THE MICHIGAN REVIEW

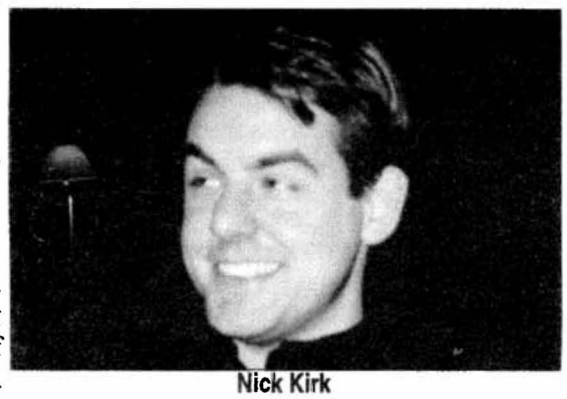
Volume 15, Number 8 — The Campus Affairs Journal of the University of Michigan — February 19, 1997

Kirk Falsifies *Review* Credentials

BY LISA WAGNER

NICK KIRK IS THE CURRENT president of U–M College Republicans. On January 31 and February 1, 1997, he gained entrance to the Michigan State GOP Convention held at Cobo Hall by claiming to be a staff writer for the *Michigan Review*. Kirk accomplished this by calling Sage Eastman of the State GOP Committee, and requesting a press credential, stating that he was a reporter for the *Review*. Kirk allegedly also created a false press ID and forged the signature of Geoff Brown, the Editor–in–Chief of the *Review*. One can only speculate on his motivations. Reportedly, Kirk was able to gain greater access to areas of the convention hall not open to the public with this pass.

This information came to light via several anonymous e–mail messages to the *Review*. Curious about the allegation, the *Review* contacted Sage Eastman, who is in charge of public relations for the Michigan Republican Party. He substantiated the fact that Kirk had indeed telephoned claiming himself to be a representative of the *Review*. Eastman had no reason to suspect otherwise, so he did issued a press pass to Kirk.



Nick Kirk

When asked for comment by the *Review*, Kirk emphatically denied the crime, stating, "I didn't do it. I just didn't do it!" Beyond this statement, Kirk had nothing to say in his defense. However, Brown is very upset about these allegations.

"I am outraged," Brown said. "He took the good name of the *Review* and used it for his own benefit. This is certainly the straw that breaks the camel's back; with this and the discriminating chalkings on the Diag last fall and all of the other intolerant things Kirk has done, he has really brought a bad reputation upon all of

See **KIRK**, page 12

MSA Investigates Mehta

BY GEOFF BROWN

ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1997, the Michigan Student Assembly (MSA) voted to create a committee for the purpose of investigating MSA Vice President Probir Mehta's violation of MSA rules. Mehta recently admitted to the Assembly that he had allocated $500 to the United Asian American Organizations (UAAO) without approval; MSA rules stipulate that all allocations must be approved by the Assembly. During the previous week's meeting, a resolution proposed by MSA Representative Andy Schor (Independent–LSA) to create such a committee was defeated by a secret ballot. During the second vote, Schor's resolution passed after a roll call vote — MSA Representative David Burden (Crush the Purple Dinosaur Party–Engineering) made a motion suspending the secret ballot.

Mehta says that he transferred the money to UAAO during the summer term, when there was not quorum for Assembly meetings. He claims that the decision was made by MSA President Fiona Rose, and was made during a period when few Assembly members were on campus. However, Rose "does not recall" having instructed Mehta to sign the transfer order. Furthermore, the order was signed by Mehta on September 5, 1996, two days after the first Fall Assembly meeting, which had quorum.

The committee, chaired by Rep. Mark Dub (Independent–Engineering), consists of Dub and five other students selected at random from the

See **MEHTA**, Page 12

MSA President Uses Assembly Funds For Personal Purchase

BY GEOFF BROWN

THE *REVIEW* RECENTLY discovered that Michigan Student Assembly (MSA) President Fiona Rose purchased an expensive Franklin brand planner with MSA funds. The planner in question was purchased at the Franklin Quest Store in the Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi, MI at a cost of $127.94, which was reimbursed to Rose from MSA's Operations Account.

The *Review* learned of Rose's purchase from several members of MSA. Documents, including the original receipt, obtained by the *Review* via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from the Student Organization Account Service (SOAS) confirmed that Rose made the purchase and was subsequently reimbursed by MSA. The actual reimbursement authorization form was signed by MSA Vice President Probir Mehta. Mehta is currently under investigation by MSA for an unrelated event, in which he admitted to allocating $500 to a student organization without MSA approval and in violation of MSA's rules.

The MSA budget provides for $250 in discretionary spending for the MSA President and Vice President. These funds are intended to be used for purchases made by executive officers for items needed to conduct Assembly business. Assembly approval is not required for purchases made under this provision.

Rose readily admitted to the *Review* that she purchased the planner. She stated that the purchase was an essential accessory that she needed in order to manage her time as MSA president. When asked why she chose a Franklin planner over a much less expensive version, Rose explained that she had attended the University's 2017 Leadership program, and during that conference a seminar on time management and planners was held which used a Franklin planner as the example; thus, she chose that brand. Rose stated that she felt that the purchase was reasonable.

"It's not as though I bought a nice

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❑ FROM THE EDITOR

GREETINGS! WELCOME TO another issue of the *Michigan Review*. First of all, I want to thank all of you who have been providing us with feedback about the paper — it really is appreciated.

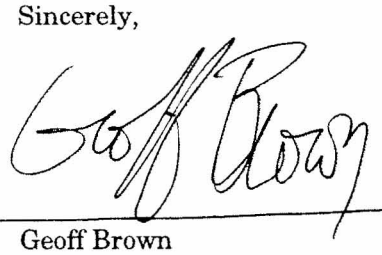
This issue deals with several events that are of interest to this campus. Two of the most notable deal with MSA and its leadership. I feel that it's imperative that each student at this University realize that MSA, for all its problems, is the best representation we have available to us. They also make it possible for many student groups on campus to function, by providing funding and other assistance. Over $200,000 of our student fees go toward funding MSA, and thus it is in our best interest to keep tabs on the Assembly, and hold them accountable for their actions.

I also wish to speak about the incident with Nick Kirk that is featured on the front page of our paper. I am deeply concerned that Kirk, who is the President of the College Republicans on campus, would commit such an act against this paper as misrepresenting himself as a member of it. However, I blame only Kirk for his actions. I know several members of the CRs, and know them to be upstanding individuals. It is my hope that the misguided and completely inappropriate actions of their president do not reflect back upon them. I further hope that Kirk will publicly admit to his wrongdoing, and apologize to me and the staff for misusing the name of our paper. I would hate to see Mr. Kirk continue to draw a negative spotlight on his organization.

On a more positive note, I'd like to remind all of you that it is never too late to join the *Review*. We need writers of all sorts, ad executives, copy editors, photographers, and just about everything else in between! If you're interested, then by all means, stop by one of our staff meetings, which take place on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in our wonderful office in Room 32 of the Perry Building. The Perry Building, for those who don't know, is on the corner of Packard and South Division, across from Blimpy Burger. If you can't make the meetings, give us a call at 662–1909, or send us an email at mrev@umich.edu.

Also, keep the letters and comments coming! We love to hear from our readers. You can email letters to mrev@umich.edu; be sure to type "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line of your message if you want it printed. You can also use "snail mail" — our address is 911 North University Ave., Suite One, Ann Arbor, MI 48109–1265. I hope you enjoy this issue, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,



Geoff Brown
Editor–in–Chief

❑ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

In counterpoint to the Terry Bevins' (*sic*) letter of February 5, I'd like to address the following points:

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States reads: "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech ... or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble ..." I do not support the KKK [Ku Klux Klan], but according to this Amendment, they did have the right to assemble at Ann Arbor City Hall on June 22. The NWROC also had the right to assemble at City Hall, but they did not have the right to attack the police force dispatched to the area to maintain peace and order.

What the NWROC seems to miss in their fervor to organize a "mass militant integrated movement" is that they are playing directly into the hands of the KKK. The Klan stages these rallies just to cause scenes like the one at City Hall on June 22. NWROC members have the option of not listening to the opinions of the KKK, an option I have exercised numerous times in my stay in Ann Arbor (I regularly try to ignore most of the "political activist" groups, as well as MSA). Instead of setting up protests at these rallies, the NWROC should stage their own peaceable public meetings, where they could express their feelings about the current social situation, and avoid messes like the bill for damages to city property (a sum in the neighborhood of $36,000, I believe).

In conclusion, having your own political beliefs is fine. Please just be aware of other people's Constitutional rights, and do not think that the Constitution does not apply to people you don't like.

NAME WITHHELD AT THE REQUEST OF THE AUTHOR

To the Editor,

In response to your continuing ripping on the Free Mumia Coalition, I'm wondering if you'd be interested in understanding why all American citizens are affected by Mumia Abu–Jamal's case, not just "annoying leftist splinter groups" who want to "free Mumia Abu–Jamal from the oppressive imperialist clutches of the State of Pennsylvania."

Put quite simply, Mumia did not recieve (*sic*) a fair trial. A (very) short list of faults with the first trial: His past experience in the Black Panther Party was used by the prosecution to sway jurors — a practice found to be unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court. One of the major prosecution witnesses has recently recanted her previous testimony against Mumia, claiming that her testimony in the first trial was the result of pressure and threats from the police. Mumia was given incompetant (*sic*) counsel (his lawyer was later disbarred) and was barred from the courtroom for most of his trial.

If the state of Pennsylvania is so convinced that Mumia is guilty, then try him again! Try him again, and follow the rules this time. No legal body in the United States has the right to ignore the Constitution in any trial, for any crime; whether it be jaywalking or murder.

I am personally of the opinion that if Mumia Abu–Jamal were to be given a fair trial, he would be found not guilty. The *Mighigan Review* (*sic*) has made it obvious what opinion it's (*sic*) editorial board holds. All I ask is that you take a look at the facts of Mumia Abu–Jamal's trial and ask if you would like to your constitutional rights trampled the way his were.

ANDREA TAWIL (AZT@ENGIN.UMICH.EDU)
STUDENT, COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

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THE MICHIGAN REVIEW

The Campus Affairs Journal of the University of Michigan

"There is *no* crack in Iowa!!"

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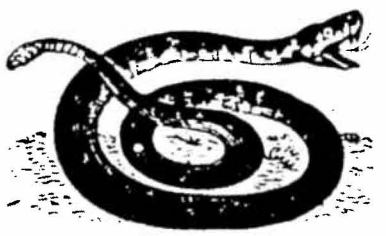
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❑ SERPENT'S TOOTH



It has recently come to the attention of the *Review* that last Thursday *Dateline NBC* visited the University of Michigan to see what normal college students were like. Rumor had it that the camera crews visited local bars. After rigging various tropical drinks to explode in the faces of patrons, and crashing a truck through the window of Scorekeepers, the producers concluded that bars were unsafe for college students and should be permanently closed.

According to the news last week, the president was ousted and later, three successors all vied for the position before finally deciding on a new President. During all the while, most of the populace remained calm while a few citizens took to the streets. Oh, no, we're not talking about MSA. This happened in Ecuador.

We were going to do a T-shirt promotion regarding the recent misrepresentation of the *Review*, but a T-shirt with the slogan "I'd willfully misrepresent myself as a member of the press for the *Review*" just isn't catchy.

We've got a good question to ask: Isn't the slogan "Diversity Days: A Celebration of Similarities," well, contradictory in a way?

Recently, people may have noticed that the Accounting and Billing System of ITD has been down due to a hardware failure. In other related news, student George Saunders was charged $1.2 million dollars for 4 minutes of dial-in access.

Fiona Rose, after watching her secret ballot to determine whether to investigate her political ally Probir Mehta blow up in her face, whined "Where's the respect?" for MSA. Well, it's not like she or Probir have had any for it.

In related news, Probir Mehta charged that the accusations against him were part of a "political and personal vendetta." We can only think that if this was true, he would have been thrown out of office a long time before.

Good news, all you students! The City of Ann Arbor recently said that a proposed city income tax would help to cut rents. Well, not really, the cuts would really be a "reduction in the rate of growth" of rents, but if that doesn't convince you that what the Democrats say is a cut isn't a cut, we don't know what will.

Hey all you trial fans, O.J. Simpson will still be around forever and ever until the end of time. Or so say the makers of the new O.J. line of *cutlery*. The slogan may very well be "O.J. Cutlery. The cutting edge of cutlery." Other product s include "Isotoner O.J. Gloves: Guaranteed Not to Fit," "O.J. Home DNA testing kit: A Little Dab'll Do You (own blood not required)" and the all new Ford Bronco "Leader of the Pack." And they say O.J. isn't marketable...

Rumors have still been flying about that O.J. will release "The Juice is Loose: O.J.'s favorite Pop Hits." Included in the two CD set will be "Tragedy," by the Bee Gees, "Hey Joe," by Jimi Hendrix, "The End" by the Doors, plus many more: "Disco Inferno," "I fought the Law and the Law (kinda) Won," "Maxwell's Silver Hammer," and a remake of "I Will Survive (If That Glove Don't Fit)."

Many people have written in asking how they too can make up phrases such as "bloated cadaver of inefficiency." As a Public Service, we have included a list of similar phrases that can be used in the home or office.

"rotting corpse of bureaucracy"
"the wormfood of injustice"
"highfaltuin' stiff of incompetency"
"pulchridtudinous corpus of ineptitude"
"grandiose nuggets of idiocy"

You're quite welcome :-).

Letters

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Ms. Tawil: We would certainly be the first to demand a new trial for Abu–Jamal if indeed it were shown that he was imprisoned unfairly. We are not altogether sure, however, that this occurred in this case. Too often a cry of "racism" is used to excuse or condone various crimes. It is true that we would not want to see one's Constitutional rights trampled upon. However, it is also true that we would not want to see the justice system supplanted merely because of accusations of racism. —Ed.

To the Editor,

I assume you always knock people and their political opinions. Your small spot on ebonics was totally racist and out of line. You don't make fun of the way an individual speaks. You are trying to fight racism, not start more. Which leads me to my next conflict with your paper, and it's journalist's (*sic*). NWROC had as much of a right to be at the "Day Without Diversity March" on MLK day (*sic*). We are a organization that is totally against racism.(though you might not think so) (*sic*). Trying to shut us down was not to (*sic*) smart on your part, it goes to show just how much racism on U of M there is. We still got our message out. You should put some effort into trying to bring your campus together, instead of knocking NWROC all the time. You are a bunch petty–bourgeousie, fucks (*sic*). You don't know what NWROC is about, nor do you care to understand our methods, our political views, or you (*sic*) struggles. Instead you make fun of us, and what we are trying to accomplish. Mumia Abu–Jamal was framed, he is not a "cop–killer". Though he is serving time on Death Row (*sic*). He was falsley (*sic*) accused. I think you have your organization crossed we are not affiliated with MIM (*sic*). We do not spell use "K" in our interpretations like they do. You should check out our page at http://members.tripod.com/~Bevins_II/index.html, or e–mail me at bloodinbloodout @hotmail.com, if you would like any "true" facts, otherwise shut your fuckin face. You should be concerned with the institutionalized racism tha (*sic*) is going on, on the U of M campus. Your University race relations, need some drastic attention, to make it more diversified. Your campus is racially divided,(though you are so level headed (*sic*) you can't see what is going on). The University preaches "diversity" on the surface, if you dig deeper you'll find that the raes (*sic*) are actually quite seperate (*sic*). Take a look around racism/sexism, Gay/Lesbian bigotry, it's all around you. Racism is apart of everything at U of M (hiring, firing, Admissions tenure etc.) it's all around you. Your joke about the $36,000 bill for NWROC. Wasn't funny, (*sic*) We are not a small organization, we are pretty big. You wouldn't know that, because you are never present when we everyone at our meetings. We have many supporter , in the shelter, in the high school's (*sic*), and the city of Ann Arbor. The Dental Three case is proof. That with enough backing anything can be done! If you roll a 79–sided die, you have to (*sic*) much time on your hands, 1. The KKK should have never come to Ann Arbor in the first place, my personal belief is that there is no free speech for the fascists. 2. The police harass everyone including youth, and the homeless. 3. The government is corrupt, and is an injustice to it's own self (*sic*). 4. your student publication is filled with lies about NWROC. It makes me nauseous. As far as i'm (*sic*) concerned you have nothing better to do, the (*sic*) to slam organizations, that are trying to make a step to making something positive in our society. You might not agree with what we do, you should keep it to yourself.

TERRY BEVINSII
(BLOODINBLOODOUT@HOTMAIL.COM)
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Mr. Bevins: first of all, regarding our Ebonics joke: it was neither racist nor out of line. Furthermore, your supposition that "you don't make fun of the way an individual speaks" is outright wrong. Comedians do it all the time. Jeff Foxworthy has made a living out of making fun of how rednecks talk. Several Black comedians routinely make fun of how white people talk. Being offended by Ebonics jokes is simply a case of "you can dish it out, but you can't take it" syndrome.

Furthermore, we do understand NWROC and its views, which is why we "knock" your organization. We are highly disturbed that your organization advocates a "no free speech for 'fascists'" position — the last time we checked, the First Amendment held no such provisions. We also find your demand that unless we agree with you we remain silent to be offensive, immature, and unprofessional; we also feel that it reflects upon the organization that you speak for, and gives us

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❑ FROM SUITE ONE

Mehta: Set Good Example

THE MICHIGAN STUDENT ASSEMBLY (MSA) RECENTLY VOTED to form a committee to investigate the actions of its Vice President, Probir Mehta. Mehta recently admitted to violating MSA rules by allocating $500 to the UAAO without Assembly approval. MSA originally voted against creating an investigative committee, but later reversed itself. However, Mehta has been doing everything in his power to sidestep any consequences of his actions. As a leader of one of the most important student organizations on campus, Mehta has a responsibility to face the consequences of his actions. Regardless of whether his intentions were good, by not taking responsibility for breaking MSA rules, Mehta sets a poor example for those that follow him. By proving to MSA and to the campus in general that those who break rules can forego punishment by claiming pure intentions, Mehta opens the door for those with less than honorable intentions.

MSA and Mehta need to prove that they are concerned with student interests, and in doing the right thing, and that they are not attempting to cover up any wrongdoing. By characterizing the investigation as a "personal attack," Mehta is attempting to save his own skin. Furthermore, this attempt casts doubts on his claim that the fund transfer was for a legitimate purpose. This, in addition to his approval of MSA President Fiona Rose's purchase of an expensive planner with MSA funds, call into question his motives in transferring the funds without attempting to gain approval.

Likewise, we feel that the investigative committee needs to remember its duties, and not turn the investigation of Mehta into a politically–charged witch hunt designed to smear Mehta and subject him unnecessarily to punishments that he may not deserve. The committee has a responsibility not only to ensure that rules are properly enforced, but also to see that they are enforced fairly.

MSA Rep. Andy Schor correctly points out, that the focus of the investigation is not necessarily to punish Mehta, but to ensure that no similar violation occurs ever again. Mehta claims that he is being unfairly singled out, citing that his predecessors committed violations of rules and ethics far worse than he ever did without consequence. However, previous violations should not be sufficient to condone future transgressions of the MSA Code. Simply because past violators got away with their misdeeds, Mehta should not expect this matter to be dismissed without further consideration. If MSA rules continue to be abused in this matter, they will lose their effectiveness, which will make it more difficult for future MSA leaders to govern effectively.

MSA needs to take adequate steps to reassure the student body that it holds itself accountable, both to the students that they represent, and to their own rules and regulations. Mehta's improper allocation, as well as questionable purchases him and Rose made, such as Rose's expensive Franklin planner and the pagers that Rose and Mehta purchased with Assembly money in the beginning of the year, should serve as considerable warning to the student body that perhaps MSA is not spending its money as wisely as it should. First and foremost, MSA needs to serve student interests, and not its own.

The *Review* disagrees with Mehta's contention that the investigation mounted by the Assembly is driven by personal vendettas and partisan politics. Quite to the contrary, it is good to see that MSA members finally realize that covering up problems such as this does no good. It is also reassuring to see that MSA is seriously exploring its options in this matter, rather than dismissing it as a result of Mehta's apology. Merely following up on an admitted violation of procedure and regulations does not constitute a vindictive witch–hunt. Mehta is mistaken in believing that he should be absolved of his sins for merely admitting to them. It is imperative that MSA members follow procedures and enforce rules, regardless of the intentions surrounding the act. After all, "the road to hell is paved with the best of intentions." Mehta should not insist that his means be excused because they led to a noble end.

The committee should also focus on Mehta's current involvement with UAAO. The *Review* recognizes that Mehta was not involved in the organization at the time of the allocation. However, he is currently involved in that organization, and issues of impropriety and conflict of interest certainly would play at least a small part in this route. We caution the Assembly to ensure that Assembly funds are not disbursed by members that have a personal involvement with the group being funded — this way any appearance of impropriety is avoided.

The *Review* applauds MSA for holding itself accountable to students and to its own rules. We implore Probir Mehta to take responsibility for his actions, and face their consequences, whatever they may be, and set an example for other student leaders. **MR**



❑ COMMENTARY

Education Reform Needed

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS CONTAINED a call for, among others things, an emphasis on education. In the address, Clinton called for several piecemeal reforms of the education system, as well as some tax incentives for college students. Washington Republicans have been unwilling to criticize the President, unwilling to appear against "anti–education." This stance is a mistake.

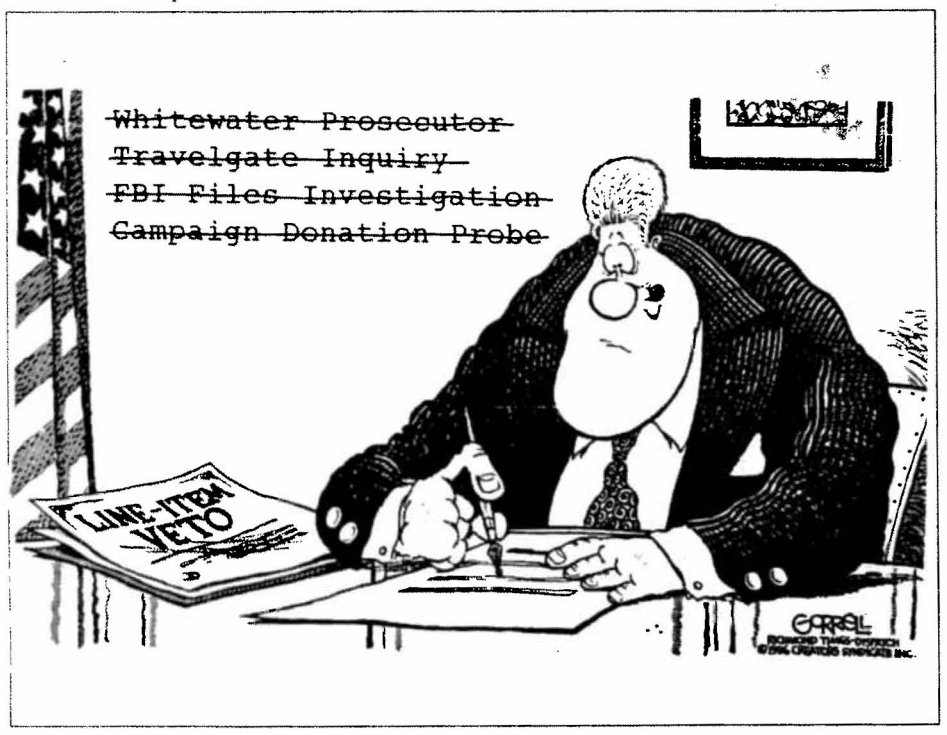
Clinton's major proposal was to increase the 1998 education budget by 20 percent, bringing total education expenditures to $51 billion next year. No doubt that after the Medicare demagoguery of the last election, Republicans are wary of sparring over education. Yet the Democratic solution — throw money at a problem and imagine it will go away — is typical liberal policy which deserves condemnation. The premises behind the increases are that more money per student and fewer students per teacher are the key to our educational future. Yet studies suggest that per–student spending and class size do not correlate with academic performance.

The primary target for the funding increases may well involve information technologies like the Internet. It is clear that the Administration hopes that soon the Internet will be "our new town square"; this optimism about technology will likely extend to education. Given Speaker Gingrich's own fascination with the digital age, such expenditures may get a clean bill of health. Yet this is misguided. The problem of American education is not an inability to surf the Net , but inability to read, write, and do math. The idea that computers teach better than teachers is preposterous and unproven.

It is also important to note that much of Clinton's education reform goes on not at the crucial primary schools, but in secondary education. Tax credits for tuition costs make up a large part of the Clinton education agenda, and there are arguments that they may do more harm than good. Giving thousands of families tax credits for tuition may simply lead to inflation in tuition. While Republican zeal to trim taxes is often the best policy, there should be attention to this problem before such reforms are enacted.

Clinton must get credit for some of his goals, however. National standards in math and English, long the bane of teacher's unions since they give parents warning school inadequacies, are commendable. His support for charter schools, subject to fewer rules and regulations, deserves kudos as well. Increasing parental involvement in education, as well as letting charter schools experiment with freedom and deregulation offer significant potential for allowing innovation in American education. Such innovation may bring far more tangible education benefits than the Internet.

Reform in our schools is long overdue. Studies show that the nation's students are performing only at average levels. However, Clinton's emphasis on the status quo (with a dash of high–tech nonsense) is not going to solve these problems. Congressional Republicans will have to establish some backbone if they wish to really improve the quality of education. **MR** —*Matthew Buckley*



❑ COMMENTARY

City Income Tax Flawed

THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR IS CURRENTLY STUDYING A PROPOSAL to implement a 1% city income tax upon all those working within the city limits of Ann Arbor, students included. This pernicious taxation scheme must be "nipped in the bud" in order to prevent students and workers from being adversely affected.

While 1% of one's income does not seem like much, it is added onto an already burdensome plethora of federal, state, and local taxes that at the very least gobble up a quarter of one's earnings. It is rather pathetic that the city government would look to those who, by the simple fact that they work in Ann Arbor for a living, are the least able to resist such an initiative. What are they going to do if this is made law? Nothing; it's not as if students and workers can simply give up their jobs and work in a different city with lower taxes.

The Ann Arbor city government already views non–resident workers and students as walking parking tickets in the first place; it is an added insult to also tax us for the privilege of working inside the city limits of Ann Arbor.

The "goals" behind the income tax proposition are almost as silly as the proposal. By implementing a city income tax, the government states that it will a) lower property taxes b) "cut" rent (reduce the rate of growth of rent increases) and c) encourage investment in the city.

Property tax relief has already been implemented at the state level to a large degree. While property taxes are onerous, if the government feels that lowering property taxes will subsequently encourage investment, it should lower them, and cut or make more efficient the services it offers instead of imposing a tax upon hardworking, productive citizens. To a point, property taxes are more voluntary than an income tax imposed from upon high. While still unfair, a resident must know, according to law, how much in tax he will pay for his house or business annually; in fact, this can very well be the basis for choosing properties. Choosing jobs and choosing property are two different arenas: have you ever seen someone refuse a job or a paycheck due to the city income tax? They cannot afford to.

As for the argument that lowering property taxes will somehow reduce the eye–gouging rents that we must pay in Ann Arbor, this is simply laughable. The dead will rise from their graves before the landlords around Ann Arbor will actually lower their rents or freeze them. They will simply pocket any gains due to a property tax change and continue kicking the collective student body. While I am all for capitalism, I also find it inconceivable that they are not making enormous sums of money off renting space.

To implement a city income tax would unduly hurt students and workers in the city of Ann Arbor, for the end purpose of making Ann Arbor a more attractive place to invest. However, the city can and must take other action in order to make the city more attractive for investors. They can do so by lowering property taxes, by not implementing an income tax, and by searching for other means to make Ann Arbor business-friendly. MR

—Benjamin Kepple

❑ FROM SUITE ONE

THE LAST STRAW

THIS IS THE LAST STRAW. FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON, while attending the recent Republican State Convention, Nick Kirk, President of the University of Michigan College Republicans (CRs), purposely and willfully misrepresented himself as a staffer of the *Michigan Review*. By misrepresenting himself as a member of the press, an illegal act, Kirk has disgraced himself and the CRs, along with possibly damaging the good name of the *Review*.

We at the *Review* are disgusted and shocked that anyone, even Kirk, would resort to such unethical and pernicious tactics such as these. What is even more surprising is that Kirk probably could have gained access to many of the events even just being President of the CRs. We must emphatically state that in no way whatsoever has Kirk ever been associated with or affiliated with the *Review*, and for him to have claimed otherwise is utterly false.

However, we are more concerned with the status of the group Kirk leads, the CRs, as they will no doubt be affected by this controversy. We do not wish to drag the CRs through the mud as a consequence of their leader's actions. However, given the inept leadership that Kirk has displayed as he has led the group this year, the *Review* can no longer sit by and allow our criticism to appear in the form of satire and the occasional signed article.

Given the actions of Kirk against the *Review*, given that he has undeniably damaged the conservative movement on the University campus, and given that he has damaged the credibility, respectability, and effectiveness of the University of Michigan branch of the CRs, *We hereby demand that Kirk formally apologize to the* Review *and admit to his actions in writing , and that Kirk immediately resign from his position as President of the College Republicans, and not seek any future office or position in the College Republicans.* The *Review* will not allow wayward and immature individuals such as Kirk to impact it in a negative manner the way he has done. We are outraged with his childish action. He appears to have undertaken it with the same lack of thought that he regularly displayed leading the CRs this year. Kirk's actions regarding the now infamous QUP chalking incident were bumbling and mindless, resulting in the condemnation of the CRs by essentially all of campus. Later, his inciteful letters to the *Michigan Daily* were mindless acts that, with each word, placed another nail in the coffin of what used to be a viable conservative movement on campus. But this most recent action by Kirk has stripped the CRs of any last shred of respect they had on this campus, as it only confirms in the eyes of students that the organization is an extremist cabal, its only futile attempts at rational discourse appearing to be the scrawled, tormented chalkings on the Diag that suddenly pop up every election cycle. This state of affairs simply can not continue.

As President of the CRs, Kirk is assumed to be the "official" representative of the conservative movement on campus. It is regrettable that Kirk has only harmed the movement while he has been in office.

In 1982, the *Review* was founded by Thomas Fous, as an alternative viewpoint to the *Michigan Daily*. Fous was a conscientious conservative who refused to have his ideals attacked or his honor tarnished by the vindictive organizations that were a part of that liberal climate. How disgraceful that the honor of the *Review* has been tarnished by the actions of Kirk, a conservative, and how sad it is to have been directly attacked by Kirk due to his foolish action. It is ironic, and well worth noting that Fous, before he became the first Publisher of the *Review*, held the office of Chairman of the University of Michigan College Republicans.

Fous represented much of what was right with the CRs; Kirk represents much of what is wrong. And Kirk can no longer be allowed to represent any part of the conservative movement on this campus. He is like a dog without a leash, and he must be muzzled in order to prevent any more damage to the neighbors' property.

However, we do not wish to see the CRs suffer. As it has been written before in this journal, the CRs have the potential to be a viable and powerful organization on campus. They just need the right leadership. From the accounts given to the *Review*, we can deduce that Kirk acted on his own initiative and without the CRs consent. Hence, the only person to blame for Kirk's action is Kirk himself, not the group he happens to lead. We feel that if Kirk truly cares for the CRs and the conservative movement as a whole, he will end his destructive ways, resign as President of the CRs, and formally apologize to the *Review*. We would rather work with other conservatives than fight, but regardless of any characteristics of the attacker against the *Review*, we will stand up for our rights without compromise or timidity. MR

What's the matter, Josh and Olga???



CHICKEN?!?

Recently my editors and I challenged Josh White, Editor–in–Chief of the *Michigan Daily*, Olga Savic, Editor–in–Chief of the *Michigan Independent*, and their respective editorial boards to a friendly little game of Trivial Pursuit. Obviously, we scared them off, because we received no reply to our challenge. A lesser paper would term that a "win by default," but we're more sporting than that. So again, I extend the challenge to the two editors, with the same terms as outlined in our previous issue. The deadline to answer this challenge is 11:59 PM 28 February 1997. Send me email at mrev@umich.edu or call 662–1909. I look forward to meeting you all in this challenge!

Sincerely,

Geoff Brown
Editor–in–Chief
The *Michigan Review*

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❑ CAMPUS COMMENTARY

Even Buildings Have Opinions at U–M

BY LEE BOCKHORN

AS THOSE OF YOU WHO have read my articles this year in the *Review* (if such persons exist) may have noticed, most of my contributions have been rather angry, bitter tirades about people who annoy me, like Bill Clinton or Dennis Rodman, or ideas that annoy me, like affirmative action or sexual "harassment" in elementary school. As any number of my close personal acquaintances can tell you, I can often be a very "glass–is–half–empty" kind of guy; with this in mind, I've decided that it is time for me to lighten up a little and stop taking myself so seriously — in other words, to write a fluff piece. Consider yourself forewarned...

I do not have a car here in Ann Arbor, and while most of the time that is an inconvenience, it does have a few advantages. One of the benefits of being forced to walk everywhere is that it gives you a lot of time (almost too much) to think. One begins to notice the inane, the trivial, the outrageous. One such inanity I recently observed is the number of buildings on our fine campus that have some supposedly wise or profound statement displayed on their edifices; you might call this "establishment graffiti." I'm sure many of you have perhaps noticed the large quotation above the State Street entrance to Angell Hall, but if you look around campus you will find quite a few more. I recently discovered one example of pious tripe on a bench in front of the School of Natural Resources and Environment building. On it one sees a plaque commemorating the planting of a nearby tree:

"In the future may we not have to be concerned over global warming. May efforts to reforest, recycle, and conserve energy eliminate this escalating crisis. This maple was planted on the eve of Earth Day 1989, to symbolize our hope."

Boy, I'm all warm and tingly inside now, aren't you? Never mind that this plaque reveals as much about its authors' ignorance as it does their "hope". Since they are so uptight about the "escalating crisis" of global warming, it might help loosen them up to discover that some two decades ago every environmental quack worth their salt was warning about an impending Ice Age and, not withstanding the current weather in Ann Arbor, this simply hasn't happened. (See the August 14, 1975 edition of the *New York Times*, which declared that there were "many signs ... that the Earth may be headed for another Ice Age.")

Two inscriptions which reveal a little more intelligence can be found on the outside walls of the Clements Library: "In darkness dwells the people which knows its annals not" is the first; "Tradition fades but the written record remains ever fresh" is the other. At least some actual common sense went into these two quotations. The first one should be posted as a reminder on the office door of every revisionist history professor at this university.

Another fairly sensible inscription can be found atop the Natural History Museum: "Go to nature, take the facts into your own hands, look, and see for yourself." This certainly seems to represent the spirit of intellectual curiosity and discovery that college is all about. It is attributed on the building to Agassiz, a Swiss–born U.S. paleontologist and geologist who lived in the 19th century and was known as a conservative in his opposition to Charles Darwin (imagine, a U of M building actually quoting someone who was considered a "conservative"). Unfortunately, I can picture many freshmen reading the quotation on the way back to Markley thinking, "Wow, not only can that dude play tennis, he's like, profound and stuff!"

Whereas many of these inscriptions attempt to offer some kernel of wisdom or advice to passerby, those on the buildings of the Law Quad seem to go out of their way to display the complete arrogance of the legal profession. For instance, the following adorns one of the many archways leading into the Law Quad: "Upon the bar depends the continuity of Constitutional government and the perpetuity of the republic itself."

Now if the "bar" this little blurb refers to was the type that go by such names locally as Ashley's, Scorekeepers, or the Heidelberg, I might say, "Sounds like common sense to me!" Unfortunately, it refers to the legal profession. I'm sorry, but if constitutional government and the republic's life itself depend on whether Larry Parker can win me $2.3 million for being stupid enough to drive with hot coffee between my legs and burn myself, we're in trouble. This isn't the only example of legal pomposity from the Law Quad, however; take a gander at this excerpt from the will of William W. Cook (whose donations helped build the Law School), which you can find just inside the doors of Hutchins Hall:

"Believing as I do that American institutions are of more consequence than the wealth or power of the country, and believing that the preservation and development of these institutions have been, are, and will continue to be under the leadership of the legal profession, and believing also that the future of America depends largely on that profession..." He goes on to say he's bequeathing a rather large sum of money to the U–M law school.

I think we can agree with Cook's assertion that American institutions are more important than America's wealth or power, but again, do we really want to go so far as to say that the future of those institutions, and thus of America itself, rests "largely" with **lawyers**? If that's the case, I have two words which should strike fear into your heart: *O.J. Simpson.* Heaven forbid that we should think America's future might also depend on whether the rest of us peon citizens participate and vote, even if we think a "tort" is some sort of pastry dish (I don't mean to deny the importance of having good lawyers; certainly American institutions are in some jeopardy when the Catherine MacKinnons and Lani Guiniers of the world say things like majority rule is bad, or the First Amendment is okay as long as you don't offend someone's "sensibilities").

Well, I find myself ranting again, which I promised myself I would not do, so I'll settle down. Since I have demonstrated such displeasure with many of the quotations on University buildings, might I be so presumptuous as to suggest some new inscriptions which might be appropriate? For instance, one all–purpose phrase which might work well for many locations is: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here." This would go very nicely at, say, the entrances to the East Quad cafeteria, the Financial Aid office, University Health Service, and the Angell Hall computing sight. Or, if you don't like that one, what about: "Behind these doors, nonsense often occurs." This would work well over the doors of the MSA chambers, the Fleming Administration building, the Student Publications building, and the offices of many tenured professors.

Of course, if we're willing to go this far, we ought to change the aforementioned inscription on Angell Hall as well. As you may recall it reads: "Religion, Morality, and Knowledge being necessary for good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

Now very little of what goes on at the U of M these days has *anything* to do with "religion," "morality," or "good government," so why not do away with this quotation in favor of something more representative of the University community, like "WELCOME TO HASH BASH!", or perhaps "HUH, HUH ... BEER RULES!"? If those aren't acceptable, I have another suggestion: since Nike will probably own half of the campus in a few years anyway, why not put their "Just Do It" slogan up there? This would be perfect for the U of M: it's inspiring, open to any interpretation which suits your race, gender, or sexual orientation, and comprehensible by (most of) the University's students. Also, displaying the slogan of an "evil capitalist company" which exploits child labor in Third World countries would give us the opportunity to enjoy the wacky fun of many delightfully entertaining protests by members of NWROC and the Maoist International Movement...

As you can see, once you free your mind it's rather easy to come up with catchy slogans for our campus buildings. For instance, your favorite movie quotations can work well; here are a few from one of my favorite cinematic characters, Clint Eastwood's "Dirty Harry" Callahan: "Do ya feel lucky today, punk? Well, do ya?" (for the Financial Aid office). "A man's got to know his limitations" (SAPAC). "Go ahead, make my day" (Maureen Hartford's office).

Recent films work well, too. The already famous "SHOW ME THE MONEY!" quote from *Jerry Maguire* might be appropriate for the Cashier's Office in the LSA building. And speaking of money, since the University claims to be so desperate for cash, I have another suggestion (besides not spending half a million dollars just searching for a president). Why not turn some of these quotation sites into electronic billboards and sell the space for profit? This kind of access to the coveted 18–24 year old market is an advertiser's dream. Just think, upon ascending the Angell Hall steps we could be reminded of the essential need to "be young, have fun, and drink Pepsi," while the University could be raking in millions to pay for the next round of executive administrator "bonuses" when the Regents get sick of Bollinger and decide to kick **him** out...

Perhaps it is appropriate that on a campus where everyone seems to mouth off about any subject that comes to mind, even the buildings have strong opinions. Unfortunately, sometimes the building quotes reveal as little thought as anything you might hear on the Diag. MR

❑ LOST IN THE EIGHTIES™

Point...

BY BENJAMIN KEPPLE

THE ABUSES AND EXcesses of that bloated cadaver of inefficiency we label the Michigan Student Assembly (MSA) have been well documented by certain campus media (not the *Daily*), and the events of the past few weeks have only strengthened my view that MSA should indeed be destroyed and replaced with a far more efficient, non–partisan body. By doing so, we could eliminate the moronic politicking of many currently on the Assembly, and *with one swift stroke* crush the constant problems present in that decaying corpse of mediocrity.

Now, many people oppose me on this, even the *Review*'s own Geoff Brown. He feels we can actually save the damn thing. Now sure, Geoff and I do hold dissimilar opinions on a lot of things....

ME: "Let's see who the masked phantom really is!"

GEOFF: "It's JOHN McLAUGHLIN!"

McLAUGHLIN: "WRONG! And I ask you, Freddie the Beadle Barnes!"

ME: "No, no, no." (collective gasp) "IT'S PROBIR MEHTA!"

MEHTA: "BLASTED MEDDLING *REVIEW*!"

...and I respect that. But I would love for him to argue just how we can "save" this. It is past reform. It is beyond hope. I call it a bloated cadaver of inefficiency *for a reason*. The only reason I can really think of for saving the rotten thing is because without it, the *Daily* would be stuck running even more articles such as "Celebrate Diversity," "Diversity With Qatar–Fest," "Sasketchewan Diverse, Says Study," what have you. And that isn't reason enough, although Geoff may very well argue that point for all it is worth.

Now, I am willing to admit that there are many on MSA who actually have souls, and who actually care for their constituency. Quite frankly, while I do not approve of many actions of the Good Apples on MSA, they have ethics! They have morals! They have guts! Would **Andy "The Lobbyist" Schor, David "The Condemned" Burden, Karie "Actually Holds Office Hours" Morgan, Ray "Ray Robb" Robb, John "No Parties" Lopez, "Famous Willy" Jurkewicz, Mike "Clear Skies and Empty Head" Nagrant, Jon "Jonny Quest" Winick, Mark Dub, and Barry Rosenberg** please stand up and receive (nnnngh) commendations? And if I missed anyone, my apologies. How did I choose these people? Because I felt they are ethical, vote their conscience and stand up for their beliefs. And I think that should be commended. Especially David Burden, who is willing to go through political suicide for what he supports.

I know what you're thinking out there. "But wait, Kepple. There are more than ten representatives on MSA." Very astute. The rest, and the majority, of MSA reps fall into two groups: A) student politico hacks, and B) those smart enough not to do anything and quietly serve out their term.

What is a student politico hack? According to naturalist Carson "Dick" Pinckney of the University of Wolverhampton, one can identify a hack through Certain Traits.

For example, instead of focusing on important campus issues, and bothering with small things like ethics, procedure, rules, what have you, they look to the Big Picture. They go off to lobby in Washington, D.C. with Assembly funds to Make A Difference, as if any Congressman cared what a bunch of whiny, self–righteous college students thought about anything. They Reach Out to student groups, as if they had one iota of knowledge as to what constituted leadership. They ignore major issues because it might jeopardize their cordial relations with University Administrators. And when they are finished, with sterling recommendation letters in hand, they leave the mess they've created behind for the next sap who "takes charge." This is a student politico hack.

NOW you see!

So who is closest to my textbook definition this year? Could it be **Fiona "Fotomat" Rose and Probir "Funk Lord" Mehta**? COULD IT? The two most important student leaders on campus? Yeah. Student leaders my eye. Christ. The only leadership these people learned was from the glossy innards of *Student Leader* magazine. (For some reason, we received a copy here at the office and subsequently snickered at it.) For those unaware, this useless publication gives "advice" to "student leaders," who also happen to be ensconced in "executive positions" at student governments *even worse than ours*. It is allegedly edited by ex–student leaders who couldn't get jobs in the real world, and...

What? Now look, purchasing pagers and planners with Assembly funds ain't legitimate leadership activities.

But look at these people. We haven't any leadership. Good Lord. The Regents and the Administration *don't care* what we think, MSA or no MSA. We haven't any representation. How are we going to have adequate representation when our leadership sells us out? Remember Flint "That Bastard Who Sold Us Out On The Code" Wainess? We had more adequate representation when student groups protested the Code. At the very least, we forced the Regents to listen to us. They don't even listen to MSA. They don't care. With or without MSA, we have the same situation, so let's save what we waste on them.

I feel Fiona and Probir are mirror images of the stereotypical student politico hack. If you at any time thought that they cared one moment for what you as a student thought, you were probably the victim of a pernicious ruse. And God forbid you have the impunity to question their murky, self–serving motives or their financial improprieties — if you do, expect a sharp retort or a whiny quasi–excuse from the arrogant, power–hungry dolts. Christ.

I would just love an explanation from someone justifying their blatant abuses of power. Hell, what's $130 for a Top–O–The–Line™ Franklin Planner? What's $500 to a group you're involved with and on top of that transferring it illegally? What's a few hundred for pagers?

And what about that secret ballot to determine whether Funk Lord would be investigated? Given that type of reasoning by MSA representatives, I want my $3.69 back.

The Assembly also spends a lot of money for questionable, if not illegal, purposes. For example, the External Relations Committee is a prime case. My own personal feeling about MSA lobbying is that it is, in a phrase, completely and utterly worthless! I don't think I have to spell it out for anyone that our lobbying isn't doing anything. Nothing! Nada! For the last time, no one on Capitol Hill or anywhere else cares. Now, Erin "Let's Go To D.C." Carey, ERC chair, claims that all told, travel and lobbying costs come out to "less than a stick of gum per student." Look, 40,000 sticks of gum is a *hell* of a lot of Juicy Fruit. Wouldn't it be more prudent to spend it on something that actually had an effect on some problem? Oh, NO. We couldn't do that, could we?

The real crisis here is that this corruptness and idiocy is not a recent problem. If you take a look back through the years, Fiona and Probir are actually improvements. For example, look again at the inept leadership of Flint Wainess and Sam Goodstein (1995–96). These people used to edit the *Michigan Daily*'s Editorial Page, something that should immediately exclude them from doing anything of importance. They actually screwed up worse than Fiona and Probir (remember, Flint sold us out over the Code). Go back through the years. Incompetence, impropriety, idiocy, every year. Look at the MSA of the 1980s. It makes our current Assembly look angelic. Why bother with this? Let's kill it.

If we can't get competent and ethical positions in the leadership, and always have to settle for the Schors, Burdens, and Robbs being marginalized while the Roses and Mehtas of the world run the business, it is time for the students to revoke MSA's operating license and replace the sickly organization with (deep breath) an efficient, non–partisan body that would act as an appendage to SOAS (Student Organization Accounts Services) to distribute funds and office space along with an informally networked group of student group heads that naturally, can do a hell of a lot more than MSA could in the case of an emergency.

The scandals surrounding MSA are merely a sad reminder that this organization has outlived its usefulness. For student interests to be served properly, we can rely on the collegiate governments that actually run competently, rely on student group heads with their ears to the vine who will and have taken action, and rely on ourselves to police what should be, in a perfect world, a small board of students working with SOAS distributing office space and student monies to students, instead of MSA wasting it away.

MSA has a legacy: a sick, bloated, festering legacy in which waste, corruption, and political scheming are rampant. As we have seen, it is a well deserved reputation. Dissolving the Assembly would be the perfect solution to getting the campus back on track. Even if we replaced it with a similar group, we would have that chance to start anew, which is what we need right now!

What more can I say? I would like it if the Assembly would work for real, sweeping, true reform. I would like it if Fiona and Probir would pay back the money they misspent. Unless a sweeping change occurs, this will not happen. So, instead, I will have to continue to Fight the Good Fight... in the end, that is more productive than just throwing up one's hands. **MR**

Benjamin Kepple is Managing Editor for the Review. *He was last seen in Garden City, New Jersey. You can e–mail him with the typical barrage of comments at bjkepple@umich.edu*

❑ ROLL UP FOR THE MYSTERY TOUR

... Counterpoint

BY GEOFF BROWN

BEN, YOU IGNORANT SLUT. Sorry, I've always wanted to say that in an official capacity. But I digress. Anyway, this time, the Magical Mystery Tour is dying to take you in a new direction: off to the wonderful land of MSA. Ben, my good friend and trusted right–hand man, has decreed that MSA should be dissolved. This would be, to use the technical term, a "pretty bad idea." Yeah, Ben, I know that they're currently a "bloated cadaver of inefficiency." I know that their President and Vice President are both people of somewhat questionable ethics (sorry, Probir — my opinion is that if you were a real leader, you'd face the music for what you've done, and not try to save your own ass by accusing the entire Assembly of executing a "personal vendetta") who are well on their way to being the recipients of Geoff Brown's "Bill Clinton Award for Unethical Activity and Blatant Cover–ups."



Geoff Brown: Crusader for MSA?

But you see, Ben, my friend, the fact is that, in spirit, MSA is actually a ***good idea***. I know, it pained me to say it, too. I mean sure, you have your Fionas and Funk Lords, but think about it: they have to graduate some time. How much damage could they actually cause? Well, okay, maybe a lot. Maybe that's a bad example.

But I digress.

Think about it, Ben — without MSA, how else are we going to have any vestiges of student representation? It's not as though the Regents and the Administration (featuring Vice President for Student Affairs and Ruler on High of The Code Maureen Hartford) are going to go around ***asking*** us what we think! Please! I mean, look at The Code! If you go and dismantle MSA in favor of an "appendage to SOAS," you'll remove whatever fleeting remnants of a collective voice that we have! Are you forgetting that SOAS is part of the Administration?!? HELLO!!! Don't you remember that these are the SAME PEOPLE WHO MADE UP THE **COOOOODDDDE**!!! THEY DON'T GIVE A **SHIT ABOUT US**!!! OH!!! OH, OH, **OHHHHHHHHH**!!!!!

Woah. Sorry, got caught on a "Sam Kinison–esque" tangent there. And what's this crap about an "informal network of student group heads" being relied upon for governing this thing?!? You're awfully cavalier with my time — I am currently the "group head" of two campus groups, and I don't have the time nor the inclination to play stooge to the Administration! And how would you guarantee adequate representation? How much influence would people like me, who head more than one group, have? And what about the students who don't belong to any student groups? How would they be represented?

I know what you're thinking: "the same function could be performed by a minimalist government consisting of one guy working behind an old desk stamping forms, and we need to privatize the air, and blah blah blah blah!" I'm sure that your redneck, pothead, anarchist friends over at the Libertarian Party would be proud of you. But, as much as I hate to say it, some form of government is necessary. Yes, MSA is flawed beyond all possible belief. I wholeheartedly agree that MSA is currently a bloated cadaver of inefficiency, albeit a well–organized cadaver, what with Fiona's shiny new MSA–funded planner. But I don't agree that completely chucking the thing out the window is necessarily the best thing to do. In fact, it's all too easy to do that. It's really easy to break something. Fixing it, and improving it, that takes talent, that takes skill, and yes, it takes time and effort. We can't just jump ship every time things don't go our way — we need to stay aboard and help right our course. Sorry about the cheesy metaphor. I'll try not to do that again.

I hate to admit it, but at the risk of sounding as though I've been kidnapped by aliens working for MSA and had my brain replaced, I think that certain people on MSA are right when they say that we don't realize what they do for us. Hell, most people don't even know what MSA even **IS**; they probably think its an acronym for some food additive or something. The most important thing MSA provides is student group funding. I don't know about you, but I'm not sure I want student group funding left in the hands of the people at SOAS. Not to knock them or anything — they're great people, and I say this without regard that they can freeze every red cent in the accounts of the two student groups that I run. But the thing is, (1) they aren't students, and can't possibly understand the need or perspective of student groups, and (2) they work for the Administration. I ***know*** that you don't trust the Administration. Do you really want student group funding left to a bunch of people that implement student codes of conduct above the objections of the students and in direct opposition to the Constitution of the United States? My God, man. And think of the paperwork. It's bad enough as it is now with MSA handling it. Can you imagine what would happen if the bureaucracy–minded folks in the U–M administration got a hold of it? You'd have to fill out forms in triplicate and leave drug tests and blood samples just to get the forms you need to apply for funding, which, of course, would have to be filled out in triplicate (at the very least).

Using the argument that MSA is full of self–serving, opportunistic weenies doesn't work either, because (1) they're not all like that, (2) Congress is chock full of self–serving, opportunistic weenies, too, and you wouldn't go arguing that it should be abolished (okay, granted, that's damned tempting, too, but...), and (3) nothing — there is no third thing. I think you do the good people of MSA a disservice by lumping them in with their résumé–enhancement–seeking, pretend politico counterparts that like to go on "lobbying" trips and spend $5,000 on "postage."

You know what would really help? If students really paid attention to MSA elections, and what goes on with their money. I don't think that most students realize just how much money MSA gets its grubby little paws on every year — it's a hell of a lot. We need to find the candidates that truly care about student concerns, and get them onto MSA. We need to find MSA Representatives that are willing to join together and fight the machine of the Michigan Party, which is responsible for much of the "bloated cadaver" phenomenon. If there were a more — dare I say it — diverse range of opinions on the Assembly, we would much more likely see student interests protected.

You know, Ben, you also make the point that the MSA of today is "angelic" compared to the MSA of old. You use that as a reason to toss the suckers out of existence. However, I see it as a sign that ***maybe***, just maybe, MSA is improving; thus, your logic would be incorrect. If MSA is actually improving, then why would we get rid of them? These things take time. If you go calling for a revolution, you start sounding like those crazed, barely literate folks at NWROC who actually think that people are going to rally behind them in some sort of "socialist, proletariat, militant uprising." Right. They can't even spell. How can they be rulers of a nation?!? But I digress.

What we need here is to fix the current situation. Hell, I'd run for MSA myself if I weren't graduating, and so damned busy at the *Review*. I've done it before. You have to realize, though, that a student's right to representation is vital here. We should be spending our time ensuring that we are properly represented, and the way to do that is *not* by abolishing MSA. But how do we accomplish this? Let's explore some ideas:

• **FIRST: STOP THE DAMNED LOBBYING TRIPS!** Sorry, Erin, but I still don't see how blowing several thousand dollars in this manner is really helping us here. Erin is the MSA External Relations Committee Chair. She's actually quite committed to serving the students, so I suppose I can't fault her for that. However, it seems rather silly to think that sending a few MSA representatives to Washington, D.C. is going to solve the tuition and financial aid problems. What the External Relations Committee should focus on is improving relations with the Regents and the Administration.

• **SECOND: STOP SPENDING SO MUCH MONEY ON FIONA'S PLANNERS!** For God's sake, Fiona, I could have gotten the same planner that you bought with $130 of our money for maybe $40 tops at some office supplies store, or even less at Target or Meijer. It's hard for us to believe that you're committed to spending our money wisely when you go spending money on ritzy planners.

• **THIRD: ABOLISH MSA!** No, wait! That defeats my whole purpose! Sorry! I meant to say:

• **THIRD: ELECT RESPONSIBLE LEADERS TO THE ASSEMBLY.** We don't need a bunch of pretend politicians trying to further their careers, we need people with a genuine interest in helping students.

So in closing, don't destroy MSA. It's a good idea in theory — let's make it a good idea in practice. **MR**

Geoff Brown is a n LSA senior majoring in biology, and the Editor–in–Chief of the Review. *He can be reached at gmbrown@umich.edu, as long as Ben doesn't kill him.*

❑ IF IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE ...

...It Probably Is: (Renting in Ann Arbor)

BY KRISTINA CURKOVIC

WE THOUGHT WE HAD found the perfect house. It came complete with a dishwasher, laundry, microwave, and even a nice landlady. Well, okay, "Mollie" was a little anal about certain things, and she seemed a little too weird about what we could and couldn't put in the toilet, but we trusted her. We even trusted her when she told us how much the "preparation fee" was going to be.

It was a lot of money, and it meant that I wouldn't be able to eat regularly for a while, and I'd have to switch to a generic shampoo, but gosh darnit it was worth it, for that house. "Just think how nice the house is," we kept telling each other. "It's a nice house, and Mollie's a great landlady."

I started gushing about the house to friends and people at work, and after I'd mentioned that preparation fee a couple of times, some people started to point things out to me. "You know, that's illegal," they said, "because she's required by law to clean the house and not charge you for it." This got me wondering. Was I being jived? No, I thought, not at this university. Not, of all people, by a landlord. Yet, when I got some information from the Tenant's Union (an informative little booklet called "How to Evict Your Landlord"), I discovered that dear Mollie may have been dabbling in some illegal activity.

It turns out that some landlords (one bad grape ruins the bunch) try to get out of having to pay for the required cleaning of their houses and apartments before you move in by charging you for that amount of money. In our sorry case, Mollie was charging each of us $90 for her so-called "preparation fee." Troubled and disappointed, and eager to save about two weeks worth of pay from my measly job, this naive young student took the newfound information straight to Mollie, hoping that the dear woman would realize her mistake, forget about the fee, and encourage us to all live happily ever after.

A piece of advice, my friends: never expect your landlord/lady to be reasonable when presented with the appalling information that he or she may be a criminal. They just don't seem to respond very well, and may in fact have some sort of biological or genetic condition that prevents them from handling such situations with logic when they are in danger of losing any amount of money.

> ***"We thought we had found the perfect house."***

Mollie was very disappointed with our objection, and that we would react to her preparation fee so belligerently. Mollie got very upset with us, and threatened to tear up our lease, which, stupidly enough, we hadn't finished signing yet. The lady (Mollie) doth protest too much, I think. Had she known that what she was doing was legal, then she could have calmly explained this to us, shown us the law, pointed out the discrepancies. Instead, she seemed a little too eager to have us void the lease, to find some other landlord, and to just leave her alone. She knew we were on to her — her long reign of terror and cleaning fees could be coming to an end. She got scared.

Another lesson for you, fellow students: don't try to reason with your landlord until you have all signed the lease and after you've moved in, because although you might treat him or her with the utmost respect, your landlord will remember that you're just a miserable student looking for hard-to-find, decent housing. They have an edge. "Hey, if you don't like it, maybe we shouldn't do business," Mollie told me. And the ball was always in her hands because, as I learned too late, I had no bargaining power. It wasn't about pointing out Mollie's "mistake" to her and expecting her to drop the fee. It wasn't about working out a compromise, or behaving rationally. Mollie always knew that she had the upper hand, and if she couldn't dupe us, she could dupe the next person that came along, because there would always be somebody to cheat. In the end, we kept the house, and Mollie still managed to get her money, but legally this time, by adding it into our overall rent.

Did I learn a lesson from this little exercise? Of course. I learned that it's pretty darn hard to stand up for your rights when you're a student, and that maybe someday when I grow up and lose all sense of right and wrong, I'll become a landlady and cheat naive students out of their money and call it a living. I learned that you can't make a deal with the devil, because you'll get screwed any way you try to look at it. I learned that three years of college haven't prepared me to do battle against the real world, but at least I'll be able to quote Shakespeare.

You know, I almost thought that the "good landlord" really did exist. Somebody who wasn't in it for the money, but who wanted to do honest business with the poor students of this campus and make our stay at the University a little more tolerable and affordable. If that person exists, please let me know, and we'll have to do something about getting him or her canonized. But if you run into a landlord who just can't function above-board, forget it — it just may not be worth it. On the other hand, if it's a house you really want, wait until you move in to make any objections, and then contact the lovely people at the Tenant's Union or the Student Legal Services to have a look at your lease. (Those people sure are cool!) So watch out! The landlords are out to get us. They're all out to get us! It's not paranoia talking, it's just me. MR

Kristina Curkovic is an LSA junior majoring in English and linguistics, and copy editor for the Review. Her landlord isn't happy with her.

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❑ CAMPUS AFFAIRS

Professors Express Themselves Too

BY BENJAMIN KEPPLE

SINCE ALMOST ALL OF US live or have lived in the dorms on campus, we all know the Complete Significance of the Room Door. If one has any spare time at all, one can easily decorate a door with political slogans, cute pictures, funny articles or cartoons; in general, create an extension of one's personality. It allows others to get a glimpse of the person living in the room.

Professors and teaching assistants routinely decorate their office doors with posters, slogans, and what not as a way for expressing themselves as well. Now, given the climate at the University of Michigan, one would expect that even in politicized departments such as English, American Culture, and so on, there would be all kinds of ill–thought out slogans and posters doing strange things like praising the Sandinista government or calling for the release of Mumia Abu–Jamal.

The eerie similarity that I found on office doors, researched by ranridors of major University buildings, was not political in tone. It was more warm than that, yet cynical in a reassuring way.

The winner of the best door award goes to the unknown occupant (the room appears to be a storage room somewhat put-this up on) of 4141 MLB, the designer of "The World According to Graduate Studies" map. This ingenious document has every emotional and mental state that your teaching assistants ever have in class mapped out, ranging from the "Delusions of Grandeur" region to the "Bay of Rage." Other areas include the "Sense of Worthlessness" region and the "Learning Not to Fight the Power of the University Bureaucracy" region.

One graduate students' door made this bold statement: "William Safire — When he tries to make sense, he sounds outrageous and offensive. When he tries to sound outrageous and offensive, he makes sense." However, the occupants of this office were immediately discredited by this statement present: "Vernors ... not just a soft drink. It's the law." and as such, any and all relevant points made by the propaganda on their door were immediately nullified.

While many offices had no embellishments on their office doors, seemingly every office had a sign announcing the latest events offered by "The Institute for Research on Women and some sick Academic Apocalypse where people realize there is no more research to do in certain areas. Hey! Maybe this bias isn't about ideology at all, it's about the fact that everything has already been written on, say, the American Revolution or Ulysses and professors desparately looking for research grants have discovered the heretofore untapped field of gender relations in Ulysses and phallic imagery in the American Revolution, and are exploiting and oppressing this very resource!

Nah.

Due to major building renovations and construction of New Buildings For No Apparent Reason, many doors are vacant, with the only decorum being a solitary slip of copy paper with the laserprinted words of "J. D. Bile, English Language and Literature." placed somewhere in the door. This is unfortunate, as a lot of professors with cool things (or blatantly stupid ones) on their doors summoned their graduate student slaves to take the offensive material down, and it hasn't resurfaced. Pity. I mean, I like having things on the door. It lets me know whether the professor I am about to see is a complete wacko or whether he has his feet on the ground, and I can shift my conversation likewise.

ME: "Say! I saw that ... ah ... neato keen poster supporting Daniel Ortega on the door!"

PROFESSOR: "THE CIA IS OUT TO GET ME! THEY'RE SELLING CRACK TO INNER CITY NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE BEING FUNDED BY THE TOBACCO

ME: "The kops and the klan go hand in hand!"

PROFESSOR: "Thank God, you're safe. They're after me. What do you want?"

ME: "Well, I need my test moved back to..."

PROFESSOR: "Sure thing. Want a croissant?"

ME: "A croissant? What's that go for nowadays?"

PROFESSOR: "$2.49."

ME: "Yes! Certainly!"

Those of you not familiar with the far left's lingo can easily buy a pocket translator at department stores everywhere.

Lastly, the best thing about the office doors of teachers instructional staff, excuse me, is the plethora of cartoons and cartoon–related products present. Nearly every door, even if bare of other material, will have some cartoon by Gary Larson, Matt Groening (exclusively from his "School is Hell" book), and Bill Watterson's "Calvin and Hobbes." These cartoons exclusively deal with the five following themes:

1. My life is a living Hell.
2. I have no job/no employment prospects.
3. My students are uninterested morons only inspired by Schlitz.
4. My department head is a politically correct goon. ~~He~~ (S/he) sucks.
5. Why am I doing this?

So, as we have seen, as a general rule, professors and TAs are surprisingly normal when it comes to things they put on their office doors. Sure, there will always be some weirdo who ecrates the American flag, and you need to watch out for a person like that. Why? Well, in the words of Hank Hill, "that boy ain't right." But mainly for the reason that if you say the wrong thing during office hours you'll most likely get a low mark on your final exam or section grade. And that is why the office door is helpful. If only the teaching assistants were this open during the discussion sections, we might definently have an improvement. **MR**

Benjamin Kepple is the Managing Editor of the Review. *He is hoping that someone would translate those foreign posters into English.*

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❑ NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Clinton "Balancing" Act Fails

BY MATTHEW BUCKLEY

PRESIDENT CLINTON RECENTLY proposed his budget plan for the 1998 fiscal year, and with it his plans for a balanced budget by the year 2002. Republicans, loath to appear negative in the face of various Clinton proposals, are offering some serious criticism. Looking at the details, however, one wonders why they aren't being louder.

The timing of the proposals spending cuts is a natural target for Republicans. Over 250 billion dollars of government spending would be cut, with over three–fourths of those cuts in ... 2001 and 2002. Clinton will be out of the White House at that point. About 1 percent of the cuts get made this year, and only 6 percent will emerge next year. This brings "passing the buck" to epic proportions.

The fact that only 1 percent of cuts occurs this year brings up another political point for Clinton. A promise to eventually balance the budget may make Republicans pass up flaws in *this* year's budget. There may be temptation to give Clinton leeway in the short–run to preserve the balance budget. As *New York Times* reporter David Rosenbaum notes, this coming fiscal year will actually increase the size of the budget by over a billion dollars. Short–term budget irresponsibility is getting political cover from the balancing plan.

That would be a shame. Plenty of spending increases in Clinton's 1998 proposal could be foregone for budget reduction, *Times* reporter Michael Wines recounts the details. Energy conservation programs get a huge 25 percent increase in funding in 1998. The Environmental Protection Agency gets 12 more; unproven job–training schemes get a similar boost.

How is this spending harmful? Ignore the fact that the nation somehow survived for years without electric–car research or wetlands protection. The raises set up higher levels of future spending on these programs. Next year a modest 3 percent *increase* in funding for these programs will be seen as commendable by the president; politicians may overlook that those programs were overfunded in the first place. Why not keep those programs at current levels, applying the money to deficit reduction?

Even if Clinton's proposal passes, don't hold much hope for 2002. Clinton's budget proponents assume the economy will not take a downturn anytime soon. The business cycle predicts otherwise. The longest postwar recession in the US was from 1982–1989, a total of seven years. The current economic uptick began in 1992. If the economy matches the 1980s upswing in length, that gets the country to 1999. It would take a *ten year* surge to last through the whole budget package. Not really likely ...

The possibility of recession brings up an interesting sidenote. Clinton opposed a balanced–budget amendment, claiming that if the government could not allow budget deficits, it would make raising the economy out of recession impossible. This is a credible position. Yet hidden in the program is a provision mandating a loss in prospective tax cuts and cuts in government spending if provisions are not meant. The program could very well mandate a devastating economic policy. Clinton had the right idea before; why lose it now?

While some Republicans criticize the proposal, many are waiting to see how bipartisan negotiations will play out. After being savaged on the Medicare issue by ads accusing the GOP of trying to cut services to the elderly, they may wish to sit on the sidelines and watch Clinton flounder.

This is the wrong attitude to take. The GOP earned control of Congress by promising to be active, not passive. The GOP must offer a compelling alternative rather than simply snipe away. The tactical thing to do would be to lash at the program line by line, exposing it with all its flaws. Leadership, however, demands more.

Recently, Dick Morris revealed that Clinton will spend the coming years trying to define himself on the scale of past Presidents, in a search to reach that top tier in American history. To begin, he must get a budget deal. The Republicans hold the votes, and they can make Clinton deal. By striking a hard bargain, the GOP can put their footprint on what may be the issue of the decade. Let the bloody compromise fighting begin. **MR**

Kirk

Continued from page 1

the conservatives on campus. As the CR president, he is automatically the unofficial spokesman for conservatives at the University. Nick Kirk is out of control. He must be stopped before he causes irreparable damage to the conservative movement at U–M."

"I am disgusted and shocked that even Nick Kirk would do something so incredibly stupid and irresponsible such as this," said Benjamin Kepple, Managing Editor of the *Review*. "I would have thought he would have been smart enough and ethical enough not to break the law. The whole situation is just pathetic."

The allegations against Nick Kirk are serious. Falsely claiming to be a member of the press is a crime. Forgery is a felony. The *Review* and Geoff Brown are each weighing their options, and considering what, if any, legal action to pursue in the matter. **MR**

Rose

Continued from page 1

leather binder," Rose said. "I bought the very bottom of the line model."

However, according to employees at the Franklin Quest store — who were able to identify the items listed on the receipt Rose submitted for reimbursement — Rose did indeed purchase a leather binder. In fact, Rose apparently spent extra money to purchase a planner with extra features not found in the "basic" planner kit, such as specially patterned calendar paper and the special leather binder. In reality, the "bottom–of–the–line" model would have only cost about $64, nearly half of what Rose spent on her model.

MSA Representative Andy Schor (Independent–LSA) stated that while Rose didn't technically violate any rules, he feels that she acted unethically in spending such a large amount of money on an item for personal use when the money might instead have gone to a student group in light of the fact that she apparently spared little expense in her purchase.

"I believe that [Rose] knew that it wasn't her money she was spending, and so she felt she could get whatever she wanted," Schor said.

Commenting on Mehta's authorization, Schor pointed out that it is the duty of the Vice President to authorize disbursements from the Operations account. However, Schor feels that Mehta should have put the concerns of students before his duty to Rose, and not signed the authorization.

"He wasn't looking out for the interests of students," Schor said. "He should have advised her not to buy the planner." **MR**

Mehta

Continued from page 1

Assembly membership. It is charged with investigating the incident and coming to a determination by February 25.

Rose stated that she believes that certain members of the Assembly have the "intention to ruin" Probir.

Mehta feels that he is unfairly being singled out by the Assembly.

"I am very disappointed and alarmed," Mehta told the *Review*, "that the Assembly, in a partisan vote, decided to investigate me."

He feels that the committee was formed for less–than–honorable reasons.

"This is a mean spirited attack in the midst of an election season. What really are people's motivations in trying to smear me."

However, Schor disagrees.

"He knows its neither personal nor partisan," Schor explained. "First of all, his party holds the majority on the Assembly, so it couldn't have been a partisan vote against him. Second, there was a rule broken — it's not partisan politics to investigate such a violation."

Dub contends that, "personal feelings are not going to play a role in this investigation. Personal and partisan politics have no place on this committee."

Mehta believes that since he told the truth about his violation, he should not be punished for his activities.

"There have been much more serious allegations in the past and never has an investigative committee been formed," Mehta said. "No one is above the law; however, is this the reward for honesty?"

The committee will recommend action to the Assembly. This could range from acquittal to requiring Mehta to repay the Assembly, recall, censure, or a variety of other punishments. Any recommendation would then go to the Assembly, which could vote to either accept it, or to come up with one of its own. **MR**

Letters

Continued from Page 3

ample evidence that, instead of being "filled with lies about NWROC," our allegations are right on the money. Rest assured that we are not going to abandon our quest for the truth based upon the poorly-spelled, incoherent rantings of one who seems to have more time to create web pages than become a productive member of society.

Plus, we bristle at being called "petty bourgeousie f—ks" — we've always thought of ourselves as "grand bourgeousie." —Ed.

To the Editor,

I would like to respond to some of the allegations you made in your recent editorial entitled "MSA Needs to Reform Budget." (Page 4 — February 5, 1997) You claim that MSA needs to spend its money more judiciously, citing the fact that "Lobbying trips are of questionable value to the student body at large," and wondering, "If the administration and the Regents do not take MSA seriously, why would any member of Congress be more receptive?" Let me tell you why we do what we do.

According to the Office of Financial Aid, approximately 45% of the students at the University of Michigan currently receive some sort of federal financial aid. This adds up to about $130 million per year in grants, loans, and work–study money. Thus, the amount of financial aid available is of real interest to students on this campus, one of few things that concerns almost all students at some point in their college career. In fact, a national survey released last month found that more college freshmen than ever before say that they selected their institutions based on financial reasons.

MSA's External Relations Committee (ERC) plays a unique role as the only advocate working purely on behalf of students at this campus. ERC works with all levels of government on a variety of issues, but our primary focus is the affordability of a university education. After all, if we can't afford to be students, there is no need to worry about other student issues.

In fact, just the other day I was talking to a friend of mine, who was telling me about all the groups he'd like to get involved in, and all the things he'd like to explore while still in college. Then he sighed.

"But I can't," he said, "because I'm strapped for cash, and I can't even pay off the interest. I'm instate, and I'm looking at a $52,000 debt after school." There are thousand of people just like him on this campus, and thousands more who couldn't come in the first place because they couldn't afford to go $52,000 into debt. And that's where MSA comes in.

The Assembly's efforts vary from working to ensure that University students benefit from the state and national budgets and other legislation concerning financial aid to lobbying on Capitol Hill to conducting a cellular phone call-in on the Diag. We are also working with the state legislature to create a student seat on the University Board of Regents, which would provide additional student input into how University decisions, including financial decisions such as tuition, are made.

While these efforts do sometimes require money, we make every attempt to spend as little as possible. For example, in the past MSA has hired a private lobbyist. However, the Assembly deemed that option too expensive for the gains students on this campus were seeing, and now all of our endeavors are completely coordinated and carried out by student volunteers. The cellular phones for our call-out were donated to us, and our biggest lobbying trip of late was the result of several Assembly members already in DC last summer who gave up their own time to go talk to Congresspeople.

Furthermore, through MSA, the University of Michigan is now a member of the National Association of Students for Higher Education (NASHE). Formed in the spring of 1995, NASHE is a nationwide coalition, representing over 1 million students, and is dedicated to helping ensure the affordability of a college education. Acting collectively, our voicesare much stronger.

While it is true that students at the University collectively pay $900 in NASHE dues, that is far less money than other schools pay other organizations. The University of Wisconsin, for example, shells out about $40,000 per year to the United States Student Association, and receives approximately the same benefits. Furthermore, the per student cost of MSA's membership in NASHE is only about 2.5 cents. Even if you add in the current travel expenses, every student contributes less money than it takes to buy a stick of gum. Not exactly a huge waste of student money.

Finally, student lobbying really does make a difference. In the past two years, a wide variety of budget–balancing measures have been proposed in Congress. These include eliminating the Perkins Loan program, eliminating State Student Incentive Grants, and making drastic cuts in a variety of other programs. The proposals would have meant the loss of billions of dollars of students aid, affecting millions of students.

However, students, including those here, formed a nationwide coalition to save student aid, working in every way imaginable to make our voices heard. Thanks to the fuss students made, student aid levels will be higher next year than they are currently, not lower; among other things, the maximum Pell Grant will increase 9%, and work–study funding will increase by an amazing 35 percent.

What is more, it looks as if education is becoming a real priority for Congress. In the opening days of the 105th Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike have introduced bills that would make college more affordable. These would mostly be tax breaks for students and their families, including one that would end taxation of money students earn from work–study jobs. "We are all concerned about the skyrocketing costs of higher education," said Senator Paul D. Coverdell of Georgia, who heads the Republican Task Force on Education.

It is important to see MSA's involvement as an investment. Although state and national lobbying efforts require money, which detracts from what MSA is able to give to student groups, the benefits students receive in terms of increased aid can be tremendous. So the next time you question MSA for lobbying on behalf of students, realize that our lobbying helps keep a lot of your classmates here.

ERIN CAREY (EMCAREY@UMICH.EDU)
EXTERNAL RELATIONS CHAIR
MICHIGAN STUDENT ASSEMBLY

Ms. Carey: It is indeed good to see that Congress and the federal government are beginning to pay attention to financial concerns of college students. However, we are forced to wonder exactly what role MSA lobbying played in that. Education in general has been a hot political topic for quite some time, so it is quite natural that these concerns are now being scrutinized by politicians. However, there does not appear to be any causative link between MSA's involvement and this new attention to college students. As a matter of fact, with so many parents being forced to pay more and more for their children's educations, this issue would have likely been addressed with or without MSA's efforts.

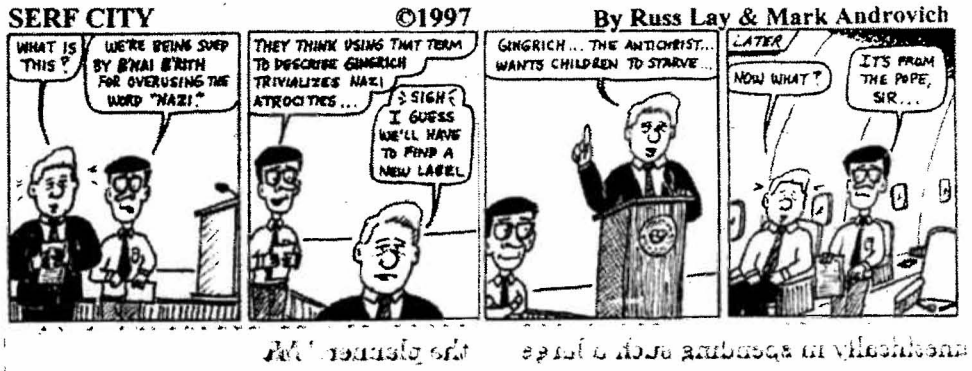
We also disagree with the contention that the External Relations Committee exists primarily to lobby for lower tuition. Rather, it should direct its energies to improving student relations with the Regents and with the adminsitration — both of these endeavours would require less money and fewer trips to Washington, D.C.

Further, we do not feel that the fact that each student's financial contribution to your committee works out to be the same as a stick of gum necessarily means that the money isn't being wasted: who really needs 40,000 sticks of Freedent anyway, Erin?

However, your letter does bring about some interesting points. The External Relations Committee does indeed have its heart in the right place. We suggest that your efforts might better be directed closer to home.

In response to your opinion that lobbying dollars are an "investment," we agree. However, we feel that we have yet to see any returns on our investments.—Ed.





Film

Woody Allen Sings

BY KRISTINA CURKOVIC

AFTER RECENTLY INITIATing Woody Allen as one of my all–time favorite writers and movie makers, watching *Everybody Says I love You* proved to be a painful experience. It was like watching the slow decline of an aging family friend: it's just too hard to admit that something is wrong.

Everybody Says I Love You
Directed by Woody Allen
Featuring Allen, Natasha Lyonne, Julia Roberts, and Edward Norton
At Ann Arbor 1 & 2

After all, what would inspire a movie maker of the nineties to produce a musical? And to encourage bad actors to sing, and good actors to try to dance? I grew up watching musicals, and the magic of their success was the presence of actors and actresses who were born to play the song–and–dance parts central to the movie musical. Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Debbie Reynolds, Leslie Caron, and even Frank Sinatra could turn a really bad story line into a fun and sometimes awe–inspiring performance. The musicals that came from long ago created impossible worlds where the transitions between the "real world" of dialogue and the "dream world" of song and dance were seamless and believable.

Woody Allen tries to recreate these worlds in his new movie. In the real world, we have the fluctuating love affairs between a variety of couples; in the dream world, we have nightmarish sequences involving actors who can't sing whose unfunny attempts at dancing make them look foolish and unpleasantly conspicuous. It is painful and embarrassing to listen to Drew Barrymore and Julia Roberts sing; could it hurt to dub some real voices over theirs? Woody Allen even has a little number — his weak, soft voice barely audible over the surrounding music. It is nice that Hollywood is trying to win hearts through song — but maybe everyone needs some lessons on how to sing and act well at the same time.

Perhaps an old–fashioned belief that if you want to make a movie musical, you should try to hire people who can be musical. And if you can't do that, maybe a well–written, funny script would suffice. Unfortunately, there are few laughs in this movie, and sadly the one that got the most response was a tiring joke concerning an artery blockage that explains some strange Republican behavior and beliefs. But we won't go there. It was disappointing to see such weak writing coming from Allen; after *Bullets Over Broadway*, one expects more from the creative vault. However, in *Everybody* he returns to his familiar plot revolving around a neurotic writer unlucky in love.

Love is, of course, one of the themes of the movie. D.J., our narrator (Natasha Lyonne), takes us on the rounds as she travels between New York, Venice and Paris, describing the relationships in her family. I didn't really like D.J. She like totally reminded me of some sorority chick sitting behind me in my psych class, you know? In fact, it was hard to like any of the characters, except for the cute Holden (Edward Norton, *The People vs. Larry Flynt*), despite his dancing incompetence. As is usual, Allen's character, Joe, suffers the most disappointment in love. This time, he attains and loses the love of Von (Julia Roberts), and the age gap of this relationship, a common Allen theme, amazes us. As he gets older, it becomes harder to believe that he could manage to attract the young women he does.

It is difficult to determine what Allen is trying to say with this movie. While it has its nice, romantic moments, the film just doesn't have very much fun, and neither does its audience. Perhaps this lack of cohesion represents Allen's efforts to emulate the bad musicals of old days, when such films were quickly thrown together to satisfy audiences who wanted to see their favorite stars, regardless of the worth of the movie itself. In the same way might Allen's fans love this movie, regardless of its actual worth. But it is the nineties, and some of us expect a little more for our money. It's too bad that Astaire and Kelly are gone — a touch of their kind of magic and talent is exactly what this movie needs. MR

Marsalis Delivers at Hill

BY TOM JOLLIFFE

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRuary 12, Hill Auditorium hosted Wynton Marsalis and his Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra for their performance of Marsalis's inspirational three–hour work, "Blood on the Fields." With American slavery as its subject, "Blood on the Fields" brings together blazing jazz with African–American spiritual harmonies, and the end result is something outstanding. The world–class Marsalis, largely responsible for a general renewal in jazz appreciation, has written an unforgettable epic that follows two slaves from their capture in Africa to their eventual liberating journey north. With vocalists Cassandra Wilson and Miles Griffith as Leona and Jesse, the show presents their search for identity amidst struggles in the antebellum South.

From the get-go you know that "Blood on the Fields" will be a musical performance of the highest order. The fourteen piece orchestra (four reeds, three trombones, three trumpets, a pianist, bassist, and drummer), with soulful textures on top of a solid jazz foundation, was an unbridled platoon of mood and vitality. "Move Over," a rolling, dissonant evocation of the Middle Passage, established the evening's authentic atmosphere. "Blood on the Fields" takes us back to that era of forced servitude, when the slaves' enduring strength of spirit fostered a unique culture of optimism and fortitude.

Marsalis conducts with vigorous if informal style, here clapping his hands in time and there cueing the brass to bring it up. It was jazz in the classic sense: a cohesive overall scheme underscored with a daring sense of improvisation. Throughout the show were we delighted by individual musicians playing three octaves above the score, their fresh solos generating some serious excitement at the Hill. Of particular note was Herlin Riley's thunderous drumming during "Forty Lashes," a stirring, driving piece about plantation punishment. During his brief but furious session on the skins, quite audible were cries of encouragement from the Hill concert–goers. Marsalis, the decade's foremost trumpeter, took several breaks from his conducting duties to tear off some mean lines on the brass cannon himself. He, too, plays with the nonchalant grace that infects the entire Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. Of course, the real merit of "Blood on the Fields" lies not just in the technical mastery of the musicians, but also in the very story itself.

Being more than merely a vehicle for superb music, Marsalis's presentation of slavery and its themes is profound and original. When the show begins, Leona supports Jesse on their trans–Atlantic voyage, but when they arrive in the new land, he more or less leaves her in the lurch. He is his own first priority, and he sets his sights on freedom for himself only. After his escape and subsequent capture, he realizes that he needs to "help their brother dance this dance" and "sing with soul...heal this wounded land."

Before each piece, the Jazz Orchestra recited in unison several lines of narrative having to do with developments in Jesse and Leona's lives. Particularly effective were "Marketplace" and "Soul For Sale," two ironically up–tempo songs exposing the inhumanity of the slave auction block, sung by the charismatic Jon Hendricks. Mr. Hendricks also sings the part of the wise fool Juba in an inspiring and catchy performance. Juba tells Jesse that he needs to do three things: he has to love his new land, he has to learn how to sing with soul, and he has to learn who he will be when free. As Juba, Hendricks deals out some dizzying scat; it's a free–wheeling vocal flight competing with the accompanying instruments. Towards the end of "Blood on the Fields," Griffith and Wilson get into the scat act with matching exuberance in the ever–optimistic "Freedom is in the Trying." With impressive vocal range, Ms. Wilson as Leona is strong, passionate and soulful. Her duet with Griffith in "I Hold Out My Hand," in which Leona and Jesse sing their love for each other, demonstrates all of these qualities. This powerful song about love transcending adversity embodies the driving theme of "Blood On the Fields."

Wynton Marsalis, if he hadn't already, has now firmly established himself as a living jazz legend with his terrific "Blood On the Fields." Hill Auditorium was positively buzzing Wednesday night, the spirited music having reached us on quite an emotional level. Marsalis has applied jazz to tell the great American tragedy, and this effort is altogether triumphant. MR

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Music

Veruca Salt: Lackluster Fun

BY SIMON EINSPAHR

AFTER A TWO-AND-A-half year hiatus, **Veruca Salt** have just released their sophomore full-length album, *Eight Arms To Hold You*. Be warned: This is one of those albums this isn't as impressive at first, but slowly seeps into your unconscious, finding daylight while you are in class, trying to read or concentrate. Which isn't necessarily bad. After about seven listens, I find myself singing these catchy tunes all over campus. Also, my initial verdict on the album now pales in comparison.

Veruca Salt
Eight Arms to Hold You

Everyone remembers Veruca Salt. My freshmen year, I couldn't turn on the radio (I barely do anymore) without hearing those cute but angry voices screeching, "can't fight the seether..." This was another one of those tunes that infiltrates your mind (like "Macarena" or any Sheryl Crow song), fastens its iron grip, and then runs rampant for days. Yeah, I bought the album, but "American Thighs," named for a phrase from AC/DC's "You Shook Me All Night Long," was not as fun as "Seether". The songwriting of Nina Gordon and Louise Post, the axe-wielding tandem who also split vocal duties, showed promise. Last year, the band recorded an EP, *Blow It Out Your Ass It's Veruca Salt* which Nirvana producer Steve Albini couldn't save from mediocrity. However, Veruca Salt have always had a sense of humor, and like to have fun while they play, like their heroes AC/DC — who should receive the Pulitzer Prize for writing some 200 songs on three guitar chords, the same bass-line, and one drum sequence. Therefore, while *Eight Arms To Hold You* isn't the most original, encapsulating, or groundbreaking record, it is fun — which shouldn't be overlooked.

The album opens with "Straight", which could be about a crummy relationship, marijuana, or even better, a relationship that turns crummy because of marijuana. Next follows the first single, "Volcano Girls," which is just as endearing as "Seether."

The coolest part of the song is their tribute to the Beatles (as in the title of the album, which was the working name for Fab Four's 1965 film "Help") by returning to the riff of Seether. Nina Gordon, who was the Seether, now sings "I told you about the Seether before...Here's another clue if you please, the Seether's Louise." In the Lennon-penned "Glass Onion" from the White-Album, John writes, "I told you about the Fool on the Hill...Here's another clue for you all, the Walrus was Paul", when in fact John was the Walrus. I don't know how many people would catch that reference, but for someone whose first words were probably "Goo-goo ga-joob," it is quite amusing.

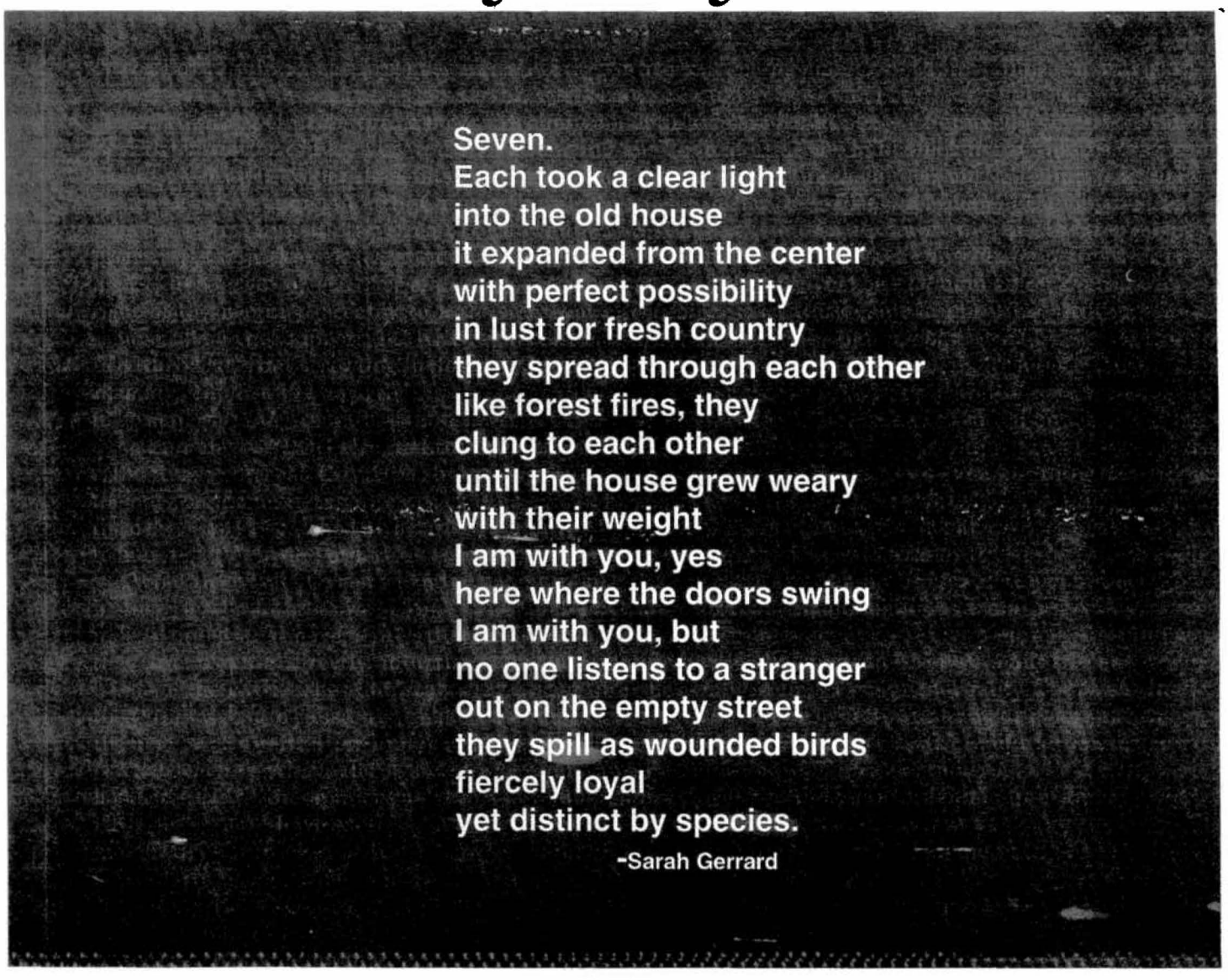
There are many other standout tracks on the album, like "Don't Make Me Prove It," which sounds suspiciously like Sonic Youth, and "Stoneface," which has a classic-sounding riff, and "Sound of the Bell," which sounds like a tribute to the early-80's new wave movement. My favorite song on the album is "Venus Man Trap," which combines Veruca Salt's love for the big riffs with their sweet melodies and attitude. But while most of the music on the album is fine if not standard, sometimes it sounds as if the lyrics are half-hearted attempts. Like in "Benjamin," when Nina Gordon writes "Take me away I know I could use the rest/ I want to clear up this mess/ I need a few days with my good sense/ I need a few good days Benjamin." While this could've been developed, it wasn't and really says nothing. Other bands (such as AC/DC again) have lyrics that only serve as layering for the music, but for Veruca Salt, the problem is that the music just isn't interesting enough to do that. Also, when Nina or Louise are really angry in their songs, it is just too hard to believe because they sound so cute.

I also have a problem with the sound on the album. So many people are jumping on the low-fi bandwagon, but for a band like Veruca Salt, they benefit from big thick arrangements. It seems odd that Veruca Salt picked Bob Rock, the noted veteran producer of Metallica and champion of meaty arrangements, to produce "Eight Arms To Hold You," which sounds like an attempt to lighten up their tone. The results are muddy and confused arrangements, and drums that sound like cardboard. I think Veruca Salt should have stuck with Brad Wood, who has worked wonders for the likes of Liz Phair and The Sea and Cake, other Chicago artists, who gave Veruca Salt more of an in-your-face sound on "American Thighs."

All in all, I think one should take *Eight Arms To Hold You* with a grain of salt, because it's fun, peppy, and cheerful, but it's no White Album, which was a wonderfully successful dirge into low-fi. While the album may sound great blasted in a car stereo, the album leaves something to be desired — both intellectually and lyrically. I think Veruca Salt will find their niche in late-90's rock when they don't try to do something different just for the sake of it, and come to terms with the fact that they are not going to be studio wizards. They are essentially a party band like Van Halen or AC/DC, good in concert, but lacking in the studio. I would love to hear many of the songs running through my head right now at St. Andrew's in Detroit, or at the Blind Pig, but as recording artists, I suspect Veruca Salt may never achieve all they hope for on *Eight Arms To Hold You*. Rating: 6.5/10. **MR**

Simon is an LSA junior studying Psychology. Official record has it that his first words were actually "lay down your mind, relax, and float down the stream."

Poetry, Anyone?



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