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ALLOPINION



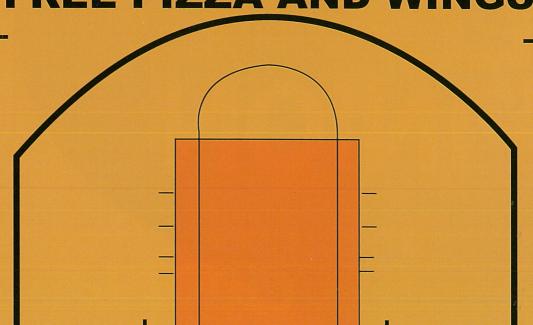


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EDITORIAL

Do you pick what clothes you wear in the morning? Do you have specific people you enjoy talking to? Do you wish animals wouldn't kill people? Are you glad some do?

Yes? It's probably because you have opinions. Everybody has opinions. Even I have opinions, something evidenced by the editorials I write each week. However, this week—this issue—does not contain my opinion. Instead, its explicit purpose is to showcase the opinions of other students at RIT who do not have a regular public forum in which to express themselves.

You may not agree with what they have to say. That is because you have opinions too.



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REPORTER

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Erhardt Graeff

ART DIRECTOR

Joseph Guzman

SENIOR EDITORS

Kate Bloemker, Jonathan Bove

PHOTO EDITOR

Michael Sperling

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Adam Peck

AD MANAGER

Bryan Hammer

BUSINESS MANAGER

Gregory Smith

ONLINE EDITOR

Sean Hannan

EDITORIAL STAFF

Brenna Cammeron, Casey Dehlinger, Ben Foster, Mike Eppolito

WRITERS

Kate Bloemker, Casey Dehlinger, Bryan Hammer, José Plaza, Govind Ramabadran, Kim Weiselberg, Josh Van Hook

STAFF DESIGNERS

Jessica Campbell, Tricia Chin, Lauren Dellaquila, Jonathan Rivera

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jacob Hannah, Eric Sucar, Thomas Starkweather, Kim Weiselberg

STAFF ILLUSTRATOR

William Robinson

CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATORS

Rachel Gottesman, Brittney Lee, Michael Norton

ADVISOR

Rudy Pugliese

PRINTING

Printing Applications Lab

DISTRIBUTION

Justin Harsch, Joseph Guzman

CONTACT

MAIN 585.475.2212 reporter@rit.edu ADVERTISING 585.475.2213 reporterads@mail.rit.edu



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OPINION (4)



Square Pegs in a Tiger-Shaped Hole

Dear Diary- Today I went to the pep rally. It was rad to feel so included! And Todd looks so hot in his football uniform. Good thing I wore my gold Manolo Blahniks. I'll have to ask Amber if they clash with Todd's uniform. I can't wait to go out tonight and sell myself in exchange for warm Natty Lights! Hopefully from Todd, but really anyone will do. Keep it real, Diary! -Kelli

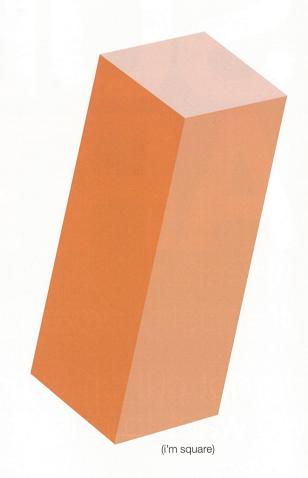
by Kate Bloemker

Even without the football reference, I would still guess that Kelli is not an RIT student. Her tendency to conform tips me off in this case. It's not that I'm trying to make fun of her; it's just that she's an entirely different species from the people you normally find here. We're much more likely to be heard debating the rise and fall of the pump-action sneaker than the Manolo Blahnik spring collection. Most of us limit our football-watching to the Super Bowl, and some of us only watch for the commercials. I'm sure that the RIT administration is proud of having attracted such "original" students, but there is one thing Kelli has that a lot of us don't. And that's school spirit.

This causes a lot of hand-wringing in Building One. To combat our lack of campus unity, the higher-ups brandish Strategic Plans, concerts, and Division One sports teams. These methods would probably work at other schools, but have failed to make much of a dent here. What I wonder is, has the RIT administration stopped to wonder why we are responding to their efforts as though they were a placebo drug? The answer is simple: The types of students RIT attracts are just not joiners. A great majority of us were not the "cool" students in high school. In fact, a lot of us really hated the conformity associated with school. Rather than going to pep rallies, we preferred to build our own computers, read Oscar Wilde, or spend our days in the art room, creating sculptures from nothing but plastic straws and duct tape.

We haven't changed much. We do drink a fair amount of cheap beer, and we do go to hockey games-but only because we actually like hockey, or because our friends are playing. We also have Greek organizations, but they present themselves as more about making friends and doing good works than being drunken assholes. A typical RIT social event is more likely to involve watching the latest anime, going bowling, or sampling the wares from Beers of the World. A lot of people who once felt there was no one like them have found niches here.

Among the friends I've made at RIT, I include a gay Hispanic artist, a man who attached a life preserver to the back of his car "in case of water travel," and a guy who likes to chew on packing tape. I wouldn't trade them for a million Kellis. The problem with schools like hers that have massive collective identities is that some students get lost in the shuffle. I doubt that happens so much here.





Quotas: You're Just Not Good Enough

by Govind Ramabadran

I recently happened upon an article in *The Boston Globe*, dated April 8, 2004, stating that Princeton University is going to propose a cap on how many A's professors can give to undergraduate students in their classes. The plan is to limit professors to no more than 35 percent A's given per class. The admininstrator who wrote the plan, Dean of the College Nancy Weiss Malkiel, said that the plan is designed to "give Princeton students more accurate information to distinguish their best work from their ordinary work" and that the college wants to "motivate them to stretch to do the most imaginative work of which they are capable." According to her, this plan is designed to limit grade inflation, which has its roots in the Vietnam War. During that time, professors would award high grades to students so they could avoid the draft.

If this plan actually goes through, it that means that professors will no longer have the right to grade students as they believe is deserved. If 35 students in a class of 100 already got A's for their final grades based on how well they did, and Student #36 also worked very hard to rightfully secure an A for that course, the professor would have no choice but to give the student a B. It would follow then that his or her GPA would decrease. This is what disturbs me, for grades are one way of showing the work done by a student at any college, be it an Ivy League school or a technical school like RIT. The professor should give out grades based on how well the students do their work, not to fit a percentage that the school wants in order to make itself look good. High grades are a reasonable enough way to show the topnotch work done by students in those classes. For any Princeton department that refused to meet this standard, Ms. Malkiel states that "there will be a lot of talking, a lot of jawboning. If there are some number of faculty or departments who refuse to cooperate, the dean of the faculty might have some further talks."

Quotas are nothing more than attempts to be politically correct about something. Grade quotas are another way of creating a sort of elitist class structure by allowing only a certain percentage of students to get A's, and everyone else is assigned a grade to fit the proportion, making a nice bell curve for each department. This in turn would affect students' GPA's, which are looked at heavily by employers. So, sorry, you can't get into that top-notch job you were looking for, because your grades are low, because some professor was forced to give only 35 percent A's. You may think you've earned that A through your hard work, and your professor may agree as well, but not the dean. And because the dean says we need to have these quotas, you will have to stick with that B or C, and a lower GPA. Because you were the 36th percentile instead of the 35th. Better luck next time. •





Disgruntled Sophomore In the Lounge With the Lead Pipe.

by Casey Dehlinger

When I was a kid, I used to love to play Clue (I was always Mr. Green). We always had trouble with the game, though, because at some unremembered time, someone had bitten the corner off the Miss Scarlet card. Because of this, she never had any privacy. You wouldn't even need to ask; you already knew she was hanging around in the lounge, nowhere near the dead body. That is where her game piece always started. As a matter of fact, none of the game pieces had particularly desirable accommodations. Sure, the mansion had nine rooms, but not a single bedroom or bathroom; hence, Miss Scarlet seemed to be stuck living in the lounge. Next year, I will share a similar fate.

Like hundreds of other freshmen (who, oddly enough, are given first choice in a rare and foolish case of reverse-seniority) I applied for the traditional hierarchy of apartments followed by the residence halls. The only reason I decided to even put the dorms down was to ensure that I ended up living somewhere besides a box on the Quarter Mile. Also, like hundreds of other freshmen, I was thrown back into the dorms. However, not only am I in the dorms: I'm in a "built triple." Housing's spin control word for a lounge. Next year, when you decide to look at the time on the Gleason Hall clock, all you'll need to do is look down two floors at the floor-to-ceiling window on the right side, and there I'll be. I have a pet lizard back home with a similar box, only that's called a terrarium. If I left the blinds open, I'd pretty much have my own reality TV show. This isn't simply my plight, though. It turns out that Housing has turned every lounge into a "built triple," so no one in traditional dorm housing will have

What baffles me about the search for the murder weapon in Clue is the fact that a quick examination of the body would reveal the weapon. If the victim has a bad case of rope burn around the neck, you can rule out the revolver, and maybe even the knife. There's a complete detachment from logical problem solving.

The same applies to the student body. In order to figure out what's ailing it, all you need to do is pay attention to those who are afflicted. When there's a lack of apartments and increased demand for them, don't respond by trying to cram more people

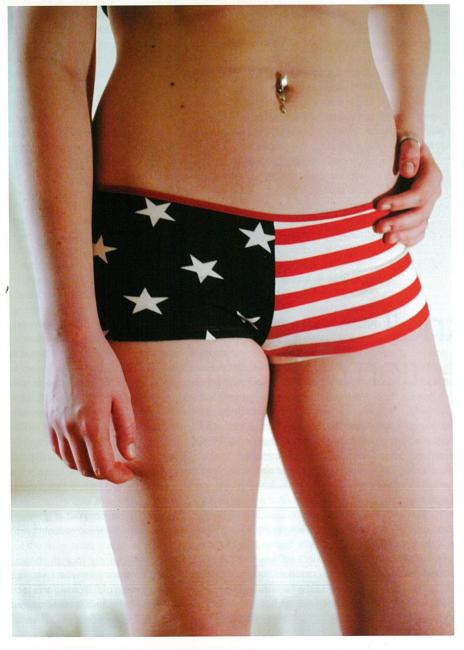
in the dorms. I dread the day when some utilitarian genius decides that the janitor closets would make excellent singles. Also, my quarterly \$1621 to live in a box seems rather steep compared to the \$1574 rate in the fully furnished University Commons. If Housing was so hell-bent on making money, they'd stop driving students off campus and losing "business." I'd move off campus myself, but I like the convenience of being close. I believe that this desire is shared by most of the campus, and that Housing should attempt to cater to this as opposed to advertising their expensive and inconvenient RIT Inn Housing.

There's another glaring mistake in the logic: RIT's rate of retention matches the Clue mansion's rate of attrition. Housing overbooks the Residence Halls to compensate for the amount of people who decide to "pursue other options" after first quarter. However, RIT has made bettering retention a major priority, and if they intend to succeed, that means the Residence Halls will continue to be overbooked. And, because dorms are cheap to build and expensive to live in, I'll bet all my Monopoly money that we'll see another dorm complex before we see what students really want: new apartments. And, quite frankly, I'd like to see a few more apartments than a walkway connecting buildings on the academic side, or a new and "improved" entrance to the campus.

For the Clueless, all you need for a conviction in Clue is the murder weapon, the location, and the suspect. Motive is ignored completely. Housing ignores motives, as well. They deal with dozens of cases of roommate discontent, and they usually try to solve this by shuffling unhappy people around several times. (Keep in mind, if you try to get a new roommate, you have a 50% chance of getting the person who hated their roommate, and a 50% of getting the person their roommate hated. Those who change roommates are likely to do so many times). What about motives? I'm pretty good at tolerating people, but when I barely have enough room to recline in my chair, I can get a little bit of cabin fever. If I had a room (in an apartment, perhaps) I would have some means of escape. Confine me in one room with two others for too long, and you'll be asking around to see whether I used the wrench or the lead pipe. •



Old Glory FOR SALE



words and photo by Kim Weiselberg

The American flag is a true symbol of our dignity and freedom, reflecting our cultural values. So it seems quite fitting that, along with everything else in this country, this precious American icon has been bought and sold. It seems like everywhere you look these days, you see an American Flag on something. Lighters, underwear, toilet paper, t-shirts, mugs...the list goes on and on.

On Flag Day (June 14) of 1924, Title 36, Chapter 10 of the United States Code was adopted. In the section titled "Respect for the Flag," it clearly states that "The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or otherwise impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard. Advertising signs should not be fastened to a staff or halyard from which the flag is flown."

Ever since September 11, the floodgates have been opened to corporate exploitation of the American flag. With the nationalist fervor that has erupted, questioning the ethics of misusing Old Glory has been labeled unpatriotic. Think about how many car dealerships you see pimping the flag all over their lots, or news channels, like Fox, who use American flag graphics to get ratings. More disturbing is the abuse of our icon by political candidates, who wrap them selves in the stars and strips to get votes.

Yet it seems like everyone has something to say to the person who would like to take the "under God" out of the Pledge of Allegiance, or to the flag burner who is trying to make a political statement (Flag burning, incidentally, is a legally protected act). But when it comes to true exploitation by companies who are making profits from our national symbol, people don't even open their mouths.

I'm sure the intentions of the American public are not out of disrespect but rather ignorance. I'm sure that the public just wants to show their patriotism and nationality. Wearing American flag underwear and lighting a cigarette with an American flag lighter doesn't say patriotism. I think that being an active part of the democratic process is the best way to express your love of the United States of America. My hope is that the American public won't remain manipulated sheep, but rather begin to have some respect for this precious American icon. •



PlayMore

by Bryan Hammer

Recess was that great moment in the school day when you got to cut loose, play, live. Then one day they took it away. No more time to play; we need that hour now to work. Even lunch hours these days aren't enough. You end up eating at your desk during class or while studying for some quiz. More and more, it seems we are giving up what living is about: enjoying a homemade sandwich with your favorite toppings, playing your favorite sport just for fun, starting new hobbies, or just sitting on a bench enjoying the outdoors. To me, these are the things that make life worth living, but they always seem to come second in the "real world." Everyone has their own idea of what a fulfilling and rewarding life is, but it doesn't seem like people always dictate their own path. The world moves at the speed of the internet now, with hard deadlines and cutthroat competition. If you're not on board, you'll be left in the dust. What is everyone in a rush for, and how did we get to this point?

It seems to me that too much of the world has gotten caught up in stocks, suits, conference calls, and politics. As a society we've forgotten how to play. It is looked down on as lazy, unproductive, and childish. However, we forget that a child at play has more imagination, creativity, and potential for the next great thing than any man or woman in a suit and cubical ever will. How can you survive in the world if you're playing, you ask? I think you will not be able to survive if you do not.

The reality of outsourcing to countries like India and China should make people realize that it isn't enough to just get a college degree, or a Master's even. It is cheaper now to send jobs that simply entail applied knowledge overseas. Given the opportunity, anyone can learn how to do these jobs, and more people in the world are now getting that chance. The next wave of great entrepreneurs will be the ones who can take ideas to the next level. Individuals who can create something new, different, and unique will be the ones sought after, not only for their expertise but also for their personal style and process. The ones who have the creativity and vision to consistently offer their specialized knowledge will lead the next economic revolution.

Before you convince yourself that if you can just get that MBA then the BMW will follow, take the time to develop your own personal vision. Resist the urge to be another cog in the wheel, and reinvent it. The important answers are not in the back of the book; they are in the imagination. If you play more you will see more. I think if people took the time to play with problems they encounter in life, they wouldn't get so frustrated trying to work at them. •



with my Riverknoll Internet Connection?

by José Plaza

RIT students have many things to boast about at our university. Among them are the top-notch education, the great faculty and staff we have, the newly added Gordon Field House that has attracted well-known artists, comedians, and actors, and of course, one of my personal favorites, Ben & Jerry's. A majority of the RIT community would also say that they are proud to be a part of the RIT internet network, which, as far as I have heard, is the fastest connection in the nation. Well, like I said, I've only heard about it. For the unlucky few like me who reside in the Riverknoll Apartment complex, we know exactly what it's like to reminisce about the 56k days when we are using the alternate internet connection of Road Runner. I guess that I'm a minority in more ways than one.

It's not to say that I'm an RIT super nerd who spends 168 hours a week on the internet, playing Ever Quest Online or downloading music. But I do become extremely frustrated when I hear how my friends on "the hub" are making the most of it by downloading complete albums faster than it takes me to complete

an algebra test. I mean, if we are going to RIT just like everyone else, why don't we have the same benefits? Why deprive the Riverknoll community of the Internet service everyone else on campus takes for granted? Every other apartment complex, from the high-class UC estates to the dormitory-side Perkins and Colony apartments, benefits from the RIT Network connections. Come on, is this fair?

Yes, I do know some of the history of Riverknoll, and how just a few years ago there were plans to tear it down. But the fact of the matter is that the apartments are still up, and people are still living in them. I can honestly say that this might be the only complaint I have about my apartment. I get to have my own room, with a bathroom to share with only one person, unlike last year when I shared one with 50 other guys and had to cover my eyes before walking into the shower for fear of finding a pube or two on the shower floor. I also have my own kitchen (and yes, I can cook...or so they say), so I make the most out of it. Plus, I have my own living room where I host weekly movie nights with my friends from the dorms.

I am pleading for RIT to do something about this situation as soon as they can. If I sound a bit desperate, maybe I am. But then again, I just want to get the most out of RIT, and if this tech school has the best internet around, why jsn't it being shared with everyone? I mean, after all, sharing is caring. •



Terrorism: Real or Hype?

by Josh Van Hook

September 11, 2001 is a day that will live forever in the annals of American life. President Bush adamantly declared that the terrorists would not defeat the United States; they would not accomplish their goal of striking fear into the hearts of the American people. Since that day, terrorists have not struck again. Bush's war seems to have run them into deeper, darker hiding spots. He sent a message across the world that the U.S. is not to be taken lightly. With little potential of future attacks, why are newscasters reporting about different ways in which America is vulnerable?

In order to examine this question, the definition of terrorism needs to first be established. Terrorism is generally violence carried out to accomplish a political end. In other words, the goal of these acts of violence is to sufficiently scare people into submission. By using violence, fear or terror is struck into the hearts of everyday people; hence the word terrorism. With this in mind, the goal of a terrorist is simply to scare the population enough so that they cannot carry out their normal lives. Once fear is planted in the people, the terrorists can go around doing as they please, running things as they see fit. Terrorists try to disrupt the normal flow of everyday life. In other words, people become afraid to fly on airplanes or go outside, and buy plastic sheets and duct tape to seal their homes. Getting the general population to act in fear is the goal of terrorism.

Since September 11, news programs have been reporting on stories about possible terrorist targets. While it is a good idea to keep possible weaknesses in mind, frivolous ones should not be bothered with. This includes everything from attacks on nuclear power plants or liquefied natural gas transportation to attacks at political conventions or airports. News networks such as CNN and Fox have created hype about different situations. For instance, a report aired about a month ago on possible attacks on landing and taking-off aircraft. The reporter was able to buy a .50 caliber rifle in cash without any paperwork. The seller was found on the internet, and armor-piercing rounds were also purchased online through legal channels. The effective range of this particular weapon is about 1000 yards, but the news team had it tested at a couple hundred. Round after round was shot through an airplane door. Then, a piece of steel about an inch thick was placed behind the door and again, the rounds penetrated it with no problem. The whole point of the story was that some terrorist could buy a rifle of such large caliber, sit outside an airport, and fire at aircraft as they landed and took off.

First, it is not shocking that a weapon of this power exists and can be purchased. People have been selling arms illegally for ages. Also, the disbelief of the reporter at the power of the weapon is unwarranted. With armor-piercing rounds at a couple tenths the maximum range of the weapon, of course it is going to penetrate steel; that is what the rifle and ammunition are designed to do. The thought of a terrorist sitting outside an airport and taking potshots at airplanes is absurd. If someone were going to do it, it would have been done already. The report blew things way out of proportion.



Similarly, previous fears about a terrorist attack on ships carrying liquefied natural gas were blown out of proportion by the media. Boston brings in large shipments of LNG on specialized ships. For a period of time after September 11, the news kept reporting about the possible danger of a terrorist attack on such a target. The government smartly put security in place, but again, nothing happened. The same goes for nuclear power plants and even the Democratic National Convention. Each time, the government realized there was a possibility and took care of the situation, and each time nothing happened.

The news media keeps reporting on the latest terrorist threat, yet nothing ever happens. If something does happen, it will most likely because the news pointed out a weakness that no one had thought of before. The thought of shooting at aircraft during take-off and landing seemed to be a fantasy, but now that it has been the subject of a special report, there is the question, are news programs doing the job of the terrorists? Is the news making the American people afraid to carry out their normal lives? Is the threat of terrorism real, or is it simply all hype? •

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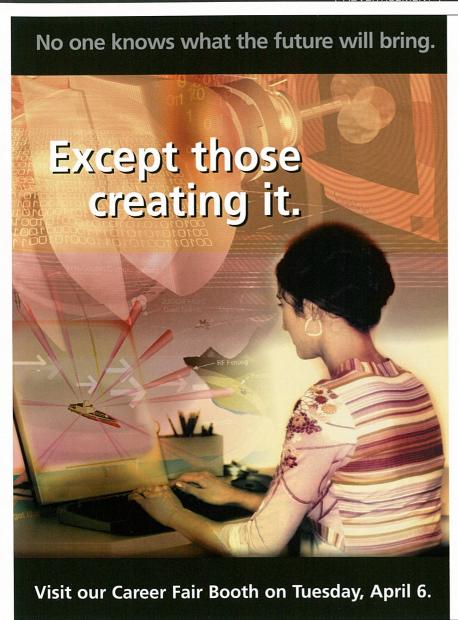
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