

COMPASS -ON- **CAMPUS**

A SAFE HAVEN

My name is Mike DeVine. I've been laying out the paper here at the Compass for nearly two years now, and yet thanks to my notorious laziness I've managed to write only a handful of stories in that time, each of which has had to have made me feel strong enough about it to force myself out of my La-Z-Boy, out onto the streets, and then chain myself to Microsoft Word for hours in order to produce a final draft.

Last month, a story happened to fall into my lap that I felt more than met my criteria for being worth going out and getting my hands dirty. I also knew that the nature of this story was bound to rub certain people the wrong way, and certain other people the right way. I was going to really piss some people off- maybe even put some folks' jobs on the line- with what I was so busy putting together during last issue's Layout Weekend.

But despite knowing this beforehand, I was convinced that this was an issue that needed to be dragged out into the

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We've received tons of Letters to the Editors this semester- we'll print some more next issue.

A SAFE HAVEN

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light. My ultimate goal; a goal which I believe is shared by every writer published in our paper, was to open a dialogue with the community regarding a subject that otherwise would never be discussed between us here at SCCC- outside of the inescapable rumors and impassioned commentaries that float around this campus like a slow-moving haze. So I wrote my story, reporting the facts as clearly as I had gathered them, and asking questions that I hoped would eventually be met with some sort of answer. I had no idea how right I was.

In case you haven't guessed by now, I'm talking about the front page story of Issue Five: "Does The Crumbling Marshall Building Pose A Threat To Us?"; and in the weeks that followed its publication, we recieved feedback through our various channels that ran the gamut from overwhelming approval, to further questioning, to scornful criticism. We heard from students, faculty, and members of the SCCC administration regarding our coverage of the apparently deteriorating Marshall Building- which says to me, at least, that we've more than acheived our goal in opening a multi-faceted dialogue within the community here at Suffolk.

However, amongst the many opinions about our story a rather huge miscommunication was uncovered. Namely, my repeated referencing of the "Safe Havens" which occupy the second story of each fire escape on the Marshall Building. The misnomer came when I was originally interviewing my primary source on this story (whose identity I will not disclose in order to protect his rights), who had informed me about these so-called "Safe Havens". My source described these locations according to their most commonly-used definition- a designated location where newborn babies may be left which ensures the infant's survival via officials who periodically check these spots for any unexpected deliveries. These locations include fire stations, police stations, and other areas throughout New York State and most of the country.

Unfortunately, it turns out that both my source and I were misinformed as to the true nature of the Safe Havens that are a part of the Marshall Building. These spots are actually part of a separate schoolwide program- also referred to as Safe Havens- which consist of designated spots outfitted with special phone lines directly to Campus Security. These areas are clearly marked, and exist in most buildings on campus.

Now, this is actually a very commendable idea- but unfortunately, I now must state for the record:

NEWBORN INFANTS SHOULD NOT BE LEFT AT THE MARSHALL BUILDING.

Absurd as it may sound, this is a very serious concern- hypothetically, if a parent looking for a "real" Safe Haven to leave their child at were to be mistakenly informed from our original story or from the signs hung around campus, and that parent left their child at a location where it is not meant to be left... no one wants to see that happen.

Regardless of why the school chose to name their program the way they did, and regardless of who may or may not be "in the wrong" in this instance, it's most important that we recognize this mistake now, before it leads to tragedy. I still look forward to publishing more stories which open such a broad range of discussion here at SCCC... but I hope the next one doesn't end in me having to print something so ridiculous-sounding in big bold letters.