

# REPORTER



**HOW THE RECESSION  
IMPACTS STUDENTS**  
UPSTATE NEW YORK'S  
DWINDLING LEGACY  
OBESITY TAX







# REPORTER

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# EDITOR’S NOTE

## WHAT RECESSION?

When it comes to topics such as Batman, beer pong, and sexiling (see “RIT Rings,” page 30), RIT students have a bounty of opinions. Week after week, our answering machine is full. Email after email fills my inbox. You’ve got a lot to say, and you want to make sure people hear it. Awesome.

Yet when it comes to topics such as the recession, on the other hand, opinions suddenly dry right up. You shrug and mumble incomprehensibly. You change the topic. You don’t return our emails. It’s really weird.

Looking for interview subjects for this week’s cover story (“Wearing the Barrel,” page 16), I was mildly surprised by the amount of difficulty that we had in finding students that were willing to talk to us. Although there seems to be a general awareness that things aren’t going very well out there in the real world, we were somewhat hard pressed to find students who would talk on the subject. The truth of the matter is – for most us, anyway – it’s difficult to see how this is actually impacting us.

While RIT students excel in the mastery of any number of abstract concepts (mathematics, philosophy, fine arts, computer science, etc.), getting a grasp on how the economy impacts our day to day lives is somewhat elusive. Did you get turned down for that interview because of something going on in the financial world? Or should you just have spent a little more time polishing up your resume? Unless an employer comes right out and tells you one way or the other (which is rare), you’ll have to draw your own conclusions. Connections between your personal misfortunes and larger economic trends aren’t always the first thing that come to mind.

Whatever happens, we’re lucky in the sense that we’re not locked in to anything quite yet; at this stage in our lives, we still have the ability to make major decisions about our futures. If Upstate New York’s economy continues to worsen, we will move (see “Should I Stay or Should I Go,” page 22). If we are unhappy with our lives, there are plenty of ways we can improve them (see “Ten Ways to Improve Your Life the David Bowie Way,” page 12).

And in the end, we don’t have all that much to lose. As a friend of mine observed, “A cardboard box under a highway overpass isn’t such a demotion from a forced triple dorm.”



Laura Mandanas  
**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

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### RINGS

585.672.4840. Enlighten us.

Above photograph by Jeffrey Porter. Mike Polimeni, a second year Mechanical Engineering student, leads the RIT pep band after an RIT goal in the First period of last Friday’s game against UConn. RIT went on to win 5-3.

Cover photograph by Thomas Liggett

## CALENDAR CHANGE PUT BEFORE INSTITUTE COUNCIL

by Leanne Cushing | photograph by Eric Drummond

The institute is investigating the possibility that the winter quarter schedule needs to be changed. Many students and faculty alike loathe the winter quarter, not just because of the cold, but also due to the break in between studies. Some faculty members believe that two weeks away from the educational experience hinders learning at a critical time in the quarter.

A new proposal, discussed at the Institute Council (IC) on

January 7, if adopted, would commence a three-year trial starting in the 2010-2011 academic year. The year would begin in late September and go until late June. This would allow winter quarter to not be interrupted by restarting in January.

As beneficial for faculty and staff as this may seem, others believe it would pose a threat to co-ops and study abroad programs. "A change to a calendar that doesn't promote

jobs is a pretty dangerous move for students who are going into the job world," commented Matt Danna, Student Government (SG) vice president, after the IC meeting. "It [the co-op program] is a cornerstone of our university."

SG, which had a 16-0 vote against the new proposal, believes that if RIT students get out later than other universities, they could lose their competitive edge. A recent Co-op Office survey found that 150 out of 300 companies would be concerned that the proposed schedule would make RIT students less desirable hires. "An economic downturn leads

to a more competitive market to seize the minimal amount of jobs," argued SG President Ed Wolf. Like many in the co-op program, he feels that job opportunities will disappear if the calendar is altered.

An official change has yet to be enacted, as a consensus among the IC, SG and Academic Senate has not been reached. As College of Imaging Arts and Sciences senator Adam Richlin put it, "We haven't seen a single positive outcome that benefits all students across the board from the proposed change." •

## HOUSING CHALLENGE

by Caitlin Shapiro

RIT students living in the dorms have complained that conditions are cramped, loud and frustrating. In response to these complaints, Student Government (SG) has posed a challenge to the RIT administration. Approximately 45 RIT administrators have been invited to live in various campus dorms for three days and two nights. Move-in begins on Sunday, January 18. The 21 administrators who have accepted the challenge,

including President Destler, will have an 11 a.m. check-in, and will then meet their new student roommates.

Matt Danna, creator of the challenge and SG vice president, commented, "As a category of one university, we shouldn't be benchmarking ourselves against other schools' poor habits." The goal of this challenge is for administration to learn more about student life at RIT. By living in the

residence halls, administrators will have firsthand knowledge when making any future decisions regarding student living on campus.

Caty Stuires, a Sol Heumann Hall resident and first year Art major, explained that her biggest issue with living in the dorms is the noise level at night. "Quiet hours aren't enforced because either the RAs aren't there or they're hanging out and being loud too." Stuires doesn't think that much will happen to change her dilemma. She noted, "If people know the administrators are living

in the dorms, then everyone will follow the rules better."

Besides bunking up with students, administrators will also be eating at Grace Watson Dining Hall and dealing with the scarcity of parking spaces.

SG has also planned an open forum for move-out night on Tuesday, January 20. The Forum will be held at 8:00 p.m. in the Panara Theatre in Lyndon Baines Johnson building. Here, administrators will reveal what they learned and what they feel should be improved. SG hopes a few hundred students will attend to express their concerns. •



Rober Ulin, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, peers behind Ashok Rao, Associate Dean of the College of Business, during a vote on which calendar option to adopt.



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## SG UPDATE

compiled by Alecia Crawford

### DORM CHALLENGE FACULTY LIST RELEASED

The agenda included 21 faculty that will be participating in the Housing Challenge, including President William Destler, Vice President for Student Affairs Mary-Beth Cooper, Director for the Center of Campus Life Mike D' Arcangelo, and Director of Maintenance Services Randy Vercauteren.

### ACA FASHION SHOW TICKETS ON SALE

AALANA Collegiate Association (ACA) representative Toronto Alsbrook reported that the ACA Fashion Show Tickets will be on sale in the Student Alumni Union lobby from noon to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### DR. HAEFNER TALKS TO SENATE

Provost and Senior Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Jeremy Haefner spoke before the Senate about the voting results from the Staff Council and Academic Senate regarding the 2010-11 academic calendar. The two governing bodies disagreed with Student Government. Haefner stated that he was more comfortable with semesters than the quarter system, but knows that most of the student body desires the quarter system. Haefner also wanted to make himself more available to SG.

The Senate also brought the issue of all faculty using myCourses to the Provost. Students want to see their progress in a course, but some professors aren't delivering that feedback to the students. Financial Manager Merry Schading advocated for the faculty by describing the difficulty of myCourses for a professor and how it takes them a long time to post grades, given the size of their classes. According to Schading, the process is long and troublesome.

When asked about participating in the Orange Hair Challenge, Haefner joked about sending a picture of the president's dyed hair and telling his wife, "See what happens when you're not around?" Student Athlete representative Jose Guzman then suggested that Haefner should join the challenge and dye his hair during the half time of the Women's game and Destler at the half time of the Men's. According to Chris Hysek, Marketing Assistant for the Center for Intercollegiate Athletics & Recreation, Haefner has accepted the challenge.

### IMAGINE RIT

Dr. Barry Culhane came to talk about the innovation festival coming up in early May. There will be six welcoming tables this year, rather than last year's one huge tent. Spring Fest will be the following weekend, rather than the same weekend. The hours of Imagine RIT will be extended one hour, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Destler's green vehicle challenge will be at 9 a.m. The challenge will consist of energy-efficient cars racing on a three-mile course, from S Lot to the Red Barn and back. The idea was inspired by Destler's electric bicycle.

### FRESHMEN SENATOR ELECTED

25 interested freshmen delivered speeches before the Senate (plus one e-mail to the Senate). Most of the freshmen goals included fixing Gracie's food selection and quality, all freshmen being able to receive all debit meal options, increasing freshmen involvement, and school spirit through various incentives. After an open vote, Teraisa Chloros a first year Medical Informatics major, was chosen to represent freshmen in the Senate. Chloros seeks to reclaim lounge space in the dorms and to make Gracie's selections more vegetarian friendly. •

## RIT FORECAST

compiled by Alecia Crawford

### SAT 17

#### LAST COMIC STANDING FINALS

CSD Student Development Center, Room 1300 and 1310. 11 p.m. RIT's funniest compete to make you laugh. Fortunately, it's also a known fact that laughing works out the abs when done often. Sponsored by CAB and the RIT Comedy Troupe. Cost: \$1.

### SUN 18

#### NOTORIOUS IN THEATERS

Any movie theater. Check local listings for times. The biography of Christopher Wallace (a.k.a. Notorious B.I.G.) is out in theaters. And if you didn't know, now you know. Cost: Varies.

#### JAZZ NIGHT AT LOVIN' CUP

300 Park Point Drive. 7 p.m. Listen to local jazz groups while sipping coffee or beer (if you're of age). Sit back and relax before the beginning of a busy week. Cost: Free.

### MON 19

#### BIG APPLE MONDAYS

Flat Iron Café. 561 State Street. 9 p.m. Learn how to swing dance with live music by the Quinn Lawrence Trio. Cost: \$6 cover, \$5 for students.

### TUE 20

#### PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION BASH

Clark Gym. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Watch the inauguration of President Barack Obama with the RIT community for this momentous occasion. Cost: Free.

### WED 21

#### EDWARD BURTYNSKY

Webb Auditorium. 8 - 10 p.m. Works from a Canadian photographer of industry-transformed landscapes. Sponsored by the Caroline Werner Gannett Project. Cost: Free.

### THU 22

#### CAB THURSDAY NIGHT CINEMA: THE GOONIES

SAU Cafeteria. 9:30 p.m. HEY YOU GUYS!!! Who can't resist the truffle shuffle? Watch the movie that everyone has to have seen as a kid. Cost: Free.

### FRI 23

#### NAS

Gordon Field House. Doors open at 7 p.m. Live at RIT for one night only, Nas and special guest The Knux. Cost: \$16 for students.



# 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.



Found on the 2nd floor of Wallace Library - A tag by Jakob Lodwick, former RIT student and co-founder of Vimeo and CollegeHumor.com. This past summer, the "internet millionaire" gained some unwanted attention when he decided he no longer wanted a presence on the internet.

## Gaming

### What Lies Ahead

by Chukwuma Morah  
illustration by Ben Rubin



Gaming is a lot like RIT's female-to-male ratio: It gets better with every passing year. With the magnitude of last year's success in the video game industry, 2009 has some big shoes to fill. Let's take a look at what the Year of the Ox has to offer.

#### NINTENDO

This year, Nintendo promises to cater to you, the gamer, and not your mother — that means less with the Wii Fit and more with the being a good ol' couch potato.

Get ready to wipe that dust off your Wii, because the classic fan favorite *Punch-Out!!* returns sometime this year, as will the sequel to the N64 cult favorite *Sin & Punishment*. Nintendo's fall lineup is still a complete mystery, so expect a big announcement sometime in the upcoming months. The big N has hinted that a new *Legend of Zelda* is currently in development, but I wouldn't stain my shorts just yet — the chances of it seeing a 2009 release are slim. Other great titles to look forward to include the Japanese RPG *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers*, the insanely violent *MadWorld* (YouTube it; you won't be disappointed), and the promising first person shooter game, *The Conduit*. The sequel to *Wii Sports*, *Wii Sports Resort*, is on the way as well. Tell your mom not to worry.

#### MICROSOFT

Microsoft is usually tight-lipped about their blockbuster titles until about halfway through the year, so little is known about their '09 menu. From the creators of *Age of Empires*, *Halo Wars*, a real-time strategy game based on the *Halo* franchise, will be released on February 28. Along with it, the Master Chief-less expansion pack, *Halo 3: ODST*, is scheduled for the fourth quarter and should keep *Halo* fans engaged.

That's it for the exclusives, but Microsoft assures fans that something big is in store for the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3), gaming's biggest showpiece event, in June.

#### SONY

In the Sony world, last year didn't go too well, so they're hoping 2009 will prove a bit more fruitful. Expect 2009 to be the year where PS3 provides games that are visually superior to the Xbox 360 offerings (as the console's hardware specs have been promising all along). The futuristic shooter *Killzone 2* comes out on February 27, with visuals that will melt your eyelids; you will simply not have seen a better-looking console game, period. The ultra-realistic, emotionally engaging, adult thriller *Heavy Rain* will then disintegrate whatever bits of eyelid are remaining.

*God of War 3* is currently in production and has a good chance of making it to store shelves by fall, so cross your fingers. The Playstation Network online store will be seeing some impressive, low-priced, downloadable games like *Fat Princess* and *FLOWer*. With the economic crisis at hand, expect a \$30-\$50 product price drop sometime in the near future. If all goes well, this year should be a good one for the PS3, as Sony works hard to overcome memories of last year's unmet expectations.

#### MULTIPLATFORM

The multiplatform games of 2009 might just steal the spotlight from the console exclusive titles. The *Street Fighter* series will see a much-anticipated revival when *Street Fighter IV* hits stores on February 17. *Resident Evil 5* will have you going number one (or number two) in your seat on March 13, which, coincidentally, happens to be Friday the 13th. For summer, the *Ghostbusters* game, due on June 16, will



pick up where the last movie left off.

If you have ever wondered what *Devil May Cry* would be like if it starred a Sarah Palin lookalike with a shape shifting hairdo, don't miss out on the impressive looking *Bayonetta*. Also, because sequels sell so well, expect them from some of 2007's best games (*Call of Duty 4*, *Bioshock* and *Mass Effect* in particular) later in the year. Other noteworthy mentions include *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, *Brutal Legend* (starring Jack Black), *Bionic Commando*, and *I Am Alive*.

#### PORTABLE

The portable side of gaming won't be hiding in the shadows any time soon, either. The DSi, Nintendo's latest iteration of the DS, should hit shelves by the summer. In the meantime, *Final Fantasy: Dissidia* (think *Final Fantasy* meets *Smash Bros*) should sell plenty of PSPs. Finally, be prepared to take the iPhone a bit more seriously as a gaming platform; Konami will be releasing a *Metal Gear Solid 4* spin-off for touch screens everywhere. Stay tuned. •



# THE DAVID BOWIE WAY

In honor of the new year and the living legend's birthday, here are some tips to jump start your next 365 days (minus 16).

by Leanne Cushing | illustration by Joanna Ebert

**MAKE SOME CH-CH-CH-CHANGES** Unhappy with your life? You don't have to be — change it. Try finding a club to join. After all, many are open to new members year round. Or, try attending an on-campus event. If you're one of the many people who has resolved to lose or gain weight for the new year, you can see a nutritionist at the Student Health Center to discuss healthy options, join an intramural sport, or consult one of the personal trainers that work in the Student Life Center.

**BE A HERO (JUST FOR ONE DAY)** Do something spontaneous! Go sledding, try snowboarding, or go out on a late night adventure somewhere. The cold is going to be around for a few more months, so try to enjoy it. If you find something positive about it, it won't seem as bad.

Be a hero and volunteer your time to improve the lives of others or work for a charity. RIT Leadership Institute and Community Service Center actually has a list of volunteer work that is available during the school year. If you like to work with your hands, try helping with Habitat for Humanity. If you love animals, work with one of the many adoption agencies around the Rochester area. The work may not be your favorite thing to do on a weekend or weeknight, but, all in all, you can feel proud knowing you have helped improve your community.

**WEAR TIGHTS** Alright, maybe try something a little less extreme as wearing tights. But Bowie did in *Labyrinth* and the movie was a huge success. Try showing off a special talent or take a stab at a new look (but please, try to avoid mullets and hairspray). Being eccentric helps liberate a uniqueness and creative side in you that will lead to a happier and much more interesting lifestyle.

**SCARY MONSTERS (AND SUPER CREEPS)** Yes, random neck-bearded guy, I'm talking to you. I see how you Facebook-stalked that one girl in class and googled her name. Stop it! You can't woo her that way (of course, that's assuming she knows you exist). While you're at it, quit raiding four-plus nights a week in *World of Warcraft* and watching the most recent superhero movie on repeat — get out and speak to someone "irl" (in real life).

**FILL YOUR HEART** Filling your heart doesn't have to mean just having a significant other. Fill your life with friends and always try to meet new people. By forcing yourself into awkward situations and conversations with strangers, you can develop a relaxed disposition (which can help when talking to or asking out that certain someone, if you must).

**DARE TO DAYDREAM** Have a Moonage Daydream! Imagine you're an alligator, a space invader or whatever you can think up. Daydreams tend to be connected to happy, hopeful or ambitious emotions and range from reminiscing on the past to imagining the future. A lecture that is tough to get through can go by faster by engaging the mind and diverting feelings of anxiety and depression. Daydreaming can be constructive in some contexts, such as developing new ideas for film, literature, mathematics and scientific research.

**GOLDEN YEARS** College is the last opportunity for irresponsibility without consequence and not having to deal with reality. If you live on campus, most bills are taken care of by one lumped sum at the beginning of each quarter, which, for many of us, is paid for by our parents.

College is the only time where individuals can be drunk every day and not be frowned upon as an alcoholic. Before you know it, we'll all be trapped into 9-5 schedules in the real world with financial stress and little time or energy for fun. Enjoy college while it lasts — these are your golden years.

**REBEL, REBEL** Challenge established ideas. Be innovative and creative when attacking projects and problems. Stop caring about what others might think about you. Rebel against your normal expectations, change your appearance for a day to see the response, or try a new programming language or an unusual photography technique. Select a movie or food you'd never usually pick, or do something completely compulsive and selfish.

**SURROUND YOURSELF WITH SOUND AND VISION** Music and color is a great way to change your mood. Try downloading a new artist or find new music through Pandora or Last.fm. Add color to your dorm or apartment room by buying a new bright colored blanket, an array of posters, or a lamp to warm the room up. Color is a great way to subliminally lift your moods in the dull Rochester winter.

Wal-Mart and Target have a lot of cheap things for your room. For example, super-soft fleece blankets run at around \$10 at Target and, with Christmas behind us, strings of lights run around \$6 for every 20 feet. Lights are a good alternative to the computer glow and fluorescent lighting and all you need to put them up is tacks. The more welcoming and homey the room looks, the happier you'll be (and the more likely floor mates might stop in for a visit).

**HANG ONTO YOURSELF!** The winter quarter is halfway over, which means the academic year is half over as well. Halfway through the year, halfway through the workload — try to keep up your motivation and morale. As tough as it may be to push yourself to get every last homework assignment done, your commitment will pay off. •



# REVIEWS



## THE UNBORN

by Emily Mohlmann

### RATING: SKIP IT

Dybbuks, jogging and death — oh my! That is what unfolds in David Goyer's *The Unborn*, but don't jump up to see it so quickly.

*The Unborn* doesn't take long to get into weak, shock factor scare tactics, starting in the opening scene with quick cuts, a mask-wearing bull terrier, and an fetus in formaldehyde that opens its eyes. Cheesy effects top off the rest of the movie, implementing the use of potato bugs, wriggling tentacles, and alien-like dead people.

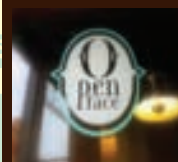
With the main character, Casey Beldon (Odette Yustman), spending inordinate amounts of time in her underwear and jogging in slow motion, it leaves little time for anything resembling character development.

The movie spawns from Jewish mysticism, a dybbuk and Nazi experiments on twins in Auschwitz. The dybbuk is a wandering soul attempting to be reborn through someone in Beldon's family. Hallucinations start before anything is physically wrong with Beldon, but once one of her pupils changes color, her best friend Romy (Meagan Good) makes sure to point it out: "Case, there's something wrong with your eye." This only serves to add to the unrealistic dialogue and overly explain a situation that leaves little for the viewer to think about.

Beldon starts a quest to get to the bottom of her new eye color, eventually talking

to a woman who we find out is her long lost grandmother (Jane Alexander) through the convenient placement of archived articles and footage in her basement. After learning the dybbuk killed her twin and her mother, Beldon summons Rabbi Sendak (Gary Oldman) and a basketball coach-gone-priest (Idris Elba) to perform a nonsensical exorcism. In the end, after the cast has been killed off for Beldon's own selfish good (it leaves you hating her by the end), and her father (James Remar) mysteriously drops from the script, we can finally rest easy.

But wait, this movie wouldn't be complete without a predictable twist and a lead in to a possible sequel depending on box office sales. Don't let this happen. The bottom line is that this short, 87-minute-long movie will leave you feeling like you've wasted a whole night. •



## OPEN FACE

by Geoffrey H. Bliss

### RATING: DIG IT

Nestled in Rochester's South Avenue strip sits a cozy restaurant with candlelit tables — a place where food is served on vintage metal plates, and which opens its doors every year to one of Rochester's biggest Vespa reunions is the Open Face restaurant. It is even run by two RIT alumni.

Drew Serman, a Fine Arts graduate and his business partner, Jared Valentine, who studied Industrial Design, launched their restaurant in 2004, catering to

anyone who sought out delicious food, coffee and tea served fresh alongside a daily repository of atmospheric refinement.

The interior space, completely designed by Serman and Valentine, combines the owners' previous experience in design and art into something all their own. Upon entering, the appearance is welcoming, with small attention to details encircling a very small but intimate space.

The menu is diverse, featuring special items like a coconut cream latte and a variety of sandwiches with a side option of soup, chips and salads to settle a person's appetite at a reasonable price. The food is delectable and its presentation is given the same amount of attention as everything else inside.

Still, Open Face is more than just a restaurant. Guests don't just eat.

They create their own experiences. Tea is served differently: Instead of being given to customers in small pods, people pack their own by hand. There are thirty varieties of loose-leaf tea and another unique-tasting, almost antique drink called the Moxie, named after and made by the oldest soft drink company in the United States.

All in all, everything is worth trying. The curry carrot soup in particular should not be missed. Check out Open Face. Seriously. Any guest will feel at ease both before and after eating.

*Open Face is located on 651 South Avenue and is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. For a menu and more information, go to <http://openfacesandwicheatery.com>. •*

# 01.16.09

# AT YOUR LEISURE

by John Howard

## STREAM OF FACTS

Charles Schulz, the celebrated cartoonist, almost accepted another career path in the art world after returning home from leading a machine-gun squad in World War II: lettering tombstones. His early drawing lessons at Art Instruction Schools in Minneapolis were his only formal training for the talent that would later develop into a strip called "Li'l Folks," later to be known as "PEANUTS."

Over 99 tons of PEANUTS go into packing a day's worth of output on the Snickers bar's assembly line. At 16 peanuts per bar, that's about 14,000 of these candies — one of world's favorites — per day. Snickers bars were originally brought into the world by Frank Mars in 1930 and were named after the Mars family HORSE. At the time of their introduction, they contained no chocolate coating.

A HORSE does not possess the necessary internal makeup to allow the mammal to vomit. This is because the muscles of the animal's stomach only allow food to move forward in the digestive track. The stomach will swell up when food cannot be moved quickly enough through the digestive system to compensate, and can even reach a point where it may EXPLODE.

EXPLODE is not a word normally associated with the act of cleanup. However, such was the case at the sight of a washed-up sperm whale on a beach outside of Florence, Oregon on November 12, 1970. The Oregon State Highway Division pumped the 8-ton carcass with half a ton of dynamite, leaving large chunk still lying on the sand and the rest to RAIN down upon the onlookers.

The screenplay of the *RAIN Man* features a statement claiming that only 8,095 Buick Roadmaster Convertibles were manufactured in the year 1949. The truth of the matter is that they were 149 off, as Buick churned out 8,244 units that year. Jack Nicholson, who turned down the role of Raymond Babbit (then played by Dustin Hoffman) in *Rain Man*, is seen driving a 1994 version of the Roadmaster as Costello in *The Departed*.

## QUOTE by John Carpenter

"In England, I'm a horror movie director. In Germany, I'm a filmmaker. In the US, I'm a bum."

## CARTOON by Kory Merritt



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To see more of Kory Merritt's comics, check out

## REPORTER RECOMMENDS

Stephen Lynch. If you miss the good old days of Adam Sandler singing about Hanukkah and the lunch lady, then this may just be the right amount of dark and perverted humor to fix that feeling of withdrawal. Sure, the concept of a singing comedian is far from being original, but rarely is the genre met with the kind of vocal talent that Lynch brings to the stage. He has been around the musical circuit since 2000, spitting out songs with titles ranging from "In Defense of a Peepshow Girl" to "Little Tiny Moustache." If you haven't heard of him, check him out on YouTube, and if you have, perhaps it's time for a revisit. After all, laughter is the best medicine and, with all the colds you're going to catch this season, you're going to need all the help you can get.

## OVERSEEN AND OVERHEARD AT RIT

Female student seen text messaging in front of the toaster at Java's while holding up a crowd of angry, untoasted bagel-holding patrons. "I'm on Linux, you son of a bitch." Student at Crossroads.

Bicyclist stuck in a snowbank behind Gannett Building (7B).

## WORD SCRAMBLE

Dining at Gracie's is seen as a last one of these:

Unscramble the highlighted letters above. Answers available at <http://reportermag.com>.

HOPRC \_\_\_\_\_  
TCSY \_\_\_\_\_  
CEIRTCNOOR \_\_\_\_\_  
FENBOIDDR \_\_\_\_\_  
AETRMK \_\_\_\_\_

ANSWER \_\_\_\_\_



# wearing the barrel

by Michael Barbato and Maximiliano Herrera

photographs by Georgi Unkouski

# A

shley Karavic started to feel the pressure of a bad economy back in early 2008. She always believed that companies needed to promote themselves in order to get her to work for them. Recently, however, Karavic, a Juris Doctor student in her first year of law school at the University of Chicago, has been humbled by rejection after rejection. She has even been turned down for part-time work at both a coffee shop and a bookstore.

For college students across the country, this recession has hit close to home. Many have been laid off due to downsizing, particularly in college towns where labor is cheap yet the cost to pay for such labor isn't deemed necessary. One such college town is home to the University of Florida, where Kelli Willits, a third year Anthropology and Entomology major, has been laid off twice in 2008 by relatively small companies due to downsizing. In Florida, a state where education budget cuts have been unstinting as of late, many students have also felt the effects in their daily college experience. Petra Aldridge, a third year Statistics major at the University of North Florida, remarks, "Class selections have been cut, getting funding for clubs from Student Government is harder, that sort of thing."





# Im

Massachusetts, the experience is different, yet noticeable nonetheless. “The most I’ve felt it was at school. The food, which has never been that fabulous, definitely took a turn for the worse. The dining halls would run out of food, the hours got shorter and there were more repeats of meals than usual. I’m about to start job searching, so I’ll probably start feeling it a lot more ... Also, the student organizations are getting a lot less money than they used to. Or, well, my organization [Smith Sci-Fi Fantasy Society] did, anyway,” remarks Danielle Popp, a third year East Asian Languages and Literature major at Smith College. There’s no doubt that even we at RIT have found it difficult not to notice.

## What’s happening?

The reasons for our current economic situation are complex, but the basic idea is this: In the mid-1990s, when the economy was stronger, banks began granting loans to people who did not have the financial security to repay the debt. To make things worse, most of these loans had ballooning interest rates (interest rates that start low and become larger over time). This practice is what has been referred to in the media as “sub-prime lending.”

Unsurprisingly, when interest inflated, many of the borrowers became unable to pay even the interest on their loans. Investors lost money as borrowers defaulted, and as they lost money, they were unable to pay their own financial obligations. Because many of these investors were major financial institutions, the troubles that they passed on were felt throughout the entire market. Due to this and other contributing factors that have made their way to the news recently, the

United States has been through two consecutive quarters of a decreased gross domestic product, otherwise known as a recession.

Even so, Dr. Jeffrey Wagner of the RIT Department of Economics offers some reassurance: “While there are many contributing factors to recessions, we are starting to understand that the economy is cyclical in nature. Recessions are almost inevitable, but they are not permanent. Most economists suspect that this recession should be over by the end of 2009.”

According to Dr. Wagner, recessions hurt, but they are necessary evils for capitalist societies. For the most part, they fix economic imbalances and bring attention to wasteful business practices, eventually leading to a more sustainable economy. A recession forces companies to make “smarter” business plans and avoid poor business decisions (like sub-prime lending). When companies operate wisely and more efficiently, the whole economy benefits. These events lead to a prosperous post-recession economy.

Until that time comes, however, most students will be pinching pennies. Prices on just about everything have been rising since early 2008, from the cost of groceries to the cost of attending college. Although it isn’t unusual to see tuition hiking up with every following school year, at RIT, it is financial aid that seems to have been affected the most by the recession.

## The Financial Aid Situation

There are some changes to the aid available next year due to the crisis, but most will be behind the scenes. Verna Hazen, the assistant vice president of RIT’s Financial Aid & Scholarships Department, assures that

“RIT is strongly committed to assisting students whose families cannot afford the total cost of an RIT education.” According to Hazen, the department itself is also “not seeing any decreases in the amount of federal financial aid available to students for this year and next year.” In fact, what they are seeing is what appears to be, from the outside, an increase in aid.

This is due in large part to action on the part

of the federal government to increase availability of certain loans for both parents and students. For instance, access to existing Stafford Loans — federal student loans that can be borrowed by nearly every college or university student — has now been guaranteed for all students.

A widely used type of Stafford Loan is the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP), where private lenders such as Citibank provide

the capital for loans. Some lenders have recently withdrawn from FFELP in light of the weak economy, but so far, students are still able to receive their loans because the amount lost from lenders withdrawing has been replaced by federal government funding.

Government involvement has also made it feasible for other lenders to remain with the program, preserving Stafford Loans for students.

RIT participates in a program similar to the FFELP called the Direct Stafford Loan program, which eliminates all private lenders and borrows all capital from the federal government. It also allows more flexibility in the timing of fund disbursement. “When some lenders withdrew from the Stafford Loan program last summer, RIT students and parents were entirely unaffected,” Hazen remarks.





# U

Unfortunately, some loans for students without co-signers are not going to be available next year. The non-federal Custom Loan, a shared-risk loan between RIT and Citibank, once allowed a student to borrow from Citibank without a co-signer. By the 2009 academic year, Citibank will no longer offer this loan. However, "Financial Aid and Scholarships is actively working on a number of alternatives for the small number of students who might be affected next year," says Hazen.

Work is also being done to help students with particularly difficult financial situations. A modest increase in the Federal Pell Grant program has been scheduled to take effect in the coming year. It will provide need-based grants to low-income undergraduate and certain post-baccalaureate students in order to ease the burden of post-secondary education.

## Surviving the Crisis

In general, the people who have been hit the hardest are the people who had the most to lose. Because most students are just coming into financial independence from their parents, as a group, we are the least affected by the recession. Even so, that does not necessarily mean that there are happy days ahead.

According to *The New York Times*, the total number of jobs lost in the recession now totals 2.59 million, with many more job losses expected in coming months. Hundreds of thousands more people sought full-time work in the past month, but were not able to get more than part-time jobs. In the coming months, companies will also need to get rid of the least efficient employees, those who usually contribute to part-time labor. As businesses leave job positions vacant for lon-

ger periods of time and more workers compete for these jobs, it may be more difficult for students to obtain part-time jobs off campus.

Graduates and students looking for co-ops may have similar setbacks. Many firms are already downsizing, so there will be less offers available in the coming year. That does not mean that there will be no offers. Wagner advises, "Firms will always need people to work for them, and employees are always leaving for other jobs or retirement. If you do what you love, then money will come. Don't worry."

There's no need to panic and switch majors now — remember, the economy flows in cycles with ups and downs. Picking a career based solely on what may currently be a successful industry isn't a good idea. A year or two from now, the outlook may be radically different.

Whatever the market does, there are plenty of things that students can do to differentiate themselves to retain a competitive edge. "I can't get mad at the economy for sucking. I can only do what I can to try and get a job," Karavic confides. She is currently trying to increase her appeal to employers by volunteering and tutoring while she's not working. This is a good start. Another beneficial practice is to talk directly to working professionals about what they are looking for in an employee. Bolstering your extracurricular activities and knowledge base of how companies in your field conduct business can land you a great co-op or career in any economic situation. •

For details on the availability and criteria for loans at RIT visit <http://rit.edu/emcs/financialaid/loans.html>, under the heading "Loans." For more information on the Pell Grant, visit <http://ed.gov/programs/fpg/index.html>.

## Getting More Bang Out of Your Buck

- Cutting out proprietary products and using generics can save a bundle at the store.
- Instead of buying the more expensive original brand, try the generic store brand.
- Wegmans, for instance, offers a wide variety of ice cream flavors, which are cheaper alternatives to brand named frozen treats.
- Look for free stuff from Craigslist, since people often give great stuff away. If you're looking for something specific, you can even subscribe to an RSS feed of your search terms.
- You're never too young to start using coupons.

## Helpful Suggestions To Revitalize Your Bank Account

- Instead of buying brewed coffee, make your own.
- Cut out movie theaters and use Netflix.
- Reserve going out to restaurants for special occasions.
- Ride a bike instead of a car when you can.
- Look over available scholarships from reputable sites, such as that of RIT's Financial Aid office.
- Use your RIT ID to get a free club card at BJ's, and buy in bulk.
- Avoid impulse buys by shopping after you've eaten.
- Brown bag your lunch.
- Bottle your own water.
- Recharge your laptop on campus.
- Do regular maintenance on your car to avoid more serious problems.
- Use online tools to manage your account. <http://mint.com> is a well respected personal finance application, but there are others out there as well. Find one that suits your needs.

# The Ombuds Office

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RIT Ombudsperson  
585.475.2876 / 585.475.7200  
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[www.rit.edu/~ombuds](http://www.rit.edu/~ombuds)



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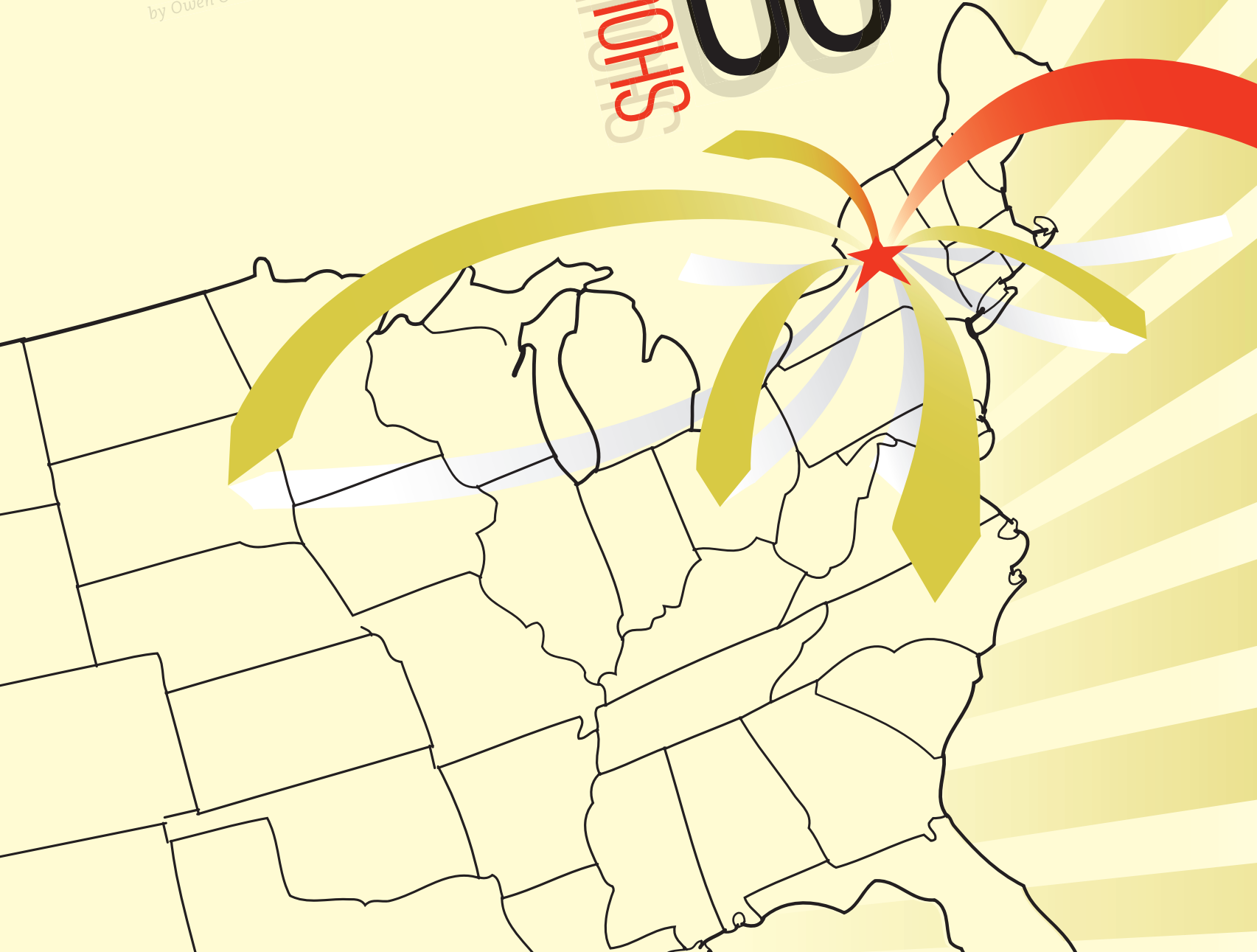


# STAY OR GO

SHOULD I

SHOULD I

by Owen O'Connell | illustration by Katie Anderson  
 by Owen O'Connell | illustration by Katie Anderson



In the recent State of the State address, Governor David Paterson outlined his plans to ensure New York's position in emerging from the national and global economic slump. He emphasized the state's schools by citing upstate New York's "clean tech," information- and research-driven institutions. According to Paterson, New York holds "some of the best human capital in the world."

The hope is that President-Elect Barack Obama's intent to pour money into cutting edge research could jostle the upstate region out of the economic malaise that has dogged it for nearly two decades. There is a problem, however: Once the graduates of those institutions are cut loose into the work force, only an estimated one-fourth to half of them will choose to stay upstate and work at local technology firms — those which actually grow the economy. The rest will flee for greener career pastures, seeking higher pay, cosmopolitan lifestyles, lower taxes, warmer weather, or some combination of all of these things.

This so-called "brain drain" is a specter that haunts nearly every discussion of upstate economics. Higher education draws heavily on the resources of the region, and when students pull up stakes after graduation that loss is compounded. "No one is more mobile than a recent college graduate," says Professor Rolph Pendall in a discussion with Rochester's City magazine.

Governor Paterson was quite clear in recent statements that New York will be raising taxes in order to compensate for its huge budgetary shortfalls. This policy runs contrary to his preferred solution to the brain drain: alleviating property taxes to make New York a more desirable career destination. State taxes, already above national averages, are often cited as a major reason that qualified workers are lured elsewhere.

Beyond taxes, there is a social dimension. In the same City interview, Cornell Professor Susan Christopherson notes

that young graduates are motivated by two things: Jobs and dates. To compete socially with New York City and less proximal cities, Rochester needs to transform into a youthful, active place, rather than a Rust Belt giant bemoaning its dwindling legacy.

There is nary a college student that wouldn't want to escape from such a place, especially when they are already so proximal to what is publicized as exciting, urban environments. Pendall says, "A lot of the colleges are located in more rural areas with smaller labor markets, so once you graduate from a small-town university, if you're going to move at all, you're probably going to go to New York City or North Carolina or something, unless you have roots upstate ... especially if they look at the wages in Rochester or Buffalo or Syracuse and compare them to the wages that they'd be earning practically anywhere else, in any other big city in the Northeast."

The NYS Department of Labor reports that the wages in our area are less competitive and experts point to a lack of cooperation regionally. A long-standing sense of rivalry between nearby cities and between those cities and their surrounding rural and suburban sectors has stymied any coordinated attempts to enrich the region's economic prospects. To Pendall, this competitive edge in a time of economic distress is absurd: "Why is it so necessary for Syracuse and Rochester to compete with each other? They really are within the same economic region. The fate of Syracuse is the fate of Rochester and vice versa."

The road to this fate starts with politics. Any reliable map of New York State politics will show a glaring blue region engulfing the New York City area, surrounded by red in the more rural parts of the state. Tackling the issues of upstate New York then becomes a difficult task, since issues concerning these areas are clustered alongside those of New York City. Upstate issues are often overlooked, a complaint which fuels a bitter form of partisanship.

Pendall cites the severity of this partisanship as "poisonous political

fighting that goes on from either side." He recalls that discussions about "smart growth" once passed without qualms in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut, all places with republican governors at the time. Yet the minute "smart growth" was mentioned by our democratic New York State governor, it was denounced as democratic. Politicians stopped dead in their tracks. "I think a lot of people upstate are really sick of the deadlock that happens, because any one of these issues, the minute it comes up, it's a partisan issue and the only people who are talking about it happen to be the partisan politicians ... There's something about the dynamic in New York State," Said Pendall.

The cyclical relationship between higher education and local industry gets truncated if the alumni don't stay to contribute to these firms that may once have been attracted to the area. As the economy worsens, firms are more likely to be uncommitted to temporary work, especially by a currently unprofessional student still in need of on-the-job training. RIT's co-op system and culture of innovation could play a key role in attracting firms to set up in Rochester and increasing career options throughout the region as a whole. With diversified employment opportunities, Rochester might break from its historic reliance on a handful of gigantic firms (such as Xerox and Kodak), making the region more of a magnet for young professionals in search of a place to build their careers.

As Governor Paterson characterized the state's situation as "perilous," it is essential to look to the future that will be formed by our current policies. It seems that upstate has many of the tools needed to emerge from this crisis stronger and in a better position than ever, but to do so, the state must take action to retain the critical sector of young, qualified workers. RIT's administration and students can do their part by living up to their promise to drive technology and innovation, but will the state do what it takes to make the most of it? •





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RIT's Caitlyn Burr in the Women's 800 yard freestyle race on Saturday, December 6, 2008.



# STROKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

by Jack Reickel | photograph by Even Witik

This new year, a group of RIT athletes got to miss the deep cold of Rochester by taking a training trip down to warm and sunny Florida. With bad weather and high prices abounding, the RIT men's and women's swimming & diving teams forewent the usual plane ride and instead piled into a bus for a 22-hour ride south. It was the fourth year the swimming & diving teams have made such a trip. The teams shared pools with top swimming programs from around the country and were, in fact, the only Division III teams practicing there. This trip plays into the long-term season goals of each team.

So far this year, the men's team record is three wins with two losses; the women's is the reverse: 2 - 3. When asked about this season, Coach Mike Cahill was extremely optimistic. Unlike other sports, where maintaining a season record propels teams to the playoffs, in swimming, the season is a constant buildup to the State Tournament. Meets are a good way for teams to check how they are doing throughout the season as they prepare for the final showdown that

is States. Women's Captain Caitlyn Burr, a third year Finance major, said, "States is like your final say." It's more important to the team to end the year at the tournament with a strong statement and a good finish than it is to win the small meets leading up to it.

Cahill is aiming for numbers to get the teams in the State Tournament. They're working towards having the men's team finish in the top three or four in men's Division III Swimming & Diving in New York, while the women's goal is the top six. Alongside the team goals, Cahill has his eye on sending some individual players to the NCAA Tournament. Men's Captain Casey Schneider, a third year Industrial Design major, agrees that one of his personal career goals is to reach the national scope.

Though the season's goal is to perform well in the State Tournament, as well as to send swimmers and divers to the NCAA tournament, any team has its eye on the future. Overall, the Tigers are a very young team. Cahill called it an "excellent recruiting year, especially on the women's

side." The men's and women's teams combine to have 19 first year students in total, 12 of them on the women's team.

With such a large contingency of young teammates, maturity could be an issue. According to the captains, that is not the case. Women's Captain Cat Jones, a fourth year Interpreting major, said that the team has great character. Rather than trying to direct the team, the captains are choosing to lead by good example and out-of-pool encouragement. The training week in Florida is one example, but, according to Burr, all team gatherings outside of the pool are the best way to make new teammates feel comfortable.

With this season shaping towards another successful State Tournament for the Tigers, and as each young team looks to the future, RIT's swimming & diving program seems to keep improving. The next home meet for the women's team is February 20, against William Smith, and the next joint meet at home is February 7, against Nazareth. Go Tigers! •

music!!!!!!

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# SLIMMING DOWN WITH THE OBESITY

# TAX-ATION WITHOUT CAUSATION

## GOVERNOR DAVID PATERSON'S

so-called "obesity tax," a part of his \$121 billion budget proposal, calls for a 15 percent tax on sugary non-diet sodas. Some people might wince at the prospect of having their Coca-Cola costing more; some might even go so far as to claim that the government is overstepping its bounds. This response is all too familiar — from back when taxes were placed on tobacco.

When tobacco was first taxed, a similar response to the obesity tax emerged. Some people were against the tax, proclaiming that it was their right to consume tobacco. Health organizations, as well as ordinary people, were also for it. Now, it has become evident that increased prices do influence consumption. Research in the journal of *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* indicate that for every 10 percent increase in the price of cigarettes, overall consumption decreases by approximately three to five percent.

In a YouTube video, Dr. Richard Daines, the state health commissioner of New York, states that the health cost of obesity is around 6.1 billion dollars. Other sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), articles from WebMD.com, and *Daily News*, indicate the same amount and show that the bill ends up at Medicare and Medicaid. Daines also discusses some startling trends. In 1970, Americans consumed an average of five cans of soda and 10 glasses of milk every week. However, in 2008, Americans consumed an average of 11 cans of soda and six glasses of milk every week. Just drinking three more

cans of soda every week, you would consume 13 pounds of sugar in a year.

According to the CDC, 10 percent of the adult population in New York in 1985 were obese. In 2007, the percentage jumped to approximately 25 to 29 percent. The CDC attributes the obesity trend to a variety of factors, including consuming sugar-sweetened drinks due to the high calorie count in them. The numbers are startling by their own right. People, overly saturated by the media

and advocacy groups, may just end up not caring. However, there is evidence that such tax would actually influence behavior — just as the tobacco tax had.

In *Daily News*, they reported that the obesity tax would actually generate 404 million dollars in a year. They interviewed people and some respondents said that they would just buy less soda if the prices ever went up. An example of such a response was, "I don't like to buy Diet Coke," said Amaury Garcia, 16, ... 'I'll just not buy

any sodas if it goes up.'"

It is not in human nature to make changes in our lifestyles easily. If it were, all those weight loss companies would go out of business rather quickly. With that in mind, is it really such a bad thing to put a tax on one of the leading causes of obesity? *Daines' video can be seen on YouTube.com by searching "Soda vs Milk".*



by David Spiecker  
illustration by Jaime Douglas

**UP UNTIL VERY RECENTLY,** "obesity tax" was something that was used jokingly to describe the price difference between XL and 2XL shirts. Now, as New York is pummeled by the crumbling economy, the state is forced to find obscure sources of revenue. Obesity tax may no longer be just a joke; it could be a reality in the near future.



not be the only health problem associated with diet sodas.

must be asked: Do diet sodas actually help people lose weight?

According to a 2005 study conducted at the University of Texas Health Science Center, people increase their risk of obesity by 41 percent for every can of diet soda they have per day. While there is no direct connection between diet soda and weight gain, there is equally no connection between it and weight loss. In actuality, there is more evidence to suggest that drinking any soda will lead to unhealthy eating habits. However, this might

The history of artificial sweeteners has been rough at best. Sweeteners like cyclamate and saccharin have been linked to cancer, and have been banned in several countries. Research conducted on the carcinogenic nature of aspartame, the sweetener found in most diet sodas, has produced varied results, but there is some evidence to suggest that it may also cause cancer. One such study, published in 2005 by researchers at the Cesare Maltoni Cancer Research Center, concludes that aspartame "is a multipotential carcinogenic compound."

However, the true motivation behind this tax is not health-related. In fact, there is not a single mention of such a tax in the state's strategic plan to combat obesity. What is on the state's books, though, is a \$15 billion budget deficit.

The tax is part of a larger state-wide initiative to pay off that deficit. While the rest of the plan seems to be a sound financial move, such as cutting back spending and limiting automatic raises, the obesity tax can be seen as a sign of desperation. Forgoing any hard evidence that diet soda produces weight loss, New York State has instead decided to work on the assumption that it does. This assumption has the potential of creating more health problems than it aims to avoid, as the government is effectively endorsing diet soda.

by Andy Rees  
illustration by Jaime Douglas

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



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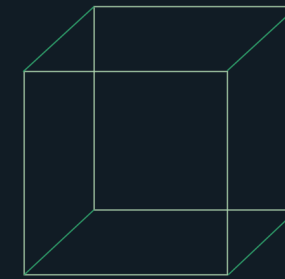
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# RIT RINGS

## 585.672.4840

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.

**SUNDAY, 1:08 A.M.**

This bromance that we have with these two bros right now needs to end. I'm going back to girls now.

**SATURDAY, 4:06 P.M.**

Hello, I just want you to know that you're the sunshine of my life and I am cheering for you with my beer and a beautiful game of beer pong. Bye!

**FRIDAY, 11:48 P.M.**

Do you know what sexiled means? It means being exiled from your room because of sex. My roommate is a slut.

**WEDNESDAY, 12:57 A.M.**

Hey Rings, it's [Tiffany]. I just skipped out on smoking pot with a bunch of people to come to the SAU and watch *The Dark Knight*. Aren't I cool?

**FRIDAY, 11:08 P.M.**

**RIT RINGS, I'M READING ONE OF YOUR OLDER ISSUES. I'M LOOKING AT THE "BY THE NUMBERS" ARTICLE AND, SERIOUSLY, ZERO INSTANCES OF STATUTORY RAPE? THAT SOUNDS LIKE [BS] TO ME. I MEAN I WAS 17 LAST YEAR, AND, WELL, 'NUFF SAID. IT'S [BS].**

**SUNDAY, 4:19 A.M.**

Hey... uh... I got a roll of quarters and we're buyin' a stripper.

**WEDNESDAY, 4:18 P.M.**

There's this kid in one of my classes that when he talks, he sounds like a walrus that's raping a dog. It is so disturbing. I wish he wouldn't talk at all.

**TUESDAY, 8:00 P.M.**

I don't understand. If you're born in an airplane, what are you a citizen of? Is it the country you took off from or the one you are flying to. Or are you a citizen of the one you're closest to? These are the things I need to know.

**FRIDAY, 11:08 P.M.**

[Religious figure], why are there so many ugly couples making out on campus these days? Your relationships are not special. Stop trying to show it off to everyone.

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**WHEN?** Wednesday, January 21, 2009 • 5:00–6:00 p.m.

**WHERE?** Bausch & Lomb Center (Bldg. 77) Room A-190 (lower level)

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Interpreters provided upon request subject to availability. Please call if you need the services of a sign language interpreter.

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