



THE ARGO

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Hypnotizing Prep

by Jeremy Wang-Iverson

Last Wednesday "mentalist" Ronny Romm brought an abridged show to Rutgers Prep. Students and faculty packed Baldwin Hall to witness one of the more intriguing as-

time, but Romm said Pabst's reaction was too exaggerated to be faking it. It was possible to be conscious of what was happening, but impossible to stop it. Megan Scully said she was aware of everything that happened but said it all seemed

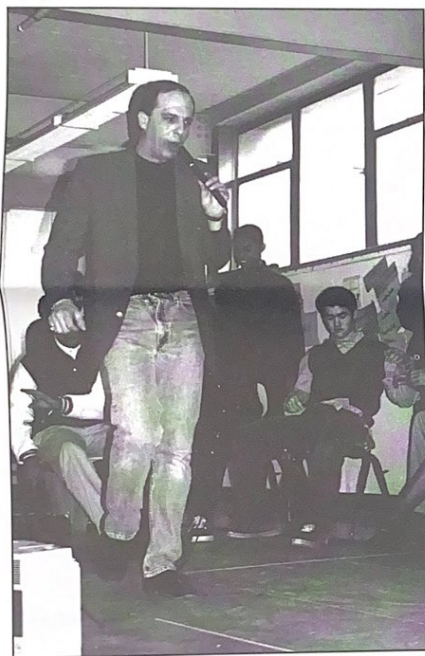
one of the more interesting acts. If Snukis or Sutton was asked to repeat something in "Martian language" it would apparently be said the exact same way, indicating that perhaps their blabbering was not entirely random.

Some people are not more hypnotizable than others. There is no bearing on intelligence or the like; the only thing that might affect the session is the hypnotees' strength of the imagination. Anyone could be hypnotized, even if they try to resist it, but Romm is not interested in doing challenge shows, so he doesn't ask for the cynics.

The training period to become a hypnotist is a lengthy and laborious process and Romm says there are only 18-20 people like him across the country. Romm states that however it can be learned and there are no inherent characteristics one needs. He can teach it, but doesn't plan to until he stops performing.

His ESP act garnered a certain amount of cynicism, and when asked if it did involve sleight of hand, Romm declined to answer since he says people wouldn't believe him either way. It is important to note that all the acts he did depended on someone giving him a number and then Romm writing it down. Romm says he has given people their phone numbers, social security numbers, and addresses but did not do so at Prep due to lack of time. If he did the latter it certainly would quiet most of the critics. Some thought there was carbon paper on his pad of paper and he was able to take it out and slide it under his coat. If he's able to distract the audience for long enough, it's possible he could write the right number down as the person (Robert Haleuk for the change, Nayla Oliver for the number between 1-100) walked to the stage.

Overall, it seemed most of the student body enjoyed the assembly. A Physics lesson went askew afterward, while all the pictures that came out had faces laughing hysterically. There was a varied reaction among the hypnotees. Rao and Scully didn't really care, while McWilliams said it was a little annoying for everyone to come up to tease her about Brad Pitt, and Nicole Smith was downright embarrassed. It was funny while watching it, but in retrospect one may feel that it was quite strange. The rumors say it cost quite a bit, but the fact is it's the only entertaining thing Council has done in a very long time.



Ronny Romm begins to display his mastery of hypnosis

semblies of the year. I was able to speak to Romm afterwards and he had some interesting comments on his work.

Romm, 39, was in medical school with a degree in clinical hypnotherapy when he decided to enter show business. In his 18 years in the business he has held almost 200 shows a year, appeared on several talk shows, and helped people clinically, including situations involving drinking and smoking cessation. He prefers show business to clinical work and usually plays to much larger audiences. He says the key to becoming hypnotized is following what he says and how he says it. The breaks in his speech are part of his act and not an impediment.

Many of the hypnotees had no recollection of what happened. Natalie Mantell and Will Pabst claimed they were faking the whole

within a span of five minutes. Romm left it up to each member to decide whether he/she would remember, saying he could have gone on for about two more minutes and everything would have been forgotten. Kelly McWilliams and Nikki Rao could not remember at all.

Romm has a repertoire of eight hours of material (such as acting cold, betting on a horse, being glued to the floor) and chooses on location based upon the subject's personality and his initial feelings. He sometimes improvises and can get his patients to do whatever he wants them to. He was able to tell Fred and Eugene were not hypnotized based on numerous indicators, including breath patterns and muscle tension.

The Martian dialogue between Jarrett Sutton and Jen Snukis, in which Snukis interpreted Sutton's "Martian language", proved to be

Winter Show Plays as Winter Closes

by Chris Wang-Iverson

On Thursday, February 12th, at 7:30 in the evening, several of Rutgers Prep's performers will gather in the student lounge to put on the student run Winter Show. Along side some of the Prep drama veterans, many new faces will be making their theatrical debuts in this show. The admission is free and audience members will be treated to both six vignettes, ranging in style from classic to contemporary, and half an hour of Prep's musicians.

Prep Actors Allison Moskowitz, Jeremy Wang-Iverson, and Whitney Case took the lead as directors for the vignettes. Jeremy directed three freshmen, Andrew Cross, Jason Dalal, and Justin Slawson in a scene from Shakespeare's comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*. Allison directs the most serious scene of the night, *Women and Wallace*, about a teenage relationship. This performance will feature Aubrey Hebda-Bolduc and Eric Lemmo. Nathan Holt, guided by a dynamic duo of directors, Jeremy and Chris Wang-Iverson, will star in David Ives' very funny *Mere Mortals*. Isaac Chahal plays a bi-sexual on a date with a

character played by Whitney in *Beyond Therapy*. In addition, Amy Miklos will make her Upper School debut along side Samantha Simon in the dark comedy *Baby With the Bathwater*.

Two years ago, music was integrated into the show. This tradition will continue with acts ranging from Michael Szeles on violin to students performing contemporary hits by such artists as the Indigo Girls and Boys to Men. On a more tranquil note, Katie Dougherty will sing the John Denver hit, "Rocky Mountain High," with non other than Mr. Dougherty on guitar.

Although this should be essentially what will occur during the show, keep in mind that it's always a tradition to add scenes and acts last minute. The show will last about 90 minutes and should be a great time for both the audience and the performers. If you stop on by to check out the show, you'll get a chance to see what Prep kids can do when the faculty members aren't looking. If great acting, free admission, and lots of laughs sound like an appealing way to spend an evening then you won't be disappointed by this year's Winter show.

Virtual High School Begins its Second Semester

by Nina Needleman

This year at Rutgers Prep, eight students with advisor Mr. Kendall participated in the inaugural semester of Virtual High School, a nationwide program which allows students to take eclectic courses over the Internet. Each student has their own web page which they access through a name and password, and the interface includes a message page where students can post questions and comments, and an assignment page where the work is scheduled.

The eight student involved, Angela Lin, Nina Needleman, Jeremy Wang-Iverson, Sheela Srinidhi, Allison Moskowitz, Matt Krolak, Eric Lemmo, and Kyle Szabo took courses ranging from Hands on Physics to Spanish Language and Culture. Mr. Kendall taught the course Writing: From Inner Space to Cyber Space. Angela was impressed by how well she got

to know her teacher even though they have never met, and Allison liked the different feedback on her poetry. The semester wasn't without its problems though.

Since it was the pioneering semester, there was inevitable technical difficulty. The technicians could not predict the amount of usage and as a result the servers would easily be overloaded and run very slowly. This created virtual snow days but all those worries have long been laid to rest with stronger servers.

The second semester will continue with Amanda Rabinowitz, Minesh Patel, Sahil Khanna, and more students. The program is in its early stages so far but will certainly improve to be more efficient and easier to use. Its purpose is not to replace normal education, but give an interesting supplement. If you're interested in giving it a shot, make sure you have free time and speak to Mr. Kendall.

Live From Latvia: Catching up with Ms. Berrien

by Jeremy Wang-Iverson

If you didn't know, Algebra II and Japanese teacher Ms. Monica Berrien is currently on the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program (with Ms. Sevencko) and is teaching in Latvia until sometime in June. She will return to Prep next fall. She teaches at the Riga First Gymnasium, the best high school in the country for mathematics and physics. She primarily teaches English Conversation classes, but still teaches three math lessons a week for 10th and 11th graders. The Argo sent her an email, and here are her responses about life in Latvia.

Argo: How is the standard of living in Latvia compared to US? How are the living conditions?

Ms. Berrien: As you may expect, the living conditions are not like those of America. It is simply different. Yes, the first flat I lived in did not always have hot water as is often the case. In fact when I first arrived, the hot water was off and I had to sponge bathe from a pot of water heated on the stove. I've had to do it several times since! My current flat has the luxury of a private hot water heater, now my concern is the lack of water pressure! But it is amazing how well we can cope with this - it is only a very small inconvenience.

It may be interesting to see what things cost here:

a loaf of bread: \$.30 - \$.50
McDonald's BigMac meal: \$3.10
a can of Coke: \$.47
one trip on public transport: \$.25
a movie: \$2.75 (\$1.50 on half price day!)
a large pizza with 3 toppings: \$10.15
teacher's annual salary: \$2000
lawyer's annual salary: \$100,000

Argo: Do you see differences in Latvian students versus American students, or are we basically the same?

Ms. Berrien: My students here asked me the same thing! What a difficult question to answer! Yes, basically, students are students. They don't like studying or tests, and wish there was no such thing as homework! They are very open about grades and do not feel any need to hide a very good or very poor mark

from their classmates. One major difference is the blatant cheating that goes on here. Not only the standard cheat sheets, but there is a lot of open conferring with classmates even during a test, and students sit in the hall (or even in class!) and copy homework while teachers are standing right next to them. At first I was stunned, but now realize that there is more of a sense of "group" here compared to the extremely "independent" American view to school. Of course cheating occurs anywhere, but it is much more accepted here.

One day when two girls were late to my class they stood before the class and sang the Latvian national anthem as a voluntary punishment! I simply couldn't picture any students from Prep doing that willingly!

Argo: Are there any aspects of American culture in Latvia?

Ms. Berrien: You can find aspects of American culture everywhere! Anywhere you go there's a McDonalds. Latvia receives the US movies within a few weeks to months after they are released in the US - I saw the James Bond movie in early January.

What I find funny is this one item of current fashion: "Indiana Hawks" jackets on a lot of the boys. (FYI - there IS no such team!) There is cable TV with NBC, CNN and MTV. There is a Benetton store in town.

Argo: What do you do when you're not teaching?

Ms. Berrien: Travel, travel, travel! I hit the ground running, so to speak. Latvia is in Northeast Europe and so I have been to its neighbors Estonia, Lithuania, and Russia, as well as Finland, Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Greece. And when I'm not traveling, I'm planning a trip!

Argo: How did you react when you first arrived in Latvia?

Ms. Berrien: The Old Town in Riga is beautiful - a quaint cobblestoned area of narrow winding streets and little shops for gifts or coffee. I was struck by how wonderful it is! Many of the buildings are being restored and there is incredible architecture. Outside of Riga are farms and small

towns and villages. You can see people riding horse drawn carts along these country roads.

Argo: What do you find most peculiar about Latvia? Any superstitions?

Ms. Berrien: A few things are interesting and funny simply because they are different from what I'm used to. For example, there is no weekly trash pick up; neighbors know the garbage truck schedule and meet at the curb with their bags in hand to throw into the back of the truck when it swings by. This winter was interesting for me because of the short days - it was light at about 10 a.m. and dark by 3 p.m. Also, there are no strange looks or whispers from people if you wear the same outfit for two days in a row. On the contrary, most people do wear the same thing repeatedly! Also, there are still remnants of Soviet Times apparent around the city. I've spotted a few hammer and sickle signs. Going to the movies is an experience - when you buy your ticket, you are also assigned a seat.

Argo: How's the food? What's it like?

Ms. Berrien: Potatoes, potatoes, potatoes...and cabbage! It is very much a meat and potatoes diet, and there is no "low calorie" or "low fat" food here. The food is very much like our own, overall. There is definite Germanic influence both here and in the US.

Argo: Do you have any regrets about doing the Fulbright Exchange Program? Or is it the best opportunity you've ever had?

Ms. Berrien: In my opinion, any chance to travel should not be missed. I have learned something new about myself and my world on every trip I have taken. This has been an invaluable opportunity for me to learn about Eastern Europe, the former USSR as well as America. For those of you who know me, you probably know that my first love is really my time spent in Japan and this ranks right up there. I have no regrets! Naturally, I wish I could see my family and friends occasionally, but I keep in touch over e-mail. If anyone wants to drop me a note, I'd love to hear from you! My e-mail is: monica@latnet.lv.

Surviving the Crash

by Amanda Rabinowitz

The Rutgers Prep Maroon Exchange teams have always fared well in the New Jersey Stock Market game, and this fall game was no exception. Each team is given \$100,000 and ten weeks to make the most of the money. The winning team was made up Captain Sahil Khanna, Amol Luhadia, Dan Marketti, and Imran Malik. The team ranked second out of 109 teams in the region. However, the road to victory was not easy and came down to the final day of trading.

In the early weeks the team started competition in extreme disorder. Jeremy Wang-Iverson's team took an early lead in our in school competition due to their diligence and sheer brilliance. Khanna's team's initial investments rendered huge losses, and their cash balance was near -\$67,000 when the members got together and decided it was time for some changes. The team switched captains from Dan Marketti to Sahil Khanna, and made moves to cut their losses. Khanna, like a bold dictator, told his team they had nothing to fear and lead them from being a financial failure to a money making machine.

Though the Dow Jones Industrial Average (a combination of over 30 stocks which represent the how the economy is faring) crashed a record 500+ points in October, it isn't as bad as it sounds: this represented less than 10% of the Dow and recovered quickly in the next few

days. The Dow crashed because of fluctuations in foreign markets, more specifically, an Asian currency crisis. Though it hurt most teams, the crash presented a unique opportunity to regain lost ground. Khanna, with an audacity you wouldn't expect from a soft-spoken Indian boy, took risks to make up lost ground. Using short selling, they reaped huge profits that slowly offsetted their prior losses. Short selling is borrowing shares on credit, then paying it back when the stock falls, so you're paying it back a cheaper price. You can borrow 100 shares of a \$1 stock for a \$100, and if it falls to \$.50 you would pay back only \$50. If it goes to \$2 though, you have to pay \$200. The risk involved is huge: there isn't a set amount you could lose. It is rarely used due to risk involved, but if successful it can bring in huge returns.

The competition was not decided until the very last day on which the winning team earned \$20,000 on a volatile stock known as Cisco Systems. The team not only won the in school competition, but also, as previously mentioned, ranked second in the region. With this accomplishment the team was invited to a awards ceremony at Merilly Lynch on Friday January 30. The team had a luncheon and accepted certificates for their work.

If anyone is interested in taking on the defending champions in the spring semester of the Maroon Exchange, they should contact Mr. Hordijk now.

Dates To Remember ...

Friday, 2/20/98: 50's, 60's, 70's dress down day

Sunday, 2/22/98: Council Ski Trip

Wednesday, 2/25/98: Election Speeches

Friday, 2/27/98: Elections/Maroon and White Day

Friday, 3/6/98: Talent Show

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THE ARGO

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The Truth About Boys and Basketball

by Ian Liggett

It may be cliché, but this year's boys' basketball team is better than its 4-9 record would indicate. We have proven to ourselves and to our opponents that we can play effective defense, and that we can score on offense. The problem that has risen throughout the season is trying to put a solid defensive effort together with a strong offensive output in the same game. It just has not happened often enough this year.

Coach Scott Neal, in his first year as head coach has instituted some major changes in both the offense and defense from previous years. These have not come as any great surprise to the players, as Coach Neal hinted last year that changes were inevitable for this season. As Coach Neal put it, "It's my way, or the highway." In other words, any player who didn't like his style before better learn to love it by game-time.

With the emergence of junior forward Nakul Rao as a shooter, the

inside game has really been left wide-open for senior center Will Pabst. Senior Captain Zach Solomon runs the show from the point position, with off-guard Jarrett Sutton and forward Ian Liggett rounding out the starting five. Playing key reserve roles have been guards Rene Gbonyo and Dan Chelel, as well as forward/center Nathan Holt. Due to recent injuries to Nikki, Dan, and freshman Kunal Kapur, the rest of the varsity team have seen some increased playing time. These include Anthony Suzara, So Sugita, Bolus Brzezinski and Mitch Francisco.

As the team gradually gets healthy and has a chance to get a little more experience playing as a unit, things will start to come together. We will be a force to be reckoned with in the Prep B Conference. When the State Tournament comes around in February, the team will be at the top of its game. Even if we don't win you can be sure that the team will not go down without giving our last opponents a good fight.



Megan Scully lines up a shot as the Argonauts take on Peddie in their home court

Girls Basketball Continues to Roll Onward

by Sripriya Radhakrishna

The year's Lady Argonaut Basketball team has started with some impressive wins and milestone accomplishments. The state championship varsity team, coach by head coach Mary Klinger and assistant coach Matt Shifman, currently holds an 13-5 record. The team is led by all-state captain Jackie Sienkiewicz. Leadership stems not only from the other seniors, including all-state guard Jennifer Franklin and Debbie Gray, but also from upperclassmen Alyssa Botwink and Emily Wilson. These five diverse players make up the starting team.

The talent on this team is not concentrated among the older players, however. Jasmine Orders, Dori Petigrow, and Risa Peterson have

shown great dedication. This year's freshmen, including Megha Rao, Megan Scully and Erin McElroy have displayed great raw skill, and depth to the team.

For the first time in Prep history the girls' basketball has been divided into varsity and junior-varsity squads. The brand new JV team, coached by Michelle Stevenson, is undefeated. The JV team consists entirely of freshmen: Megha, Megan, Erin, Megha Kanwar, Aliya Gaspard, Virginia Soong and Joanna Danile.

This year's varsity team started out with a bang by winning the Gill-St. Bernards' Tournament, for the fourth year in a row. Jenn Franklin made the all-tourney team and Jackie won MVP. Jaclyn achieved a milestone by reaching 1000 point

for her high school career, earlier this year against New Hope HS. She is the third girl in Prep history to accomplish this feat. Other key wins for the team came against Wardlaw-Hartridge and the Hun School. The prep girls continued their strong start by winning both the RPS Holiday Tournament and the Newark Academy Tournament. Once again, Jenn made both all-tournament teams and Jackie won both MVP awards.

After a short slump, following Jackie's shoulder injury, the team looks to re-establish their winning streak this week with Jackie's return against the Stuart school. Cheering on the team are parents, teachers, and of course, the fourth grade pen-pals. Last, but never least, is Bradford Blecker, who greatly helps out the team as a stellar manager.



Jarrett Sutton takes the ball to the hoop against Morristown-Beard

Volleyball: A Strong Season

by Maura Pritchard

As the girls' volleyball team headed out onto the court this season, they knew this year would be a rebuilding one. After losing three starters to college, co-captains Angela Lin and Aarti Patel looked to their teammates to attain the same level of success as they had last year.

The returning varsity players leading the team to victory include middle blocker Nicole Smith, outside hitters Jaydalia Jones and Emily Scherb, and setter Allison Schecter. Rounding out the varsity roster are outside hitters Jessica Belser, Maura Pritchard, and Kim Brown and middle blockers Rachel Kendall, Kristen Peterson, Misha Prophete, Babi Das, and Kristen Checchio.

The girls began their season eager for improvement and ready for victory. Their efforts were rewarded in their sound defeats of almost every team they encountered. Early in the year the team captured second place in both the Rutgers Prep Spiker's Tournament and the

Morristown-Beard Tournament. These achievements are certainly a credit to their teamwork and dedication to the game. Clearly, the team has taken this season seriously, and they have overcome the loss of last year's players.

The dedication and leadership Angela and Aarti bring with them as captains has certainly been an added asset this year. Thanks to the guidance of Coach Sue Tidd, the team started holding pre-game discussions and goal setting sessions during the last ten minutes of their warm ups. This new strategy has improved both the focus and spirit of the team during tough matches. As the season wears on, the girls are looking forward to a rematch with Princeton Day School, whom they lost to by a narrow margin earlier in the season. The ultimate challenge will come in the State Tournament in the end of the year. The team will undoubtedly finish the season strongly and continue the pattern of success that all RPS volleyball have established.

by Khanjan Nagarsheth

The season thus far has been a good one for the RPS Wrestling team. A new life has been brought into the program with the incoming freshmen and sophomore wrestlers. The year seems to be a prosperous one and the team has set some high goal which will no doubt become a reality (but not without hard work).

Last season was a rebuilding season, and this year is to conquer. Already off to a great start, the wrestling team has won six of their eight matches. The high point for many of the wrestlers was the huge victory over Wardlaw-Hartridge, a long time rival of our school. The dual meet with Gill St. Bernard and Wardlaw has set the team as the ones to beat in this year's Prep B Conference.

This would not have been possible without the help of head coach Bob Dougherty and assistant coach Larry Santowasso. Their help and commitment to the team has been an inspiration to the team as a whole.

The wrestlers, too, have improved over the past years and are now more able to handle the tough competition. This year the team was blessed with more people showing an active interest in the sport and coming out for the team.

These new members have enabled the team to fill every weight class and allowed the team to stay competitive with the biggest schools. At 103 lbs., freshman Ari Crystal has joined the varsity team from the middle school. At 112 lbs., sophomore Andrew Oppenheimer, a newcomer to Prep has helped the team. At 199 lbs., Sophomores Fred Kim and John Berkely have won many matches. At 125 lbs., freshman sensation Adam Goetz has been a tremendous help to the team. At 130 lbs., Marc Silverman has put his back bridge to good use. At 125 lbs., returning conference champ Marvin Quesada has lent a hand to pull the team to a higher level. Also at 135 are Ryan Smith and Mehul Nagarsheth. At 140 lbs., are Andrew

Cross and conference champ Alon Tabak. At 145 lbs., is senior Brett Rubin. At 152 lbs., is Andrew Hobbes, who has shown great improvement over last season. At 160 lbs., is Somerville transfer Sageel Shiromani and Ho Min Lee. At 172 lbs., is conference champ, senior Khanjan Nagarsheth. At 189 lbs., is conference champ Jim Russo. At 215 lbs., is freshman Julian Rinaldi, and finally, at heavyweight, is Andrew "Beef" Venezia. Also filling at various spots are Kyle Ernst and Rob Haleluk.

This year has proven to be a tremendous year so far. In addition to look towards another conference championship, the team is also looking for a state title. With additional hard work during practice this team has a shot at completing these goals and returning the trophy to where it belongs. There are also many individuals who are looking at this year as a chance to win a place in the states. With the talent that is on this team, anything is possible.

Future Issues ...

- Model United Nations recap
- Council Elections
- Talent Show

The "Crisis in the White House": Questioning the Limits of Presidential Privacy

by Heather Adi Crossner

In all the hyperbole and speculation surrounding the Clinton-Lewinsky affair, lost in the bitter attacks and blazing headlines, there is one very simple question that the people of the United States must ask themselves: Do Bill Clinton's sexual habits in any way impede him from effectively carrying out his presidential responsibilities? From the state of the country, the answer is no. We are threatening the presidency of a man who has led the nation to one of its most prosperous decades. The economy has undergone 3.8% growth, unemployment has reached record low levels, the stock market has reached unprecedented heights, yet at the same time, some people declare Clinton to be a disgrace to the presidency. The irony is far from humorous.

Sometime in the past seven years, destroying the president has become the primary focus of the nation, instead of Iraq or Israel or Social Security. To date, our own government has spent more than forty-one million dollars of the public's money funding an investigation to find anything criminal in our own president's background. The media, in turn, clearly loves to report any inconsequential news from the White House with blazing

headlines like Filegate, Travelgate and Hairgate, equating these minor events with the apocalyptic Watergate that brought down Nixon. The always popular Ronald Reagan lied before Congress about sending guerrillas into South America and his integrity was never questioned, yet Clinton denies allegations of a trivial affair, that should never have even been a matter of public debate, and people call for his resignation. This decade has brought the mentality of a witch-hunt to Washington which can only lead to an inept government mired in issues wholly unrelated to laws or policies.

The Clinton-Lewinsky scandal typifies the deplorable state of affairs, and the Kenneth Starr investigation is one of its most shameful aspects. From a conflict of interest, to witness intimidation, to press leaks, this investigation borders on criminal. As special prosecutor, Starr went outside his jurisdiction when he first began questioning Monica Lewinsky, unless of course there is some connection between her and Whitewater that the country is unaware of. He unscrupulously told a woman to wear a wire to obtain information and then had state troopers and federal officers lure Lewinsky to a cabin, under false pretenses, where he questioned her for seven hours and denied her an attorney

after repeated requests. The independent-counsel investigation is even funded by the Christian-Right Rutherford Institute, and Starr has clear connections to Clinton-hater Richard Mellon Scaife, the man who funds the deanship Starr was going to accept at Pepperdine University. Starr claims to be investigating whether Clinton told Lewinsky to lie, and not the affair itself, but it has always appeared that Starr has tried to hurt Clinton politically when he cannot touch him legally. No one has ever doubted Clinton's intelligence, and I find it hard to believe that with all his verbal games, he would ever have been stupid enough to blatantly tell Lewinsky to lie about any relationship they may have had.

The damage the media has done, and continues to do, may be even more dangerous than Starr's investigation. The day the story broke, papers and television anchors plastered pictures of Monica Lewinsky across the country and reported her affair with Clinton, citing the existence of a dress with Clinton's semen, taped conversations between Lewinsky and her friend, and a secret service agent that saw the two in a compromising position. And, oh yes, this was an "alleged" affair and all of this was "speculation." Only now, a week later, Lewinsky's credibility has be-

come highly suspect; there is no semen on the dress, and papers issued a retraction four hours later saying there was no secret service agent who saw the couple. In this age of the internet and twenty-four hour cable stations, there is so much competition that journalists are reporting stories before they have even verified their veracity, often presenting speculation as fact. Respected anchors and journalists have tried to justify the vilification by saying that their job is to report the news to the American people, however unsavory it may be, but this is a joke. The press presents every matter like it is the next Watergate, not for the country's benefit, but for their own. Since the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, CNN and MSNBC's ratings have more than doubled, Time and Newsweek reported a surge in sales and the number of hits to The National Enquirer's Website has tripled. In all of this, I have seen only one article on Clinton's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The fact is, however, that none of this is really relevant. Our government simply should not be investigating whether or not our president may have had an affair, because it is none of the country's business. Clinton's libido or past dabbling with drugs does not determine his presidential abilities. From Jefferson to

Johnson to Kennedy, men have proved themselves great presidents despite personal problems. However, in this past decade the press and politicians have made these sexual exploits the focus of elections by raising that slippery argument of morality. Some say that a president must be of strong moral character and must represent our values. But people should not vote for a man because he would make a good role model or represents the kind of person everyone should be like. We are not electing the Pope. A nation elects a president because he can lead the country and represents the electorate's views on foreign affairs, on taxes, or on welfare. Arguing over morality leads to tortuous questions about whose morality should be the standard and about the silly belief that a man who has not acted perfectly all his life would betray the nation and lead the government to ruin. The overwhelming glare of morality as an issue has blinded people to the relevant debate of policy, leading to these kinds of invasions of privacy and scandals that have absolutely no relevance to the nation. Until the country denies the place of private affairs in politics, scandals will continue to plague presidents long after Clinton and prevent our government from ever working to its full potential.

US Schools vs. Korean Schools: Praise for the American System

by Homin Lee

During my few short years in America, I have come to realize that there is a huge difference between American and Korean high schools. In Korea, the uniformity of a group is much more important than the well-being of an individual. Both Korean middle school and high school students are forced to wear uniforms. Although some defiant students struggle to express their individual uniqueness by not wearing those uniforms, such behavior results in a severe punishment. Not only is the dress code strict in Korean schools, but so are the teachers. Teachers are very powerful figures who have the right to severely punish students during class if they are disrespectful or disobedient to teachers in order to secure both "order" and "uniformity."

American high schools, however, have very different characteristics. First of all, individual well-being is more important than the uniformity of the group. Although people care about uniformity in American schools, they regard it as a secondary concern. The most important thing is to establish individual uniqueness. Unlike Korean schools, American schools do not prevent students from carving out their own niche. We can even see this in our own dress code policy. Rutgers Prep allows its students to

wear anything they like, as long as they keep within the relaxed parameters of the dress code.

One sees an even sharper contrast in the school system when one observes the teachers in an American school. American teachers, especially those who teach in private schools, have a horizontal relationship with their students. They are not nearly as authoritarian as Korean high school teachers are. Don't they have any authority? Of course they do. By giving defiant students demerits or detentions, the American instructors exercise a certain level of authority. However, they are not dictators like their Korean counterparts; they are much more liberal, open-minded and kinder. Furthermore, they listen to their students. I remember the day when I wore sneakers on campus and had some words from teachers. I explained my reasons for it and they generously forgave me and warned that I should wear proper shoes the next day. In Korea, such a thing never happens. Teachers have sole authority to punish students, serving as judge, jury, and executioner; they very frequently exercise this absolute power. Two weeks before I came to this country, I had violated a dress code. Though I was wearing the proper uniform, I made the mistake of wearing white socks. For this violation, I had one of the hardest days of my life. I spent the entire three class pe-

riods doing push-ups. Though American students would call this treatment too harsh, it is a normal phenomenon in Korea. Perhaps this kind of grueling experience is the main reason why I first saw the American high school as a heaven. In many ways I still see it as a heaven.

What about American public schools, you may ask. Well, I am aware that public schools are much harsher than Rutgers Prep. I have heard that teachers in public schools, given that they have enormous class sizes, cannot take care of students in the way Rutgers Prep teachers do. Nonetheless, I believe that even American public schools are of a better quality than Korean schools. Although a public school may have thirty students in a class a Korean school regularly has sixty students in a class. That huge contrast is a perfect illustration of the difference between the quality of an American education versus the quality of a Korean education.

I am not criticizing Korean high schools lopsidedly, however. The Korean schools do have some good qualities, believe it or not. One is the strong unity among students. As I mentioned before, uniformity is a very important value in Korean high schools. Though it sometimes creates an authoritarian order among students and teachers, it also imbues the student community with a strong sense of togetherness. As a result,

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cliques or other exclusive clubs are eliminated. Furthermore, students organize and run very effective and influential student organizations, in spite of a lack of financial and spiritual support from schools and parents. Annual high school festivals are the best examples. Korean high school students organize a huge annual festival without any significant support from school administrations or parent associations. It is truly amazing to see how effectively the students arrange the festival with their group effort. If you attend these festivals, their scale and uniqueness will amaze you. Students are well-disciplined, respectful toward one another, and very polite toward adults and teachers. This is the main reason why Chinese people have for

centuries praised Korea as "the polite Kingdom of the East".

Unity aside, the vestiges inherited from old educational systems have kept down the Korean system. While American schools constantly improve their system according to social changes, Korean schools keep their traditions going. The old systems prevent individual students from living up to their potentials. Students are good at following directions, but they can't do anything for themselves. That's why Korean society has lacked creativity for decades. However, the creative atmosphere I find in the United States is the generative power of the American society and an enormous influence in every category of people's lives.