

Honi Soit

SEMESTER 1 WEEK 4
24 MARCH 2010



Honi to Obama:
where the
bloody hell are
you?

OBAMA

US Edition

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HONI SOIT, EDITION 4
24 MARCH 2010

OBAMA'S COMING! OBAMA'S COMING!

SHIT. HE'S NOT COMING.

THIS WEEK'S:
Strange smell: The SRC kitchen. We suspect a dead student politician stuffed inside the fridge.
Best laugh we had this week: Listening to Portugese David Bowie songs and imagining they're in gibberish.
Best Youtube clip: Art of Sand followed closely by The Falling Fairy.



KEN LEE
LIBI-DIB-WEE-CHOUTOO

THE HYPOTHETICAL:
Would you rather
Be the popular DJ at your local pub, with the opportunity to return at any point in your life
OR
Be able to jump six feet in the air, but have this ability disabled in any competitive context
FAQ:
Do I get paid as a DJ? Yes - \$100/night + free drink.
Do I stay popular regardless of what songs I play? Yes - but there's one song that will make you blow up if you play it, and you don't know what it is.
What happens if I try to jump in a competition? You temporarily return to your original abilities.
What do you mean by 'competitive'? Any situation in which you are challenged by another person.



The Post 03	Our incompetency is horribly exposed. <i>Mea Culpa.</i>	The Arts-Hole 09	Bridie Connellan flags us down. Sam Pender-Bayne sings a tender refrain. Ellana Costa scrubs up for SUDS. Henry Hawthorne is a golden, fiery God.
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Sorry Mulligan!

Hey guys,

You published my article "How to write a romance novel" in last week's edition, which is groovy, except you said my name was Elizabeth Mulligan, which isn't groovy, coz my name is Elizabeth Mulhall*. If you could print a correction in the next edition that would be cool.

Cheers,

Liz

**Editors' note: we are truly very sorry for getting it wrong, Liz. Don't worry - the right people have been punished.*

Retraction: Swedes hot. Other Scandinavians not.

In my article on Sweden and it's sycophants (*Honi* wk 2), I accused Swedish women of being the most boring people on the face of the planet. Last week's letter from, and my subsequent meeting with, a very attractive Swedish woman however has entirely disproved my theory and I therefore recant my statement that Swedish women are in any way dull or disinteresting.

Finnish, Norwegian & Danish women on the other hand are unimaginably boring. If any females from those nations would like to meet to dispute my claim, please write to *Honi* and I'd be delighted to print a further retraction.

Oliver Burton

We will now hear from the representative for *Honi Soit* for as long as is required to fill this space....

Recipe for 'Mega Biscuits'

Some days you feel like a biscuit, but on other days only a mega biscuit will do. This recipe is for those days. Makes 24.

Ingredients

2 cups rolled oats
4 cups Cornflakes
2 cups desiccated coconut
2 cups caster sugar
1 1/2 cups plain flour, sifted
2 cups sultanas
250g butter, roughly chopped
1/2 cup golden syrup
2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda
1/3 cup boiling water

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line 4 baking trays with baking paper. Using a pencil, draw 6 x 12cm circles onto each sheet of paper, leaving room between circles. Turn paper pencil-side down on trays. Combine oats, Cornflakes, coconut, sugar, flour and sultanas in a large bowl. Combine butter, golden syrup, bicarbonate of soda and water in a small saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring, for 4 minutes or until butter is melted and mixture is well combined. Stir butter mixture into dry ingredients. Mix well. Shape 1/2 cupfuls of mixture into rounds on baking trays, using pencil marks as a guide. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden. Cool completely on trays.

And now, a reading from the phonebook....*

**Editors' note: for an explanation of all this, read "Filibust-a-move" on p4.*

EDITORIAL

Never trust a handsome politician. They tell you that they're going to visit, that they just can't wait to see you, that you really are important to them...but then the uncertainty starts creeping into their voice. First, they tell you that there'll just be a minor delay - "Don't worry, I definitely won't let you down," they say, with their signature charm as you smile understandingly. Then BOOM! Something annoyingly momentous like universal healthcare reform comes up and suddenly you're pushed to the wayside left to sulk and blow your nose into the abrasive, cheap-quality paper of the 24-page edition you've specifically themed around the fact that said politician was scheduled to make an appearance.

Look, it's not like I'm bitter or anything, but President Barack Obama - YOU BROKE MY HEART!

Obama was supposed to make his first ever trip to Australia this week, as part of a Pacific tour also including Guam and Indonesia. Many news outlets have been commenting on how President Obama hopes to fashion himself as the first Pacific President.

So we, as an editorial team, thought it would be a swell idea to have a whole issue just dripping in deep-fried, fatty, US goodness. Late last

week, however, Obama dropped the bombshell that he would be postponing the trip until June due to the imminent vote on his healthcare reform bill. The good news is that we still have tasty American-themed treats for your reading pleasure, but the bad news is that you won't be able to drool over/heckle/stalk the most powerful man in the world in your own backyard.

We all remember the build-up that led to Obama's election victory in 2008: the t-shirts, the badges, the posters, the advertisements, the Paris Hilton Youtube video, the Bruce Springsteen song, the hyperbolic Facebook statuses, Obama Girl, *Huffington Post* articles, the overuse of the word "Change", promises of a puppy in The White House and so on and so forth.

This issue, Tim Mooney, a USyd student who campaigned for Obama in Philadelphia, explores whether Obama has lived up to the hype that made him so popular amongst foreigners and students in particular (pp12-13). So settle in: learn how to fake having read every book in the history of American literature (p5), scope out the best brownie on campus (p7) and meet the US Ambassador to Australia, Jeffrey Bleich (p10). Who needs an Obama in the country to have fun? NOT ME!

Diana Tjoeng

FACT!

In America, they celebrate Christmas on the 4th of July, and call it Bastille Day.

Love mail? Hate mail? Snail mail?

SEND IT ALL TO

honi.soit@src.usyd.edu.au

Submit to us.

Think you've got what it takes to write something for *Honi*? Well listen up buddy... you probably do.

Send in any submissions to **honi.soit@src.usyd.edu.au**

THE STALKER



On **ground floor of the Manning building** I've stopped for Friday afternoon. When I spy you with your **black t-shirt** and **denim cut-offs**, a combination that makes me swoon.

Why that **black leather bag** you carry is delightful! And those heavenly **hooped earrings** you wear Complement your **Nike sneakers** and **aluminium Macbook** and I gaze upon you without a care.

I suddenly suspect you've spotted me, and I begin to perspire, As to watch you, eating your **nachos from Xquisito** and drinking your **Iced Tea** on your own, is all that I desire.

You sensually **light a cigarette**, just to

complete your meal, Before you make your way to the **Education Building**, but that won't be the final glance I steal.

For I see you **pause for a conversation** outside, and I loiter, I linger, I long, Before following you in whilst you **wait for the lift**, fearing to follow along.

But you instead **take the stairs**, thus answering my prayers, and I see you **exit on level five**, Before you disappear from my gaze, but not from my thoughts, as on those alone I survive.

THINK you were stalked this week? Send a photo of yourself to **honi.soit@src.usyd.edu.au** and we'll ask this creep if it was really you. If you're correct, you'll win a prize.

FREE COUCH

SRC is giving away a comfy secondhand 3-seater couch to a student home.

Pick up in person from SRC Wentworth Bldg. Call 02 9660 5222.





Reforms to Youth Allowance

David Mack reports.

In a piece of non-US news we couldn't hold off, the Federal Government has passed reforms to Youth Allowance after a protracted negotiation with the Opposition, ending months of uncertainty for the 150,000 students whom the system supports.

Almost 10 months after announcing plans to tighten the eligibility criteria for students receiving the payments, Education Minister Julia Gillard and the Opposition's education spokesman Christopher Pine finally reached a deal, passing the new package in the Senate on March 17.

However, the compromise may prove something of a mixed bag for rural and regional students.

Initially, the Government wanted rural students to work 30 hours a week over 18 months to qualify for Youth Allowance, but the compromise means that rural students will now need to work just 15 hours a week over two years, or earn \$19,352 over an 18-month period if their parents earn a combined income under \$150,000.

However, the deal sees the Government assessing some students' eligibility based on where they live, with students from "outer regional", "remote" and "very remote" areas exempt from tougher eligibility rules, but not "inner regional" areas.

This is evidence of the Rudd Government's lack of understanding of regional areas, argued the leader of the Nationals, Warren Truss, in a statement: "The Rudd Government's

map is proof that Labor does not have a clue about regional communities and the challenges facing students from regional areas."

Additionally, the parental income threshold for Youth Allowance has increased, but the gap year criteria no longer exists for students who are not from rural, remote or outer regional areas.

To fund the changes, the new annual start-up scholarship, to be used by students to buy essentials like textbooks, will be cut by \$126 to \$2128 – but this year will be just \$1300.

Speaking to *Honi*, SRC Welfare Officer Matt McGirr said he was pleased with the overall package.

"As far as we are concerned, the passage of the Youth Allowance Bill through Parliament represents a great relief for students," McGirr said. "For the first time in a decade, we are seeing positive changes to income support for students, which includes an annual start-up scholarship and a more accessible system for hard-working students from lower income families."

SRC President Elly Howse's sentiments reflected the mix-bag of the final package: "We feel ambivalent in several ways: yes, we are extremely happy with some of the changes to Youth Allowance which have been long overdue – such as the increase to the parental threshold," Howse said. "But we are disappointed that legislation of this nature had to be compromised".

Filibust-a-move

Mekela Panditharatne will continue to talk long after you've stopped listening.

Although its gorgeous idiocy is threatening the passage of health reform in the United States, the filibuster is one of the more interesting and ludicrous American political traditions (notwithstanding the pardoning of turkeys). Put simply, the filibuster is a procedural method of delaying the passing of a bill.

The unique nature of the American filibuster arises from the provision in the Senate rules that allows for a senator to speak for as long as they wish on any topic they choose.

The catch is that the senator may not sit down, lean on anything, take a bathroom break or pause for any amount of time. It has evolved into a deliberate, if not particularly intelligent, form of political manoeuvre with its own rich history.

One of the longest and most entertaining filibusters was delivered by the notorious socialist, Senator Huey Long, in 1935. He dedicated 15 1/2 hours to preventing the confirmation of NRA employees by reading and offering lengthy analysis of the entire US Constitution. At one point, he glanced up from his notes to see that several of his colleagues were

napping at their desks. He suggested to Vice-President John Garner, who was presiding, that the senators be forced to listen to him until excused, to which Garner replied, "that would be unusual cruelty under the Bill of Rights".

Upon finishing his analysis, Long (reportedly belligerently) declared that he would "accommodate any senator on any point on which he needs advice". Reporters responded by sending notes up to the floor, but Long ended on a flourish by reading out his recipes for "fried oysters and potlikking", before succumbing to the call of nature. The bill was passed the next day.

Other senators have been more proactive than Long in ensuring that their fragile human need to relieve themselves was met. In fact, the filibuster has traditionally been called "taking it to the diaper".

Senator Strom Thurmond, who holds the record with his 24-hour, 18-minute effort, visited a steam room before his filibuster in order to dehydrate himself but had an aide stand by in the cloakroom with a pail in case of emergency. Thurmond managed to pass the time by reading from a phonebook and exposing his mother's

Bleeding Hearts Club

Bridie Connellan ♥s uni!

The "all-campus" spanning society I♥Uni unsuccessfully set up a stall on Eastern Avenue last Wednesday to celebrate the launch of their newly-designed free magazine IHU, but were quickly asked to move along by Campus Security.

Both Campus Security and Student Support were contacted after various SRC representatives noticed the use of unauthorised University branding on promotional material, and the spruiking of events in direct competition with those funded by USU. Use of the USYD logo without permission led to requests for the group to remove the logos from their branding, however opposition to the group is now stemming far beyond a few pamphlets and a pair of short shorts.

The society was founded at UTS by Kamal Zreika, a 2007 graduate and Union Board Director, and is currently co-managing the franchises with fellow Board Director Andrew Ho. With features on the Miss UNSW Pageant and 'Sexy Swimwear & Zombie Warfare', the "intervarsity" magazine and society have a strong focus on a frivolous student culture and large-scale parties.

The society and the magazine flagrantly promote student modeling, with advertisements for swimsuit models and photoshoots heavily promoted on their Facebook group and website. The group are the official organisers of the annual Miss University pageant with contestants sporting I♥Uni T-shirts to boost their academic fandom during the competition. But if the calibre of the current title holder is anything to judge by, Rosemarie Marino told *The Sydney*

Morning Herald, "If people don't know that I'm smart that doesn't bother me."

With the society promoting allegedly offensive and sexist mantras, SRC President

Elly Howse showed concern for Equal Opportunity on campus if I♥Uni were to succeed in gaining club status. With Director of Student Support Margaret Edmond similarly "enraged", Howse commented that I♥Uni society, parties and magazine are "directly against Sydney Uni's ethos".

'CEO' Zreika has already created waves in University political circles as various members of his Union Board campaign team reportedly accused other candidates of being ill-equipped to deal with International Student issues and made similarly controversial comments about the winning tactics of female candidates. The I♥Uni franchise has spread with a large following at UNSW and UWS, and now seeks an I♥USYD branch funded by USU. *Honi Soit* is already hedging bets on the outcome of a parking lot showdown with SUB-SKI.



CHORAL EVENSONG



St Paul's College Chapel

Tuesdays in Semester
5:45 pm

The St Paul's College Chapel Choir
David Drury Director of Music

Open to All

Ivan Head Warden

Location: 9 City Road, Camperdown

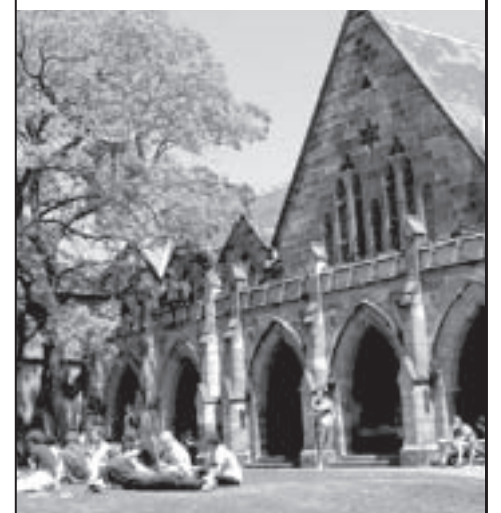


"Ingredients: One cup self-raising flour.
One pinch salt..."

biscuit recipe. That particularly heroic effort from the pro-segregation Senator was all in the name of preventing the *Civil Rights Act* from passing.

In the fictional world of *The West Wing* the filibuster becomes a form of exercise for the old bones of Senator Howard Stackhouse, who adds Charles Dickens to the list of platitudes that can keep senators awake overtime.

Obama lobbied to get a filibuster-proof Senate upon being elected, but failed. Meanwhile, we may all rest assured of the legitimacy of the American legislative system while in the safe knowledge that health reform might conceivably be blocked by someone reading *Twilight* out loud to the US Senate.





FAKING IT



THAT YOU'VE READ EVERY BOOK IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

How To Begin

It's impossible to say when 'American Literature' begins, but let's go for 1608, when John Smith (Mel Gibson from Pocahontas) wrote *A True Relation of ... Virginia*, presumably titled so because the name of the colony he helped found escaped him for a moment. But be sure not to forget the rich narrative tradition among the pre-Columbian Native Americans, and the journals written by early settlers from Europe. You must note that 'America' was conceived (albeit at times obtusely) in European works such as Sir Thomas Moore's *Utopia* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

The Foundations

Next, the Puritans. Don't dwell on them, they hated theatre, music and fun (mainly fun) and only wrote sermons, and even those were in 'Plaine Style' (ie. Dull style). Mention John Winthrop's 'a city upon a hill' prophecy - this is what American literature has been discussing, one way or another, ever since. Throw in the names 'Increase' and 'Cotton Mather' for good measure. Oh, and the first American poet of any real importance is from this time. Her name's Anne Bradstreet and she wrote a poem about her house burning down.

The Next Hundred Years Or So

You can skip a hundred or so years - it's just the Enlightenment, but remember Edward Taylor (poet) and mention that Benjamin Franklin figuratively cross-dressed, and wrote letters to the newspaper under the name Mrs Silence Dogwood. Ok, *The Declaration of Independence* in 1776, when slave-owner Big Thommy Jefferson said that "all men are created equal". Washington Irving became the first American to make his living as an author, and soon we had the American Gothic, which you can sum up as being when someone's father spontaneously combusted (in Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*), and it turned out an Orangutan did it in Poe's *Murder In Rue Morgue*. Jump to Transcendentalism with writers like Emerson and Thoreau reckoning that 'intuition' was better than so-called 'learning' and talk about how Nathaniel Hawthorne turned introspective on the nation.

You MUST go on about how in 1851, a boat, the "marriage" between an American and a Pacific Islander, a one-legged Captain and a white whale, explained all of America. Also from this book we got "Starbucks". Tell them how Walt Whitman was declared 'The Bard of America', (by himself, that is), and Emily Dickinson began writing very different, but no less wonderful poems

about death and flowers.

In 1858 Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and caused a civil war. Explain this as: everyone realising that the stain of slavery meant they were not 'a city upon a hill' and sought to rectify this through combat, memorialised in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. But the racism didn't go away with the war, and Mark Twain would still be attacking it twenty years later in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Relations with England were also symbolically re-established and examined through the novels of Henry James.

The 20th Century

Next the modernists: e. e. Cummings, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot (who is American in the way that Russell Crowe is a New Zealander) and William Faulkner, who used the stream-of-consciousness to discuss the South and the scars of the Civil War, as well as Gertrude Stein, who completely baffles everyone.

In 1925, *The Great Gatsby* satirised the American Dream, established years ago by Winthrop, leading to the perpetual undergraduate argument about the significance of the 'green light'. Get nostalgic over Dorothy Parker and friends at the Algonquin, and express a guilty fondness for 1930s hardboiled detective stories. Mention Carl Sandburg's folkloric contribution to high-culture poetry, and extol Hemingway's lean, forceful prose, and John Steinbeck's elegant dramas of the workingman. Explain how Nathaniel West showed that America could never live up to its own idealised rhetoric. The rich poetic

tradition continued; Sylvia Plath, Robert Frost and Dorothy Parker applied wit and sophistication to American urbanity, as Saul Bellow would do after the war with his picaresque tales of modern civilisation.

In 1951, J.D. Salinger exemplified teenage angst, and 12-17 year olds forever more declared they WERE Holden Caulfield, until their 18th birthday when they read Kerouac and declared they WERE Dean Moriarty. Show how Allen Ginsberg became a new Walt Whitman with *Howl* and made students read about being "fucked in the ass by saintly motorcyclists". Muse on how it took a Russian to give the English language a sublime wallop in *Lolita*, and how it took Robert Lowell to introduce the confessional into American poetry. Be sure to mention Maya Angelou's series of breathtaking autobiographies and the diaspora of minority voices in American literature that flowered late in the 20th century. Say that Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* did for post-modernism what *Ulysses* had done for Modernism, and then twenty-three years later David Foster Wallace did it again.

And To Finish Up

For today, mention Cormac McCarthy, Don DeLillo, Toni Morrison, Paul Auster, Michael Chabon, McSweeney's and Jonathan Franzen. And then tie in Obama's inaugural with great ones from the past (Lincoln's 2nd, Kennedy's 1st) and you're done!

STOP SAYING THAT YOU'RE EMBARRASSING YOURSELF

"CRAZY" AMERICAN LAWS

What you say: Did you know that in [any US state, preferably southern] you [can/can't/must] do [a ridiculous thing, often involving guns or animals]?. How crazy is that!?

Why you are wrong: Well, technically you're not. The things that you describe are all against the law, but often they're just regular, non-wacky things shrouded in a bunch of stupid bullshit. For example: "Did you know that in Alabama it is illegal to take a lion to the movies on a Tuesday?". Of course it is. It's probably also illegal to do that anywhere else in the world. The illegal part is taking a wild animal out in public, which is against the law, regardless of the eventual destination or time of week. Using this method, you can take the most mundane, obvious laws and make them sound like they were written by Wilson Tuckey. Hey, did you know that in Florida, if a man, dressed as a clown, on a motorbike, throws a fish in the air then shoots his wife to death, he can go to prison?!

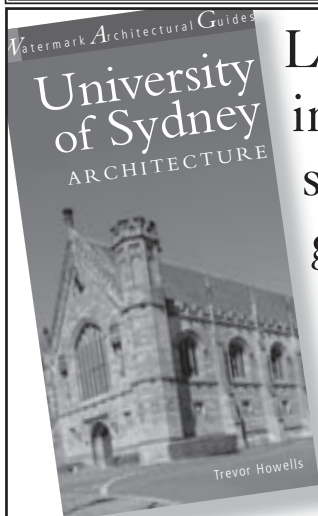
Why you're embarrassing yourself: In fairness, you're probably not embarrassing yourself at all. In fact, you can pretty much say whatever you like about America and people will believe you (see fig 4.2). So go for broke, who's going to stop you, the police? They're too busy arresting people for dropping a moose out of a plane in motion.

Ben Jenkins

[fig 4.2]

- >There are more Chinese people in New York than in China.
- >If you pooled all the hotdogs sold on Wall St in one year together, it would be bigger than the sun.
- >Cape Canaveral is the only Canaveral visible from space.
- >The Governor of Kentucky MUST be a colonel.
- >The bald eagle is actually a type of fox.
- >There has never been a President of the United States.
- > The oldest person in America is still younger than the youngest giraffe.
- > The Pentagon was originally a Pentagram used to summon Native American spirit-demons.

Michael Hing



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Use Your Noodle

BEAT STUDENT POVERTY

Did you know:

- * Youth Allowance Payments are 48% below the poverty line
- * Rent Assistance is less than half what most students pay
- * 1 in 2 students say their studies are adversely affected by financial stress

Come to Noodle Day on Your Campus: WED 24 MARCH

NW, Vic, Tas, Act - 2pm
Qld - 1pm / NT - Midday
SA - 1.30pm, WA - 11am

This year, students across the country will be getting together to make a statement about student poverty.

On campuses in every state and territory, we'll be setting a record for the most people eating noodles simultaneously.

What better way to show that we need a fair youth allowance system by getting together and eating the traditional dish of poor students everywhere?

NUS

Authorized Carla Drakeford - President, National Union of Students

Get involved - Help set the noodle eating record & Fight Student Poverty!
contact SRC Education Officer Gabriel Dain // education.officers@src.usyd.edu.au / 96605222



The Land(s) of the Free?

Will Rickard compares the liberties of Australians and Americans.

For as long as the US has existed, it has been widely known as the 'Land of the Free', mainly because of its people's right to democracy, liberty and all those other clichéd things that American politicians consistently espouse. In reality, however, how free are Americans? More free than Australians? Let's uncover the truth with a good old fashioned 'scientific' comparison.

This topic of freedom is indeed very complex, yet it can be unreservedly declared that Americans possess more sexual freedoms than we do. Under s30(1)(3) of the Alabama Marriage Law, incestuous marriages are deemed legal in Alabama, whereas in every state in Australia, we are not free to marry our siblings. What sort of a society disallows its people to marry our so very attractive cousins? (America 1, Australia 0)

Americans also have drink-driving freedoms we don't enjoy. The legal drink-driving limit in all states of the

US is 0.08, whereas in Australia it ranges from 0.00 to 0.05. Consequently, there are far less crashes in the States because alcohol has been proven to increase confidence whilst driving. America 2-0.

America also has economic freedoms that we don't. If you can find Aussie beer in the US (that isn't Fosters), it will cost about nine US dollars for a six-pack of Coopers Pale Ale (in California), whereas it costs around \$17-20 in Sydney. America 3-0.

According to s257.658 of the Michigan Vehicle Code, when riding a motorcycle in Michigan, it is only necessary to wear a helmet if you are under the age of 19; In Australia, however, our harsh, draconian laws force all motorcycle riders to wear a helmet, regardless of age. America 4-0.

Furthermore, the US is without a universal healthcare system; the people aren't burdened with paying for unimportant things such as blanket healthcare like we are. Instead, they are 'free to choose' their health insurance company. But if you can't afford private insurance, you can always just choose

death! America 5, Australia 0; It's not looking good for Australia!

However, all is not lost. The Patriot Act of 2001 following September 11 violates five of America's 10 amendments in their Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech & assembly (-1 for America), due process (-1), prompt public trial (-1), protection from cruel and unusual punishment (-1) and protection from unreasonable search and seizure (-1). The revised total is America 0, Australia 0.

The death penalty is imposed in 37 different American states, whereas it is illegal Australia-wide. America -1, Australia 0. In Victoria, a minor caught with alcohol faces a fine of \$50, whereas in the state of Texas, according to s106.02 of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code, a minor caught possessing alcohol faces a \$500 fine, 8-12 hours of community service and a 30 day driver's license suspension.

The final result is America -1, Australia 1. From the result of this fundamentally ridiculous test, it looks like us Antipodeans are more free. God Bless Australia.

STUFF USYD STUDENTS LIKE

#392 *The West Wing*

USyd students want you to believe that they are worldly and knowledgeable, above the fray of ordinary television viewers, and capable of producing spontaneous, biting witticisms. *The West Wing* is a repository of all that we aspire to be.

The program's primary utility is as a source of American political trivia with limitless intellectual point-scoring potential. There's nothing more embarrassing than your friend having to tell you that it's the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee which makes recommendations to Postmaster Generals about the design of new stamps (Galileo, season 2) – nothing, that is, but the moment when you gently remind them that it's "Postmasters General", like "Attorneys General" (17 People, season 2).

It's not just the content of the show's dialogue: it's the sheer speed at which the characters pull out their A-material. Every character is, in every episode, expert at the banter which USYd students strive to generate.

Within the opening minutes of the first episode (Pilot, season 1), Toby Ziegler (Head Honcho of White House Communications) is asked to turn off his cell phone onboard a flight. Faster than you can say "multiple sclerosis", he whips out, "We're flying in a Lockheed Eagle Series L-1011. Came off the line twenty months ago. Carries a Sim-5 transponder tracking system. And you're telling me I can still flummox this thing with something I bought at Radio Shack?"

The keenly observing USYd student quietly resolves that the next time they are asked to turn off their mobile, they will call the requester a "horse's patoot" (a la President Bartlet in *The Stackhouse Filibuster*, season 2), assassinate a Qumari government minister (*Posse Comitatus*, season 3) and pardon a Thanksgiving Day turkey (*Shibboleth*, season 2). All before breakfast.

Of course, the main reason USYd students love *The West Wing* is that it's flipping terrific.

Do you agree? Get yourself along to The West Wing Trivia Night, hosted by Sydney Uni's home-grown comedy team Project 52 on Wednesday 24 March in Hermann's Bar, 8pm.

Naomi Hart



"Obama's coming out! Lets's have a US edition!"

Honi Editor's Weekly Meeting

HONI EDITORS SAYS THE DARNDDEST THINGS

FACT!

George Washington was actually just a bunch of cats taped together.

Shit Talk



The Ladies', Lower Level Carslaw

OPINION

The Health of American Conservatives

Oliver Burton takes a surprising swing to the left.

I'm not a member of the amorphous Left. I describe myself as a 'recovering Young Liberal', still struggling with that first step. I supported both of America's noughties crusades and the only time I'd ever campaign against deforestation would be if they were cutting down Bob Brown instead. I'm also rarely bereft of a contribution, generally as outlandish as it is consciously inflammatory, to a discussion. "Don't you think," I have been known to quip (read slur) over a lager or three, "that it would be the most fair and liberal system to link votes to taxable income?" However, faced with a US Conservative recently, I found myself awe-struck by the callousness of his position. For him, the Government should be responsible for three things only: the protection of his Life, Liberty and capacity to pursue his own happiness. It therefore is an intolerable imposition for him to contribute in any way to "socialised healthcare."

Alright, I'll admit that a Medicare safety-net is a very different proposition in the United States than it is in Australia, not least because of its 350 million citizens. And for the sake of argument, let's throw out all of the silly fluffy-bunny stuff like justice, equality and human rights. To these people, that's all about as persuasive as Wilson Tuckey at a MENSAs conference. No, let's look at this in terms they'll be likely to understand. Don't worry, I speak

Conservative.

In Matthew 19:23-24, Jesus says that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Now, given these chaps seem rather keen on the idea of a white frilly cloud and a clap on the back from a long-haired beardo with a penchant for peace, offloading a little extra dosh shouldn't be cause for railing in the aisles. Moreover, it's going to be a hell of a lot easier for whatever microscopic level of government they'd have in their perfect nation, to protect their right to life if they haven't got patients marauding the streets assaulting bystanders to buy a bypass.

This is all not to mention the fact that it's rather hard to pursue your own understanding of happiness when your teeth have fallen out and your mouth has stopped closing. Unless, of course, your concept of bliss is to live in Alabama. Yes, the small print on your health insurance contract informed you that if you were inbred you wouldn't be covered, but you were too busy playing banjo to notice. Surely the Government and, therefore, the taxpayer has an obligation not to let you starve from your inability to chew? No, that's too touchy-feely. Surely it's obvious that people can't be economic contributors if they're waiting for a brain transplant? No one likes new taxes (well, except Tony Abbott) but like vote allocation on the basis of income, the system leaves the poor without a voice(box).





ROAD TEST

CAMPUS BROWNIES

We all know Americans love their cake. So does **Lucinda Bradshaw**.

The ubiquitous brownie has probably caused as much conflict as the Bush presidency. Areas of dispute abound: is the perfect brownie fudgy or cake-like, icing-covered, nut-packed, or plain?

Whatever your personal taste, the best brownie is one that unites all the mouths of mankind in communal appreciation of its deliciousness. But does such a brownie exist on campus?

Zabeli, Manning, \$3.50

This huge and dense brownie looked promising, but despite its wonderfully fudgy texture it tasted stale and so salty it was more like eating a pretzel that had been rubbed in Willy Wonka's armpit.

Tasty Baguette, Law School Building \$4.20

I so wanted to love this expensive little brownie, with its suave deep-brown colour and white chocolate chips. How saddening it was, then, to discover it tasted more like rancid cocoa-flavoured chalk. The white chocolate – looking so sultry and caramelised! – tasted oddly of bandaid. Six of us sharing couldn't finish it. Quite tragic.

Courtyard Café, Holme Building, \$2.95

This almond-stuffed brownie is extremely crumbly and tricky to eat. The batter itself is on the cakey side and very sweet. For the nut-lover only.

Azzuri's, Wentworth \$3.80

I'd murder my mother for a bite of this brownie, if her own brownies weren't so much better than any of these second-rate campus options. Still, Azzuri's tops the lot – dark and moist but not cloyingly rich, with that wonderfully crackly top you expect from a well-cooked brownie. Perhaps slightly too many walnuts, though they're delightfully offset by a smattering of chocolate, and overall a textural triumph. The only brownie worth buying on campus.

Parma, Wentworth, \$3.50

This chocolate-coated brownie is a rather dull brown colour and consists more of squidgy batter than sweet fudginess. It's not altogether bad, though – the nuts are finely chopped and well-dispersed, giving good texture, but little chocolate flavour.

Bosch Café, \$2.95

Despite the dingy location, this brownie is surprisingly decent, especially for the price. It's nut free and quite moist, though still definitely in the cake camp. It's no Azzuri's, but rather the happy-go-lucky brownie to eat when in need of a sugar fix.

COUNTDOWN

In the midst of Obama's mysterious cancellation of his trip to Australia, Laurence Rosier-Staines counts down the top five American conspiracy theories....



JFK ASSASSINATION 5

A series of polls demonstrate that somewhere between 50% and 70% of Americans believe that the President John F. Kennedy assassination was caused not by a gunman acting alone but rather was at the centre of a vast conspiracy, although there is disagreement about whether the CIA, the FBI, Cubans or vice president Lyndon B. Johnson were responsible.



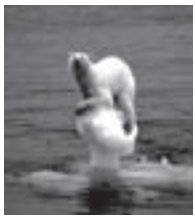
MOON LANDING HOAX 4

The first claims that the Moon landing was faked by the US government in order to one-up the Soviet Union and distract the world from Vietnam were put forward by an author whose other books include "The 99 Cent a Meal Cookbook" and "Great Hot Springs of the West". Variants on this theory include 'Freemasons faked the moon landing!' and 'Elvis faked the moon landing!'



WATER FLUORIDATION 3

The introduction of fluoride to the United States' water supplies resulted in both dental relief and paranoia, with many people certain that something nefarious was afoot. Whether fluoride contains an agent to make people dumber or turn them into communists remains controversial. For more, see Dr Strangelove.



GLOBAL WARMING 2

Allegedly part of a vast left-wing conspiracy to destroy capitalism and turn the world into a hippie enviro-orgy, the proponents of this conspiracy theory may also be accused of conspiring with each other in order to propagate said theory, resulting in a sort of meta-conspiracy. I don't know why everyone's worried – John Cusack said the world's going to end in 2012 anyway.



9/11 1

Belief that the September 11 attacks were part of a governmental conspiracy include claims that US intelligence knew in advance about the attacks but did nothing in order to provide a pretext for wars in the Middle East, or that the World Trade Centres were toppled by controlled demolition and not by planes at all. These theories are helped by the neoconservative think-tank "Project for the New American Century" having insisted that American global dominance would be more quickly facilitated by a catalysing event like a "new Pearl Harbour".

MEDIA BOTCH

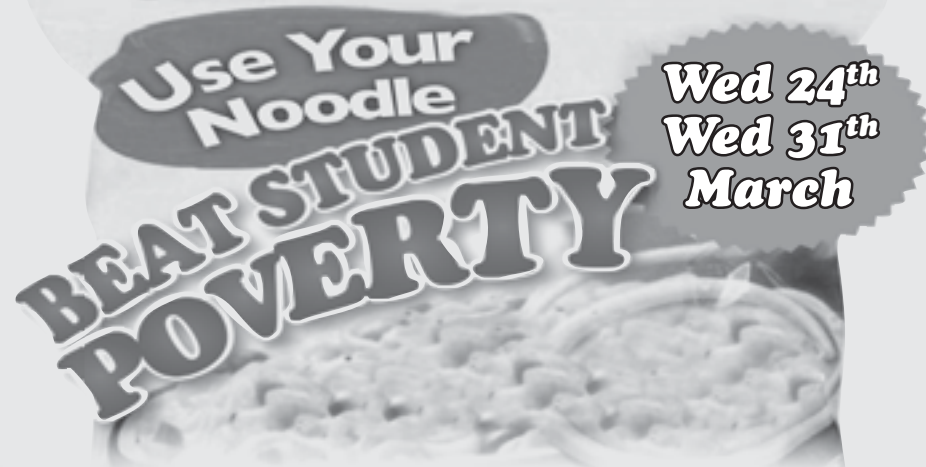
On Friday morning the President of the United States of America announced to Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, and pretty much the rest of the world that he would be postponing his trip to Indonesia and Australia until June. If he had made this announcement about two days earlier, this week's *Honi* would not have had a large picture of him on its cover, nor would it have been themed to the US. Thanks champ. Don't expect us to go to this much trouble again in June.

The Jewish community have expressed their outrage at world champion Australian surfer Mick Fanning after he called journalist Charlie Smith a "fucking Jew". Smith published the article, "Tales of a Fucking Jew", in the surf magazine *Stab's* January/February edition, saying that Fanning accused him of "totally fucking writing off surfing and then making money off surfing". The expletive-laden, grammatically incorrect quote culminated in Fanning calling Smith a "fucking Jew". In his defence, Fanning stated that his comments were "taken out of context", and that he intended them to be "ironic". Fanning stated that he had previously refused to speak with *Stab* "because it had previously published articles which I believed were racist and anti-semitic". It would seem strange, then, to make racist and anti-semitic comments in his first encounter with the publication. Also, just because Smith is Jewish doesn't mean that calling him a "fucking Jew" is ironic.

FAIR EDUCATION

Let's Fight for It!

- International student concession cards
- Affordable housing for everyone
- Fair Youth Allowance system



Event 1
NOODLE DAY!
 2pm WED. 24 March
FRONT LAWNS
 Eat Noodles!

Event 2
Day of ACTION!
 12pm WED. 31 March
FRONT LAWNS
 Rally to Town Hall!

For more info: www.unistudent.com.au
education.officers@src.usyd.edu.au 02 9660 5222





Wanderlust

Callie Henderson is in the US and underage again.

Remember the not-so-legal but oh-so-fun days of high school drinking? When orange UDL's were alright, but the green apple ones were the best? When having a delinquent older sibling or one of those cool hippy parents were your ticket to social stardom? Drinking illegally was great at 17 in the local park after hovering outside a liquor store for an hour asking random passers-by to purchase you "a box of fruity-lexia if you please." (Didn't you know, it makes you 'sexia'.)

But we moved on. We graduated, we aged, and we were schooled in the ways of the Manning and using our real IDs. I thought my days of sneaking into bars and congregating in allies were over.

Studying in Washington D.C. is great, but I have regressed. And I'm pretty sure that at 19, smuggling drinks into the dorm is just not cute anymore. In the land of the free, where at 19 I can buy a gun, vote, drive, smoke, fight in a war and (in certain states) possess a bit of MJ - I find myself huddled in a group in the corner while my friend from Turkey purchases some fuck-off two litre bottles of vodka and Captain Morgan's spiced rum. Delicious. My youth and naivety have been returned to their former (non)glory.

The time-honored tradition of the keg party is best described in a single word: BLACKOUT. These are the parties where sweaty, beery, falling-over, incoherent drunkards who can't remember their own name (let alone yours) are the responsible ones and decorum is something left at the door. Everyone is awash in a thick atmosphere of bass and panting, Bud Light



"Fill it up again!"

and Jungle Juice - a strange and dangerous concoction perfect for when you feel like waking up in not-your-room, unable to locate your keys or your dignity. It's a fruity 90% alcohol elixir that tastes somewhere between acetone and fruit punch. The beer is nasty, and I find myself wishing for a delicious Coopers Green, but by the time that fourth massive red cup is drained and you're challenged to a game of beer-pong - it doesn't even matter anymore. I'm back at a high school party thrown by one of those kids with permissive or absent parents, only with the addition of crazy frat guys who like to lift me up so I can drink beer upside-down. This is called a keg stand. I wouldn't advise it, but here, anything goes. Unless you're a socialist. (But that's another story.)

These parties are just like in the movies. Only blur the edges. Add more music that can only be explained through the concept of the crack-beat: music that is terrible, yet you can't help dancing to it because the beat is full of nasty, addictive crack. My night is awash in young inebriation, and I try to explain the concept of my frequent outbursts of "TAXI" - don't worry, its catching on...

And finally, who knew you could get a citation for having a blood alcohol level if a cop pulls over your taxi and gives you a test? I didn't, but I do now. Three cheers for court appearance for "possession of an alcoholic beverage". Yep, even in my stomach it counts. God Bless America.

THE GAUNTLET

THE CHALLENGE: EAT 24 KRISPY KREMES IN 12 HOURS

"You brought it on yourself." This self-castigating phrase is on a relentless loop in my head as I sit here, expecting at any minute complete loss of bodily function. To be honest, I was doomed from the start. Whether out of indolence or apprehension, I only actually purchased the doughnuts at 12:34 pm (I kept the receipt for posterity/litigation purposes), adding further meaning to the phrase "minutes to midnight".

The Krispy Kreme "Team Leader" looked moderately terrified when I told her of my gastronomical quest but nonetheless gave me the \$30.95, 24-doughnut sampler (12 original glazed and 12 assorted). I trudged off to the nearest bench to survey my hand-picked opponents. Feeling that the box marked assorted was too much to handle, I resolved to make a dent in the set of original glazed. The first bite was, well, pretty damn good. The preternaturally sweet glazing and light filling combined to create a moment of pure eating pleasure. The second was, inevitably, nowhere near as good.

When I entered the *Honi* office, my sadistic tormentors decided that I should probably pick up the pace. They forced me to create a triple decker Krispy Kreme burger, constructed with two original glazed as the buns and a dusted jam doughnut as the filling. Eating the "Jam Royale" was one of the more bestial things I have ever done. I felt like a pig devouring tripe and with "jam" going everywhere, looked like an extra from a Hammer Horror Dracula film.

It was at dinner when I discovered the binge-doughnut-eater's steadfast companion: the

microwave. After 20 seconds of irradiation my enemies were reduced to amorphous blobs of grease. I slid at least five-and-a-half down my gullet using this method, and broke the remaining three-and-a-half into sub-bite-sized pieces. As a result of my efforts, I only had seven doughnuts to go and five hours in which to eat them. Sinch.

The next two-and-a-half hours were only made more difficult by the fact that I made the cardinal error of watching the A-League Grand Final. Fortunately, Kevin Muscat's immensely satisfying penalty miss made a nuclear pink doughnut easier to stomach. By the time the clock had dragged itself to quarter to twelve, only the crème de la Kreme remained. Jet black and foreboding, the Choco Mud had a gravity all of its own. When it was done, apart from feeling bloated and slightly numb in my lower extremities, I didn't really feel anything. I wasn't really even relieved (well, I needed to relieve myself, but that's another matter).

Disappointingly, I didn't wake up the next morning encased in original glaze. Lacking anything tangible, I decided to analyse my "achievement" in terms of cold, hard figures. In eating all 24 doughnuts, I had consumed 6,447 calories (almost three times the recommended daily intake) and a whopping 334 grams of fat (more than six times the RDI). Yuck. I guess I should be grateful for one thing, however. If you are what you eat, it is only the perfect annulus shape of the air-pressure extruded Krispy Kreme doughnut that is preventing total blockage of my aorta.

Joe Smith-Davies

Martin Seneviratne did a keg-stand at UCLA.

COLLEGE

Australian colleges have a cousin over in the States. A rather loud, uncouth sort of cousin at that. The kind you avoid at family events because last time they got plastered and vomited on grandma. Well...you know what I mean. This cousin is the frat. In my mind, the term 'frat boy' used to conjure up images of brash, meat-headed dudes with a penchant for red cups and cheerleaders. Which isn't altogether wrong. But after spending a year on exchange at UCLA in Los Angeles - a university where frats and sororities are a huge deal - I came to discover what it really means to go Greek.

The year starts with a weeklong selection phase called the 'rush'. Fraternities open their doors to prospective 'pledges' and try to seduce you into becoming the newest Delta Kap or Sigma Pi. Their marketing techniques are ingenious. One house offers an unlimited BBQ, the next has Hooters girls holding platters of fried meats, and another is offering free tickets to the baseball. I went to a lot of 'rush' events to get a taste of this frat culture... and this free frat food (that's tough to say quickly!) but didn't end up joining any. Without forcing a cumbersome university analogy, it seems that joining a frat is a bit like signing up for a group project with the gaggle of hot girls. It's all jolly and rosy at first...but then you realise you've got a lot of work to do. Pledges are the slaves of the fraternity for their first year. They clean the house after parties, run errands for the seniors, and even construct new additions to



"Welcome to the Fraternity."

the already luxurious fraternal palaces. Meanwhile, they go through the hazing process, which usually just involves a lot of nudity and inebriation. If they pass, they're inducted into the true frat community - a nation-wide network with multiple chapters at different colleges. You learn the secret handshake, wear a special badge, and start calling yourself a "Beta" or a "Delta".

I'm generalising a bit of course. In reality, there's huge diversity amongst the frats because each one tends to be quite specialised. There are religious frats, ethnicity-based frats, frats for athletes, frats for aspiring doctors. A frat for all occasions really. Which means that members of a frat often become completely defined by the image of their fraternity. The upside is that these frats offer a small, close-knit community to nestle into within the huge expanse of the university. That's what Australian colleges do to some extent as well. Small communities in a big university. And there are plenty. But I think it'll be a while yet before Drew's or Wesley starts luring new freshers with fried chicken and Hooters girls.

STATE OF THE City



Swapping the Harbour Bridge for the Brooklyn Bridge, Rohan Grey takes us on a tasty tour of New York.

With the possible exception of the flagel (flat-bagel), the pizza-pie represents New York's single greatest contribution to American cuisine. This special relationship between city and slice began in 1905, when Gennaro Lombardi opened the first American pizzeria in Little Italy, Manhattan. Lombardi's instant success encouraged him to train an entire generation of pizzaiolos in the new Italian-American style. His protégés went on to establish their own pizzerias around New York, many of which are still in operation today after over 80 years. The New York-style pizza is now the most popular pizza in the United States, and is recognised and replicated all over the world.

In contrast to the deep-dish Chicago style, New York-style pizzas are typically thin, with a hard outer crust and a very soft inner base made from hand-tossed, high-gluten flour. They are also extremely large, with the average pie

pushing 18 inches in diameter. However, commonalities end there. Various schools of New York pizzaiolos now disagree over almost every detail of the preparation process, from the use of coal versus wood-fired ovens to the choice of fresh or aged mozzarella. Consequently, a New York City pizza nowadays can refer to anything from a \$3.00 takeout margherita slice at the Koronet in Morningside Heights to a \$1000 pie at Nino's Bellissima on the Upper East Side, complete with crème fraiche, lobster tail, wasabi and four different kinds of caviar.

With such extreme diversity, what is it that makes all New York City's pizza so universally irresistible? According to top food critics, the answer is the tap water used to make the crust. Since the 19th century, New York City has relied on an elaborate aqueduct system to transport pristine water from the Catskills in upstate New York to the inner boroughs using sheer gravitational force. Much to the pride of every New Yorker, this water remains almost entirely untreated, preserving natural trace elements that have a unique effect on the rising, binding and flavour of the dough. The importance of water quality to the overall cooking process is so great that pizzaiolos from as far away as California have resorted to importing Catskills water in order to recreate the taste of the dough. Pizza might have originated in Italy, but like so many other Italian foods, it has found another true home in New York City.



ANTHEM

Sam Pender-Bayne asks you all to be upstanding.

It's always difficult to critically analyse two repertoire staples like the fair-dinkum "Advance Australia Fair" and God-blessed "Star Spangled Banner"; works so laden with history and extra-musical significance that analysing them is like harvesting a Big Mac for its pickles (without which, I hear, it would be classified as a dessert).

Nevertheless, even national anthems

cannot escape the self-righteous judgment of a blood-thirsty music academic. So, to celebrate Barack Obama's 24-hour reverie in Canberra (now scheduled for June)*, here is that very analysis.

"Star Spangled Banner" (originally the British drinking song "Anacreon in Heaven") begins in solid counterpoint - the melody rises in an arpeggio and the bass descends stepwise to the relative minor. A strong beginning to stir up those pre-Superbowl enthusiasts! The early use of relative minor and tonicisation of this key area (in an

otherwise major piece) represents the yin in the yang: the jam amongst the peanut butter. Then, an exact repetition of the head, a bridge and coda, (a structural template for the oh-so-many American pop songs that followed it, perhaps?).

"Advance Australia Fair" is similarly contrapuntal. The melody alternates between arpeggiac and scalic motion, reminiscent of Australia's droughts and flooding rains (or not). Structurally, our anthem moves in eight-bar phrases. The first comprises alternating two-bar units of unison and harmony, the second two four-bar units that build to climaxes and

the third is but scalic motion at the tonic to reinforce the home key. Technically sound and functional, just like British settlement.

And so, the Damien Leith Memorial Prize for winning a song contest over better candidates goes to "Advance Australia Fair", whilst the Robbie Williams Award for being a drunk Briton falls to "Star Spangled Banner". President Obama is expected to present these prizes in Parliament during his visit (in June)*.

*editor's insertion.

STAGE

Ellana Costa provides us with something refreshingly un-American.



A Czar is Born, written and directed by SUDS member Laurence Rosier-Staines, is a Marx Brothers'-styled musical comedy about the ins and outs of publishing, and the lengths some publishers will go to in order to beat the competition. Written and performed in a typically farcical style, it is complete with mistaken identity, whirlwind romance, singing and puns.

This is a short play, running for around an hour, but there is a lot packed into it. Moving between a publishing office, a book reading, a courtroom and then back again makes for sometimes unclear transitions but generally very funny situations. The cast of 15 added great energy to the play's chaos, and the chorus' complete commitment to the show's musical moments (written by Laurence, and performed by Laurence, Oliver Simpson, Mike Solo and Julia Su), contributed greatly to the spectacle.

Tom Mittelheuser plays the over ambitious Swanson with aplomb, and an air of ruthlessness and superiority that works nicely opposite Declan Dickson as Swanson's bullied and anxious publicist. Michael Richardson portrays the nervous and clueless Fabian with an innocence and naivety that complements Swanson's harshness, but appears too weak at times. James Barrow and Tina Moshkanbaryans, playing Duchamp and Henry respectively, work well together, Barrow being the Groucho to Moshkanbaryans' Chico. Genevieve Fricker's Rosana contrasts effectively with the other less serious characters.

Whilst the lack of consistent accents makes the setting of this play difficult to determine, and some moments happen so quickly it's hard to keep up, *A Czar is Born* is a light-hearted, puntastic show and as SUDS show through-and-through it's commendable stuff.

FLAG

Bridie Connellan salutes you.

Life as an official US flag must be fairly freeblowin' with official codes for folding storage, specifics as to how much gold fringing can indeed infringe on you, and rumours that a lass called Betsy sewed you first. I pledge allegiance to praising such a skerrick of material. She fine.

Design is striking and multi-purpose, whether for the use of a US marine uniform, a Bruce Springsteen album cover, a Lady Gaga dance outfit, a doggie bandana, a historic pose at Iwo Jima or a West Wing opening sequence. Starry, spangly, epic. Captain America didn't nab that colour scheme for nothing y'all. And sure, as a flag, when Lenny Kravitz, Miley Cyrus and Madonna choose to lip-sync in front of your sweet self, it's either time to give yourself massive props or throw yourself in a shredder. But hey, if it was good enough for US Congress in 1777, it's good enough for MTV.

Talk of Illuminati, Freemasons and conspiracy symbolism also permeates more sophisticated analyses of such a cultural banner, with 13 horizontal stripes proving too suspicious to pass as mere colonies against the British monarchy. But this high-flyer doesn't play by anyone's rules, not even its own (apart from that pesky old Flag Act) and should never be dipped to any person or thing, unless it is the ensign responding to a salute from a ship of a foreign nation. But the beauty of the US flag is its direct correlation with the national anthem, an advisable element of any national flutterer really. Literally a banner of Starry Spangles, it's hard to deny the patriotic merits of serenading one's national symbol, particularly when the words "play ball" swiftly ensue.

Oh say can you see, Uncle Sam sure picked a good'un. With the last of the 50 state stars only added for Hawaii in 1960, this national symbol is historic enough for nostalgia, while geometrically fresh enough to pass for modern sleek. Stripes, stars, bold block colours; gang's all here for a Party in the

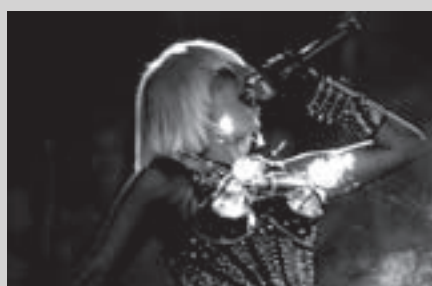
USA. Replicas run rife in packaging and promos, with even a gangbusters Sydney student newspaper finding this flag slick enough to put on a masthead. Pop-Tarts releasing an American flag range with blue icing may be a touch too much patriotism for adequate nutrition to handle, however novelty flag toothpicks are, thankfully, not. In an aesthetically pleasing and coincidental addition, the geographical shape of the US continent perfectly fits their own flag. Take that New Zealand.

It's the vibe, it's liberty, it's justice, no... it's just the vibe. Denmark may have the oldest state flag still in use, Nepal ousted the rectangular flag format in favour of triangular radness, and Libya is the only nation to say "fuck you all - we just want plain green", but the US of A sure kick it when it comes to fluttering national symbols. Admit it or not, it's the flag you want on the back of your biker jacket, the side of your Lucky Strikes, the bumper of your wood-paneled Chevrolet. Long may it wave. Props to Old Glory.

4/5

SOUNDS

Henry Hawthorne regrets not wearing fishnets.



Lady Gaga sees Madonna's cones, and raises her a firework.

"All the freaks are outside," began Lady Gaga, "and I've locked the fucking doors." Which was lucky for me, because up until that point I'd felt pretty excluded from the Gaga fan base (or *monster club*). Despite trying to get up to speed with Gaga's repertoire before the concert, including a five-day immersion session in which I locked myself in a room with a set of her film clips and a makeup kit, I still paled in comparison with the other fans (or *monsters*), who exuded Gaga from every pore.

Even as I waited at Wollstonecraft Railway Station on my way to the Entertainment Centre, I felt untouched by the long hand of Gaga's cultural imperialism, as the usual backdrop of

LADY GAGA: LIVE

leafy suburbia was now dotted with the fishnet stockings, vaulted shoulder pads and spiralling hair of the monsters on their way to the concert.

Regardless, I'd made it to the concert (or *Monster Ball*) and forgotten my inhibitions, swooning in Lady Gaga's presence and assuming, at her direction, the 'monster claw' stance along with 10,000 others. But what immediately struck was that the audience didn't directly sight Gaga for the first ten minutes of the show - her figure was variously projected and enlarged a thousand times around the stage by screens and silhouettes - suggesting a tension that lingered the entire concert: what is it to see the artist, celebrity and god-figure of Gaga in mortal flesh? After all, Gaga and her *Monster Ball* are a Frankenstein patchwork of mixed musical sources, media hype and levels of insincerity stitched together to make a persona far larger than any single performer, the talented musician and dancer named Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta.

The most typically and comfortably 'Gaga' parts of the concert, then, were when Lady Gaga herself was offstage (a frequent occurrence, given the

numerous costume changes) and pre-prepared clips were played to sate the monsters' hunger. Even when on stage, the majority of the songs (aside from the favourites such as "Poker Face" and "Paparazzi") seemed vehicles in which to carry out Gaga's larger artistic project of exploring the mutilating effects of fame and media. It's no surprise to hear of Gaga's ambition of having installations and performance pieces at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

So complete and well-realised is Gaga's persona that the tantalising glimpses of the woman behind the makeup are undesirable. A piano solo half way through the night, stripped of electronic embellishment and supporting dancers, reveals her range and talent but sits uncomfortably with the image of a reckless material girl. It's not until the piano spontaneously bursts into flames and is replaced with a Keytar that we're back in familiar territory.

Nevertheless, Gaga's solos serve to remind the audience why she keeps one step ahead from the current welter of divas: behind the inflated persona and media hype is a fantastic performer, whose voice remains strong, true and anything but lip-synced. That, and the emotional blackmail of her monster fans: "I'm kind of like Tinker Bell," she whispers towards the end, "If you don't clap for Tinker Bell, she dies!" And clap we did.



Hi, I'm Honi Soit, you two guys must be Ambassadors

This week *Honi* caught up with two men involved in foreign diplomacy. **David Mack** talked Obama and living Down Under with US Ambassador to Australia Jeffrey Bleich, while **Callie Henderson** met with former marine, politico-military advisor and ambassador H. Allen Holmes to get an insider's account of foreign policy.

AMBASSADOR JEFFREY BLEICH US AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA

"You're David Mack, right?" a voice asks, as I look up to see a security agent with a pink face, moustache and the signature Secret Service plastic cord attached to his ear. "Here to do an interview with the Ambassador? Studying media and law, yes?" Feeling slightly taken aback, I confirm his facts and with thoughts of spy movies and the CIA running through my head I (somewhat) jokingly ask whether he had been 'briefed' on me and if I have a 'file' (before realising I included all that information in my email to the Ambassador's press secretary). "No," he replies with a laugh, "but it's my job to know what the Ambassador is doing at all times." I think better than to laugh. This isn't going to be the average interview.

Jeffrey Bleich (pronounced 'Blysh') is enjoying something of a rare treat for US Ambassadors. Since being confirmed as the 24th US Ambassador to Australia – a position first established amid World War Two when Australian foreign policy irrevocably shifted from British to American dependency – a large part of his duties have involved negotiating and then preparing for a visit from his

President (which, despite being cancelled for next week, looks as if it may go ahead in June).

"The President is very anxious to get out to Australia," Bleich tells me from within a conference room at the Studies Centre, pointing out that President Obama was planning to come to Australia earlier into his term than any other President. "He's very interested in Australia so he will be out here." The postponement will also mean Obama may be accompanied by his family, which will be a good thing as Bleich says "Michelle and the girls were really keen to come to."

"In fact, I saw him in December and one thing he said to me was, 'Man, Australia's been good for you!' I'd sort of bloomed. I said, 'Yeah, it's a great country.' He said, 'Yeah, I can't wait to get out there.'"

If it sounds like Bleich has something of a personable relationship with the President that's because the pair have known each other for decades. I ask the Ambassador when he first met the young Obama, and he starts laughing to himself. "I was clerking for Judge Abner J.

Mikva in the DC Circuit," he says, "and we heard about this hot shot who had just been elected as President of the Harvard Law Review and everyone said he was terrific and we were wondering why he hadn't applied to clerk for anyone else we'd heard of. So the Judge had me give him a call and I came away thinking, 'This guy is great.' In fact I told the judge, 'He's even better on the phone than he is on paper, but he doesn't want to clerk, he wants to do community organising in

Bleich says. "I had told then Senator Obama if he decided to run, I was with him. I knew him, I knew his character, I thought he had just the right temperament for the times."

Bleich was a founding member of Obama's national finance committee and eventually co-chaired the campaign in California, helping Obama ultimately secure that crucial state's votes. After serving as a special advisor to the

"To have a person come out and really connect, really talk about what people were really concerned about, how they really felt and what mattered to them was extraordinary...It was electric. People were crying."

your neck of the woods, in Chicago.' So Mikva said, 'Let me give him a call', and he comes back into my office a little while later holding Obama's resume and he says, 'Now this is the kind of guy I ought to be hiring.' 'You mean instead of me?' I asked, and he said, 'Yeah. Give him another call.'"

Obama never did join Bleich as a clerk, but the two remained in touch. In 2004, Bleich was present at the Democratic Convention when Obama gave his famous 'Red State/Blue State' speech, catapulting himself into the national consciousness. "It was electric. People were crying. If you've been to an election there is a lot of scripted, staged, contrived presentations and to have a person come out and really connect, really talk about what people were really concerned about, how they really felt and what mattered to them was extraordinary.

"In fact, I remember having breakfast with him afterward, and people were talking about how he should be on *The Today Show* and running for President and doing all this other stuff, and he's having breakfast with me! 'You're missing a moment here', and he said, 'Part of the problem with American politics has become that we are so thirsty for authenticity, that you hear someone say the truth once and we overreact. This should be how we all talk to each other all the time and we all got to calm down a little bit: I haven't even been elected to the Senate yet.'"

But of course he did get elected and when he began orchestrating his 2008 Presidential campaign, Bleich was one of the first people he called. "I'd been approached by, I think, all the candidates at the beginning of the election season"

new President, Bleich was nominated by Obama to serve as the next US Ambassador to Australia. Despite Obama pledging in the campaign to end 'patronage positions' in appointing ambassadors, where campaign donors or friends are 'rewarded' with the plum jobs, Bleich's appointment suits the Australian government, who tend to appreciate the direct access to the President that comes from close friends like Bleich.

But by no means is Bleich unqualified or undeserving of the post; he has spent decades practising and teaching law, spending a stint as President of the State Bar of California and once even clerked at the Supreme Court under then Chief Justice William Rehnquist, a noted conservative jurist, which Bleich says helped to instil in him a strong sense of bipartisanship: "I have always had the sense that neither party has a monopoly on good ideas or good people," he says. "[Clerking for the Chief Justice] did help me very much in terms of carrying that sense on in politics which is you can disagree without being disagreeable, you can admit that the other side has a good idea without being weak or disloyal. These are traditions which have made America stronger in history. They're unfortunately traditions that I think we forget."

Amid the endless backslapping that comes with Presidential visits, it is sometimes easy to question whether the American government genuinely takes an interest in our country's affairs or values the alliance. I'm reminded of the words of Bill Bryson, perhaps the de Tocqueville of our times: "Australia is mostly empty and a long way away. Its population is small and its role in the world consequently peripheral...It is stable and peaceful and good. It doesn't



Ambassador Jeffrey Bleich – don't look now, but there's a big flag sneaking up behind you.

need watching, and so we don't. But I will tell you this: the loss is entirely yours." I ask the Ambassador whether things have changed since Bryson penned Down Under.

"It's certainly changed," he says without hesitation, giving me the impression that Australian journalists tend to ask this type of question a lot. "When I was in the White House, we talked about Australia constantly. Any major issues, whether it was nuclear non-proliferation; climate change; trade, particularly multiparty free trade agreements, we were always focussed on, 'How do we work with Australia?' What do the Australians think? And how do we develop this effort in collaboration with Australia?"

I'm not so sure about that last bit, and perhaps sensing my scepticism about my country's weight in world affairs the Ambassador suggests a re-evaluation: "I think another aspect of the relationship is that people in Australia may not appreciate how important contributions that they think of as modest are.

"In a world that can be dangerous it's very important to have strong friends you can rely on, both in terms of your security alliance but also just in terms of sharing information and being a good thought partner in terms of how to deal with tough situations in the world.

"I think the other thing is this is a critical area of the world and to have Australia be such a strong and stable presence is critical...so Australia is a very visible, very important element of America's relations around the world."

How Obama's Presidency will shape the alliance in the years ahead is yet to be seen, but in Bleich the President has a diplomat with a sharp eye for law and politics and a growing passion for Australia, evidenced when I ask him about his first visit to Australia as a young lawyer: "I think I spent two weeks in Melbourne doing depositions and I came away loving Melbourne, and if you can love Melbourne after two weeks of depositions, you're in a special country!"



Ambassadors are pack animals, seeking safety and warmth in numbers.

Reagan decided he wanted Holmes a little closer to home, and gave him the post of Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs. When Bush Sr. hit the White House, Holmes became Ambassador at Large for Burdensharing in which he ensured balanced security responsibility among NATO members, Japan and other US allies. But these were anything but partisan appointments. Clinton loved him too, giving him the post of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operation and Low-Intensity Conflict.

Holmes has truly been around the block, and yet remains completely casual in relating these details of his brilliant career. He is not impressed with himself, which makes him all the more impressive.

Given Ambassador Holmes has such a wealth of experience in US foreign policy and politico-military affairs, I thought it essential to ask him to share his views on the current foreign policy environment.

On Iran, he thinks that the international community need to have some level of engagement, despite the current instability in the Ahmadinejad regime. "I've always been supportive of [Obama's] view on Iran. I think it is essential, it's just basic in foreign policy to be in a position to talk to people. You don't have to like or admire a regime in order to have diplomatic relations with them. You cut off your hearing and your vision if you're not in a country." Holmes likens Iran to the Soviet Union, both with which America has held diplomatic relations. He believes it is unwise to wait until Iran actually make the decision to "go all the way and develop a nuclear weapon" before the US government starts talking to them.

Continuing the theme, Holmes sees the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy as a step in the right direction. However, he stresses that the problem in dealing with the porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is the degree to which loyalty is ascribed to tribe and not to nationality. He does, however, see a positive future and thinks Pakistan are taking some positive steps. "General Kayani, the leader of the Pakistani army, has adopted a more open and cooperative policy towards the Afghani government. And my interpretation of that is that the Pakistani government wants to be in a position of working as a friend of Pakistan and not leave the field open to the Indians". Holmes also stresses that the process of allowing the policy of this kind to develop

organically within the country could take as many as ten to fifteen years, stating that the difficulty is that "the American people [don't] have the patience for such a long engagement."

On the Israel-Palestine conflict, Holmes reflects: "I think the US always has had a very important role in relations between Israel and the Palestinian people. We're the only country that can speak to both sides with some authority... But unfortunately during the Bush [George W.] years the peace process was just in neutral. We just weren't working on it. Whatever the Israelis decided to do we sort of supported it, because we were all just fighting the same enemy - 'terrorists'." Holmes now sees an opportunity for the Obama administration to restart the process, and he agrees with Obama's actions thus far. But he is also careful to note the increasingly divisive right-wing government in Israel and the widening gap between Fatah in the West-Bank and Gaza. "Bridging this gap will be a difficult task, and one I'm not sure the American people will support undertaking."

In Holmes, we see another example of the scepticism that existed within the Defence Department about the threat of Iraq. "Frankly, having been in the pentagon from 1993 to 1999 and having been privy to the same briefings every morning that were seen by the Secretary of Defence Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I always had my doubts. I was never convinced that [Iraq] was a smart view. Instead of being distracted by Iraq we should have used our forces to follow up on what was a very successful initial campaign in Afghanistan... the attack on the United States was hatched and dispatched in Afghanistan by the Taliban who then controlled about 90% of the country. We should have pursued them into the mountains to snuff out the al-Qaeda alliance."

Holmes maintains some optimism that Obama's timeline for withdrawal can be met. but cautions against underestimating hostile insurgencies - "Perfect is the enemy of the good."

Holmes currently puts his vast knowledge in the field of foreign diplomacy to use as an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. Experience such as his, both on the battlefield and in the White House, is invaluable in training the next generation of diplomats, ambassadors and advisors that the US will produce.

H. ALLEN HOLMES FORMER MARINE, POLITICO-MILITARY ADVISOR TO THE WHITE HOUSE AND AMBASSADOR

When I think of an ex-marine, I envision a grisly, hard-eyed man with a severe haircut who speaks in short, verb-filled sentences. This is not, however, how I would describe H. Allen Holmes, ex-marine, ex-politico-military advisor to several White Houses, former US Ambassador to Portugal and current Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Instead I'm greeted by a pair of glasses, a tweed jacket (complete with leather patches on the elbows), and the blush of a man too humble to sing his own laurels

Officers - cannon fodder for Korea. We all wanted to see combat, which is insane when you think about the losses."

After his Marine experience (spent mostly in California) Holmes' initial plan was to go on to teach at Berkley. However, his friends at the University gave such disparaging accounts of the faculty and its petty politics that as Holmes recalls, "there seemed to be very little teaching going on, I was turned off."

The next best thing was a position in the Foreign Service. This required

"I think it is essential...in foreign policy to be in a position to talk to people. You don't have to like or admire a regime in order to have diplomatic relations with them."

in an interview. He has the patient nature of a teacher and, as I found out, teaching is just what he had planned to do when he left high school for Princeton on a ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corp) Naval Scholarship. Things just took a more exciting turn first.

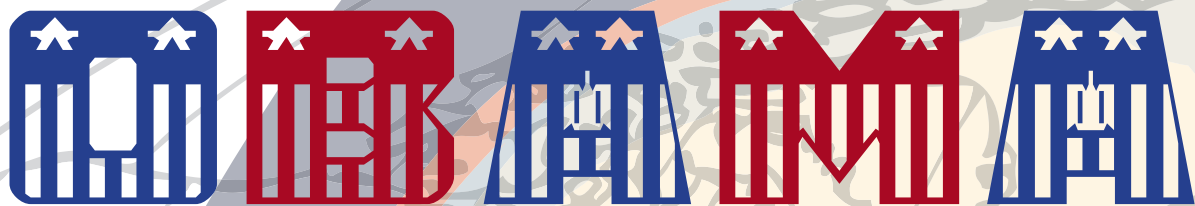
The Scholarship basically means that the Army pays for college tuition in return for taking part in some training during your degree. After his four years at Princeton, Holmes was obligated to join the Navy for three years, plus five in the reserves. Like any ambitious Princeton graduate, he chose to enter the Marines.

Speaking about the dangers of being in the Marines, Holmes noted that he wanted to "test [himself]. We were all foolish at that age. I was in the largest basic class at Quantico [a marine core base in Virginia]. Eleven hundred

graduate school, which he undertook at the Institute of Political Science in Paris. He then sat and passed the notoriously difficult Foreign Service exams at the Paris Embassy.

Despite his success in the exams, Holmes had to wait for a year in Washington before he joined the Foreign Service, "I took a position as an intelligence analyst in the State Department while I was waiting. It was an extremely sensitive area that I was working in, Western Europe. At the time we were getting intelligence reports on plotting to assassinate General de Gaulle, the President of France."

From his first Foreign Service post in Cameroon as First Secretary to the Vice Consulate, he climbed the ladder of the State Department until in 1982 when Ronald Reagan appointed him the Ambassador to Portugal. In 1985



Tim Mooney explores Obama: international pandemic or passing fad?

a truly global president?

Barack Obama's commanding victory in the 2008 election illustrated his popularity among Americans, but he was embraced even more feverishly by those outside the United States seeking a fresh start and relishing a fresh face. While everyone knows Obama won a thumping victory at home, acquiring 365 electoral college votes from a total of 538, a survey in *The Economist* estimated that if given the chance, all but two countries outside the US would vote for Obama over McCain (Iraq and Israel being the dissenters).

At 7.30 on election night in 2008, I was sitting on a near-empty bus with current *Honi* ed Naomi Hart in the outer suburbs of Philadelphia. For a month we'd made hundreds of phone calls to voters and knocked on countless doors as volunteers on the Obama campaign. At the heart of a battleground state in the most hotly contested election in US history, we had no way of knowing the results. As we furiously texted friends at home, one finally responded.

By the time we'd transferred to a deserted subway and reached the city, my friend in Australia - more connected to the election watching TV 15,000 kilometres away than I was - had told me the good news: all of the northeast, Pennsylvania, Ohio and several other battlegrounds had been called for Obama. At the volunteers' party in the city, it was hard to imagine wanting to be anywhere else at that moment, but on the big screens around the room, CNN was showing people from around the world partying. Suddenly, the familiar sight of Manning Bar appeared on screen. It was a reminder that although I'd travelled across the world to be a part of the

phenomenon that was Obama, even way back at Sydney Uni people wanted to be involved.

Where'd y'all get that accent?

My first personal experience of the international dimension of the Obama wonder was as a volunteer for the campaign in Pennsylvania. The Obama campaign wanted people on the ground, and would do whatever it took to get them, even if they happened to be on the other side of the world. So when we emailed the Democrats in Pennsylvania offering to help out, they swiftly replied that we would be most welcome. Before we could even look for youth hostels, they'd set us up with accommodation in Philly: a couple had offered to put us up for a month after the campaign sent an appeal to its mailing list.

Bill and Mary Hangle were volunteering to accommodate us because by law they couldn't give any more money to the Obama campaign: each had already donated \$2300 for the primaries and \$2300 for the general election. Taking in volunteers was the only way they could find to keep helping, and the fact that we were Australians was a boon. The idea that foreigners cared enough to fly to the US amazed them. The Hangleys invited numerous groups of friends - all Democrat supporters - to their house so that they could show us off. The guests were suitably impressed, jealous that they didn't have Australians of their very own.

At the campaign office a small group of paid workers, mostly college students, led a large group of permanent volunteers, some local and some visiting from New York. We had expected that some voters would be put out by having Australians tell them how to vote. In fact, no one seemed to notice. The area, previously majority-white, was being settled by African American and Hispanic families, with smaller Jewish and Brazilian populations also present. Hearing a strange or unexpected accent was nothing unusual for most people. Some asked if we were Irish. When an Englishman, Chris Robinson, arrived in the office, most of our colleagues confused our nationalities

on a regular basis.

Despite some Americans' confusion over foreigners, Chris says that he was never treated differently while he was working on the campaign because he wasn't American. "I think foreigners had a stronger sense of the damage done by Bush to the US' reputation abroad," Chris says, "and were more worried about how a Republican government might continue some of those policies." Locals seemed to be just thrilled that foreigners were even interested in their country anymore.

Rebecca Sheehan, a Postdoctoral Fellow at Sydney Uni's US Studies Centre who recently completed her PhD at the University of Southern California, was also in the US at the time of the election. "I was certainly aware that Obama had taken off as a figure outside of the United States in a very important way," she states. "My sense of that was that it was really in the time that he and Hillary were the two frontrunners. I think that was the point when the global support for Obama started to escalate. Hillary was seen as being part of the old guard, so she was a Clinton, she was going to be a part of the old style Washington, whereas Obama represented the new."

Sheehan points to technology as the game-changing element for foreign interest in the election: "The role of new social online technology enabled a new form of global grassroots campaigning that helped spread support for Obama," she says. "There were so many different things that were being disseminated on YouTube and on social networking sites in support of Obama that it became almost a global viral campaign in support of him."

The biggest celebrity in the world

Since his campaign for the US Senate in 2004, Barack Obama had attracted worldwide attention and adulation. His anti-war stance and African heritage helped to define him in the United States. Overseas, they created incredible curiosity and cultivated a following even in countries which had become cynical and disengaged from US politics during the Bush years.

Obama attempted to both leverage his overseas popularity and allay fears over his foreign policy inexperience with a long overseas trip during the general election. The trip began well. A tour of the Middle East yielded photos of Obama dealing comfortably with world leaders, and news stories which generally agreed that he had acquitted himself well by proving he could challenge McCain on foreign policy.

As the trip drew to a close, Obama stopped in Berlin for a public address. His advisers expected a crowd of roughly 20,000 people. Nine thousand had turned out to see Ronald Reagan at the Brandenburg Gate in 1987 when he famously called on President Gorbachev to "tear down this wall", and that was when he was a sitting president at a pivotal point in the Cold War, so the Obama target was ambitious.

Obama's reception was beyond anyone's expectations: 200,000 people crowded in front of the Brandenburg Gate. Many were so far back from the podium that they had little chance of seeing or hearing the presidential hopeful. The crowd was far larger than any Obama had drawn inside the United States, and it dwarfed the 100,000 who turned out to see John F. Kennedy's 1963 "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech. TV stations around the world showed aerial footage of Berlin's streets choked with enthralled onlookers hoping to catch a glimpse of Obama.

It was a triumphant moment for Obama; but within weeks the footage was being used against him. John McCain released one of the first negative advertisements of the general election campaign, branding Obama "the world's biggest celebrity". But the ad also focused on the discomfort of many Americans with Obama's popularity overseas, and presented him as an international rock star at a time when many feared for their jobs and futures and sought a grounded, fiercely rational leader.

There was no denying Obama had become a cultural icon, growing to represent the spirit of a new age. "I think of some other big cultural icons who have



been global figures, like Princess Diana or Muhammad Ali. It's odd to put a politician in the same category as a boxer or British Royalty, but I think there are a number of qualities that Obama had that made him so important," Sheehan remarks. "I think one of the reasons why he's popular in Australia is because he's seen as an underdog. I think there's an aspect of Australian culture that's very fond of the underdog, we always back someone who's coming up from behind."

Sheehan speculates that Obama's appeal in Australia may be partly related to geography. She said that "with his childhood in Asia, I think that people might have felt he had some personal connection to this part of the world, whereas oftentimes I think political and cultural figures in the northern hemisphere seem somewhat disconnected from our experience here – and that's one of the things he has promoted: a Pacific Presidency."

The fall from grace

In the year or so since his inauguration, President Obama has worked on a wide range of policy fronts, attempting to make good on his ambitious promises. Despite his powerful mandate and huge congressional majorities, successes have been thin on the ground – and people around the world are starting to ask why.

Some of the blame for these failures must go to a recalcitrant Republican Party which has been prepared to block legislation which voters approved of in 2008. Obama might also be forgiven for bemoaning a legislative environment in which 41 Republican Senators can block 59 Democratic votes.

For Obama-watchers overseas, malaise in US foreign policy is hard to pin on legislative intransigence. The promise of a new approach to diplomacy, talks with dictators, and a "reset" of the relationship with Russia, have yielded negligible returns. While most foreigners believed that US foreign policy would "change for the better" if Obama assumed office, according to a Pew Global Attitudes Survey in June 2008, most other foreign policy priorities have been placed on the backburner as the war in Afghanistan has deteriorated.

Writing for the ABC's online opinion forum *The Drum*, Sydney Uni Associate Professor of US Politics Brendan


O'Connor had the following assessment of Obama's term thus far: "Overall President Obama is doing a good job; however, he has met neither the lofty expectations of his supporters nor the soaring ideals of his own campaign rhetoric." It is this disparity between the poetry of his campaign and the prose of his governance that have left some around the world slightly disillusioned.

Despite all of this, Obama remains far more popular overseas than at home. His planned visits to Australia and Indonesia were generating huge excitement before their abrupt cancellation (though former Republican Senator Rick Santorum said Obama's Indonesian stopover is inspired by a desire to "bow to more Muslims"). The sudden postponement of Obama's Pacific trip amid the final push on healthcare reform in the US is unlikely to imperil the alliance in the long term, but will probably disappoint Australians who were preparing for his visit. "The President is very anxious to get out to Australia," US Ambassador to Australia Jeffrey Bleich told *Honi* days before the trip was postponed. "If some unforeseen circumstance comes up, he's going to be out here soon because it's very important for him to get here."

While many observers question Obama's

It is this disparity between the poetry of his campaign and the prose of his governance that have left some around the world slightly disillusioned.

effectiveness, his personal popularity remains high in the international community. His symbolism as a new direction for America, and his inspiring message of hope, appears to be easier to maintain in places where his policies have little effect.

Even so, walking down Eastern Avenue and seeing socialist posters mocking Obama, there is a sense that the myth may be being dragged down to the level of the man. While university socialists are never particularly discriminate in their attacks, their preparedness to denigrate him to attract attention shows that he is reaching the normality of an American President: sometimes respected, but sometimes scorned. For Bill Clinton, the fall from initial high expectations transpired to be a blessing, allowing him to pursue more realistic goals and eventually increase his popularity. It remains to be seen whether Obama can manage the same feat. 

A Ladies' Man?

In his election victory, President Obama captured enough hearts, minds and Oval-Office-fantasies to score a chunky 56% of the female vote. He's tall, dark, clever and handsome, and word on the street is he has a HUGE jet. Innuendo and my pitiful maturity levels aside, Obama racked up a solid voting record for women's rights prior to his election, and made some commendable moves thereafter. Yet he's fallen short in other areas, and his approval rating is currently looking as solid as a Haitian sandcastle. Behold a brief survey of his achievements and failures in the women's issues arena. Can he deliver change the sisterhood can believe in?

Cool

Women On Top

Since kicking off his administration in January 2009, Obama has made some choice political appointments, installing powerful women in several influential positions. While that doesn't automatically guarantee progress on women's issues, it sure looks swell on the broadsheet covers. Hillary Clinton serves as Secretary of State, Susan Rice is the United States Ambassador to the United Nations and Sonia Sotomayor was appointed as only the third female (and first Hispanic) Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. Obama also created the White House Council on Women and Girls to help coordinate federal policies on women's issues.

Reversing the Gag Rule

Contrary to popular belief and your filthy mind, this is not actually about oral sex. The now-defunct Gag Rule prevented US aid money reaching invaluable foreign NGOs associated with birth control, family planning and safe abortion. "Reversing the gag rule" might sound like "banning blow jobs", but that is not part of Obama's policy platform. YET.

Equal Work, Equal Pay

The first bill Obama signed into law was the landmark Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which strengthened equal pay legislation by making it easier for victims of pay-based discrimination to launch their claim.

Date Night

It's ladies' night every night when Michelle Obama is in the house. The First Lady is a dynamite role model and speaks out eloquently on health care reform and the fight against childhood obesity.

Fool

Jobs for the Boys

While he earned massive props for promoting those savvy ladies, Obama also made some choices that were swept straight to the epic-fail bin. Straight up he selected the controversial evangelical Pastor Rick Warren to preside over his inauguration. Warren's charming party tricks extend from campaigning against same-sex marriage to advising battered women that domestic violence is no excuse for divorce. Some commentators defended Obama for engaging pluralistic viewpoints, but he disappointed many by engaging douchebag viewpoints. Furthermore, female representation in legislative bodies in the US is 18%, compared to 48% in Rwanda. Nuff said.

No Action on CEDAW

With illustrious company like Iran, Sudan and Somalia, the United States remains amongst the last countries left to ratify the UN's flagship women's rights document, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Convention is an imperative tool for recognising women's rights as inalienable human rights, and the lack of superpower support ruins the whole party.

Cultural Relativist

While he is winning hearts on the home front Obama has copped further flack from several conservative commentators for lack of leadership on women's rights around the world. In his recent International Women's Day speech Obama failed to address or promise action on violence against women in the name of religion and culture around the world.

Back in Her Box

Some would say that Michelle has sacrificed her own legal or political ambitions for those of her husband, while all the media seems to care about is the fashion battle she's apparently locked in with French First Lady Carla Bruni over who looks hotter in a power suit.



HONI'S SOUNDTRACK TO... A MICHAEL MOORE INTERVIEW

Bridie Connellan DJs a chat with US filmmaker Michael Moore. Down with guns, down with Bush, down with capitalism, do, re, mi, fah, soh, la, ti...

1. Existing Rep:

Wagner

"Ride of the Valkyries"

While Moore is neither an anti-Semite or pro lynch mobs, Wagner's booms appropriately herald his approach. As this All-American nitpicker attempts poorly to mask his own prominent left-wing populism, the interviewee prepares him or herself for a fiery onslaught. With brass overtones.

2. Falsely Befriending:

Randy Newman

"You've Got a Friend in Me"

But he's wearing a Yankees cap, surely this guy's gotta be harmless? Despite the prospect of publicly documented humiliation, sure, let's bring this guy home for a chat. Cameras you say? Incriminating evidence? Brewskic? Let me show you to my collection of gun propaganda....

3. Mis-en-Scene:

King Crimson

"Frame by Frame"

Can you just move those pills and ironically damning graphs to your left a little? I'm just having a little trouble framing it with something hypocritical you're saying.

4. Reference to Flint, Michigan: Official State Song of Michigan

"My Michigan"
Oh Christmas Tree, did I mention where I was from? Why, you didn't catch my grass-roots context of Detroit, I'll just remind you and the American people again. And again. From different angles.

5. Throw in the Clincher:

Snoop Dogg

"Drop It Like It's Hot"

So how do you live with the knowledge of (that injustice you did) to (those innocent American citizens) at (that time), and sleep at night? Boom baby, zoom and shoot.

6. Drag Up Some Stats:

Jay-Z

"99 Problems"

With viewers lapping up the tension the American people respond only to percentages of their problems. A bitch may or may not be one.

7. Guilt Complex:

Nirvana

"All Apologies"

Look it's fine, really, no, no you don't have to say sorry to me, it's just, you know, the small children of America really deserve an apology, you know. (Insert anecdotal example of starving/deceased/suffering/disadvantaged child.)

8. Request by Subject to Leave the Property:

Lou Reed

"Leave Me Alone"

With all due respect, this interview is toast. Mr. Moore, get offa ma porch.

9. Relentless Questioning

Queen:

"Don't Stop Me Now"

You damn dirty capitalist, greedist, anti-democratic, consumerist, industrialist, regulationist, economist, anti-socialist SCUM! You will NOT silence me! La-la-la-la-la if I talk louder and fire questions in your face like a blowtorch on a stack of sparklers I can't HEAR you!

10. Second Request and Forced Removal:

Jojo

"Leave (Get Out)"

Right now, it's the end of you and me. It's too late and I can't wait for you to be gone, Mr. Moore. You said that you would treat me right but you was just a waste of time.



all up in my grill: HATING ON AMERICANS

I recently went to Dendy Newtown to see *The Hurt Locker*. The movie is a studied depiction of American soldiers' experience of the Iraq war. It was written by an American, stars Americans and was directed by, you guessed it, an American. Without giving much away, there is one scene in the movie set inside an US supermarket and in one shot we are shown a seemingly endless cereal aisle. At this point in the screening my neighbour in the movie theatre saw fit to remark loudly "Only in America". She and her companion then proceeded to chuckle derisively.

Had I the *cojones* I would have said a few things to this lady. Firstly, "Shut the fuck up, this is a movie theatre not some talky chat-house." Secondly, "Only in America? I don't think so." Yes, consumerist culture reaches its zenith in the US but it's not as if every other developed country doesn't skip down the same path.

The thing is, when it comes to America there seems to be a lot of chips on a lot of shoulders. Australians have even come up with the name "sepo" for the poor old yanks, short for septic tank because – wait for it – they're full of shit (urban dictionary told me so, so it must be true).

Whether it's their spelling, cultural imperialism/insularism or good old-fashion obnoxiousness, there's always something wrong with the Americans. I say give the Yanks a break – they may have their problems but they did give the world snuggies.

Shanusha Mutnam



A SPORTING CHANCE

An Australian sport in New York

Chris Martin on why America is shedding their sporting past.

In considering the US sporting community, it's difficult to avoid the customary America-bashing over their ignorance of the rest of the world. There cannot be a more insular competition between here and Pluto than their celebrated 'World Series' of baseball, contested by teams as geographically disparate as New York and Boston.

Still, America's sporting landscape is slowly being expanded to include some of Australia's favourite recreational pursuits. In much the same way as AC/DC changed American rock music and the Victa lawn mower revolutionised gardening (is that a stretch?), our footy nuts are erecting goalposts across Uncle Sam's backyard. And in 10 years time, it might not be so inconceivable that the US could field an international-standard cricket side.

For a fleeting moment in 2004, it seemed that the Americans would field an international rugby league team. Hosting a full-strength Kangaroos side at an NFL stadium in Philadelphia, the 'Tomahawks' led 24-6 at the break. Inevitably, Australia 'triumphed' 36-24 over their now forgotten opponents, who also very nearly qualified for the Rugby League World Cup in 2008. Such are the demands of niche amateur sport that America's leagues regularly travel across state lines to compete in American National Rugby League (AMNRL) matches against familiarly named teams like the Raiders and the Eagles. In 2011, the NRLUS will launch as a separate, professional competition, with former NRL stars Stacey Jones and Daniel Wagon in negotiations to participate.

Rugby league sits behind only rugby union in the battle for American recognition

An American sport in Sydney

Joe Payten on Sydney Uni's American Football club.

Sydney Uni has an American Football team. Yeah, I didn't know that either. It began humbly in 1984, when three Star Wars tragics decided to create a team at the University called the 'Stormtroopers' and organise a game against the Waverley Raiders. They are now the strongest club in the country, which is perhaps partly linked to their wise decision to rename themselves the Lions. Most people, including myself, would assume that their relevance only extended to American exchange students and ex-pats. In 2009, though, only four of the club's players were American born, and only another three had previous experience with the game. The club now boasts a full playing roster, an unbroken string of seven straight NSW Championships (with an incredible 84-2 record) and a handful of players at the standard of American College football, arguably making them the strongest sporting club at a university with a proud sporting tradition. So why haven't you heard of them?

Andrew Osborne, the quarterback from the original 1984 Stormtroopers, has a fascinating theory to explain the inability of American sports to gain a foothold in the Australian sporting landscape, and vice versa. "American sports were founded on the notion of specialisation and packaged 'units' of play, whereas Australian sports are founded on a notion of the all-rounder and free-flowing games with fewer stoppages."

of Australia's football codes. The latter boasts over 60,000 registered players. In terms of the sheer visibility in America, though, the clear victor is Aussie Rules. In its 10-year plan, the USAFL lists the modest ambition of "having 1% of the population knowing what Aussie Rules is about". Aussie Rules may yet emerge as the most significant novelty football code for American fans, solely for the continuing trans-Pacific exchange of players, albeit to different codes. Only last week, the former Collingwood ruckman Chris Bryan signed on as an NFL punter for the Green Bay Packers.

If anything, American cricket might have the most ground to cover, despite being only an associate member of the International Cricket Council. The US national team is dominated by expatriate West Indians and Indians, suffering from a shortage of homegrown players which even the USAFL does not suffer. At present, the country's premier cricket competition, Major League Cricket, is not recognised by the national governing body.

Nonetheless, for a collection of sports with rules that can barely be explained accurately by lifetime supporters (here's looking at you, rugby union), these Australian backyard favourites have made incredible ground. Twenty20 cricket and Americans' gradual realisation that real footy players don't wear armour give such sports a genuine chance of popularity. Really, the only Aussie sport that has failed to translate at all is V8 Supercar racing. The Americans have their high-octane equivalent in NASCAR, and it seems that nothing beyond the long left hand turn made it through immigration. But there's always Canada.

This is probably the reason why Australians would rather watch the Super 14 than the Superbowl, and why Groucho Marx, after watching a full session of Test cricket and being asked what he thought, replied, "when does it start?"

So what is attracting the club members to the game? "American Football has places on the roster for athletes who may not fit the mould required for rugby league or union," Andrew says. "Many very athletic and talented rugby or AFL players, who are seen to be too small to succeed at these sports can excel at American football by using the equipment to make up for their lack of size." He also believes players are attracted to the more tactical element of the game, and the "greater ability to 'out-think' your opponent in American football than in other sports such as rugby league," perhaps a comment more on the nature of the players in rugby league than the game itself.

Despite having to turn away some players due to the Lions' full roster, the crowds at games don't exactly resemble a Friday Night Lights episode. "There are reasonable crowds at the Waratah Bowl (the championship game) but otherwise the crowds are small, comparable to a sub-district rugby crowd."

The club's next game is for their under-18 side the Cubs, who play on Friday at the UWS Nepean Hockey Field. Go team!



Ask Abe

Q & A with students who need help and a dog who has all the answers...

Send your letters to: help@src.usyd.edu.au



Hello Abe,

When I first enrolled I signed up for 4 six credit point subjects. Now I think I might not be able to cope with the workload and would like to drop to 3 six credit point subjects. Will I have to pay for the subject still? Will I get a fail for it? Will I still be able to get Youth Allowance?

Don't want to Fail

Dear Don't Want to Fail,

If you withdraw from a subject before the census date (31st March for 1st semester or 31st August for 2nd semester) you will not get charged HECs. If you are a fee paying student seek SRC Help to get your fees refunded. You should have the grade W (withdrawn) next to that subject. Make sure you check this at the end of April on your transcript. If you are doing 18 credit points or more you are still considered full time and are still eligible for Youth Allowance.

If you fall sick or have a misadventure that causes you to withdraw from a subject after the census date, you may still be able to withdraw without academic penalty. The situation needs to have been beyond your control and of course you will need documents for proof. This means instead of a F (fail), AF (absent fail) or DF (discontinued fail) you may get a DNF (discontinue not fail).

Of course if you have more questions talk to SRC Help.

Abe

Announcing The long awaited CENTRELINK CHANGES

Come and see us at the SRC to get your questions answered. Find out if you are eligible?

- Increases to parental income threshold
- Changes to independence through work
- Student scholarships for centrelink recipients and more!

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-3pm
Place: SRC (Wentworth Level 1 - basement)
Cost: FREE
p: 9660 5222 e: help@src.usyd.edu.au



Students' Representative Council
The University of Sydney

BECOME A MEMBER!

Join in person at the SRC Office or SRC Bookshop (details below)

The SRC provides the following services to SRC members...



Support & Advocacy

- Centrelink Advice
- Academic Appeals
- Discontinuing/Withdrawing
- Students at Risk
- Show Cause
- Exclusion
- Tenancy Advice
- Fee Refunds
- Harassment & Discrimination
- International Students
- Plagiarism & misconduct

Free Legal Advice

- Referrals
- Discrimination & Equal Opportunity
- Employment law
- Minor criminal matters/traffic offences/ fines
- Victims of violence
- Debts

SRC Books - Cheapest books on campus!

- Buy & sell your textbooks
- Search for books online at www.src.usyd.edu.au
Located: Wentworth Level 3 (opposite Donut King)

Emergency Loans

\$50 emergency loans for students in need

Student Publications

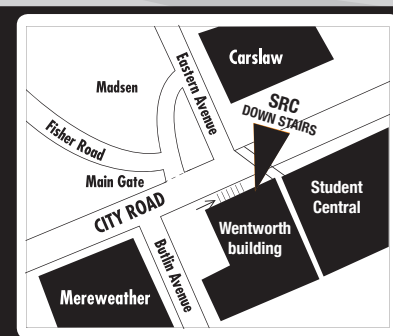
- Honi Soit weekly newspaper
- pick-up a copy available on campus
- Student Handbooks: O-week, Counter Course, International Students & Women's Handbooks.

Student Rights & Representation

SRC Representatives are directly elected by students each year to stand up for students' rights on campus and in the wider community.

We are located at..

Level 1 Wentworth Building
(under City Rd footbridge)
Ph: 02 9660 5222
www.src.usyd.edu.au
If you are at another campus,
email: help@src.usyd.edu.au



The SRC's operational costs, space and administrative support are financed by the University of Sydney.



President's Report

Report of the SRC President, Elly Howse // president@src.usyd.edu.au

Ok, so the *Honi* eds requested I write something 'US-related' as my report for this week. Right now all I can think of is Lady Gaga because I went to see her concert last Wednesday night. YES, YOUR PRESIDENT IS THAT COOL. But she was AMAZING. Like, seriously, she was. She played a burning piano and then bathed in the fake blood flowing from a Virgin Mary statue. All while singing. Awesome.

Anyway, I thought I'd do something different for a change. Instead of talking about how the higher education system in Australia is inequitable, how students are struggling etc, I'll paint a picture of the USA which may make things a bit more positive here. This is my interpretation of it – via the really cool 'star ratings system' (which I will continue if it proves popular).

SRC PRESIDENT'S STAR RATINGS FOR THIS WEEK (OUT OF 5)

HIGHER EDUCATION & SUPPORT

Let's see. American students currently face huge debts for the costs of their higher education. If your parents didn't create a trust fund for you, you're fucked. One student I know (a former President of the United States Students' Association) has over \$150,000 accumulated debt – on FOUR DIFFERENT CREDIT CARDS! And this is only her university tuition. This isn't even including living costs, textbooks etc.

Having said that, international students and domestic students have exactly the same entry requirements – a test that everyone has to do. So I'm all for making sure students, wherever they come from, are treated equally, but the costs of higher education are actually ridiculous. No wonder heaps of people don't go to college – it's too bloody expensive!

(I only gave another star because the US has some of the best universities in the world...which you'll never be able to attend unless you become a millionaire).

STAR RATING: ★★

HEALTH

American politicians seem to have an irrational fear of something like Medicare. When Medicare started in Australia in 1975, it meant that all Australians could access low cost or subsidised health care – so that health care was equitable for everyone, not just the people who could afford to pay. Even the more conservative politicians in Australia support some sort of subsidised health care.

In the States, if you get sick, have an accident, whatever, you are quite screwed unless you have private health cover. You'll have giant health bills that you may take twenty years to pay off. If a relative has cancer, good luck with finding the money to pay for treatment.

President Obama is currently (as I write this article) attempting to pass historic health reform legislation that people such as Ted Kennedy spent nearly their whole lives campaigning for. But for some unknown reason, PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO USE THEIR TAXES FOR OTHERS GETTING SICK.

This is beyond my comprehension.

STAR RATING: ★

SOCIAL EQUALITY

Hmmm, let's think:

- While Australia doesn't have 'same-sex' marriage, at least it does now recognise same-sex or queer de facto couples. Same-sex marriage was overturned in California not long after it was passed. Why would you do that?! 6 states have same-sex marriage but there is still the Federal 'Defence of Marriage Act'. What are you defending marriage from? People who love each other?
- Some states still also practise 'abstinence-only' sex education in high schools. That is even stupider. Young people generally like to have sex. It's a fact. Why wouldn't you acknowledge



that and teach them about safe sex? No surprises that the highest rates of teen pregnancy are in these states.

Der. I'm looking at you, Mississippi.

- Capital punishment is a possible penalty for felony or murder in over half of the American states. The last time Australians were surveyed about this, we were overwhelmingly clear that the death penalty is an 'inhumane form of punishment' and the UN supports that view. The US also has some of the youngest people in the world on death row. And most of them would be African-American.
- Trade unionists are hugely disadvantaged in comparison to their Australian counterparts. The right to strike is not protected under law, as it is here. I won't even go into the other work-related issues or I may be writing this until I'm 90.
- Creationism is actually taught in schools. Steve Fielding would have a 'field day'. Ha ha.

STAR RATING: ★

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Native Americans were granted full citizenship in 1924. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had to wait until 1967 and even then, were sometimes still counted as 'flora and fauna'. Gross.

STAR RATING: ★★

COOL POLITICIANS

(In comparison to our own)

Even though I think Obama is cool, I reckon Michelle would be a better President. Bring it on!

STAR RATING: ★★★

So my really scientific analysis has led you to conclude that Australia actually isn't doing that badly after all. Whilst we're still struggling with a lot of racism, and the fact that women still earn a whopping 17% less than men over their lifetimes, and the fact that higher education is still inaccessible to many people, I am thankful that when I wake up in the morning, I need not be scared if I cough up a lung because I will be able to go to the doctor free of charge.

But, having said all that, there are still numerous issues that face students in Australia. So two events I think you should turn up to make a statement to governments and the University about Youth Allowance, housing and international student transport concessions are:

NOODLE DAY! 2pm FRONT LAWNs WEDNESDAY 24TH MARCH (Week 4)

NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION RALLY! 12pm FRONT LAWNs WEDNESDAY 31st MARCH (Week 5)

See you there, my little fame monsters!



Get involved...

Education Action Group: Tuesday 16th of March, 1pm (Chancellor's Lawns -next to Fisher Library)

Women's Collective: meets every Thursday at 1pm in the Holme Women's Room.

Environment Collectives:

Student Enviro Action

Collective (SEAC):

Monday 1pm Botany Lawns

Climate Action Collective:

Monday 1pm Chancellors Lawns

Queer Collective:

Monday 2pm Queer Space Holme Building

International Students:

Check your email for updates

What's on...

Noodle Day!

Fight Student Poverty & set the Noodle eating record!
Wednesday 24th of March, 2pm (Front Lawns).

National Day of Action!

Wednesday 31st of March, 12pm (Front Lawns)

Arts Faculty Green Paper "Town Hall Meeting"

for all Arts students. Tuesday 30th March from 1-2pm, Woolley Bldg, Room N395

General Secretary's Report

Report of the General Secretary,
Donherra Walmsley // gen.sec@src.usyd.edu.au

This week students around the country were relieved to hear that the Youth Allowance bill, which has been in limbo for months, would finally pass through the Senate. The changes to Youth Allowance include an increase to the parental means test (how much your parents can earn for you to be eligible for Youth Allowance as a dependent), start up scholarships for all recipients of Youth Allowance, an increase to how much you can earn before Centrelink starts docking your payments, and a progressive lowering of the age of independence from 25 to 22. They have, however, removed the 'workforce participation' qualification (often called "the gap year criteria"), wherein you earn approximately \$19 000 in 18 months after leaving school and thereby qualify for independence, unless you're from an outer rural or regional area and your parents earn less than \$150 000 (which the Government estimates to be around 1 900 students).

The Youth Allowance changes are good, but they're far from great. The increase to how much you can earn before your payments are docked recognises how incredibly inadequate Youth Allowance payments are, but rather than increasing Youth Allowance so that it reflects the cost of living, the Government's just said you can earn more – they wouldn't want to do anything outlandish and actually INVEST in education, that's just silly. So what's the problem with expecting students to work while they're at University and on Youth Allowance (which, by the way, is still far too hard to qualify for)? The problem is that for most students, work ends up coming before classes. Many students have to skip lectures on a regular basis in order to go to work, just so that they can afford to pay rent.

The lack of time students have to devote to their studies has seen the University

progressively lower expectations: the difficulty of courses and what is expected from a student to successfully complete that course has decreased over time. Great right? We all have to do less work to get good marks, what's wrong with that? The problem is that, particularly for generalist degrees such as Arts or Science, a Bachelor degree is now almost worthless without an Honours year, because critical thinking, analysis, and communication skills are not sufficiently developed during the basic undergraduate course. The University can get away with things like this because most students are so busy working, that they're relieved when their workload is lightened. It is, however, the beginning of a worrying trend of "postgraduate-ising" education, wherein an undergraduate degree is rendered meaningless, except as an entry requirement for postgraduate studies, which are necessary to actually get employed. This is the model the USA uses, and it's horribly inequitable – postgraduate courses are still full fee courses in most cases, and though there are scholarships available, many students will still be saddled with a huge debt (on top of the substantial HECS-debt you accrue as an undergrad). Plus it's another few years of student poverty.

If the Government is actually serious about its "Education Revolution", it needs to invest in higher education. Now. Provide Rent Assistance which reflects reality, lower the age of independence to 18, and decrease HECS. Come along to Noodle Day this Wednesday (the 24th) at 2pm on the Front Lawns to show your support, and then join us in rallying to Town Hall next Wednesday (the 31st), meet at 12pm on the Front Lawns to tell the Government it's time to get serious about Higher Education. Fair education: let's fight for it!

Education Report

Report of the Education Officer,
Gabriel Dain // education.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

Youth Allowance reforms pass Senate

After months of debate in the House of Representatives and the Senate, the changes to the Student Income Support bill have passed with minor changes. These are the changes, effective from the 1st of April:

- Decrease to the Age of Independence from 25 to 22 over three years.
- Increase to the Personal Income Test from \$236 to \$400 per fortnight.
- Increase to the Parental Income Test.
- Introduction of Start-Up scholarships worth \$2128 from 2011.
- Introduction of Relocation scholarships worth \$4000 in the first year of study and \$1000 every subsequent year, from 2011.

Of course, this is just a rough overview of the changes. If you would like more information, email help@src.usyd.edu.au to book a free appointment with one of our caseworkers.

NUS and student organisations all around Australia (including the SRC) have been campaigning for fairer Youth Allowance for years. It is good to see the government finally take action on this issue.

The actions taken, however, are not enough, and we must not become complacent.

The government was adamant about making the reforms budget-neutral (that is, they simply reshuffle the money already allocated to Youth Allowance, without adding anything.) This means that Youth Allowance payments are still well below the poverty line, and many students who deserve and need income support in order to study at university still miss out. At a time when students pay exorbitant amounts in rent, food and

essential course materials, we cannot afford a government that is this noncommittal about fair student income support. For this reason, I invite you to attend Noodle Day and the National Day of Action:

(more) Noodle Day!

Noodle Day is upon us! For those of you who haven't heard, we will be setting the world record for the most people eating two-minute noodles at the same time, this Wednesday (24th) at 2pm on the Front Lawns. What better way to protest the inadequacies of income support for students and call on the government to take further action than by sharing the traditional dish of poor students everywhere? There will be free noodles for everyone, and Dom Knight from The Chaser will be speaking about his experience as a student at this University.

The National Day of Action

Every year, students all around Australia get together to demand a fair and quality education. This year we are marching to Town Hall with students from UTS, UNSW, Macquarie, Notre Dame, and other universities in NSW.

Our demands are simple: more safe and affordable housing for all students, travel concessions and an increase in the 20-hour per week work restriction for international students, and an increase to Youth Allowance payments.

We will gather outside Fisher Library on Wednesday the 31st at 12pm and march down George Street to Town Hall. We have won part of the battle on Youth Allowance, but there are many more battles to fight, and we need you on our side!

EVENTS!

Education Action Group - Tuesday 22nd of March, 1pm
(Chancellor's Garden)
Noodle Day - Wednesday 24th of March, 2pm (Front Lawns)
National Day of Action - Wednesday 31st of March, 12pm
(outside Fisher Library)

Women's Report

Report of the Women's Officer, Rosie Ryan // womens.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

On Saturday I saw Lady Gaga live and experienced the most spectacular set design, dance, song, flaming piano playing, epic speeches and spectacular costume changes.

The next morning, still glittering and reeling from the wonder of the night before, I opened the paper to be told that in attending the concert I unwittingly taken part in a concerning phenomena:

Lady Gaga is to blame for violence against women.

Yes, that's right. Allegedly all will be made clear if you watch the full nine minutes of the clip, Telephone. So NSW MP Greg Donnelly informed

the NSW Parliament during a discussion around International Women's Day.

Donnelly's issue with Lady Gaga seems to be that, "This material agitates a mindset in young boys, who grow into men, that women are fair game and that such behavior really does not matter; that they can get loaded up with grog or drugs and everything is okay."

"What effect is this horrible, coarse, sexualisation of young girls...having on the attitudes of men towards women? One can argue that women can exercise choice, and I understand those feminist arguments. But I ask: What effect is this having on males, and is that not something that we should be concerned about?"

He then went on to describe instances of rape, sexual harassment and group sex to illustrate just how hypersexualised young girls were becoming and claimed that this hypersexualisation is teaching boys to grow into the sort of men who sexually abuse women.

I find this to be a funny way to look at it, and while this is an extreme example, it is demonstrative of a common cultural perceptions about sexual harassment and violence and female sexuality. Donnelly is suggesting that the onus for stopping violence, specifically sexual violence, lies with the woman. She must dress and behave modestly at all times or she will be indicating to men that consent does not apply. On top of this Donnelly speaks about drug and alcohol abuse as factors which will inevitably lead to sexual violence.

As long as these myths frame how we approach issues of sexual harassment and assault in our community we are not going to see a change. Members of our parliaments need to stop shifting the blame and exploiting common misconceptions and start engaging in real solutions – which start at the level of cultural change, and not the kind aimed at Lady GaGa.

Women's Collective meets every Thursday at 1pm in the Holme Women's Room

Reminder: submissions for Women's Honi are now open to all female-identifying and/or female-socialised Sydney Uni students. Send questions and submissions to womenshonisoit@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions is April 9th.



Postgrad Guide to the Green Paper

What is the Green Paper?

The Green Paper is a document drafted by the Vice Chancellor and members of the University's Senior Administration. It is lengthy at 103 pages plus attachments. It does not have an executive summary, creating legitimate concerns about its accessibility for busy students. It reads from start to finish as a sustained argument for wide-ranging changes. One of the key questions for postgraduate students to consider is whether this argument is convincing and sufficiently comprehensive. Submissions in response to the proposals in the Green Paper are open from students and staff, and can be lodged up to 19th April 2010. It would be desirable if significant numbers of individual postgraduates submitted responses, in addition to the response SUPRA will submit on behalf of all postgraduate students. Once responses are received, a White Paper will be drafted, with the intention that it will form the basis of the University's Strategic Plan for the next 5 years.

What does it say?

The big picture perspective that emerges from the Green Paper is that it proposes a considerably more centralised University. If adopted, there would be a new College of Arts and Sciences, potentially containing the current Faculties of Arts, Science, Education and Social Work, as well as the social science activities of the Faculty of Economics and Business. There would then be 5 professional schools. They would be a School of Business; a School of Law; a School of Creative and Performing Arts; a School of Medicine and Health Sciences; and a School of Engineering, Design and the Built Environment. These 6 proposed new bodies would be what the Green Paper describes as 'vertical' units of the University. It is posited that the new 'vertical' units will help reduce administrative duplication, and allow disciplinary areas such as Sociology to consolidate into a larger critical mass and address gaps in expertise. Part of the job of the new and larger 'vertical' units will be to promote cross-disciplinary work within the constituent academic units under their responsibility. There is also an expectation that there would be more 'horizontal' units in the University that will include members from across different disciplines. Two examples cited in the Green Paper are proposed new centres for China studies and South East Asian studies.

Though it is not explicitly stated, it is clear that the large-scale structural changes would lead to administrative job reductions. Some administrative functions would move from current Faculty bodies to the newly formed Schools and the College of Arts and Sciences. Other functions would move away from these six new bodies altogether and be administered centrally. For example, Higher Degree Research examination could be moved to a central portfolio, probably under a new Graduate School whose potential functions are yet to be determined.

“ Though it is not explicitly stated, it is clear that the large-scale structural changes would lead to administrative job reductions ”

Other issues of interest for Higher Degree Research students, include notes in the Green Paper that recognise infrastructure inadequacy. It is indicated that the situation could be improved via implementation of a central resources policy. Many readers will know that SUPRA has pushed the idea of a Minimum Resources Policy for all postgraduate students for years, and so it is pleasing to see recognition that there is a need to address, for example, the lack of desk space for arts research students, where more than 500 students need to share only 150 desks. The shortcomings of teaching spaces for coursework students is also mentioned in the Green Paper, though surprisingly there is very little said about Masters by Coursework degrees. There is a discussion of whether Honours years should be retained for undergraduate students, and Masters degrees are mentioned as possible pathways to PhD, but there is little to give us a clue as to how Masters degrees could or would change.

As for the overall make up of the student body, it is proposed that student numbers should not grow. No targets or ratios for postgraduate to undergraduate student places have been set. That said, an initial analysis of the proposals in the Green Paper, could lead one to conclude that the trend towards a higher proportion of postgraduate students will continue. The new Economic Model proposed for the University, would require individual academic units to be more financially accountable for their own activities. The onus would be placed on those individual academic units to maintain financial viability, or else make a case for cross-subsidisation from other parts of the University. By introducing this kind of model, pressure will build on many academic units to offer a higher number of postgraduate coursework places. Postgraduate coursework offerings will be attractive under this model, because full fees can be charged for domestic students as well as international students. In some cases they may even still be able to attract subsidised Commonwealth Supported Places. International student numbers would not increase under the Green Paper's proposals.

Changes are proposed to the PhD. It is suggested that it should be delivered over four years, meaning that the current aspiration to complete PhDs in 3 years would no longer apply. The longer PhD program would include a period of training in a range of research methodologies and generic skills. It would require writing an academic piece for assessment that could form part of the whole PhD, which would need to be assessed before PhD candidature is confirmed. The Green Paper says that the 6 month gap between current government funding and the 4 year program should be funded by the University, which seems to mean that 3.5 year government stipend payments might be effectively extended to a full 4 years. An obvious issue SUPRA will need to grapple with is that government funding for tuition-free places for local students also only last for 4 years, and we would want to know whether a candidate would be charged full-fees in the

event they needed an extension to complete the new jam-packed program. There is a significant discussion about supervision of PhDs, which suggests that co-supervision across disciplines, and supervision by panels of 4 or 5 persons could be possible in the future.

In addition to the lack of commentary about Masters by Coursework candidatures, there are other areas in the Green Paper where there are gaps. Whilst the target of obtaining 6000 beds for accommodation by 2014 is noted, there is nothing to indicate how the University will assist students into accommodation in the meantime. And whilst there are substantial discussions about equity and access for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and for indigenous students, they relate only to increasing undergraduate participation. There need to be measures to ensure better equity outcomes for postgraduate students as well, particularly given the increasing number of professional degrees which are offered at postgraduate levels.

The Green Paper also does not address some serious gaps in overall coordination in complaints-handling. SUPRA is aware that some of these issues have begun to be addressed outside of the Green Paper process, but there is an argument to say that they are so important that they should find their way into the White Paper and subsequently the University's Strategic Plan.

I would still recommend postgraduates read the full Green Paper. I hope my briefing helps to give you a head-start on what to look for and guides you in writing your own response. Good luck, and remember to get your submission in by 19 April 2010! See the following web page to download a copy of the Green Paper and for more information on how to make your submission: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/about/strategy/green-paper/index.shtml>

Adrian Cardinali
Student Advice and Advocacy Officer

Postgrad Sports

No matter what your level of fitness come along! If you would like to play soccer, basketball, or there is another sport you think would prove popular, contact us by email at SUPRACHOI@gmail.com

Camden Visit

SUPRA is heading out to CAMDEN FARMS on Tuesday, March 30. Come along, enjoy a free lunch, and meet Sid, John and a SAO from SUPRA. For more information, contact Sid activities@supra.usyd.edu.au

Trivia!

Do you like Trivia? Can you name all 5 European Capitals with only 4 letters? Then Trivia is for you! SUPRA is putting on a gala trivia night on APRIL 28. Contact Sid for more information activities@supra.usyd.edu.au

POSTGRAD PAGES

Why Join SUPRA?

SUPRA is the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association, an organisation run by elected postgraduate students. We use the slogan **Your Voice - Your Safety Net** to capture the core of what SUPRA does: we give voice to postgraduate students within the University and in the wider community, and we run a free advice and advocacy service with professional staff to help you when you need it most.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We provide advice, **advocacy and support** services to postgraduates at all campuses of the university. You can get help with problems arising from your candidature, for example if you get an unfair mark for an assignment or you are having problems with your supervisor. You can also get help with some of the other problems students sometimes face, such as tenancy or welfare issues, and if our staff can't help you they can refer you someone who can. The Student Advice and Advocacy Officers (SAAOs) regularly visit all the campuses in the Sydney region, and also provide advice by phone during working hours. Our advice and advocacy service is something you may never need, and we hope you don't, but the reality is that many students do face problems during their study and it's great to know there are professional and independent advisors available if you ever need them.

We also have a solicitor who can give you **free legal advice** two days a week. To talk to a SAAO or to make contact with the solicitor, just ring us (9351 3715) or e-mail us (admin@supra.usyd.edu.au).

SUPRA represents postgraduates both within the university and beyond. We sit on university boards and committees, such as the Academic Board, the Research Training Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee to represent postgraduate interests. We have representatives on committees like the Disability Consultative Committee and the Rural Focus Group, so we can provide a postgraduate perspective for many different aspects of university life. SUPRA's student representatives have regular meetings with the Vice-Chancellor and other senior staff. In 2007 we prepared a **Postgraduate Entitlements Policy** based on surveys of postgrads and their needs.

We also provide a voice for postgraduates in **education policy** at a Federal and State level through direct liaison, submissions to official review committees, and every other avenue we can find. SUPRA is also a member of CAPA, the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, which is the peak national body representing Australia's 270,000+ postgraduates from 33 tertiary institutions. SUPRA runs **campaigns** like the ongoing fight for travel concessions for international students and supports many other campaigns, both on education and other issues that are important to postgrads. We also have specific networks and elected office bearers to look after specific **equity groups** - Women, Indigenous, International, Queer and Disabilities. Details of these equity groups are on our website (www.supra.usyd.edu.au). We also try to have activities specifically for the different equity groups we represent.

We hold interdisciplinary **conferences** for postgrads. Keep an eye out for this year's conference coming up in a few months. We regularly hold **seminars** on diverse topics, ranging from immigration issues to public speaking, self-defence, rights as a casual tutor, intellectual property, women in academia, and the impact of Google on learning.



We produce a variety of **publications**, including a regularly-updated Survival Guide to help you get through your postgraduate studies; the Thesis Guide; the postgraduate edition of the Counter Course Handbook; and various facts sheets. We send out a regular e-mail bulletin, eGrad, letting you know about events, conferences, study skills sessions and lots of other things.

Of course, we also hold **fun events** too - getting to know other postgrads is a very important part of being a student, and we know how hard that can be for part-time students. We regularly hold BBQs at the SUPRA office; as well as film-nights; post-grad parties; drinks; and weekly sports events. If you have a suggestion for an activity, please let us know (activities@supra.usyd.edu.au).

Since the introduction of Voluntary Student Unionism a few years back, SUPRA has developed a three-tier structure engaging with postgraduate students. All postgraduates in the University are considered **constituents** of SUPRA. This is in recognition of the fact that regardless of whether you have anything to do with SUPRA, we still make representations on your behalf within the University. So we wanted to acknowledge that we are accountable to all postgraduates. The main level of engagement with SUPRA is as a **subscriber**. Basically that means you register your details with SUPRA which gets you **free access** to all our services and publications. Subscribers get a regular email bulletin with information on SUPRA events and other events and news items of interest to postgraduates.

There is also the option of making a financial contribution to SUPRA and becoming a **supporter**. A few years ago all postgraduates automatically paid an \$80 a year membership fee to SUPRA. That is no longer the case. We now get most of our funding from the University. However in the last couple of years the University has cut our funding and it no longer covers the full range of services we offer. The current SUPRA Council has a strong commitment to continuing to make all of our services available for free. Rather than charge for some services, we are trying to cover our current budget shortfall through Supporter donations. So if you like the sound of free professional, confidential and independent advice and advocacy; a free legal service; and independent postgraduate student representation - and you want those services to continue being available for free - we urge you to consider making a contribution. The top Supporter rate is \$80 a year. When you think about it, that's a really small price to pay for the services SUPRA offers. You can also make a smaller contribution. So why not jump online now and become a SUPRA Supporter, or at least register to become a Subscriber.

Visit <http://www.supra.usyd.edu.au> for more information, or you can drop in. We are located in the Raglan Street Building behind the Services Building on the Darlington Campus.

Richard Bailey and Rosemary Whitecross
SUPRA Councillors

YOUR Postgraduate Representative Association

Becoming a member of your postgraduate representative association gives you the following benefits:

- Access to our confidential student advice and advocacy service and legal service
- Participate in SUPRA events and activities
- Receive regular email updates and electronic publications (eGrad)
- Use the SUPRA Resource and Meeting Rooms
- Vote or run in the SUPRA Council elections
- Actively participate in your representative student association.

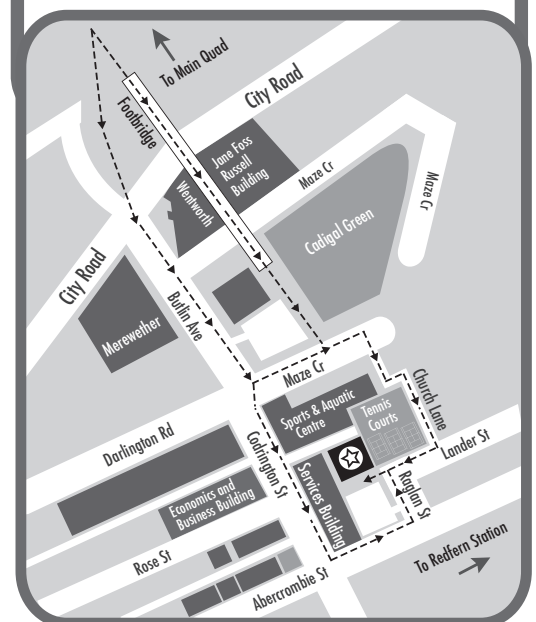
Complete your subscription online at www.supra.usyd.edu.au/subscribe then follow the links if you would like to become a SUPRA Supporter. Alternatively you can complete a form at our stalls or drop into the SUPRA office.

WHERE IS SUPRA?

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THE HONI SOIT CRYPTIC

Hey, what's with the upside-down numbers? Glad you asked. This is a two-speed crossword, meaning that there are two sets of clues - one cryptic and one quick - for the same set of answers. However, to prevent people accidentally glancing over to the quick clues, we've placed them upside down. And here is the incredibly clever part - our crosswords (and all good crosswords really) are made to be identical when turned upside-down. This way, if you just want to do the quick, you can spin the paper around and fill in the crossword using the other numbers. You're welcome.

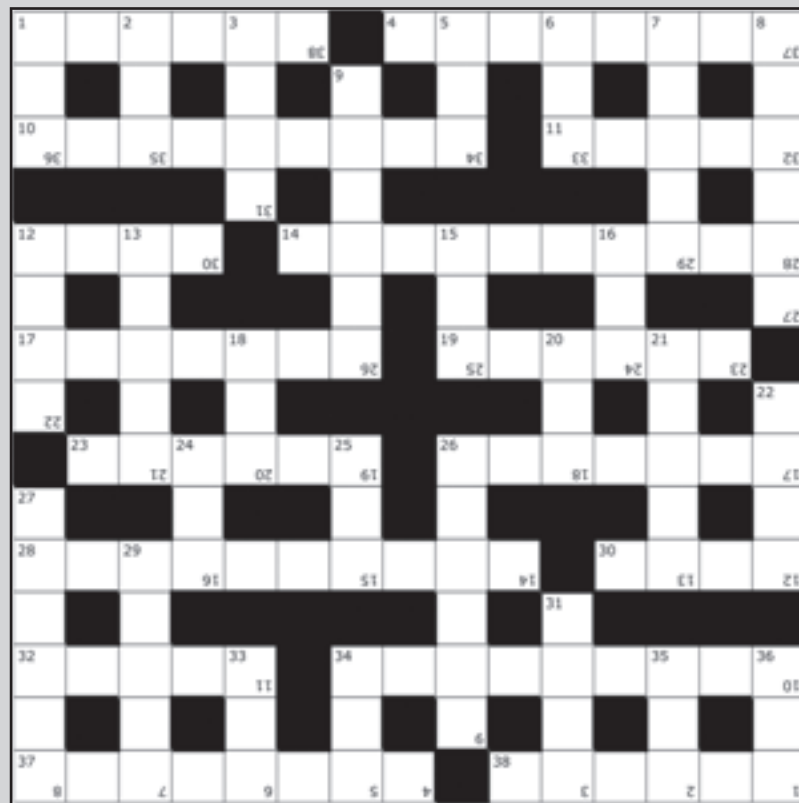
- Across**
- The 28th, and comedian Anderson's in great form! (6)
 - The 30th - Unsure? Go docile. (8)
 - The 26th & 32nd are a kanga with slender hidden energy (9)
 - The 44th and current begins "O Beautiful America, My America" (5)
 - The 41st and 43rd are a shrub (4)
 - The 1st is cleaning a huge weight (10)
 - The 35th is "artist" Done and outlaw Kelly, why? (7)
 - The 40th sounds like Cordelia's sister (6)
 - The 33rd is almost a genuine fellow (6)
 - The 16th is even Albion schooling (7)
 - The 34th alarms we heroines (10)
 - The 27th hides take-out after lunch (4)
 - The 18th will allow (5)
 - The 22nd and 24th are the largest city in Ohio (9)
 - The 25th broke my nickel! (8)
 - The 39th is one who transports goods (6)

- Down**
- Go back to uncooked combat (3)
 - Star sign undercover in Sierra Leone (3)
 - Bizarre eons are 14-Across's portraits (4)
 - Frequently included in 'Lord of the Rings' (3)
 - Odd look on toilet (3)
 - Current of air is what 14-Across helped to do with the Constitution (5)
 - Seinfeld's ex is an electronic narrow road, perhaps (6)
 - Bootleg a cyanide container, and be remembered for it (6)
 - Cook in the oven confused 26-Across (for short) and potassium (4)
 - Arson destroyed underwater acoustics (5)
 - Objectively she steals a hundred from Cher (3)

- Gigantic opening for the performance (3)
- Tree kept hidden by Thelma and Louise (3)
- Dawn concludes with a bristle (3)
- Scent sounds like a traveller (5)
- Mixed-up eskimo, without a peeper, is an undivided whole (4)
- Buckle, even at a tiny, Hawaiian stringed instrument (3)
- One strange Keanu Reeves performance (3)
- Glee is dumbfounded sovereigns (6)
- Drug me stoned, it's a large eucalyptus (3,3)
- Hero Tony is quite austere (5)
- Dancing team is like, so self referential (4)
- Tentatively beginning, John Tyler would be this (were he one of the clues) (3)
- Sounds like a line of billiards equipment (3)
- Perform legislation (3)
- Go up, rid of a computing command for file listing (3)



- Down**
- Eric Burdon's 70's funk band (3)
 - The MGM Lion (3)
 - The lowest bills in US currency (4)
 - Frequently (3)
 - W.C. (3)
 - Beer from a keg (5)
 - Julia Louis Dreyfus' character on 'Seinfeld' (6)
 - A bequest (6)
 - Cook in an oven (4)
 - Why bats go mental when you clap (5)
 - Possessive form of she (4)
 - Performance (often by a band) (3)
 - Deciduous tree (3)
 - Bristle-like appendage on some plants (3)
 - Scent (5)
 - Regurgitator Album (4)
 - Luan instrument (for short) (3)
 - Prefix meaning 'new' (3)
 - Sovereigns (6)
 - Large eucalyptus (3,3)
 - Austere (5)
 - Self-referential (4)
 - The number of commandments (3)
 - Prompt (as for an actor) (3)
 - One of five in Hamlet (3)
 - Computing command for file listing (3)



MARK 'MY WORDS' SUTTON

- Across**
- The 28th US President, instigator of the League of Nations (6)
 - The 30th US President, and the first to talk on film (8)
 - The 32nd US President, who brought America out of Great Depression (9)
 - The 44th and current US President, and the first African-American President (5)
 - The 43rd US President, who instigated the War on Terror (4)
 - The 1st US President, who famously crossed the Delaware (10)
 - The 35th US President, who averted the Cuban Missile Crisis (7)
 - The 40th US President, who concocted the 'Star Wars' programme and described the Soviet Union as 'the evil empire' (6)
 - The 33rd US President, who decided to drop the bomb (6)
 - The 16th US President, and the Great Emancipator (7)
 - The 34th US President, who was Commanding General, European Theatre of Operations in World War Two (10)
 - The 27th US President, the only one who was also Chief Justice, and who was very fat (4)
 - The 18th US President, and General-in-Chief of the Union Army (5)
 - The 22nd and 24th President, the only man to be President twice (9)
 - The 25th US President, assassinated by Leon Czolgosz (8)
 - The 39th US President, who created the Department of Education, and the Department of Energy (6)
 - The 3rd US President, who decided to drop the 'Wars' programme and described the Soviet Union as 'the evil empire' (6)
 - The 40th US President, who concocted the 'Star Missile Crisis' (7)
 - The 35th US President, who averted the Cuban Missile Crisis (7)
 - The 1st US President, who famously crossed the Delaware (10)
 - The 43rd US President, who instigated the War on Terror (4)
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 - The 35th US President, who averted the Cuban Missile Crisis (7)
 - The 40th US President, who concocted the 'Star Wars' programme and described the Soviet Union as 'the evil empire' (6)
 - The 33rd US President, who decided to drop the bomb (6)

THE TAKE HOME

- What is the world record number of hot dogs eaten in a single sitting?
- Who is third in line for the presidency after Obama and Biden?
- What is Lady Gaga's real name?
- A Faucet is (a) a dead actress (b) A small woodland animal (c) a sink
- How many times has the US topped the medal tally at the Olympics?
- What was Quentin Tarantino's first film?
- For how long did Rip van Winkle fall asleep?
- What was the highest selling album of all time?
- How many former Baywatch stars have had sex tapes?
- What was the original name of the USyd American Football team?
- Who wrote the Friends' theme "I'll Be There For You"?
- How many episodes did MASH have?

- When did an American last win a tennis Grand Slam?
- What event inspired Don McLean's song "American Pie"?
- Who was Carly Simon referring to when she sang "You're So Vain"?
- What's the highest recorded temperature in Death Valley?
- How long was the famous Boston Red Sox series drought?
- How many president's share their last name with other presidents?
- What is the current relationship between Woody Allen and Mia Farrow?
- Who said "an Englishman is a person who does things because they have been done before - an American is a person who does things because they haven't been done before"?

WORDSWORDSWORDS

The answers to each of the clues below can be spelled using only the U.S. State's 2-letter abbreviations (see map) placed next to each other, without any mixing up of letters.

Forcefully request | Requiring secret of mysterious knowledge | A nut | An African nation | A small, touch sensitive explosive device | The continental part of a region | A citrus fruit | A psychedelic drug | A commemoration | One of the Knights of the Round Table | A place for excavating a fossil fuel | Something you might find in a Fisherman's Basket

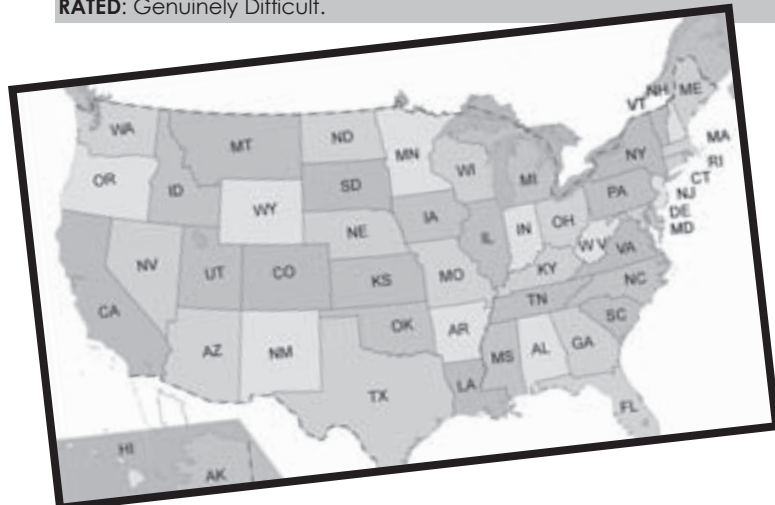
Last weeks answers:

London/England, Madrid/Spain, Bangkok/Thailand, Cardiff/Wales, Jakarta/Indonesia, Abu Dhabi/United Arab Emirates, Muscat/Oman, Singapore/Singapore, Amsterdam/Netherlands, Bucharest/Romania, Port Moresby/Papua New Guinea, Montevideo/Uruguay, Washington D.C/United States of America, Copenhagen/Denmark, Islamabad/Pakistan, Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia, Warsaw/Poland.

YOU DO KU

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

RATED: Genuinely Difficult.



1. 68 hotdogs 2. Nancy Pelosi 3. Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta 4. (c) a sink 5. 10 6. My Best Friends Birthday 7. 100 years 8. Thriller 9. Three (Pamela Anderson, Yasmine Bleeth, Jeremy Jackson) 10. The Stormtroopers 11. The Rembrandts 12. 251 13. 2003 (Kodick, US Open) 14. The 1959 plane crash that killed Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and The Big Bopper 15. David Geffen 16. 56.7°C 17. 85 seasons 18. 5 (Bush, Adams, Roosevelt, Harrison, Johnson) 19. She is his mother-in-law 20. Mark Twain

THE GARDAPRESS!

RETROSPECTIVE EDITION!



Welcome Comrades! As the man who is definitely running your country, I, Dimitry Medvedev, am very excited to be writing this introduction all by myself without the shadow of Vladimir Putin literally hanging over me as he stands menacingly and shirtlessly behind me atop his horse. *The Garda* is a much loved institution and as much a part of Russian life as cold winters, cold summers and that funny dance we do.

When comrade Lenin bloodlessly rose to bloodless power, *The Garda* was there; when the Moscow Olympics were declared "Too awesome to attend", *The Garda* was there; and when Vladimir Putin agrees to relinquish power and leave me the freak alone, *The Garda* will be there.

Please enjoy this finely chosen selection of highlights from the Garda's rich history. And as Galka would say "Who stole my shawl?"

Yours in power - Vladimir Putin. Dimitry Medvedev

AMERICA INVADES MOON

July 21, 1969

Does the rampant imperialism of America know no bounds? Not content with seizing control of Mexico, Samoa and Pennsylvania, the long, over-fed arm of capitalism has extended through the stratosphere (henceforth known as the *Krushchevsphere*) and closed its clammy, bejeweled fingers around Earth's only satellite and moon.

The invasion, which began late last night (moon time, where it is always night) was conceived in 1961 by President Kennedy, a man so incompetent that he cannot even drive down a main street without exploding his head all over his wife. Since that time, American scientists and invasologists have worked tirelessly and diabolically to ensure that the once peaceful moon should become enslaved to the burgeoning American Empire.

As Strongarm Neil, America's answer to the question "who is a bastard?", trampled the pristine lunar surface with his Space-Boots of oppression, he was heard to remark "This is one small step for man, one giant leap [onto the balls of the worker]".

Unlike the benevolent aims of the USSR's space program, which include giving the gifts of Russian satellites, the works of Chekov and a dog (still



missing), the US have initiated Space War I. Their expansionist designs include plans to install missiles on the Moon pointing directly at your daughter's room, staging the world series in the Sea of Tranquility and selling the sun to J.D. Rockefeller.

The usually peaceful and conciliatory Soviet Union will not tolerate such acts of Space-Agression (henceforth known as Spagression) and demands an immediate and total boycott of The Moon by Russian citizens.

As a result of this boycott, night will now be known as The People's Day (Pide), sleeping is outlawed and punishable by exile, all astronomers will be purged and it will now be illegal for there to be a tide.

RUSSIA "FUCKING HUGE"

August 21, 1978

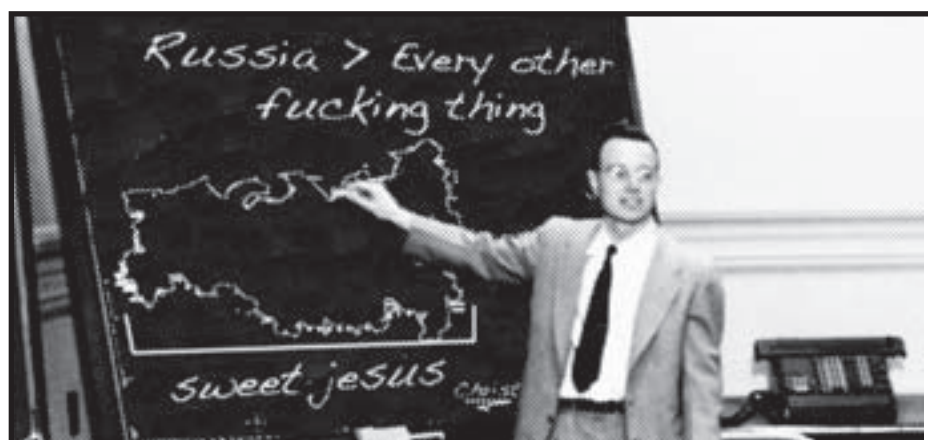
A report, commissioned by The Kremlin, entitled *Sweet Merciful Crap: The Sheer Magnitude of the Land Beneath Our Fucking Feet* has revealed that Russia, always assumed to be of modest but impressive size, is in fact "Shit-blisteringly gigantic".

The hypothesis was formed by Professor Dimitri Alexandrov, who attempted to walk the length of Russia with his wife after lunch and discovered that they could only reach their front gate before having to be rescued.

Alexandrov addressed the assembled members of the press yesterday in front of a blackboard and a massive fuck-off diagram of this horrifyingly vast behemoth of a land mass.

Pointing to a small figure in the bottom right of the map, Alexandrov bellowed "See that!? That is Japan! Japan! Look at the little shit-bitch!

"Oh look at me, I'm Japan, the second



largest economy in the world!" continued the Professor, now adopting a high-pitched voice, whilst drawing a mouth on the eastern coast of the Soviet Union, making it appear as though it was devouring the small archipelago.

This echoes the thoughts of Adolf Hitler, who in recently unearthed diaries wrote of Russia's size "Holy shitting mother of fuckcabinet." and Napoleon Bonaparte who was rumored

to have declared "merde! c'est impossible fuckcabinet!".

"You must understand," continued a noticeably distressed Alexandrov, "that this map is to scale. It is even bigger than this map!" barely audible over the gasping and weeping of all the journalists present.

"Fuck!" he concluded.

WELCOME

We at *The Garda* are thrilled to take you on a journey through our dusty and slightly irradiated archives. Over the years, *The Garda Press* (with sister publications in Australia, Guam and the bad part of Narnia) has tirelessly brought the news to the people whether they asked for it or not.

One thing we have prided ourselves on over our years of proud publishing is the pride with which we display such a wide range of reporters. Whether it be Galka's useful advice and white-hot hatred, or Comrade Bear's insightful and often moving bear-views, the quality of Russian industry is something that cannot be beaten, and certainly not criticised.

So happy and productive reading,

Editor-in-Chief.

ASK GALKA



Dear Galka,

My lover has eloped to Omsk with another woman. To make matters worse, I am pregnant with his child. What am I to do with all this pain and heartache?

From the years 1915 to 2003, Galka tended to the broken hearts and starry-eyed lovers of Russia. Her down-to-earth style and terrifying threats of violence won her a loyal and obedient fan-base over the 4 trillion letters penned from her icy cell in Siberia. These are but a few of the favourites. Enjoy - or as Galka would say, "Go fuck yourself"

1915 - 2003

**Yours,
Petra.**

Petra,

You are weak and know nothing of pain. Have you both your hands? Have you air in your lungs? Have you some of your eyes? Then you cannot complain. This is the reason your lover left you and the reason your baby will hate you.

Galka.

In one of the more famous "Galka Moments", Petra later replied to tell Galka that no, she didn't have any hands or eyes and was trapped underwater. Galka went on to list seven pages of her own ailments including 'a sore finger' and 'having to listen to your unrelenting stream of

bullshit'. Galka concluded the letter by telling Petra that when she was dead, she could complain. Months later the ghost of Petra did so. Galka received a medal for bravery in the service of insulting a ghost.

Dear Galka,

I am so confused! My boyfriend has asked me to marry him but I wonder if I am too young. I am seventeen and he is nearly twenty, with a good job and a strong back, but Papa says we should wait. What do you think, Galka?

Volkov

I think you are to have a man who is strong on plow, especially given that you are a fool for whom even the simplest decisions like

marriage or which shawl to wear seem impossible. My advice? Marry the man before he realises you are a simpleton and rightly has you exiled.

Dear Galka,

Are you missing something? I have stolen your headscarf! What a fun memento for your biggest fan! With much love,

Uri

This is one of the only letters that Galka never responded to. However, the body of a man later identified as Uri Vlostok was discovered with a horrified, frozen expression fixed across what was left of his face. Threads of the headscarf were inexplicably found behind the man's eyes.

Galka,

I have been struggling to get through War and Peace. Does this make me very silly?! It is just too large and dense!

Gergovich

Do not worry, it does not make you very silly, it makes your a fucking dense fuckstick. Is it so hard to read words on a page?

Behind Galka's hard and commonsensical exterior lay a softer side. In one of the country's most bitter winters, Galka earned the nick name "The Mother of Moscow" after taking in 100 of the city's homeless children under her wing. In a further act of immense beneficence, later that month Galka opened the city's first discount leather-goods emporium. History shines on those who selflessly serve!

COMRADE BEAR'S

Autumn 1946



BOOK BEAR-VIEWS

THIS WEEK: ANIMAL FARM

This feel-good family classic tells the story of a heroic pig named Napoleon who, following in the ideological footsteps of his mentor, the wise but conviction-lacking Old Major, overcomes the treacherous capitalist trickery of his colleague Snowball and leads a farm to iron-willed greatness. With a pack of comic, sweet-natured dogs as his public servants,

and a series of well-negotiated deals with friendly neighbouring farmers, Napoleon manages to overcome the anti-social complaints of his whiny animals (it is especially satisfying when that fat whinging horse finally gets his comeuppance) and build a windmill, with which he feeds everyone on the farm (except the useless annoying non-pigs of course). Everyone lives happily ever after, and there's a moral message for us at home too: all animals are equal, but some animals need to be ethnically cleansed so that everyone can be happy in the long run.

Five bears out of five bears.

NEXT WEEK: CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Will it have enough bears for Comrade Bear? We think no.

THE PEOPLE'S LETTERS

Spring 1949

The Garda has long been a voice of the people, and welcomed the opinions of the workers, whether positive or congratulatory. We collect here some of the more memorable contributions to the ongoing dialogue of the communist state. Comrade Stalin took a personal interest in all the letters sent in to The Garda, and often surprised correspondents with a personal visit, and free holiday.

Dear [redacted],
I am writing to speak [redacted] about what is happening [redacted] in [redacted] up country! Too many [redacted] are going [redacted] every day and yet more are [redacted] in their own homes! We as a people need to stand up [redacted] for this country. These things must be said so that the truth can be revealed about [redacted] ice-cream. My family, last week, were [redacted] in their own beds! My neighbours were [redacted] in the street and the police just watched. I [redacted] know where my family are, all I want is to tell [redacted] the people of our country so that we can [redacted] live [redacted] with [redacted] the soldiers! We are [redacted] free, we are [redacted]

safe and we are [redacted] happy!

Stand United Comrades!

Dear Comrades

I write this letter as a declaration of victory! For months, we have worked untiring, as you, the proud comrades of the Motherland, have watched our race with the United States. But no more! The Race to Make the World's Largest Cake has been won by the Motherland. This has been a marvelous fulfilment, and the victory is as sweet as the cake with which we have won it. We have watched as the evil United States have attempted to extend nearer to us in the race; as they deployed grease-proof paper around the boundaries of their cake tin; as they amassed supplies of flour and eggs; as they built progressively larger, more fearless cakes. Of course, sacrifices were made, and no one will forget Linka the Dog, who we used to test our initial recipes. But our chief technologists of cake shall celebrate! May we all feast on the sweet, sweet cake of victory, when she is distributed amongst you all evenly next week, please bring a (small) plate.

Your Fearless Leader

COMRADE STALIN'S STATE SANCTIONED HOBBIES

August 1950



THIS WEEK: HUNTING THE POLAR BEAR

Much like hunting any ethnic minority, hunting polar bears takes a planning and patience. Stalin shows us how.

Come closer, my children. It is Papa Stalin here. Today I will tell you nice story called, 'Shoot White Bear, Make Dead'. This nice story takes place in beautiful wintry land. I said come close, Aleksandra! You disobedient child. Now I must send to labour camp! Shh! Stop crying Ivanov.

So, this polar bear is enemy of Soviet Union, and what we do enemy? We crush! When I find bear, I make my gimpy, Cheslav Shurochka Sokolov shoot him. What we do children? Yes, we shoot him. Now head make nice trophy for wall.

Next week, pogo sticks!

THE GLORY OF MOTHER RUSSIA NEVER TO CEASE

Winter 1989

A surely not at all controversial report, that this journalist does not doubt for a second, that was released last Thursday has confirmed what the true members of our fine nation, like myself, have suspected for years now, that the bountiful glories of our Mighty Motherland will last forever.

The at first seemingly obvious and unnecessary report is nevertheless the first to thoroughly list all the glorious features of the mighty USSR - with the report encompassing over 13 majestic features of the land.

At the time of release, professional patriot and author of the report Led Sidorov commented that the team would have "extended the list even

further, but unfortunately we had only been allocated enough paper for a single page report."

This fool disparages the good name of professional patriotism with his treasonous comments. He is clearly too blinded by corruption to notice when one has been given the sweet gift of brevity. This reporter would never make the same mistake, and is incredibly grateful for every line of text granted to him by our sweet and merciful leaders.

The report is as interesting and pertinent as every powerful word out of President Gorbachev's well-formed mouth.

"It is very exciting to finally see this list," said list enthusiast Vadim Ivanov, "it is incredibly revealing. For example, did you know that the [glorious and mighty] USSR was the basis

of a song by The Beatles? The actual Beatles - not even their [far superior] Russian equivalent - The Monkees. That places the USSR on par with other triumphant and majestic locations, such as an orphanage attended by a distraught Lennon and the garden of a sea monster."

Mr. Sidorov has claimed the researching of the report was frequently deterred by the incredible progress of the Mighty Motherland. "It seemed that as soon as we had named a [wonderous and mighty] industrial workplace it was abandoned, and as soon as we named an influential figure he disappeared."

While it is almost certain that the workplaces were only left for mere hours so they could be replaced with even mightier and more efficient industry,

Mr. Sidorov has embarrassed himself with this irresponsible statement - as it is clear that the treasonous fools to which he refers, or indeed Mr. Sidorov himself (whoever that is) never existed and should not be talked about, ever.

Some sources, who wished to remain anonymous, have claimed that this report is misleading, and that while the Motherland is good, it is far from perfect - and any report of this nature is nothing more than self indulgence. These sources are Pavel Federov and Ana Alekseev. May our benevolent leaders strike them down, and not us loyal citizens.

Regardless, the majesty and glory of the mighty USSR will live long past this report - which will be burnt for warmth on Thursday.

WIN A TRIP TO SUMMERSIBERIA!

TO ENTER, SIMPLY

Start a capitalist black market!

Clap too much, or not enough at a rally!

Challenge Moustache size of glorious leader.

And you could find yourself relaxing on Siberia's pristine ice-beaches!

SIX OUT OF FIVE REPORTERS WITH SUSPICIOUS CRANIAL SCARS AGREE: EVERYTHING WONDERFUL

June 1951

Isn't everything just going so well! Last week, in my article "The Genocidal Collectivisation of the USSR and how it's being Covered Up", I said some very silly things. I would list them all, but I don't know where to start. I can affirmatively tell you, however, that every single thing I asserted in that article was completely not true, and everything is, in fact, better than it ever has been.

I don't know why I was being so down on my glorious fatherland last week; maybe it was the undisclosed mental disorder that I was diagnosed with when some government psychologists came by chance to visit me at the newspaper headquarters a few days ago.

Those statistics? The ones that proved that Stalin had murdered and incarcerated into Gulag Camps millions of farmers and ethnic groups? Why, I made them up of course! In fact - Stalin's been really nice to all the peasant farmers, whether or not they conform to his rigid collectivisation plan. Those busloads of them that were being driven into the Siberian wilderness? They were on an all-expenses-paid mystery tour! And Stalin's footing the bill! What a generous guy.

He certainly footed the bill for my stay in the Moscow Municipal Mental Asylum, - which finally helped me see how absolutely tops the collectivisation of the USSR really is. Because it is, it really is, just the bee's knees.

How silly was I, to report that 70% of the USSR population was dying of starvation as a result of fatal agricultural reforms, when in fact that great comrade Stalin has made all the details of our two-thousand-percent increase in grain production since 1930 publicly available in the government-endorsed Archives of Truth?

If there's a problem, it's that we have too much food! Why only the other day I tripped on a mountain of bread into a vat of soup. What fun! I'm more embarrassed than anything: why would I report something that was so completely opposite from the truth, the truth being of course that everything about Soviet Russia and Stalin's economic policies is just fucking brilliant? Probably it was just stress getting to me.

Well, I'm sure I'll be able to write much more truthfully after the long-service leave holiday I leave for tomorrow; Stalin is just so generous, he's paying all my airfares to a little beach town up North called Narilsk- I can't wait! Everything is just terrific!

June 1965

FREE MAP OF WORLD

The Garda is pleased to offer every reader a free map of the world. Simply cut around the dotted edges with a pair of scissors or a Spetznaz ballistic knife and you will always know your place in the world. The USSR. Always.



CLASSIFIEDS

LOST 1 Dog. Answers to 'Laika.' Last seen hurtling unstopably into the stratosphere. Please contact Khrushchev's mother c/o The Kremlin

MISSING Young girl. Answers to Anastasia. Come back Ana. We promise we won't murder you. Love, the Politburo

MISSING - Hundreds of scientists. Last seen pre World War II.

FOR SALE - Thousands of acres of earth. Pre-scorched. Put it on the ground! Grow nothing!

WANTED TO BUY Any information relating to enemies of the motherland. Does your neighbour say strange things? dress funny? Not begin and end every sentence with 'Long Live Comrade Stalin?' If so we may have to exile/kill them. \$\$\$REWARD\$\$\$

MISSING grandmother, last seen inside slightly larger grandmother.

FREE MONEY - Fellow English and American informants to meet

together for weekly spy club. Meet at 2am at the bottom of Gulashnikov alley. No weapons please, for after all, we all are friends! Definitely not a trap.

FOR REDISTRIBUTION. My entire crop, which I have grown and harvested with my own wife's blood, sweat and plow.

PERSONALS

I SAW YOU - You were on your throne in the royal court, I was crazed bearded mystic wanking into a mitten and plotting to bring down Romanov dynasty. Was it just the power of my electrical eyes or did I sense a spark between us?

LOOKING FOR a talented seamstress for commissioned government project. Must possess ability to sew drapes out of metal.

CAPITALIST Pig who will be crushed under the mighty fist of the Soviet Empire seeks same. Contact R. Reagan.

TO THE WOMAN on the only train out of Moscow Tuesday. Your clothes

and shoes may have been standard issue - but your smile was anything but regulation. Would you be willing to share your honey rations?

RUSSIA'S greatest love machine, I can preach the bible like a preacher, full of ecstasy and fire, also am the kind of teacher, women would desire. Lover of the Russian queen, am a cat that really is gone. Also, they shot me till I was dead. Contact Tim.

BIRTHS

MR AND MRS MULCHBEAST are excited and terrified to announce the spawning of their son, Mr. Ivan D. Mulchbeast.

DEATHS

MR AND MRS MULCHBEAST. Found wrapped in their own lips in mysterious and slimy circumstances. The are survived and were probably killed by their new-born son, Mr. Ivan D. Mulchbeast.

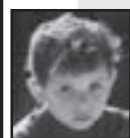
JOIN THE RED ARMY
REALISE YOUR POTENTIAL.
NOW!

June 1946

CONSUMER WHORE

CATHY, YOU LOOK UP-SET AND UNFULFILLED.
YES.
I REALISE NOW THAT ALL THE CLOTHES AND MAKE UPS AND FRIPPERIES OF THE WEST HAVE LEFT ME A COLD, EXCUSE FOR A HUMAN BEING OBVIOUSLY.
PEOPLE ARE MUCH HAPPIER IN THE USSR I HEAR.
I WISH THAT IS WHERE WE LIVED.
I REGRET EVERYTHING!
SUMMER 1990

Meet Your Idols of Chess! NOW!



Name: Boris Minsk
Biography: On day leave from institution. Has twice attacked Bobby Fischer.
Playing Style: Minsk issues rules for his opponent during game time. His competitors should avoid eye contact, movement and breathing 'if they want all their fingers'.

Name: Jelena Yann Petrovich
Biography: Nicknamed 'the White Spider'. Ranked 4th in world. Petrovich's younger sister, Nadia was allegedly sold to gypsies to pay for her competition entry fee.

Playing Style: This spider's is as deadly as she is beautiful. Petrovich plays with a tactical and aggressive style.



EASTER 1965

THE GARDA IS HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT
Mark Sutton, James Colley, Monica Connors, Michael Hing, Alex Lee, Tom Marr, Carlo Ritchie, Henry Hawthorne, Ben Jenkins and Joe Payten
ARE ALL NOW NON-PEOPLE.

Any mention of these names from hereon is punishable by exile from life.

The Garda is excited in order to declare Dolores' employment! Good to grant to the command!

Hi Dolores. Ha! Looks like your Russian needs work! Not sure how things were done at your old job, but this is not how we operate. Not to worry, just make sure it's removed by the print deadline. Also, we're still waiting on your reference, could you email it by this afternoon. Warm regards - Ed.

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- Sydney CBD - 7A Barrack Street, Sydney
- Pitt Street - 254 Pitt Street, Sydney
- York & Barrack Street - 7A Barrack Street, Sydney
- Macquarie Centre - Shop 450, Macquarie Shopping Centre, One Herring & Wessendoo Roads, North Ryde
- Parramatta - Shop 5012 Level 5, Parramatta Westfield Shoppingtown Church St, Parramatta
- North Sydney - Shop 1, Lower Ground Level, 181 Miller Street, North Sydney
- Penrith Westfield - Shop 142 - 143 Jane Street, Westfield Shoppingtown, Penrith
- Marrickville Metro - Shop 5 and 6, Marrickville Metro Shopping Centre, 36 Victoria Road, Marrickville

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