out lying information in an effort to prey on the interviewee's ignorance.

For example, one of the questions that caused Senator John McCain to lose the South Carolina primary in 2000, and then subsequently drop out of the race, was as follows: "If you knew that John McCain fathered a black child out of wedlock, would you be more or less likely to vote for him?" While McCain never had an illegitimate bi-racial child, he does, however, have an adoptive Bangladeshi daughter. When the TV cameras showed the McCain's at various political rallies, those prejudicial voters who were "pushed," made an incorrect association and used it to vote against McCain.

Rumors of push polling have already surfaced during the Democratic Primary race earlier this year. Apparently, a push poll was conducted that focused on Judith Steinberg's (Howard Dean's wife) Jewish heritage and whether it would be a factor in voting for Dean. As with all push polls, it is unclear who exactly commissioned this poll, whether it a fellow Democrat or a Republican, but its underhanded nature still remains.

Does politics really need to be this sneaky? Now, I enjoy watching the campaign process largely because I know where I stand on a large number of issues. Watching the newly-minted celebrities try to bend over backwards for my vote is all very humorous to me, because I know that I'm not going to be swayed either way. Come November, I will cast a vote for Kerry, more as a vote *against* Bush than as an affirmation of Kerry's stupidly moderate tendencies. Even so, watching Bush land on an aircraft carrier to garner votes is entirely different than getting a dinner-time phone call accusing his rival of fictitious atrocities.

Whatever happened to kissing babies and photo ops? It seems that today's politicians have lost sight of exactly *why* they are running for office, and are more concerned with winning the contested seat. Instead of waging war with idealism and hope for a better America, they're waging war with focus groups and statistics. Tactics like push polling and focus groups take the whimsy of a political victory and turn it into a series of calculated business decisions.

It's no wonder that voter turnout is so low in this country. The American public knows that they are being used—the smiles are all a sham. Part of the problem is that politicians do not give the American public enough credit. We can think for ourselves, honest. So, for those few that are contemplating taking up a political career, here's some advice: 1. Some people will not like you. Get used to it. 2. Tricking us into voting for you is not a good way to start off a four-year relationship. 3. Remember those things—what are they called? Platforms? Ah, yes. Find a platform that actually means something, and perhaps, more importantly, means something to you. It's much more fulfilling to get into office on you own ideals, rather than the ones that polled best amongst voters aged 18-24. ■

# A Time to Change?

by Andrew Bigelow

After three years, there is still one question I have for RIT's master planner: "Why does the SAU Cafeteria close so early?" The SAU Cafeteria, in my expert culinary opinion, simply has the best food on campus. Things like choosing a favorite cafeteria are matters of little consequence in the grand scheme of things—this I realize. I also realize that it would probably be unreasonable of me to request that the SAU Cafeteria stay open until 10 p.m., but I do find it outrageous that they just have to close up shop before two in the afternoon.

The SAU Cafeteria is the most salient example to me of RIT's lack of optimal hours, but there are more. The Student Health Center: closed all weekend and closes early on Friday. I guess the wisdom here is that injury deserves a weekend, too. Campus Connections, our bookstore, closes at 8 p.m. Last time I checked, classes went as late as 10 p.m. It really stinks if you have a late class and find out that you need, say, a marker for a project, only to find in despair that the bookstore has already closed. Your only option is to hop into a car and drive to another store—what a waste of time and resources. Most offices on campus—everything from Financial Aide to the Bursar's Office to Residence Life closes its doors by 5:00 p.m.—early by student standards.

In the end, though, can a change actually be made here? How heavily do the students' (customers') opinions, standards, and level of convenience weigh on campus? Are some supermarkets kept open 24/7 because the employees

desire to work constantly, or is it because the customer desires to shop whenever they choose to? The answer is obvious: supermarkets aim to please their customers, or face losing them. The same is not necessarily the case on campus. At RIT, in light of large issues such as retention, the budget, and job placement, so much less gravity gets placed on things like cafeterias and markers. After all, how likely am I to pack up and leave for another college, solely because I find the hours of operation less than ideal here at RIT?

It shouldn't matter. I don't believe the existence of larger areas of contention is an excuse to settle for the status quo in any facet of life. Instead, I propose an improvement of the situation. What would we have to lose from trying out extended hours in the SAU Cafeteria or the bookstore? After all, we certainly have enough students looking for part time work to easily fill the time slots of these extended hours. Furthermore, I recommend putting everything to the test, not simply hours of operation on a college campus; for the very moment that we accept the status quo, we reject progression, societal evolution, and also those delicious breakfast omelets. ■

# It's Greek to Me

by Tim Johnson

RIT students are unique, diverse, and have their sights on a diploma in a certain field. They know what they want, and what they don't want. They didn't come to this school for the extra-curricular activities, the social life, the weather, and certainly not to become a member of a fraternity or a sorority. Students come here for the academics, and comprehensive educational experience. I am an RIT student.

I came to this school for the same reasons as everyone else, never thinking that I would become a member of a fraternity. I watched as some of my friends participated in rush events, and the fun that they had, but it did not change my impression of Greek life. It wasn't until I became good friends with some of my then-future-brothers that I came to realization that Greek life was not *Animal House*, MTV's *Fraternity Life* or *Revenge of the Nerds*. Greek life was not based on the stereotypes, but on values that I respect and try to uphold every day. Going Greek is one of the most unique experiences you can have while at college, and something that will stay with you throughout the rest of your life.

As a member of the Greek community, you have the chance to participate in philanthropic events, and various community service activities. You go to formals, spring picnics, and various social gatherings with other fraternities and sororities. Greek organizations give a sense of belonging to their members, and create a positive atmosphere for both academic and social life. Through tradition, there is a great amount of pride with learning about the people who started the organization you are affiliated with, and how so many people all over the country in different chapters uphold the same ideals. Going Greek allows you to develop as a person, in ways you may have never thought about.

One complaint made regularly by students is the apathetic social life at RIT. What many students don't realize is that every time they speak negatively about Greek life to somebody, they are hurting the social scene even more. Without making a direct comparison, schools with a good social atmosphere generally have a large percentage of Greek affiliation. Fraternities and sororities care about improving these social dilemmas, and are constantly working towards improving RIT in this area. However, this doesn't mean that all Greeks party and binge drink. Many active Greeks are far too involved with coursework, jobs, sports or other extra-curriculars to ever consider behaving in such a way. The myths that exist about how Greeks conduct themselves are simply not true, but are based on the Hollywood interpretation.

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It is very easy to form the stereotype, and subsequently refuse to deviate from that way of thinking. Stereotypes are extremely hard to break, and even harder if the person who has them doesn't keep an open mind. People consider fraternities and sororities to be cult-like and intimidating by nature. What people need to understand is that Greek life is a choice that someone makes. They choose it when they decide that they want something more out of their college experience. It is a choice to affiliate themselves with people just like them, who are always around to support each other. Choosing to go Greek gives people the chance to have people they can call "brother" or "sister," because that is how close they become as friends. Greek organizations are not "cults." And, while they are based on exclusivity and ritualism, these are founded on the principles of the ancient Greeks that all of today's organizations are based on.

Greek life provides for countless opportunities and lasting friendships, but it is not, however, a chance to "buy friends." This is one of the more ridiculous myths. Independents with animosity towards the Greek system consider the financial dues that Greeks pay to be a payment for inclusion in the organization. It takes money to keep any organization afloat, and a large portion of these dues that Greeks pay come back in the form of house improvements, weekly meals, or other activities that require money such as rush events. The financial aspect of becoming a member of a fraternity or sorority should not be a major factor in the decision to go Greek or not, but it should certainly not be considered an act of "buying friends."

Greek life is not for everybody, but at a school as large as RIT, the percentage of Greeks is not proportionate to the entire student body in comparison to many other schools. This is because most RIT students come to campus with a closed mind, and they never think about pledging a fraternity or sorority. To be fair, you should spend some time with members of a fraternity or sorority before you make your decision about whether to support the Greek system or condemn it. Please make up your own mind, and don't give into accepting the stereotypes. ■

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# In Defense of Bread

by Kathryn Nix

Almost everyone tries to change the way they eat. I'm not one to say what is good and what is bad when it comes to eating habits. I consider myself to be healthy and mindful of what goes into my body. I, just like many others, have tried eliminating things from my diet in order to be healthier, thinner, stronger, and better looking. I have had periods in my life when I gave up red meat, all meat, dairy, anything that came from an animal, eaten all meat again. I even went six months last year without consuming anything with soy, wheat, or dairy in an attempt to "detox" my system, and give my tired little pancreas a kick-start. I have eliminated many foods from time to time in an attempt to live a healthier life, however, I will never, ever, ever, ever, eliminate bread.

Unless you have been living in a cave (or stayed away from television, magazines, the Internet, or any other form of mass-communication), you know that low-carbohydrate products are all the rage in weight loss. According to the Atkins website, the body must burn two types of energy: carbohydrates and fat. Carbohydrates are the first to be metabolized (burned) by the body, then fat. By eliminating carbohydrates will allow the body to focus on burning fat, thus resulting in weight loss (facts courtesy of [www.atkins.com](http://www.atkins.com)). This seems to make some sense, however, fruits and certain mineral and vitamin-packed vegetables are cut from one's diet along with grains and starches.

Last time I looked, the food pyramid still had bread and grains as the bottom, i.e. the section that represents food that should be consumed the most by a human body during the day. Fruits and vegetables still own a big chunk of the pyramid too.

America is missing the boat on healthy eating. Low or no carbohydrate diets promise a quick way to lose weight. Many would rather find the quick, easy, and sometimes dangerous way to lose weight rather than take the time to learn about our bodies and the food we consume and how it affects us. I refuse to fall for low-carb menus in chain restaurants, Atkins-friendly soda, cereal, and fruit juice. Eating a bunless hamburger is not better for you than a turkey sandwich. Think about your arteries for once.

I have friends who were married in September. One year ago, they began their quest for "thin bodies in wedding photos" through the practices of Doctor Richard Atkins and his anti-carbohydrate circus. They did not exercise, they did not practice portion control, and they used their allotted 20 carbohydrates a day for low-carb beer (because fatty meat + beer - grains = healthy living). The groom lost 50-60 pounds in six months, the bride dropped about three sizes, and yes, they did look "thin and good" on their wedding day. The day after their wedding,



they ditched the diet, went on their honeymoon, and came back with a few extra pounds. Within two months, they had both gained the weight back and put some more weight on. Why? The simple reason is because they didn't lose weight the right way the first time around.

What is so hard with eating a balanced diet and exercising? Are we so consumed by our jobs and televisions that we can't afford the time to go for a 30 minute walk every other day? Grabbing a low-carb food bar will not make up for the vitamins you're missing by not eating an orange (yes, oranges have sugar, which means they have carbs. They also have fiber, vitamin C and other minerals and health benefits, just like many other fruits that cannot be consumed while on a low-carb diet). Quick and easy is not always the best way. You may be thin now, but what about your overall health that should last you a lifetime?

A good friend of mine is a dietician and works with patients who are on kidney dialysis. She has said many, many times that any diet that is high in protein and lacking in carbohydrates is *not* good for your heart. She believes that all things should be consumed in moderation. I believe that either way you slice it, bread is good and should be eaten by everyone. ■

## The Proof is in the Pants: Why I wish Abercrombie still sold camping gear

Shopping isn't fun anymore. Lately, it's been more of a disheartening experience, especially when a pair of shorts at Hollister (owned by Abercrombie, Inc.) looks like something I'd wear as an ankle bracelet...or at least a leg warmer.

Over break, I visited the enormous King of Prussia mall in Pennsylvania with a friend from school. Peering into the window display at Abercrombie & Fitch, a short, ruffled skirt caught my attention—it's sure to be the next big thing come warm weather—that fit snugly to a very small mannequin. I was about to venture into the store when my friend stopped me, saying, "That's not Abercrombie [& Fitch]. That's *abercrombie*, the store for kids." Under the name "abercrombie," Abercrombie, Inc. began selling clothes for children ages 10-14. We continued our shopping excursion until we came upon the other Abercrombie, where I noticed their mannequin. Déjà vu, it was the very same skirt and the very same mannequin—same as far as its proportions. Hip size: xxs maybe, skirt size: 00.

A store that manufactures clothing specifically for kids who have yet to hit puberty, and its older counterpart that sells clothes to people in my age bracket use the same-proportioned female mannequins. Something is definitely wrong with this concept. To be honest, I was not even aware that size 00 existed, let alone that girls above the age of 14 wear it.

The Abercrombie incident reminded me of a time when I was shopping at The Gap in Toronto, Canada. I liked a shirt that was being worn on the mannequin, and looked at the

tag to learn the size. It read "XS." However, the back of the shirt was held together with safety pins so that the x-small shirt could fit the xx-small mannequin.

I am very conscious of the misrepresentation of body image at "hip," chain clothes stores, and I feel that awareness of this blatant inaccuracy is important for anyone who ever shops. The depiction of body image at stores like Abercrombie and The Gap is grotesquely exaggerated to fit certain ideals they have within their corporate marketing strategies. These marketing strategies are completely discriminatory. I am uncertain of how many people actually wear size 00, but when I walked into Abercrombie to look at the ruffled skirts, there was no size on the table above a two; but there were a whole lot of 00s.

Taking an educated guess, I'd say that the reason for this size being left in abundance is because the percentage of people who wear it is very small compared to the percentage of size 00 skirts that Abercrombie manufactures (wishful thinking on their part). On the other hand, people who wear larger sizes may stumble upon a problem when all that's left are the 00s.

The girls aren't alone though. Recently, Abercrombie discontinued men's pant sizes above a 36. My younger brother, and quite a few of his friends who wear a size 38 pant, will no longer find them at Abercrombie. They love Abercrombie, but unfortunately for them, it's unrequited. Would Abercrombie rather sacrifice the sixty-something dollars they'd get for each pair of size 38 pants they sold, or their unmarred image of bodily perfection?

The proof is in the pants. This is another marketing ploy designed to keep people who weren't created from the "perfect" mold away from the Abercrombie name and image.

Just how extreme can the marketing strategy be? There was an article published a few months ago in *Philadelphia Magazine* about discrimination at Abercrombie. Not only do they require that the employees buy a certain amount of their clothes every month to assure that they will have something to wear while working, there is something called a "look book." In this "look book" are pictures of young, white, wealthy, good-looking kids who seem to have just stepped out of "The O.C." and into my social nightmare. The hiring managers look at the book before going out to Ivy league colleges and recruiting fraternity folk to join the Abercrombie team. One manager said that she was actually told to visit a few houses on fraternity row to promote job openings. Yet, minorities who are hired are most likely placed working in the stockroom at night.

Abercrombie, Inc. is a frustrating enterprise, with the intent on forming an exclusive honor society of future yacht club members. You don't look like a Marissa or a Summer? I don't either, and neither do most people statistically.

After reading the Abercrombie article, I decided to send them a fake résumé with detailed job descriptions such as "looking good" and "handling irate customers with finesse and great hair." I'm still waiting to hear from them. In the meantime, I'll be shopping at Urban Outfitters. ■

submitted by Sara Stryjewski

## Why Vegans are Missing the Point

Vegans are a peculiar breed, forfeiting all animal-related products such as eggs, milk, and even honey in favor of more expensive, tasteless soy products. Their reasoning for doing so may be health-related, environment-related, or animal rights-related, but peculiar nonetheless. Perhaps they are not quite as peculiar as the elusive "fruitarians" who only eat fallen fruit, nuts, and seeds that do not kill the original bearer when removed. But, there are so many different varieties of vegetarians that it's almost impossible to tell them apart without a long list of rules, and the only thing they have in common is that they all avoid meat.

However, meat, to many, is synonymous with "real food." The centrality of meat to the human diet is proved by how many soy-based meat analogues there are out there,

veggie burgers, and meatless ribs to name a few. Basically, eating meat symbolizes the civilization of human beings, when we separated ourselves from the natural world and gained power over it, we became civilized. Meaning, vegans are turning their back on years of progression from herbivores to carnivores. That's why I considered entitling this article "why vegans are regressing human nature," or "why vegans are hindering progress."

Nick Fiddes, an anthropologist that studies the varieties of vegetarianism, agrees that, "killing, cooking and eating other animals' flesh provides perhaps the ultimate authentication of human superiority over the rest of nature, with the spilling of blood a vibrant motif. It is not only the animal which we so utterly subjugate; consuming its flesh

is a statement that we are the unquestioned masters of the world."

That quote may seem a little blackmetal, but you can't deny its validity. In fact, vegans seem to be drawn to food items that taste like meat, like tofurky, or soy-jerky. Why do they try so hard to simulate meals that they want to avoid? It all seems very futile to me. ■



# Professors, Keep Your Political Agendas Out of the Classroom

As the presidential election draws near, turn on any news station and every other story is about politics—John Kerry's economic plans, President Bush's national security policy, mudslinging and campaigning. Politics are a part of our lives, like it or not. I am a senior Photojournalism major. I watch TV news, listen to talk radio, and read the newspapers and magazines. It's my job. I hear plenty of political ideas, whether they are liberal or conservative. With all the attention on politics in the media, there is one place I'd prefer that I not hear it: in the classroom.

I pay over \$27,000 a year for my education; I have to go to class. When I'm there, I do not want a professor to hold me hostage while they get up and use my time to show me commercials on how bad a job President Bush is doing, or explain to me how Kerry's policies would weaken national security. Everyone has an opinion, and as a journalist, I strongly support the First Amendment and a person's right to express said opinion. Go out with a bullhorn in front of Wallace Library and speak your mind—I have no problem with that. Don't express political opinions in a classroom where I'm held captive.

An occasional slip by a professor is tolerable. After all, professors are human. A political discussion will break out in some classes. It

would be hard not to find politics in a political science class, some philosophy classes, and other social sciences classes. Most of these classes are opinion driven. However, when a professor stands on the soapbox in front of his or her art, engineering or hospitality class, and starts "professing" his or her political opinions, I'm forced to sit there. I cannot walk out because the professor might actually eventually teach me something.

If I wanted to spend money to hear political rhetoric, I would pay to go to a Bush, Kerry, or Ralph Nader fundraiser. It would be a lot cheaper than how much I've spent at RIT.

One might ask what the harm is in having a professor give his or her opinion and start a political discussion. Today, in the U.S., there are two major political parties: Republicans and Democrats. Chances are high that you are a part of one or the other—that your views lean more heavily towards one side of the political spectrum than the other. If a professor states his or her opinion, and a discussion ensues, it will, most likely, be based along the road of the professor's original opinion. This limits the discussion, and doesn't promote an open thinking environment where many roads could be considered.

If a professor raises an issue, withholds judgement, and acts more as a moderator, the

by Christopher Zajac



class will think more openly and outside the box. Some of my professors have expressed such strong opinions that I disagree with that I have to bite my tongue. I'm excluded and left out of a classroom discussion that I feel uncomfortable contributing to; therefore, I am left out of academia. Shouldn't this campus be a place for open discussion and constructive dialogue? Many times the professor ends the discussion by alluding to the fact that he or she is right, and I am wrong. I say opinions are just that—opinions. If somebody was "right," all debates and arguments would cease, the world would stop spinning, time would stand still, and Albert Einstein would come back from the dead with his infinite wisdom to team up with MacGyver to save us all. That's just my opinion. ■

## Music Over Matter

I am a Mechanical Engineering major who had decided to work on getting a minor in music. My love for music surpasses a lot of people's understanding, and often raises questions of "why am I in my current major then?" from my audience. I won't explain my reasoning, but I will just continue with saying I found a club where I could flourish—I could focus on my admiration of music, coupled with my love for God. That was Gospel Ensemble. Gospel Ensemble is non-credit, but from my understanding is advertised by others as a RIT musical performance group (where the remaining groups do offer credit). It was astonishing to find from a professor (names I choose not to disclose, I'm not into slandering) that I could not work out getting credit for my involvement in this group towards my minor because, "the director is not a professor from the college of liberal arts."

From what I know, currently there is no one in the group working towards a minor in

music except myself, so I am the first to find this "truth". I am insulted by the reasoning. If a person became aware of whom the director is, they would find Mr. Wardell Lewis Jr. is very talented. He can play the piano and organ, has an ear for harmony, aesthetics, and vernaculars, a considerable knowledge of African-American music (focuses in Gospel Music of course), and is incredibly current in the trends and old styles of it. So I began to question in my mind, "does a degree, or one who is educated, make the person more qualified to teach music?"

Music has been honored with a number of untrained and trained musicians, vocalists, and those who fit in the "etc. or other" box. They all brought their own spin on manipulation of sound, chords, and harmonies. When looking at the history of Gospel Music, you will find the roots are "Negro Spirituals." Most captives/slaves were not educated, and I'm sure the owners and families were not on

the fields teaching them the rudiments of singing these songs. I feel some of what they saw and sang was from the Europeans, like the English language and a connection with Christianity, but who is more qualified to talk about this: the slaves who sang these songs, or the Europeans?

I'm sure an individual can think of one person who has taught himself or herself, or has learned through family ways, the guitar or piano or how to sing, and how to use it to its capacity. From his or her own learned talents, that person could help someone else to be successful, and he or she is not an owner of a degree. Virtuosos are out there, and are just as good as educated persons. Sometimes they put a new spin on what we think music and life in general should be. I hope my view has reached the eyes of those who have shamed others based on what they think a person's background should be, even though the person has the talent or is gifted. ■

submitted by Nathan Holland

# (Insert Soapbox Here)

submitted by Anthony Russo

You know you've touched a chord when you make someone cry. That said, this is a story about listening to others. I speak of the proverbial listening that requires no auditory capabilities. In fact, what it requires the most is being aware of who you're interacting with, and understanding where the person is coming from.

A couple of weeks ago, I was with a group of friends and we started on the very hot and trendy topic of same-sex marriages. It might also be important to point out I do bat for the other team, so it's an issue about which I feel as though I have some say. Everyone involved in the discussion agreed that said couples should have the right to be recognized by the government in the same manner opposite sex couples are recognized. However, we hit a snafu when I said the unthinkable: gay couples should have the same exact rights as straight couples, but it should not be called a "marriage."

I was the only one in the group who held this opinion. The group of "allies" that sat around me made it abundantly clear that the way I was thinking was absurd and ignorant. Moreover, even if that's not what was intended, that's most certainly how it was interpreted. The debate ended on a bit of a down note—I was in tears.

To be more specific, I was hysterical. I was low. I was nothing. Floating in my own oblivion is the only way to describe it. At first I cried because I thought I was mad about being a faggot. I say faggot because that's how I felt, and truth be told, another "f" word proceeded that one while the sentiments echoed in my head like some sort of strange war drum. Being who I am is not something I chose, and I hated that, and still do sometimes. I have taught myself how to be strong, no matter the challenge, but that particular night, staying strong could go f\*\*\* itself.

Suffice it to say, the rest of the evening could hardly have been described as "super." I was bogged down by an overwhelming wave of anomie and I started to question whether or not I even knew what was right for me, or what I even wanted.

And that's when it hit me. Someone else was telling me what I want. Someone else was telling me what I should be thinking. Someone else was telling me the way it should be. I say I felt as though I was nothing because I felt like I didn't belong to any group. I sure as hell didn't fit in with the gay community apparently—I couldn't even think the same way they all thought.

And therein lies the problem. I am by no means the only gay person out there that feels the same way I do. I am a minority in a minority, and I was made to feel the very way that our politically correct and sensitive society doesn't want me to feel. How ironic. Telling me that I should reevaluate the way I think *even after* I have been educated as to the other side of the debate, is just as bad as someone walking up to me and saying "bein' gay jus' ain't right."

There is no difference. People forget that if they want to help out someone, whether that person be an elder, a teenager, black, white, hispanic, short, tall, stupid, fat, or ugly, they need to listen to what that person wants. End of debate. You most certainly can educate someone on alternate ways of thinking, but if you don't relent, you are forcing your views on that person and not accepting him for who he is. It's just harder to recognize because you think you're doing what's right, when in fact, you might just be doing what's popular.

All I ask is that you accept and tolerate people for who they are. You don't even have to agree with them, nor do you have to be friends with them. All you have to do is think about what you're doing, even if it seems like a no-brainer. I also understand that there could be about 5,943,140,839 people out there who don't entirely agree with those last two thoughts, but tough. I get to win this one.

The other people that were involved that particular night do not know that I am writing this. This is not to be subversive by any means, and I apologize if this is taken as some form of "non-confrontational" way to get the last word in. It is, however, a way to educate on a larger scale and put some sort of closure to a night that probably won't make the "best evening ever" list. And finally, the last thing that was intended by this anecdote was sympathy. I don't need it, nor do I want it, and would most likely throw it right back in your face if I got it. Because in all honesty, "I'm th-uper, thanks for asking!" ■

## Discrimination: The American Way of Life

by Mike Eppolito

When did the word "Discrimination" become open to interpretation? Discrimination has become such an integral part of today's world that people have become blind to it all together. For years, the auto insurance companies have based fees on what they call "statistics,"—actually, discrimination in its purest form. Insurance companies charge people in "high risk" groups (such as the male gender and teenage drivers) more money for the same service they give to everyone else. Somewhere along the line it was decided that statistics are adequate enough to legally discriminate against someone. I am not naïve enough to assume that these statistics are fabricated or manipulated but I do want people to understand that the usage of statistics is still a form of discrimination.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines discrimination as "prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment," but unfortunately this definition only applies to certain circumstances in today's world. If an insurance company had statistics to prove that Caucasians were more of a car insurance risk than African Americans, and thus charged accordingly there

would be an outrage. Sex and age discrimination in the auto insurance industry should be looked upon with the same disgust as race discrimination. How can we have equality when such a huge double standard exists? Somewhere along the line certain forms of discrimination have been thrown out the window while others have held strong. There should be absolutely no distinction between discrimination no matter what its basis.

The American people cannot subject their society to this trend of subjective discrimination without having it lead to the slippery slope effect. Once it is accepted that discrimination can be used in specific circumstances, there is nothing to stop these "specific circumstances" from being eternally broadened. The current trend in our society is to create new and unique ways to legally discriminate against people. When will the public learn that the group does not define the individual?

The only way to stop the spreading of this new form of camouflaged discrimination is to make the public aware that it is going on. These problems did not transpire overnight nor can they be resolved instantaneously, but it is only through dialogue that change will be initiated. I have only scratched the surface of the injustices that are thriving in today's society, but through discussion more issues can be discovered and dealt with accordingly. ■

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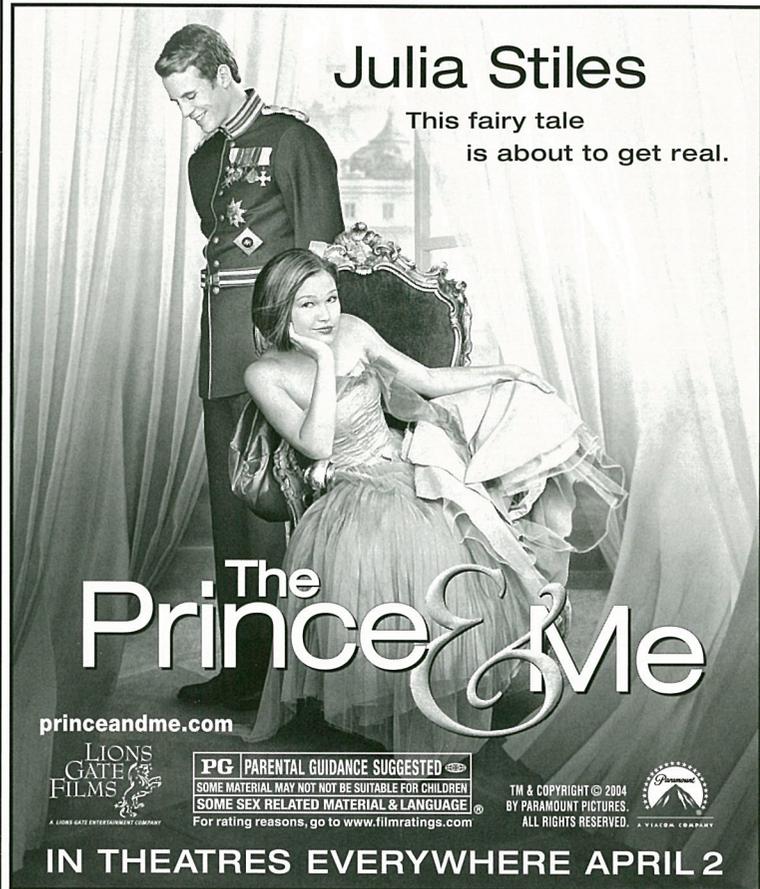
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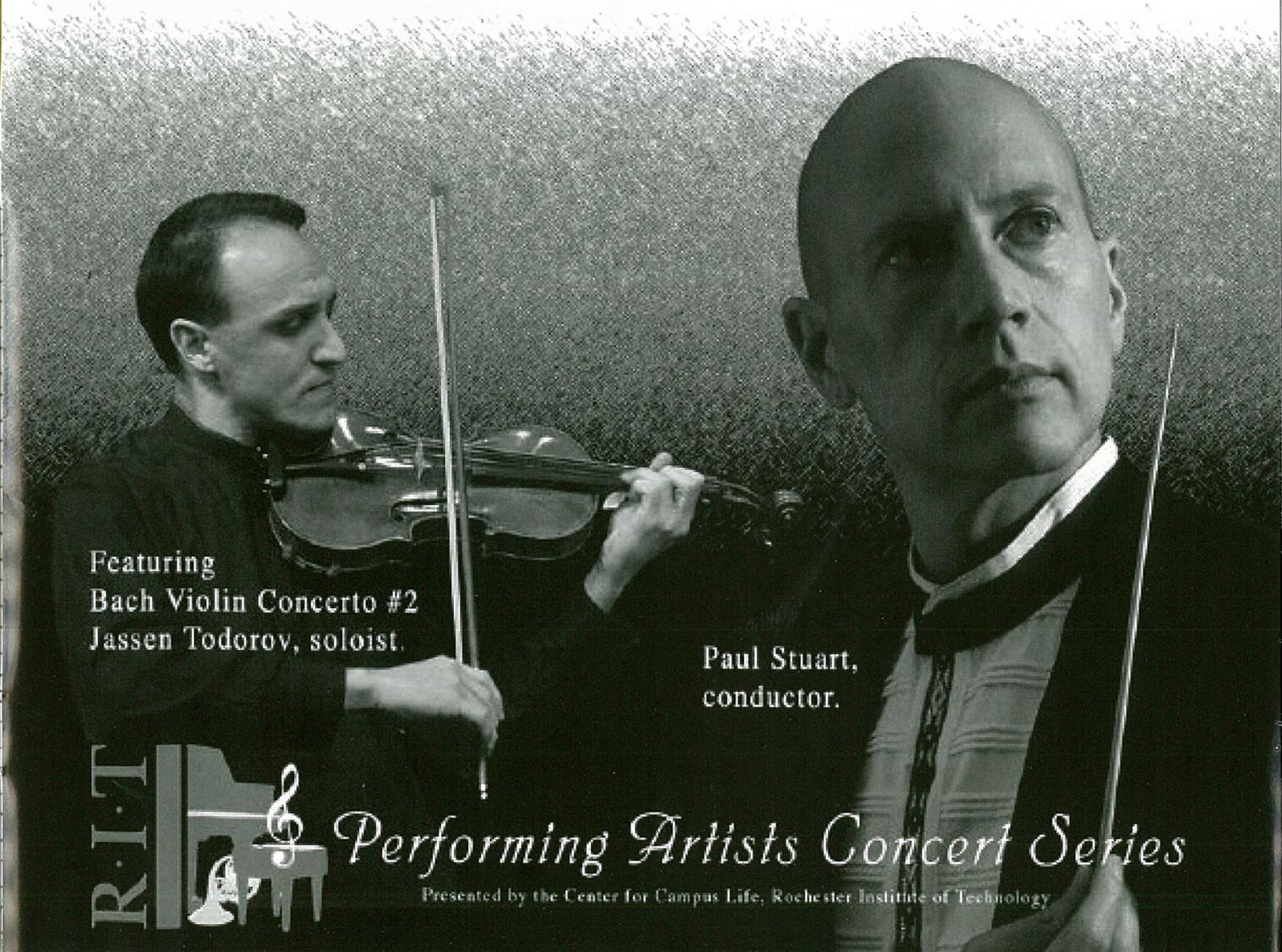
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