

DOLLARS & \$ENSE

BARUCH COLLEGE REVIEW OF BUSINESS & SOCIETY
MAY 2006



BIG DREAMS

28

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FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

Dear Readers:

Cannibalism, cricket, green buildings and sleep aids are not topics you would normally lump together. But these are among the disparate subjects that helped shape this year's eclectic issue of *Dollars & Sense*—an issue that reflects the diverse makeup and interests of Baruch's student body.

Every year, *D&S* casts a spotlight on some of the trends and issues facing New York City and the larger universe. In a section titled "Bricks, Mortars and Controversy," this 28th issue of *D&S* addresses some of the city's recent growing pains. Private developers have been transforming vast swaths of the city. While some communities and neighborhoods have thrived with the extensive redevelopment, others are resisting change and face an uncertain future.

In another nod to the future, this issue looks at the push for green-building development and its effects on New York City. From the movie "The Day After Tomorrow" to President Bush's State of the Union address, Americans have been reminded of the urgency of developing alternative sources of energy. In "It's Not Hard to Be Green" and "Honey, It's Time to Mow the Roof," *D&S* explores the pros and cons of the growing green-building movement.

Moving on from how we live to what we eat—or whom we eat—"Bon Appétit" takes a page from Dr. Hannibal Lecter's handbook and pokes fun at how seriously we take ourselves and our food. As the famous doctor once said, "I ate his liver with fava beans and a nice Chianti."

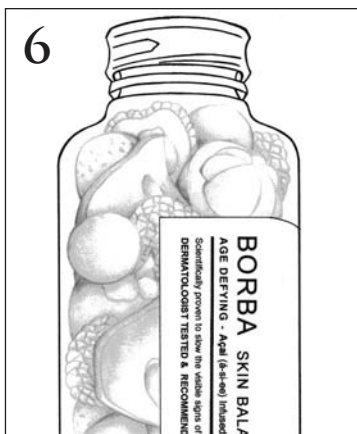
Following tradition, the *D&S* staff has continued to look at popular trends in "What's Hot/What's Not" and offer stories of personal reflection in "Inside/Out." On a final note, we believe that the Baruch Student is not the average Joe. We are determined individuals with a variety of interests. Within all of academe, Baruch falls on the tail end of the bell curve, culturally unique and mentally outside of the box. This issue is a tribute to our student body and the ideas that flourish in a creative environment.

We would like to thank Professors Andrea Gabor and Joshua Mills for their mentoring and guiding support. The *D&S* staff would also like to give special thanks to our publisher, Professor Roslyn Bernstein. And we extend our gratitude to Professor Michael Nix and his team for their creative and visual talent.

Go make \$ense!

Kori Lynch and Liman Cheng

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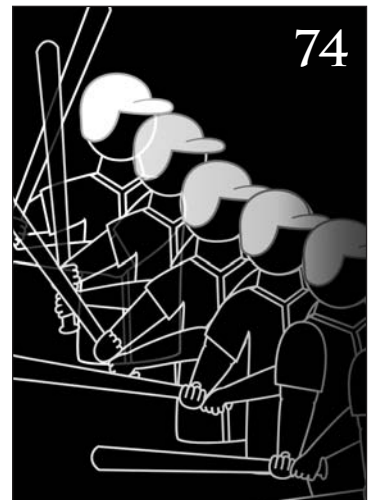
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WHAT'S HOT WHAT'S NOT



POMEGRANATE: THE NEW MAIN SQUEEZE
BACKED UP OR *#%?ED UP
SWALLOW, DON'T SLATHER
~COLA CASUALTY~
SOCIALIZING 2.0

WHAT'S HOT

POMEGRANATE: THE NEW MAIN SQUEEZE

BY TAKENORI KANEDA
ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE CORTES

It has been planted for more than five millennia. In some cultures, it is a symbol of health and fertility. It came to the Americas with the conquistadores. But until recently, the hard-shelled, red, glossy fruit called the pomegranate was relatively unknown in the United States. This is now changing, helped along by companies small and large that sense the profits that can be extracted from this ruby-red fruit.

Numerous dishes and desserts now incorporate the pomegranate, and its juice is marketed as a hip component of mixed drinks. Republic, an Asian noodle restaurant in Union Square, serves a pomegranate margarita (\$9); the Vietnamese restaurant Bao 111, also in lower Manhattan, offers pomegranate-infused sake (\$7) and Bar Masa at Columbus Circle pours a pomegranate sour, a mix of vodka, fresh pomegranate juice and lime juice (\$16). The Pomtini, trademarked by the PomWonderful brand, was the official drink of the Oscars and the Emmys in 2004. Pearl Vodka has launched Pearl Persephone, a pomegranate-flavored vodka, trying to capitalize on the growing popularity of other fruit-flavored vodkas. Dessert recipes include pomegranate brownies and pomegranate cheesecake.

Pomegranates may still be trying to find a niche in the market, but that market is surging. ACNielsen Strategic Planner, a marketing data service, says pomegranate products generated \$66 million in sales in 2005, eight times as much as in 2001.

One of the popular brands, launched in 2002 in Southern California, is PomWonderful, which sells both the fruit and its juice. The brand is owned by the Roll International Corporation, a private company based in Los Angeles with annual revenue of \$800 million. PomWonderful boasts that it is the largest producer of California Wonderful pomegranates in the country.

Marketing for the pomegranate points out its health benefits: pomegranates are loaded with vitamin C and polyphenols, powerful antioxidants that can lessen the effects of free radicals, which can cause cancer and heart disease. Companies emphasize this information in their packaging and ad campaigns.

Whether people are buying pomegranates for their health benefits or their sour-and-sweet flavor is unclear. But there can be no doubt that the pomegranate is in. D&S

WHAT'S NOT

BACKED UP, OR *#@&!ED UP

BY ALANA ALLETTE
ILLUSTRATION BY FRANKLYN ROA

Strolling through Baruch's halls, one sees many students clicking away at laptops and computers. Yet in a world so avidly high-tech, many students are persistently low-tech about backing up their data.

Come crunch-time, students can be heard moaning and crying about how they've lost all their information, their papers and, even worse, the entire semester's notes. Students proficient in

downloading music and movies refuse to acknowledge the need to support their data.

"Huh?" said Annie Chan, a Baruch undergraduate carrying a laptop. "How do you back up your hard drive?"

At the other extreme is Vladimir Yelizarov, a double exception to the rule. He is so frightened by horror stories of students losing everything that he backs everything up twice.

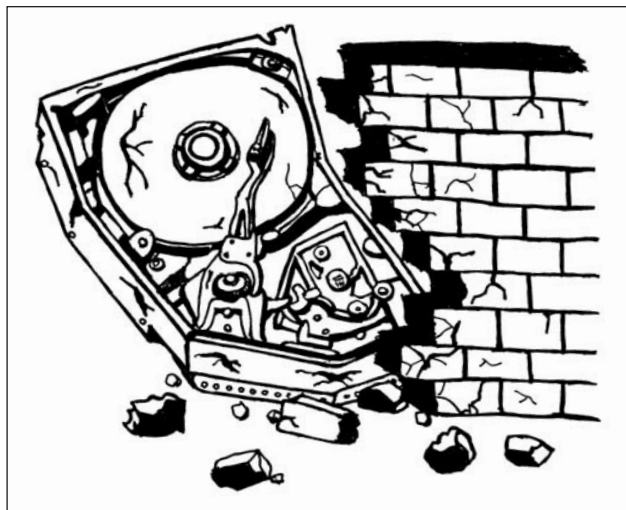
"I use two different things," he said. "One is an external hard drive to back up my main hard drive and another is to burn everything on DVDs."

Backing up a hard drive can be difficult, as a survey of the tools available demonstrates. Floppy disks are very cheap but don't have the capacity for gargantuan files containing graphics and other gizmos. CDs can hold a massive amount of data and are extremely portable, but they damage easily and need special care to protect the information. Flash drives come in a variety of sizes; the inexpensive ones can't hold large files. They are also prone to damage, and because they're so tiny—like amulets hanging from necklaces—they are easily lost along with the data in them.

What are students left to do?

Instead of backup devices, they rely on fate. They trust that their computer will never be the one that crashes. The vagaries of blind luck are preferred to investing in, learning to use and taking care of a backup device.

That is why another sign of crunch-time is the desperate students who line up at computer recovery facilities, praying for a miracle. D&S



WHAT'S HOT

SWALLOW, DON'T SLATHER

BY HEIDI SFILIGOJ

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE CORTES

Boobs. Butts. Bellies. Beauty is all about the Bs these days. Now comes a new approach: ingestible beauty products, in this case another B for the list: Borba.

A translucent watery concoction, Borba tastes like water with a fruit twist and is loaded with vitamins—one of a new line of health and beauty products aimed at convincing health- and beauty-conscious Americans that the best way of achieving healthy skin is from the inside out, rather than by slathering on expensive creams.

Borba was first introduced in 2002 in three "beautifying" varieties: clarifying (pomegranate), replenishing (lychee) and age-defying (acai). More recently, other varieties have been added: firming (cherimoya), skin-calming (longan) and anti-aging (mangosteen). Each is calorie- and carbohydrate-free and infused with vitamins, minerals and such ingredients as chamomile, vitamins B-12, A, C and K and palmitate.

Scott Vincent Borba, 32, the creator of Borba, touts the drink as a "fountain of youth." Others are more skeptical.

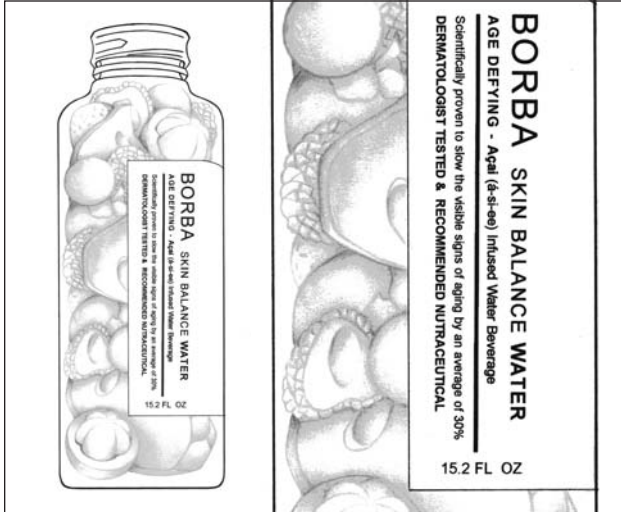
"Such products are not necessarily regulated, so they often say whatever" they want, says Lisa Young, a nutritionist who teaches at New York University. "While some of the ingredients may work, there is not enough scientific research to claim that drinking Borba will do any of the things claimed."

Taking note of "quite a bit of marketing and hype," Young adds, "You may just be spending your money for nothing."

In contrast to products like Vitamin Water and other "health" drinks that are sold in grocery stores and supermarkets, Borba is sold only in the cosmet-

ics department of Nordstrom's and beauty-product chains such as Sephora. Marketed as a beauty drink, it costs \$35 for a 14-bottle case, the recommended weekly dose for those in search of softer, more youthful-looking skin. Oil of Olay and Avena have introduced similar products.

Buying vitamins will cost you a whole lot less. D&S



other soft drinks in the United States. Adding to the rivalry, Pepsi-Cola released a similar product named Pepsi Edge.

Coke hoped that C2's 45 calories and 12g carbohydrates (in an eight-ounce serving) would have a leg up on Classic Coke, which contains 97 calories and 27g of carbohydrates. C2 was marketed so that the taste of Classic Coke could be enjoyed guilt-free. Coke's 30-second commercials featuring music by Queen and spots on Fox TV's hit show "American Idol" targeted a young market.

Nevertheless, C2 failed to generate any impressive sales. According to Coke's annual report, C2 sales were "lower than expected," contributing to a decrease in particular sectors of the company's North American operations. The volume of unit cases of Coca-Cola products sold in North America in 2004 was flat at 5.7 billion, the same amount as 2005. Pepsi-Cola fared no better and announced in 2005 that Pepsi Edge would be discontinued.

While Coca-Cola has not yet pulled the plug on C2, it is phasing it out of grocery store shelves to make room for the latest addition, Coca-Cola Zero. As its name suggests, this version contains zero calories. D&S

WHAT'S NOT

COLA CASUALTY

BY KORI LYNCH

ILLUSTRATION BY HOLLY CHU

With the surging trend of diet fads such as the Atkins, Zone and South Beach, the food and beverage industries were quick to produce low-calorie versions of long-time favorites. Some long-time staples like Diet Coke and Diet Pepsi are big hits. In contrast, the sales of Coca-Cola Company's C2, which contains half the carbohydrates and calories of Coca-Cola Classic, have been disastrous.

The goal of C2 was to provide customers a halfway point between Classic Coke and Diet Coke. But C2 was unable to establish itself amid the fierce competition of what the American Beverage Association says are more than 400



SOCIALIZING 2.0

BY JONELLE REYNOLDS

Contrary to popular belief, Facebook.com isn't the be-all and end-all of social-networking sites. You can find your best bud from high school using Facebook, but sites like hi5.com and MySpace.com promise members a more interactive and informative community.

Sites like MySpace let users listen to MP3s, allow musicians to post songs and even give fans a way to learn where their favorite musicians will be performing. The site also allows users to search classified ads for jobs and services—all information that Facebook does not offer.

"To me, Hi5 is an innovative and exciting social site," says 18-year-old Jael Coker, a Baruch student. "We can share pictures and stories of the things we're doing even though we're so far apart."

Facebook does offer some special features for college students. Facebook allows students to promote fund-raisers and to form common interest groups, all the while encouraging same-school interaction.

Social-networking sites are much more than virtual communities, however. They offer a direct pipeline to the youth market. MySpace's music features allow bands to advertise their songs, CDs and music videos on the site's home page. Advertisers have also discovered social-networking sites, which attract ads for an array of products from

Victoria's Secret to cellphones.

Now corporations are trying to cash in on the market potential of these sites. Last summer, the News Corporation paid \$580 million to purchase MySpace's parent, Intermix Media.

Of course, social-networking sites have their downside. Many young people may not realize the implications of posting personal information on the Internet. "There is always a risk that someone can get your personal information and even track your whereabouts," says Michael Wilson, a 19-year-old Baruch student. Another Baruch student who did not want to be named says she has not signed up for Facebook because she does not like the idea of strangers looking at her pictures or her thoughts. She also says it's easier to judge the character of a person in person or on the phone than through messages on a screen.

Yet thousands of students remain devotees of social-networking sites. "If you avoid posting things like your telephone number, home address and your schedule, then I think you're as safe as you can be on the net," says Wilson. While social networking undoubtedly has its risks, it also offers an easy way to bridge distances, a virtual community and a way for friends to keep in touch with each other. D&S

SMALL BUSINESS BIG DREAM



HIGH HOPES, SOUR TASTE
COLOR, CUT, CAMARADERIE
HOT SEAT

~FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME~

HIGH HOPES

SOUR TASTE

Uneasy Times for Restaurant Workers

BY BRAHM KANCHIBHOTLA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HELEN CHU AND HOLLY CHU

Duhane Reid has reason to be optimistic. The 30-year-old New York restaurant worker now has his own eatery, or part of one, anyway. He and 49 others have joined together, with the help of an industry workers' advocacy group and generous lending by an Italian cooperative, to open a restaurant named Colors.

Colors is located on Lafayette Street near Astor Place, in Greenwich Village, about a mile from Ground Zero, where 73 workers at Windows on the World, a restaurant atop the World Trade Center, died on Sept. 11. Most of the new owners, who hail from as many as 20 different countries, worked at Windows on the World, and Colors honors the slain workers. It opened in January.

"Definitely, I am happy," Reid says, as he finishes an orientation session sponsored by the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York, the advocacy group helping the workers. Beginning his restaurant career as a busboy at age 16, Reid has worked at many low-paid positions, including one at a hotel in Jersey City, with

hardly any savings or professional satisfaction to show for it. Benefits have been hard to come by. But now, Reid expects to become a dignified worker at Colors. Many other restaurant and food-industry workers are not so optimistic.

In 2005, ROC-NY found that one-third of New York City restaurant workers reported verbal abuse by their employers; nearly 20 percent said portions of their tips were taken by management and 13 percent reported violations of the minimum wage, which is currently \$6.75 an hour in New York.

The 50-page study, "Behind the Kitchen Door: Pervasive Inequality in New York City's Thriving Restaurant Industry," was financed by community groups, economists and sociologists. Based on extensive worker and executive interviews, it also cited overtime violations for nearly 60 percent of workers, no health insurance among 73 percent and widespread discrimination against members of minority immigrant groups.

E. Charles "Chuck" Hunt, executive vice president of the New York State Restaurant



Patricio Valencia shakes it up as a part-owner of Colors, in Greenwich Village.

Association, a trade body, responds: "I take great issue with the use of the word pervasive. They tried to paint the entire industry with the same brush. I don't agree with them."

Hunt says minimum wage and overtime violations against workers should not be tolerated. "I am totally sympathetic toward workers who have been wronged," he says. "I am also totally opposed to any form of discrimination." According to Hunt, a vast majority of owners observe the law and pay proper wages.

New York City lost 13,000 restaurant jobs between the 2001 recession and the Sept. 11 attacks, but it seems to have recovered much of its lost ground. Hunt estimates that most restaurants make a 5-7 percent pre-tax profit. The city's food-service sector, including its core restaurant industry, currently employs 250,000 people. The New York State Restaurant Association is hopeful that in 2006 additional workers will be added, as the U.S. economy continues to improve. The Washington-based National Restaurant Association said in its Dec. 14 report that at the end of 2006 the industry sales would be \$511 billion—5.1 per-

cent more than the 2005 figure.

Yet, despite the seemingly rosy outlook, all is not well with the industry—especially for many of the workers. Syed Amin Hussain is among such workers. Immigrating to the United States 32 years ago from Pakistan, Hussain, 60, has almost exclusively worked in the city industry, which has an estimated 24,000 restaurants.

"Wages are so low in the field that I am not able to feed my family properly," says Hussain, who now works at the 60-seat Joy restaurant in midtown Manhattan. Pointing to how few chairs were occupied, he says, "Look, despite being Sunday, how many customers are there."

At the Delhi Palace in Jackson Heights, Queens, Vincent Crasta, the restaurant manager, says business has not picked up much since the Sept. 11 attacks. The restaurant has a daily business turnover of \$4,000 during weekends and about \$1,500 on weekdays.

"We pay a basic salary of \$175 a week and allow waiters to retain their tips," Crasta says. "Aside from wages to 16 or 17 of our employees, we pay a monthly rent of \$15,000. Add electricity, phone and



Duhane Reid, a former busboy, is now part-owner of the Colors restaurant.

other charges. What's left? Nothing."

The 37-year-old India native, who opines that the economy—especially that of the city—has not improved in recent years, was promoted after years at the restaurant, which employed two dozen in early 2001. "When more and more people are becoming unemployed, how can they afford to have a frequent restaurant meal?" Crasta asks. "I'm afraid we'll go out of business if the situation continues to be like this."

Like Crasta and Hussain, 67 percent of the city's restaurant employees are foreign born, according to the ROC-NY study. The group estimated that 36 percent of the total city restaurant workers were undocumented as of 2004, when the New York industry had \$12 billion in sales revenue.

Restaurants and related eateries are the largest

private-sector employers, not only in New York City, but also throughout the United States. The nation's food-service industry significantly relies on immigrant workers—1.6 million workers are foreign born in a total industry work force of 7.3 million in 2003, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Saru Jayaraman, executive director of the 4-year-old ROC-NY, agrees with Hunt on the industry outlook. "Though most of the restaurant workers who lost their jobs since 2001 are currently working, wages are still low; they still are suffering," she says. Jayaraman notes that about half a dozen campaigns have been waged in recent years, benefiting up to 60 workers.

Apolinar Salas, a 36-year-old man of Mexican origin, and 22 other immigrants shared a \$164,000 settlement from Cité and the Park Avenue Cafe, two high-profile Manhattan restaurants. The restaurants were charged with discrimination and wage violations. Smith & Wollensky Restaurant Group, the owner of the restaurants, agreed to pay the settlement because of demonstrations organized by ROC-NY at the restaurants; ROC-NY demanded that workers be paid overtime and allowed half-hour lunch breaks in accordance with state law.

Still, the ROC-NY insists that it is not a union. "We provide job training and placement," says Rajani Adhikary, policy organizer at ROC-NY, in an interview at the group's cramped third-floor office in TriBeCa. She notes that only 1,600 workers in New York City restaurants are unionized. "We're trying to push legislation by the City Council making restaurateurs accountable to workers' well-being," says Adhikary.

A large chunk of the financing for Colors, a \$2 million restaurant venture, has been provided by an Italian food workers' cooperative, with the

"THOUGH MOST OF THE RESTAURANT WORKERS WHO LOST THEIR JOBS SINCE 2001 ARE CURRENTLY WORKING, WAGES ARE STILL LOW; THEY STILL ARE SUFFERING."



From left, Rosario Cera, Mohamed Qudus, Mohamed Memon, Patricio Valencia, Rafael Duran, Edgar Gutierrez, Mohamed Awal, Sharda Young and Dewar Khondoker are excited about their fresh start.

remaining funds supplied by corporate donors. The workers at Colors have been re-trained, will receive health insurance and start at \$13 an hour as dishwashers, working eight-hour shifts that include breaks.

Labor costs consume about a third of restaurants' revenue and are a key factor in determining their profitability, according to the National Restaurant Association. Industry analyst Hudson Riehle, who has done research work for the association, says employee-owned restaurants are becoming a successful industry trend.

"As the industry grows, so will the number of career and employment opportunities in the food-services industry—by 2016 there will be an additional 1.9 million jobs available in U.S. restaurants," Riehle says. "Even with the challenges of rising energy costs and major hurricanes in 2005, the nation's restaurants are entering 2006 with a solid performance and optimism about the future."

Such optimism is reflected on the face of Azad Uddin, a 23-year-old cook with a broad smile. Uddin, who sports a bushy mustache and a Van Dyke beard, joined Alo Sweets and Thai Cuisine in Jackson Heights, as a chef specializing in Thai cooking. He earns \$15 an hour and works with six others in the restaurant, frequented mostly by South Asians. He previously worked

in New Jersey for four years, where he learned to cook Thai cuisine from a Thai chef, before joining a Jamaican restaurant. Five months ago, the permanent U.S. resident landed the chef position at the Jackson Heights eatery. "You can't get something in this country without working hard," says Uddin, who has dreams of owning a restaurant some day.

Khalil Ahmed, who immigrated to the United States in 1981, says he pays the state's minimum wage to his workers on time and owes no money to them. With long work experience behind him, Ahmed co-owns the 18-month-old restaurant along with his brother-in-law.

Other employers are less generous. Adhikary, the ROC-NY policy organizer, says the Chinese are the largest immigrant group (13 percent) among the city's restaurant employees; Latinos take the second spot at 11 percent. The Chinese are among the most poorly paid workers in America, and a majority of them are undocumented. There are 36,000 Chinese restaurants in the United States—more than the number of McDonald's, Wendy's and Burger King eateries combined, as pointed out by *Chinese Restaurant News*, an industry publication.

"It's a new-age sweatshop," says Harvey Robins, who has worked for two city administrations and who has followed the city's economy. "Sweatshops are generally hidden." D&S

COLOR, CUT, CAMARADERIE

A LITTLE SHOP'S SUCCESS STORY

BY OLGA BODRUNOVA

PHOTOGRAPH BY HOLLY CHU



Irina Preshepchik, left, the owner, Nina Disudova, center, and Ludmila Odinosova have built a loyal following.

On a late Sunday afternoon, the hairdressers at the Irina Beauty Studio near Coney Island Avenue in the Midwood section of Brooklyn were near the end of their shifts when a wet and breathless woman blew through the door, apologizing.

"I can't be mad at her!" says a tall, blonde beautician, Ludmila Odinosova, of her tardy customer. "She comes out here all the way from Jersey." The drenched woman smiles and says, "I've been going to Luda for almost 13 years now."

Odiosova is one of three permanent hairdressers at the salon, which has been owned by Irina Preshepchik for almost 15 years.

"We have a lot of steady customers," says Preshepchik. "They are the ones that keep my business strong, the loyal customers who have been coming here for years."

became partners. Less than a year later, the partner sold her half to Preshepchik, who has been the sole proprietor ever since.

"It was hard at first," says Preshepchik. "I never owned a business before. I felt like all the weight was on my shoulders." She was a lot more comfortable with the shop after she recruited her two beauty-school friends.

Fear eventually turned into confidence and success. "The only thing the competitors try to do is slam prices, charging really low for the job to lure people in," says Preshepchik. "But I know the quality of the work here and I know how

"IT WAS HARD AT FIRST. I NEVER OWNED
A BUSINESS BEFORE. I FELT LIKE
ALL THE WEIGHT WAS ON MY SHOULDERS."

Few competitors of Irina have survived as long. "There are lots of salons in the area, but I can't think of any that held out for more than five or six years," says Odinosova.

"I think it's the loyalty we have to each other, as well as our customers that keeps us so strong," adds Nina Disudova, the third hairdresser. "We have been working together for over 25 years."

The three women first met when they were studying together in beauty school in Babruisk, Russia, in 1979. Now in their mid-40s, they have been inseparable ever since. When Preshepchik bought the shop in 1991, it was in a slump. Business was so bad that the previous owner was willing to sell for a mere \$25,000. "I couldn't believe the price she wanted, even for those days," beams Preshepchik. "I had to give it a shot and see if I can make this place come alive."

Still, it was a colossal sum for a Russian immigrant who had been in the country less than three years. Preshepchik was working almost constantly in those days, taking just one day off every two weeks to help support her husband and daughter. But then a co-worker offered to split the cost of the shop, and the two women

much to charge to make a profit. So I try not to look at them."

The approximate cost of running a small beauty shop like Irina, including rent and other expenses, is \$2,500 a month. The average price of a haircut is \$20, making this business heavily dependent on a large number of customers. "This is not the real estate business, where selling a few homes gets you by that month," says Odinosova. "We need a good flow of people to survive."

She seems to have it: customers come from all over Brooklyn, as well as the other boroughs.

As Preshepchik gets ready to end her workday on Sunday, she steps out to buy a box of Ferrero Rocher chocolates. Ann, a customer who has been getting her hair done by Disudova every Monday for almost 14 years, can't have her coffee without some sweets. "Rocher is her favorite," explains Preshepchik.

Last July, the Irina Beauty Studio was closed for a month for renovation. When the shop reopened, a client came in and asked Disudova if a new owner took over. Her response was simple: "If there was a new owner, I wouldn't be here." D&S

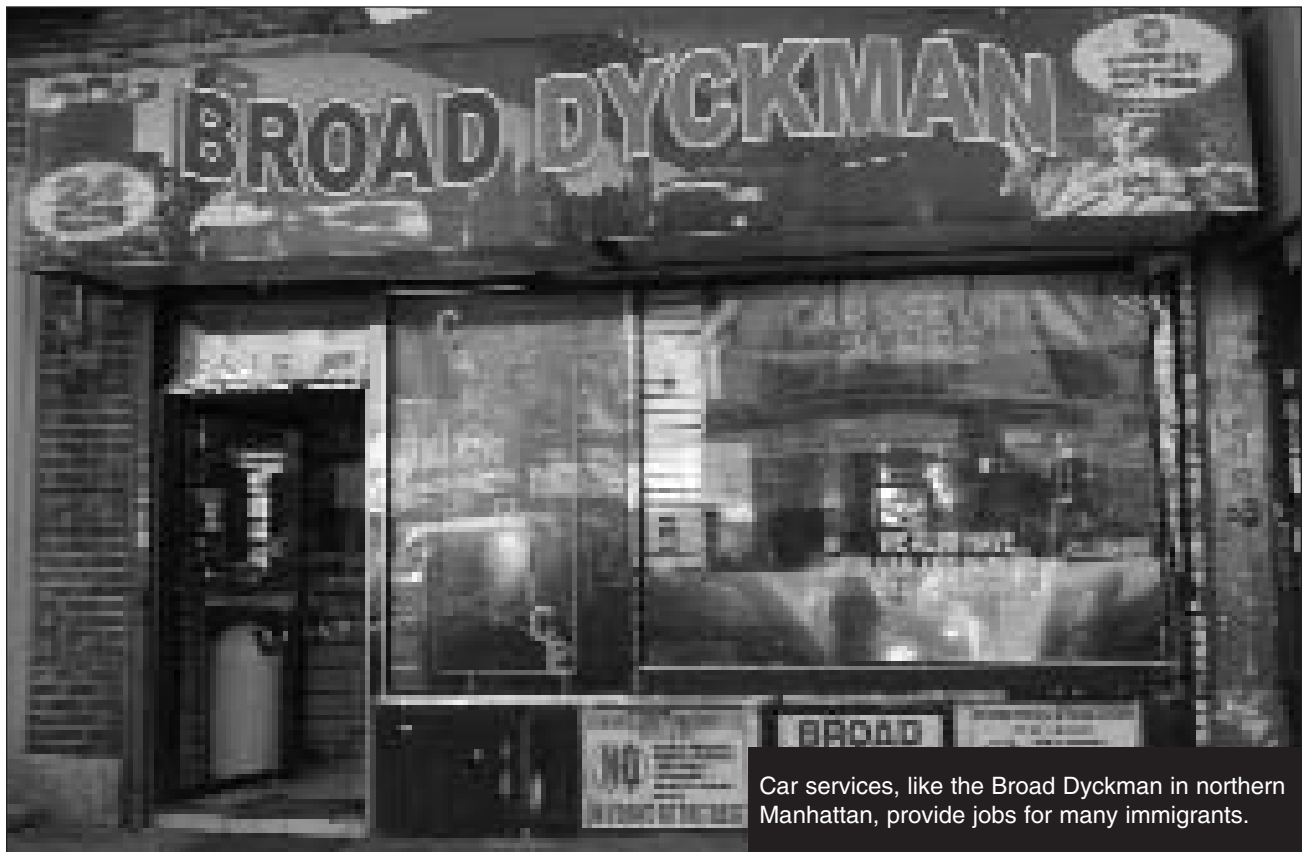
HOT SEAT

One Man Drives for the American Dream

BY ELIO PICHARDO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HOLLY CHU AND HELEN CHU

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIAN M. SIERRA



Car services, like the Broad Dyckman in northern Manhattan, provide jobs for many immigrants.

Gridlocked on the Henry Hudson Parkway during morning rush hour, Andres Bolivar scans the radio stations for a traffic report. Already an hour into his workday and not surprised by reports of delays, Bolivar turns to his second passenger of the day, a 30-something-year-old man in a black suit, white shirt and yellow tie. “So, how’s business?” Bolivar asks.

Smiling back, the man responds, “Ahi ahi” (so-so in Spanish). Michael Mitrasyon, a clerk at the law firm of Weil, Gotshal & Manges, is one of Bolivar’s regulars. At least once a week, Bolivar’s black 1997 Lincoln Town Car rolls up in front of Mitrasyon’s building on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx for the drive to 59th Street. Today, Bolivar has picked Mitrasyon up in Riverdale, a long way from where he dropped off his previous passenger, on 125th Street in Harlem.

Bolivar, 51, who began driving 12 years ago, thinks of himself as the CEO of his livery cab, which he uses to transport passengers from the Bronx, Harlem and Washington Heights throughout the tristate area. Though he rents his car from the Broad Dyckman Car Service in Manhattan, Bolivar cherishes the entrepreneurial spirit of his profession. “You’re your own boss,” he says. “You dictate your hours and drive whenever you want.”

The term livery refers to the more than 50,000 drivers licensed by the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission who work for the hundreds of car service companies throughout the city. These companies dispatch their cars, primarily through two-way radio connections with the drivers, to clients who call for service. By law and in contrast to the ubiquitous yellow taxis, livery cabs are not permitted to pick up passengers who hail them on the street.

Most livery cabs and their bases operate in northern Manhattan and the outer boroughs, where they first emerged, unlicensed, during the ‘50s and ‘60s, to meet a need for additional transportation services in low-income neighborhoods. By 1987, when more than 700 car services throughout the boroughs were dispatching more than 20,000 cars, the City Council officially recognized livery cabs as for-hire vehicles and placed them under the jurisdiction of the taxi commission, which licenses livery drivers.

After dropping off Mitrasyon, Bolivar heads to Washington Heights to try to get some calls from the dispatcher. Half an hour later, no calls have come to him, and he stops for a hailing passenger on 188th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue.

Livery cabs are licensed only to pick up

customers who have phoned for service. In large part, this is to protect the franchise of yellow taxis, which have medallions issued by the city in limited numbers. These medallions now cost up to \$300,000, a price beyond the reach of most low-income livery drivers. But despite the regulations and stiff fines for those caught picking up passengers, Bolivar and his fellow livery drivers continue to do so. Bolivar estimates that about 75 percent of his business comes from picking up hailing passengers.

Bolivar says he first met Mitrasyon when the law clerk hailed him a year ago. Today, Mitrasyon has Bolivar’s cell phone number and calls whenever he needs a ride.

At noon, following two more hailed passengers and a dispatched call, Bolivar drives to Betty’s Restaurant in upper Manhattan, a favorite spot for drivers in search of a typical Dominican meal. Betty’s has affordable prices and discounts for drivers.

After ordering “La Bandera” (Spanish for “the flag”), which consists of rice, beans and chicken, Bolivar joins his fellow drivers in a lively lunchtime discussion—in high-decibel, rapid-fire Spanish—that ranges from arguments about monetary policies in the Dominican Republic to the performance of the New York Yankees. Bolivar, the only Bronx resident and Yankee fan amid a sea of Red Sox fans, always has the task of defending his team.

Gradually, the conversation turns to on-the-job stories. Antonio Restituyo, who has been driving for Dyckman for 15 years, regales his colleagues with the story of what happened when he took a man with green hair and a sick pit bull to a local vet. The man didn’t know the address. An expert storyteller, Restituyo describes, in detail, all the false turns and stops they made before finding the vet. “It took us 25 minutes to get to the place when it really should have taken 10,” says Restituyo. “Then he has the nerve to say he only has \$5!”

Bolivar bursts out laughing, not at his friend’s misfortune, but because he has been in similar situations.



“YOU’RE YOUR OWN BOSS. YOU INDICATE YOUR HOURS AND DRIVE WHENEVER YOU WANT.”

“Working where we work, you get the chance to meet some interesting characters,” says Bolivar. “But also you get to see the diversity and cultural patterns that make up the inner city. I’ve met people from cultures and ethnicities I’ve never heard of.” He claims that urban sociologists and psychologists could conduct great field work and learn a lot if they were to sit in his seat for a year or two.

Bolivar never expected to be a livery driver. He grew up in the Dominican Republic, the only child of an illiterate father. “My father owned a small cement-block factory,” Bolivar recalls. “By the age of 6, I had learned to process cement blocks. I was waking up at 3 a.m. Monday through Saturday to work for three hours, then go to school. When I came back home, I had more work waiting for me until dusk.”

By 19, Bolivar had made it to Universidad Nordestana in San Francisco de Macoris, but after one year he had to leave school to help support his parents. “I knew that sooner or later my college years would be cut short in pursuit of our well-being, so I wasn’t disappointed,” he recalls. Bolivar landed a job as a clerk in Nordestana de Prestamos, a small private bank in San Francisco de Macoris.

In his second year at the bank, he met Luz, then a young law student, through a mutual friend. They married in 1983. She eventually became a lawyer, while Bolivar climbed the ladder and came to hold a number of management positions in Nordestana de Prestamos and other banks throughout the northern part of the country. But after their second daughter was born, the

Bolivars decided to emigrate for a chance at greater opportunities in the United States. “We wanted our daughters to get the opportunity to become educated and excel in this country,” says Bolivar. “The economic opportunities in this country are also unmatched, so the idea of making dollars was enticing.”

In 1990, the Bolivars headed for the Big Apple. “We fell in love with a dream that seemed palpable, but that dream is often blurred once you arrive,” says Luz Bolivar of the family’s first years in New York.

Bolivar was helped by old friends and neighbors who had preceded him to New York. “One of my friends who worked with me in the bank had a bodega here,” he says. “He offered me a job the day we arrived.”

After three years, Bolivar decided to try his hand at driving a livery cab. “The opportunity to work on your terms is difficult for a non-English-speaking immigrant, but as a driver, the only language you need to learn is the names of streets and intersections,” he says.

On Christmas Eve, 1993, Bolivar sat in a blue 1984 Lincoln Town Car for the first time and began his life as a livery driver.

“Driving a livery cab as your business is far more complex than what people think,” explains Restituyo over lunch at Betty’s. “There are no benefits given by the employer. Us livery drivers get no unemployment or health benefits. The most we get out of the base is access to a car for those who don’t own one.”

Bolivar, like a lot of drivers, does not own the car he drives. Instead, he rents the car from the



“IT’S NOT GOOD KNOWING YOUR DAD FACES DANGER ON A DAILY BASIS.”

owners, paying \$350 a week to use the car 24 hours a day, whether for business or personal use.

“Many people have made a lot of money under this system,” says Bolivar. “There’s one guy in our base who owns and rents 16 cars.”

But Bolivar says he has no desire to own a car because the peace of mind he gets from renting is much more valuable than the costs—and stress—of owning.

“You don’t want to assume the responsibilities and costs that come with owning a taxi in New York,” says Chris Rivera, 24, a driver at Kiss Car Service in the Bronx. “You just pay the car fees, gas and that’s it.”

Bolivar has the freedom to make his own schedule, but he works long hours; 12-hour days are common. On good days, Bolivar can make \$170. But on his worst days, he nets as little as \$30.

The surge in gas prices has hit Bolivar and his colleagues particularly hard. “Last year, I paid \$20 a day for gas. Today I’m paying about \$35. At one point after Katrina hit, I was paying up to \$50.”

In addition, driving a taxi is ranked as the 10th riskiest occupation, with a fatality rate of 24 per 100,000 population. Traffic accidents are the least of their worries; they are 60 times more likely to be murdered on the job than any other U.S. worker, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Livery drivers, especially, are faced with this threat as they work some of the meanest and most violent streets in the city. Since 1990, more than 250 livery drivers have been killed, many during attempted robberies. Bolivar recalls

a near brush with death in 1994, when a man he drove to Manhattan put a pistol to his head and took the \$87 he made that day.

In 2000, following a four-month period in which 10 livery drivers were killed, city legislators passed a law requiring all livery vehicles to be equipped with cameras or bulletproof partitions. Bolivar’s car is equipped with a camera. “I’m aware of the hazards of this job, but my family needs to eat so every day I put my life in the hands of God,” he says.

“I’m always scared. It’s not good knowing your dad faces danger on a daily basis,” says his daughter Milagros, tears in her eyes.

Like many immigrants in New York, Bolivar hopes that one day he can return to the Dominican Republic and “retire” in comfort. He says he and his wife are on the verge of purchasing a house in San Francisco de Macoris.

Their first-born, Christina, is a freshman and sociology major at Lehman College, while Milagros is an honors student at DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx. “Ultimately my wife and I have done this for them,” he says. “Nothing is better than to see your kids prosper and live a better life than the ones we’ve lived, and I think we are succeeding.”

It’s 6:54 p.m. and after nearly 12 hours on the job, Bolivar decides to call it quits after netting \$132 for the day. “Ten years ago I would have been exhausted, but I’m accustomed to this hectic schedule, so my body doesn’t complain,” says Bolivar. “The only one who does is my wife, who says I should cut down on my hours.” D&S

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME



Immigrant Cashes In on Cricket

BY CHULMATI SUKHRAM

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AHSAN KHAN



To most Americans, cricket is an insect. For many immigrants, cricket is a passion. And for one of them, Dupaul Singh, cricket has become a package deal of a game he began playing as a child and a business that supports his family.

Dupaul Singh—"everyone knows me as Rickey"—is a small, dark-skinned Guyanese who runs Singh's Sporting Goods, a retail store on 101st Avenue between 98th and 100th Streets in Ozone Park, Queens. There, he sells the bats, balls, wicket stumps, bails and other equipment for the game.

Singh's induction into New York cricket began four days after touching down at John F. Kennedy International Airport. Childhood teammates from Guyana who had emigrated earlier were always on the lookout for new blood.

"I came in on a Thursday and that Sunday I played my first game," he recalls of the day spent on the cricket pitch at Randall's Island, a venue that continues to host the game (cricket is also played at Prospect Park in Brooklyn and Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx, as well as at other, smaller locations).

Singh settled in the Wakefield section of the Bronx and began working for a jeweler in nearby Mount Vernon. Soon, he began selling cricket gear to teammates and to players from other teams. Back then, he conducted business from his living room.

His eyes gleam as he talks animatedly about the difficulties of finding stores that sold items vital to a cricketer, an obstacle he took pride in overcoming. Before the Internet provided easy access, Singh's hunt for merchandise often began in commerce departments of countries like Australia, India, South Africa and England. In the late '80s, he relied on fax machines and mail catalogues.

The Internet has not only made the business easier, but it has also lowered prices. Singh views the lower prices as a good thing, because they enable more players to participate, and, in the long run, increase the number of customers. In addition to his storefront, Singh's Sporting Goods has had a web site since 1999—www.singhsport.com. (Confusingly, add an extra S and www.singhsports.com pro-

duces a competitor, Aamchee Cricket.)

Two major brands, Slazenger and Gray Nicolls, are most popular with his clientele, most of whom are Caribbean immigrants, because this is the equipment they grew up with. He says the Australian brand, Slazenger, is more affordable: He may sell a Slazenger bat for as "little as \$25" compared with \$300 for a bat made by Britain's Gunn & Moore (Slazenger also makes top of the line bats priced at more than \$300).

Singh's shop, directly below his apartment, is not in the most exclusive of neighborhoods. No white picket fences and manicured lawns surround the homes, which are row houses tightly packed together, with industrial buildings looming nearby.

Singh says his busy season is May to September. The sign on his shop door says open "9.30 a.m. to 9 p.m." But recently, it was 12.30 a.m. before his shutters were closed. "You know, this is a Guyanese business," he says. "If the guys come, they know I am upstairs and they honk or they would call on my cell phone."

Guyanese and Jamaicans are among the many Caribbean immigrants who have recently moved to New York and with them, cricket's momentum is increasing. Cricket matches are showing up on television in sports bars that cater to immigrants and in some South Asian restaurants. Cricket may be on the verge of shaking off its cloak of invisibility in America. The USA's under-19 team will be competing in the next junior world cup. Unfortunately, the U.S. team attempting to qualify for the 2007 World Cup was eliminated in a match in Ireland.

Guyanese have also migrated to England, and for the cricketers, they find a much more welcoming environment than in the United States. Several have gone on to play for English clubs, while others have become coaches. One such man is Linden Fraser, now the Junior Cricket Program Chairman of an organization called the New York Cricket Region, Inc. An Afro-Guyanese immigrant and a former cricketer, he has coached in England, on the high school and professional level.



DUPAUL SINGH'S INTRODUCTION TO NEW YORK CRICKET BEGAN FOUR DAYS AFTER TOUCHING DOWN AT KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

Fraser says New York is now home to more than 600 experienced cricketers, all of whom need to be decked out at some time or other. The Indian and Pakistani cricketers of New York also know of Singh's shop.

Ray Sundar, another former player, has turned cricket promoter. Sundar has arranged games in New York that featured some of the cricket world's most famous stars, including the Guyanese cricketers Clive Lloyd, Rohan Kanhai and Lance Gibbs, all of whom have played on the West Indies team that competes internationally.

"Both Singh's and Bedessee's are very supportive of the players," says Sundar, mentioning one of Singh's competitors, a Canadian company also started by a Guyanese immigrant. "You can guarantee that when you walk into either of those two establishments, you will find whatever you are looking for."

Lionel Bedessee moved to Canada in 1972 and carried on the importing and exporting business he started earlier in Guyana. In 1982, he expanded into the United States and offered cricket equipment, as he had done years before in Guyana.

"Thirty percent of our sales comes from matings, the pitches that cricket is played on," says Nawshad Bedessee, Lionel Bedessee's son and one of the owners of Bedessee Imports Ltd., which has a 45,000-square-foot warehouse in Brooklyn. He says the competition from the much smaller Singh's Sporting Goods is insignificant.

"I do what you call volume business," Nawshad

Bedessee explains. "I probably sell over 3,000 bats per year, which accounts for 32 percent of our company's revenues." Clothing, says Bedessee, provides 22 percent of revenues. Singh, by contrast, says most of his revenue comes from the clothing but he did not give a percentage breakdown. Neither man would disclose yearly revenue.

In contrast to Singh, Bedessee says "December is my busiest month," because cricket gear is a popular Christmas gift in the Caribbean.

With the game of cricket enjoying increased popularity in New York, and with Guyana steadily losing population to New York City, Singh's revenue stream is not likely to dry up. With his address as the listed headquarters for the New York Cricket Region, Inc., and with his place of business acting as ad-hoc meeting place, it is a certainty that a steady stream of cricketers will always pass his way. His 13-year-old son, born in the United States, is an avid cricketer, one who his father hopes will carry on the tradition of suiting up players.

Singh may be on the wrong side of economies of scale, impossible for him to compete with the likes of Bedessee on inventory or price, but his location in Queens and his interaction with other players ensure enjoy a loyal following.

Singh's 13-year-old son, Trevor, often helps with the family business. It is too soon to tell if Trevor will embrace cricket to the extent his father has, but, for now, the cricket pitches of New York City are their stumping grounds. D&S

BRICKS, MORTAR, CONTROVERSY



WHEN GOLIATH MOVES IN
CAMERAS ARE ROLLING
CASTING A LONG SHADOW

~WALL FALL DOWN~

IT'S NOT HARD BEING GREEN
HONEY, IT'S TIME TO MOW THE ROOF

WHEN GOLIATH MOVES IN

DON'T LET THE DOOR HIT YOU
ON THE WAY OUT

BY LIMAN CHENG

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL KABATA

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STURNIOLO

Many people might find it hard to believe that their homes or businesses could be seized by the government so that a hotel, or, on a larger scale, a sports stadium, could be built on that spot.

Yet some Brooklyn residents and shopkeepers may learn that truth the hard way, as the Brooklyn Atlantic Yards project in Flatbush proceeds. A Supreme Court ruling last June gave local officials the right to seize private property under the principle of "eminent domain" in order to promote economic development. And that would seem to bolster the case for Bruce Ratner, president and CEO of Forest City Ratner Companies, to get the land he needs to proceed with his project—which would include a huge mall, high-rise apartment buildings and a sports arena that would be home for the New Jersey Nets basketball team, which Ratner bought in 2004.

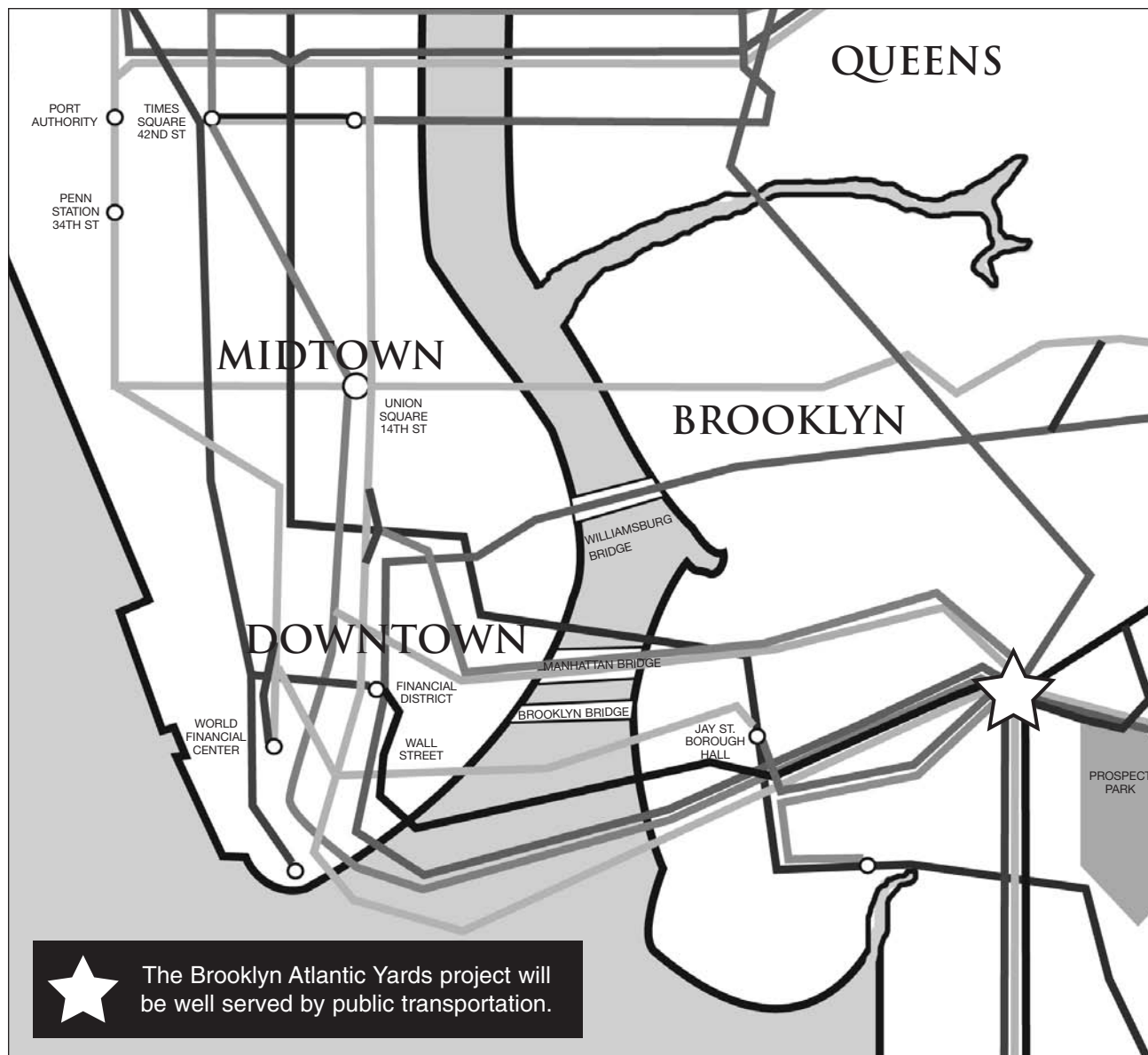
At the very least, Ratner's bargaining power has increased sharply as he tries to obtain the property of Brooklyn residents and business owners.

As negotiations continue, Ratner has proceeded cautiously in raising the specter of condemnation.

"We have done all that is possible to avoid the use of condemnation, especially related to residential properties, because it is the right thing to do," said Joe DePlasco, a spokesman for Forest City Ratner.

Much of the 21-acre site surrounding the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues is made up of the Long Island Railroad's empty lots and storage facilities, gas stations, auto repair shops and some industrial and residential buildings. Forest City Ratner says it has bought much of the property it needs and that it now controls 92 percent of the condos and co-ops (66 of 73), 65 percent of the rental units (64 of 99), 63 percent of the rental buildings (10 of 16), and 67 percent of the commercial properties (28 of 42). It has also agreed to a tenant relocation program where assistance will be provided to residential tenants who may be displaced.

Negotiations continue with the remaining prop-



erty owners and renters, and other legal issues remain to be sorted out.

In late March, Forest City Ratner said it was reducing the size of the project by 5 percent, hoping to quiet critics of the large development's impact. Most of the reduction involves the elimination of 440 condominium apartments that would have been sold at market rates; plans for 2,400 affordable-housing units were not affected. But several of the loudest critics quickly responded that they were not satisfied and would continue to oppose the project.

Another obstacle may be the 20 residents and business owners who say they will not sell, which

would seem to make them possible subjects of eminent domain. One of them is Stacey Joy Elkin.

On the border of a part-rundown, part-thriving site that would be home to the project, Elkin, owner of a small boutique called Redlipstick on Vanderbilt Avenue between Pacific and Dean Streets, vents her frustrations against the BAY project. It has, she says, "bought out my customer base."

"My business took a nosedive," says Elkin, a slim designer who sports bright red lipstick and fervently opposes the project. Most of Elkin's customers were residents of the neighborhood until Ratner bought approximately 80 percent of the

project site—within blocks of her shop—displacing tenants and property owners.

Elkin says she has been approached by the Brooklyn United for Innovative Local Development (BUILD), a community organization that supports development and devotes itself to reviving economically depressed communities, about moving her shop inside the basketball arena.

“I don’t want to be a corporate entity or sited next to a chain store,” Elkin says.

After living in the neighborhood for nearly a decade and building a clientele in the community, Elkin and others are proclaiming their property rights and economic welfare in opposition to Ratner’s project.

DISSENT OVER AN EVOLUTION

In the June ruling, in *Kelo v. New London*, the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, upheld and expanded the use and power of eminent domain for state and local governments and, indirectly, for private developers. Eminent domain is a principle of American law whose roots are in the “Takings Clause” of the Fifth Amendment, which states that “private property [may not] be taken for public use without just compensation.” State and local governments used eminent domain to ensure that power from water mills was distributed and to build canals, then railroads.

In 1954, the Supreme Court expanded the rights of government to use eminent domain for public purposes, such as the elimination of blight in slums. Over the last few years, eminent domain further extended its legal reach for “economic development” in general.

The 5-4 ruling last June was one in which the

more “liberal” justices prevailed. Within days, the Republican leadership in both the House of Representatives and the Senate introduced bills to limit government’s power to exercise eminent domain. In the House, H.R. 4128, the Private Property Rights Protection Act of 2005, passed 378 to 38, and makes a state or political subdivision ineligible for federal economic development funds for a two-year fiscal period if it “shall exercise its power of eminent domain over property to be used for economic development or over property that is subsequently used for economic development.”

In the Senate, two bills have been introduced. S. 1313, Protection of Homes, Small Businesses, and Private Property Act of 2005, defines broadly the use and power of eminent domain. S. 1895, on the other hand, narrowly defines every aspect of this law, and prohibits any condemning authority, including states and corporations—not for profit and for profit—to exercise the power of eminent domain, except for public use or public purpose. This bill defines public purpose to include sports stadiums, provided that the real property condemned is necessary for the construction of the stadium. This bill has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

In the Supreme Court ruling, Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the majority, stated, “Promoting economic development has been a traditional and long accepted function of government.” The opinion affirms the extension of eminent domain to governmental entities.

This view was disputed by Carla Main, a former litigator and editor of the opinion page

“WE NEVER HEAR DEVELOPMENT IS FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES. WE ALWAYS HEAR ABOUT TAKINGS FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES, TAKINGS OF MARGINAL BUSINESSES. PEOPLE SEE THINGS THAT ARE NOT BIG BUSINESS ARE NOT WORTHY.”



for the *National Law Journal*, who says that eminent domain is “not justified for economic development.” Main says low- and middle-income families displaced by eminent domain do not reap the benefits of economic development—they move into other affordable and isolated neighborhoods. The irony in Main’s career is that after condemning property for private developers for 10 years, she is now advocating against the rather loose interpretation of eminent domain as a legal journalist writing about law and society and law and politics.

BUILDING A SCHEME

Ratner purchased the New Jersey Nets for \$300 million as a high-profile centerpiece for the \$3.5 billion Brooklyn Atlantic Yards project. Brooklyn has not had a major league professional sports team since its beloved Dodgers moved to California in 1958, and Ratner calculated that including an NBA team in the mix would create public support for his plans.

The project will transform this neighborhood into a 21-acre, mixed-use development site with the Nets’ arena on top of the Long Island Railroad Yards, a hotel, retail shops, market-rate and affordable residential units, 20- to 60-story buildings, office buildings and 7.4 acres of open space.

To realize its full plan, Forest City Ratner continues to negotiate with the holdouts that own a small percentage of the property it needs.

Prospect Heights, the neighborhood bounding the site area, is a small neighborhood that includes the third largest transit hub in New York City—Atlantic Terminal—the Long Island Railway Yards, residential brownstones and buildings, and small mom-and-pop stores. The neighborhood consists mainly of a middle-class population with a few low- and high-income residents.

Forest City Ratner has entered into agreements with government agencies and a few community organizations to garner support for the project in the midst of political and community outcry. It signed a Community Benefits Agreement with the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now to ensure that low- and middle-income families benefit from the project.

In the agreement with ACORN, Forest City Ratner guarantees that half the 4,500 units in the project will be allocated to very low, low, moderate and middle income families, as well as 10 percent to seniors. Currently, there are only 96 rental units within the site and 60 units are owned or controlled by Forest City Ratner. Therefore, more than 2,400 additional units will be newly built as affordable housing.

“PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
HAS BEEN A TRADITIONAL AND LONG
ACCEPTED FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT.”

“Eminent domain is not the issue, it is housing and the amenities,” Bertha Lewis, executive director of ACORN, said during a conference call. She calls the deal with Forest City Ratner “a historic agreement” that “sets a benchmark.” Asked whether eminent domain is a cause for concern, Lewis replies that ACORN is the nation’s largest community organization, with a member base of 175,000 low- and moderate-income families, striving to advance communities and social justice.

In another agreement signed with BUILD, Forest City Ratner said it would guarantee work for minorities and women. According to the agreement, “not less than 35 percent Minority and 10 percent women construction workers, of which 35 percent of each category shall have the status of journey level worker.”

Forest City Ratner will also provide for the development of schools, a day-care, youth and senior facility, as well as a state-of-the-art health-care facility to provide high-tech health services not available in the local community.

A DEBATE

Whether a project so large in scale is a plan that will reinforce a quasi-cohesive community both socially and economically or is another failure at urban redevelopment by private developers and the government is a question one should consider.

On Nov. 30, during a panel discussion, Eminent Domain and Economic Development, several experts on planning and development debated how to achieve urban revitalization.

Jerilyn Perine, President of Block by Block and former commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing, Preservation and Development, said: “This is an amazing project with wonderful architecture. I’m not sure when there would be another one.”

Frank S. Fish, adjunct professor of urban planning at NYU, advised all developers and project advocates to think long and hard before demolishing the property of landowners. “I participated in some projects that I am not so proud of today,” Fish says with a sense of regret.

Susan Fainstein, Professor and Acting Director of the Urban Planning Program at Columbia, says, “We never hear development is for low-income families. We always hear about takings from low-income families, takings of marginal businesses. People see things that are not big business are not worthy.”

Fainstein is not against the whole project. “Brooklyn can use more development and the Railway Yards are not beneficial,” she says. However, she is skeptical about the scale of the project and reluctant to transfer private property to private developers, especially if that transfer requires the use of eminent domain.

“Eminent domain needs to be used very carefully,” Fish asserts, after thinking back to his former projects.

For both Ratner and the remaining holdouts, there is an alternative solution. Fainstein asserts, “Private developers can work around it by building the site around both residential and small businesses,” and adds, “They can also consolidate the small businesses into one building.”

Ratner and his lawyers continue to work with the remaining holdouts in an attempt to negotiate a fair value for the land the residents either call home or depend on for a living. Some of the landowners, who have spent years building their business or living in their homes, say the thought of selling would never cross their minds. Now, they don’t have a choice.

“This is inevitable,” says Robert Vinas, office

Signs of protest abound within and around the area of the Brooklyn Atlantic Yards.



manager at Simon Liu Inc., a painting support/art supply/art gallery business.

Currently, Simon Liu and his lawyers are in the negotiation phase with Ratner's lawyers. According to Vinas, they meet on a regular basis.

Liu has been in business for more than 22 years, and at his current location for over 10 years. Liu is one of the few remaining art suppliers who build stretchers for paintings. His clientele is expanding and the number of orders is increasing. Vinas says the company could use more space to meet the demand of customers in a more timely manner, especially the orders of the blue-chip painters—Damion Hirst, Chuck Close and Jeff Koons.

Every street or two marks Ratner's name. On

the exterior wall of Freddy's, a 100-year-old bar heavily frequented by the community, bold graffiti dominates the walls with a statement, "Ratner Sux." Ratner may respond with the children's rhyme, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me."

Vinas says Ratner is "going to get what they want. It will be a fair deal—for what it is—for the company."

"It may be a blessing in disguise."

Elkin and some neighbors may disagree, and continue to hold out. "I'm not going to let them steamroll over us," she says. But for her and other small property owners, the outlook is not positive. D&S



CAMERAS ARE ROLLING!

Astoria Positions Itself as Hollywood East

BY KORI LYNCH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL KABATA
ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STURNIOLO

As the residents who live along 44th Street in Astoria, Queens began their weekday morning commutes in November, they would pull out their camera phones in the hope of getting a picture of Uma Thurman. The high-profile actress was in the neighborhood to shoot a scene for her latest motion picture, "Super Ex-Girlfriend," scheduled for release in August.

For several days, the crew for the 20th Century Fox film took over this quiet, eclectic neighborhood of immigrants and yuppies, warehouses and brownstones. Cranes, trailers and frantic production assistants blocked the street and slowed traffic, as the film crew shot scenes with Thurman, who plays a dumped superhero out to get revenge against her former boyfriend.

This is not the first time one of Thurman's roles has brought her to Queens. In 2005, she played Rafi Gardet, in the movie "Prime," which was about an older woman who inadvertently falls in love with her therapist's 23-year-old son and was filmed at the Kaufman Astoria Studios on 36th Street. The studio is down the block from Thurman's most recent shoot and is at the heart of Astoria's gradual transformation into Hollywood East.

Today Kaufman Studios, founded in the '20s under a different name and renovated in the '70s, is undertaking a massive expansion, including additional lots and studio space, that developers and local officials hope will further revitalize a neighborhood that was once the industrial heart of Queens and transform it into a center of movie-making.

In recent years, Astoria, just across the Queensborough Bridge from Manhattan, has become a magnet for both residents and businesses looking for an escape from rising rents in other parts of the city, particularly Manhattan. The neighborhood surrounding the Kaufman Studios is also in the midst of several rezoning projects that will permit more development of commercial and residential space. The rezoning will help distance Astoria from its manufacturing and industrial roots.

Now movie companies, which in the '80s sought out less-expensive locations in cities like Toronto, are being drawn back to New York and are helping to transform areas like Astoria. The appeal of shooting realistic street scenes, as well as the 15 percent tax breaks granted by state and city programs for producers who shoot movies



Kaufman Astoria Studios is undertaking a massive expansion.

on location within the five boroughs, has brought close to 70,000 jobs to the city, according to a 1999 study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group. The study also found that film production injects \$5 billion into the city's economy. Since 2005, the Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting has given \$12.5 million a year in tax breaks, while New York State provides an additional \$25 million annually in tax breaks to movie companies. The tax breaks are given if at least 75 percent of film production is done in New York City.

To entice even more productions to New York, the Mayor's Office has started an online photo gallery that would allow producers the opportunity to view various location shots around the city.

"For producers it's about shopping around and looking for locations where you won't be

losing a lot of money," says George Delis, district manager of Community Board 1, which includes Astoria. A grip truck operator working on the Thurman film adds: "The exteriors you need are here. It's not like you can get this stuff shooting up in Canada."

Indeed, Astoria's new role as a home-away-from-home for the motion picture industry actually marks a return to the studio's roots, when Adolph Zukor built the studio in 1919 for his production company the Famous Players Lasky, which later became known as Paramount Pictures. Christened the Astoria Studios in 1920, the complex served as a home base for the company's East Coast film productions, which included films by motion picture icons such as Cecil B. DeMille and the Marx Brothers. Zukor, an immigrant who came to the United States as a penniless teenager, parlayed a penny arcade

“FOR PRODUCERS IT’S ABOUT SHOPPING
AROUND AND LOOKING FOR LOCATIONS
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business into one of the most successful careers in the film industry.

In the '30s, Zukor and Paramount moved to Hollywood. Seeing the potential in the studio's enormous abandoned lots, the U.S. Army bought Astoria Studios from Paramount and turned it into the Army Pictorial Center, which produced films primarily dealing with World War II.

When the army productions stopped in 1970, the studio remained an empty lot that was closed to filmmakers and the public. Eventually, in the late '70s, the city bought the title to the property and its surrounding buildings, in the hope of reviving the studio, which, at one point, came close to being demolished. Now, says Delis of Community Board 1, the studio is “changing the whole area for the better.”

City officials together with the Astoria Motion Picture and Television Center Foundation Inc., which has since become the Museum of the Moving Image, undertook a massive renovation of the studios, hoping to attract more businesses to the neighborhood. The city teamed up with developer George Kaufman, who oversaw the renovations, and eventually the city named the studio after Kaufman.

Since the renovation was completed in the '80s, the studio has seen a parade of stars walk through its lots. Al Pacino filmed “Scent of a Woman” at Kaufman. “Perfect Perfect,” starring Jennifer Aniston, was shot at Kaufman, as was “The Money Pit,” in which Tom Hanks played the leading role.

In addition, the studio's six sound stages have become home to popular television shows, such as “Sesame Street.” The Lifetime Network and Carsey Warner, the team behind “The Cosby Show,” also is located inside the lot.

In 1988, the America Museum of the Moving Image opened to the public as part of the studio's expanded complex. The museum has capitalized on the studio's Hollywood East appeal, showcasing exhibits on the industry and featuring special screenings of movies filmed at the studios, as well as lectures given by resident film makers.

Now, the studio is planning another major expansion that will involve rezoning the immediate area around the studio and permanently closing a portion of 36th Avenue, in order to turn the studio into a closed set that will restrict access to unwanted photographers and onlookers. Kaufman wants to offer privacy to filmmakers and celebrities while shooting on location at the studio.

So far, what worries residents most about the rezoning plan is that it will cause additional congestion and traffic. No public meetings have yet been held on the plan. “Not everyone is going to be excited,” says Delis, who says, however, that he doesn't expect major protests.

Other changes in the neighborhood also are aimed at capitalizing on Astoria's mini-Hollywood boom. The Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, a new public high school with a curriculum that introduces students to the fine and performing arts, will go up directly across the street from the Kaufman studios. The school is expected to open by 2007.

In November, the America Museum of the Moving Image was home to the third Annual Queens International Film Festival. Joe Ferrante, who manages the nearby Cup Diner, notes that events like the film festival not only help his business but also boost the image of the community. “It's only going to get bigger and better,” he



The American Museum of the Moving Image is home to the Queens International Film Festival.

says. "In a few years this place will be booming."

Ferrante, whose diner served as a backdrop in an episode of "Law and Order," is one of the neighborhood optimists who believes that the exposure that the neighborhood gets from the studio productions and film festivals will offset the inconveniences brought on by street closings and movie crews.

"No one likes traffic, but it makes the neighborhood look good on film," agrees Jim McConkey, a camera operator on the Thurman film.

Of course, changes in other parts of the city have brought about the eventual demise of small family-run businesses, as well as the departure of local residents, who cannot keep up with the rising rents brought on by gentrification.

But for now, Queens is seizing its role as a center of New York's entertainment industry, even as other boroughs are starting to compete. "The Producers," with Thurman, was the first film to be shot in Brooklyn's Steiner Studios, the former home of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, which is being renovated by Steiner Equities Group. And Robert Redford announced in January that he was forming a partnership with the Brooklyn Academy of Music to bring selected films from his Sundance Film Festival to BAM this spring.

Meanwhile, in December, Kaufman and California-based Culver City Studios began merger talks, according to *The New York Times*, a development that would strengthen the connection of Hollywood and other television networks to Queens. D&S

CASTING A LONG SHADOW

Development Plans Worry East Side Neighborhood

BY MARGARIDA CORREIA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HOLLY CHU AND PAUL KABATA

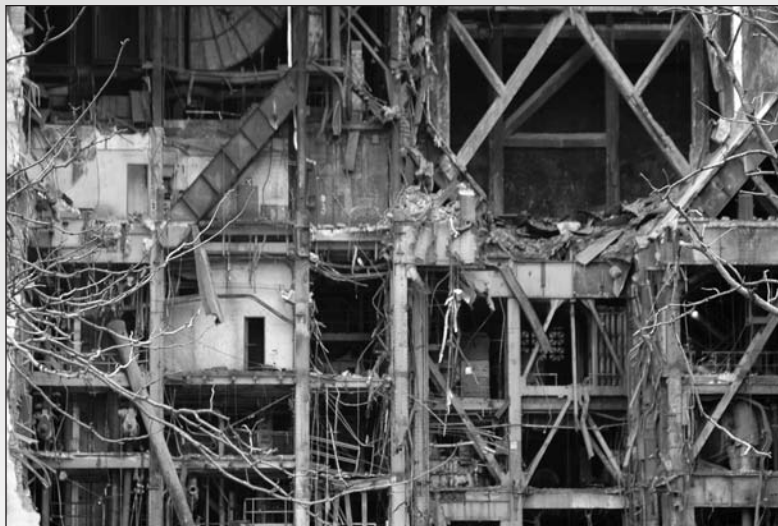
For years the Consolidated Edison power plant stood proudly near the FDR Drive, its smokestacks rising as high as the residential skyscrapers surrounding it. But the plant—and its smokestacks—began coming down in February because of a huge 9.2-acre development project that is expected to alter radically the landscape of Midtown Manhattan's East Side.

The proposed project, the largest in Manhattan outside the World Trade Center, covers a swath of land from 35th Street to 41st Street and from First Avenue to the FDR Drive. It will include four or five residential and commercial towers expected to range in height from 45 to 80 stories, when it is completed—the target date is 2014. As many as 16,000 new residents and workers may move into the complex. While the development would be a boon to city coffers, many worry that it will strain the transit system, aggravate traffic congestion and impinge on already limited space.

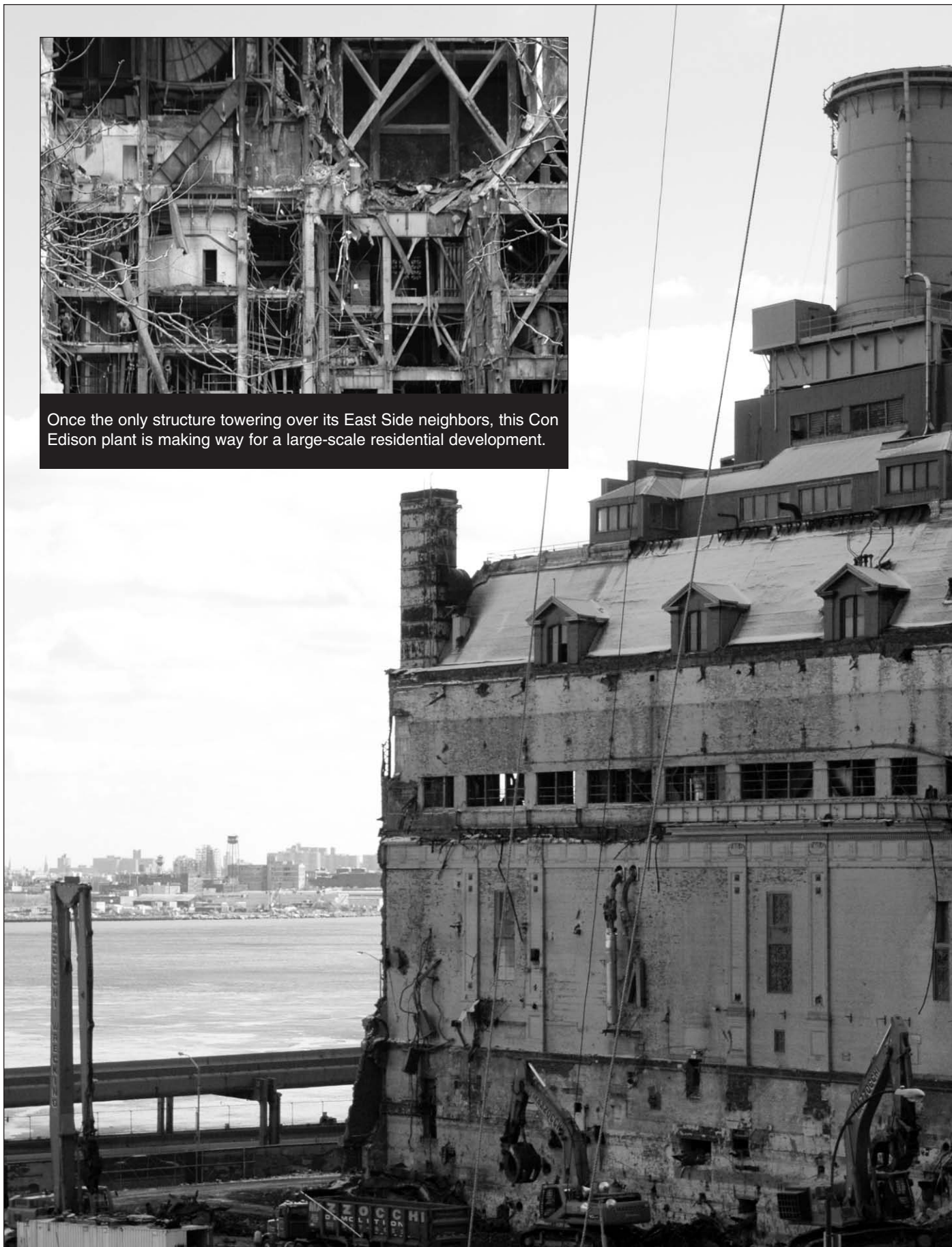
Ever since Con Edison's intended sale to the East River Realty Company, a company created by real estate magnates Sheldon Solow and the Fisher Brothers, was announced in 2001, com-

munity residents have kept close tabs on the project. Residents and community groups tracked the project as it wound its way through a three-year state environmental review and approval process under the State Environmental Quality Review Act, a process completed in May 2004.

At public hearings, community leaders have spoken out about noise and air pollution, wind tunnels, obstructed views, river access and shadows on Tudor City, a nearby apartment complex. Now, as the developer gears up for the city's own environmental review, community leaders are fighting even harder to be heard. The East River Realty Company is preparing for what's known as the Uniform Land Use Review Process, or ULURP, a tortuous environmental review over-



Once the only structure towering over its East Side neighbors, this Con Edison plant is making way for a large-scale residential development.



seen by the Department of City Planning. Given the scale of the project, the department has required the developer to prepare an environmental impact statement, a detailed look at all the ways in which the construction will impact the environment, from the possibility that it will cast shadows on existing buildings to increased pressure on sanitation services.

More importantly, the city has ordered a public “scoping” session—the community’s one shot to weigh in on the development of the site. The session, scheduled for this spring, gives the community a chance to request that the environmental impact statement analyze specific environmental factors and consider alternative construction options that would limit the height and scale of the buildings. Because the environmental impact statement is essentially the blueprint for development, the scoping session is critical.

“We have to make sure all our issues are included,” says Ed Rubin, chair of the Land Use Committee of Community Board 6. “We can’t go back after it’s agreed on.”

Much is at stake. The projected development includes four large parcels of land, the largest being Con Edison’s Waterside plant, which runs from 38th to 41st Streets on First Avenue. One property, at 685 First Avenue, is a parking lot directly in front of the plant. The other two parcels are also on First Avenue—one to the south of the plant, running from 35th to 36th Streets, and the other to the north, close to the United Nations.

The community is fighting for everything from limits on the height and density of the proposed buildings to access to the East River, open space and overlook parks along the FDR Drive.

Access to the waterfront is especially sensitive, with two streets at the heart of the neighborhood’s frustration. Several years ago, 39th and 40th Streets from First Avenue to the FDR Drive, were taken off the city’s street grid system, or “demapped,” and given to Con Edison. The community wants the streets back, to gain both access and unobstructed views to the river. The developer, however, wants to keep the rights to the demapped streets, Rubin says.

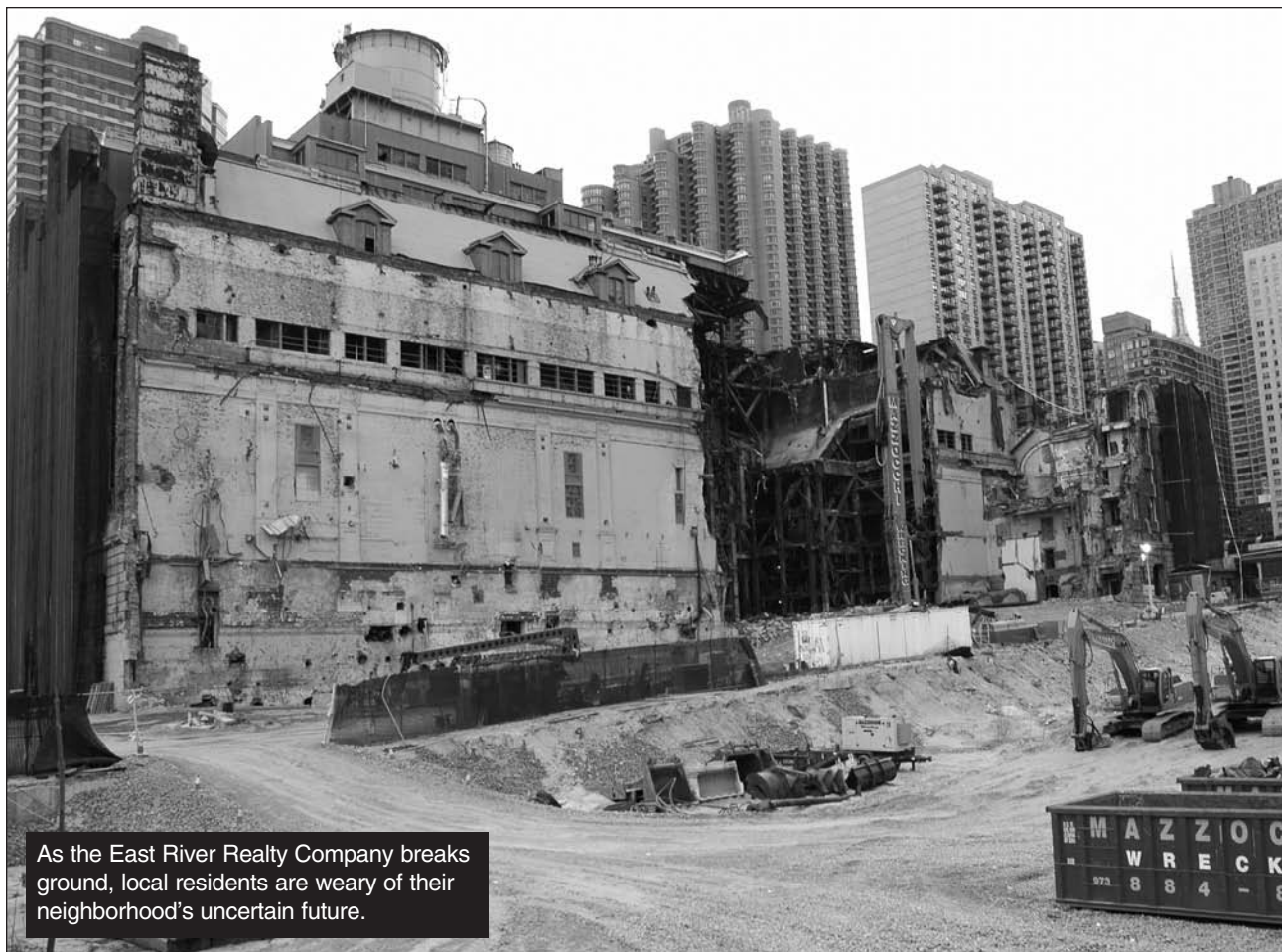
The community would also like to see the developer create large, easily accessible public spaces on portions of the site to offset the large-scale development.

The community’s biggest concern, however, is the projected scale of the project. It would like to cut back on density, with new buildings no higher than 400 feet, the equivalent of more than three dozen floors. For example, some residents worry that the planned towers will “overpower Tudor City,” the 80-year-old, landmarked apartment complex on First Avenue across from the United Nations, and cast shadows over the Tudor City parks, wrote Edan Unterman, president of the East Midtown Coalition for Sensible Development, in an email message.

“We would like to see some sort of development, just not over-development,” says Fred Arcaro, president of the Manhattan East Community Association and a member of Community Board 6. “We don’t want it to encroach on our quality of life.”

Rubin anticipates the Department of City Planning will certify the developer’s building application by this fall. The proposed development plans will then be reviewed by Community Board 6, the Manhattan borough president, the

“WE EXPECT A BIG FIGHT, AND THE ISSUE WILL WIND UP ULTIMATELY IN THE CITY COUNCIL.”



As the East River Realty Company breaks ground, local residents are weary of their neighborhood's uncertain future.

City Planning Commission, the City Council and the mayor—an exhaustive process that, given the complexity of the project, will take at least seven months. Should the plans receive ULURP approval, construction could start by the middle of 2007. The buildings, however, are not expected to be completed until 2014. That's because the East River Realty Company may want to tie the pace at which it builds to market conditions, says Rubin. It can finance one building at a time, or it can finance several.

Community leaders say they fear over-building for two reasons. First, they point to the contract of sale with Con Edison, which ties the sales price to the level of development: the higher the level of development, the higher the ultimate sales price. In addition, the contract includes a clause committing Con Edison and the East River Realty Company to seek a specified high density level of zoning from the city, which if not

achieved, gives both parties the ability to terminate the contract.

"We objected that the clause effectively would pressure the City Planning Commission to approve the excessive density, which the neighborhood infrastructure cannot handle, or see the property off the tax rolls for years until a new proposal comes along," says Unterman.

In the environmental impact statement filed with the New York State Public Service Commission, the East River Realty Company laid out several development options—all at a relatively high development level. Of the four options that East River proposes, two are almost exclusively residential, while two are mixed use, featuring some residential but mostly commercial development.

Whatever the development option chosen, the Public Service Commission says schools, day care centers and other community facilities

“WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME SORT OF DEVELOPMENT, JUST NOT OVER-DEVELOPMENT.”

would be strained. The biggest impact would be on buses, subways and street traffic, which is already highly congested because of the neighborhood's proximity to the Queens Midtown Tunnel.

Public open space would also take a hit, even with the 3.3 acres of open space the developer is throwing in to compensate for building at a high development level. The Public Service Commission estimates that open-space ratios in the community, already the lowest of any district, would fall even further below the Department of City Planning guidelines.

Gary Papush, chair of the Parks, Landmarks and Cultural Affairs Committee of Community Board 6, is especially concerned about the quality of the open space. Papush distinguishes between active open space—areas for sports and exercise with, for instance, basketball courts—and passive space, areas with trees and benches for rest and reflection. He would like the developer to make more active open space available, especially if the United Nations goes forward with plans to build on the 1.34-acre Robert Moses Park on 41st Street and First Avenue, which contains basketball and handball courts. He also would like to ensure that any passive open space is designed for public use, not solely for the residents of the new buildings.

The East River Realty Company did review and analyze three alternatives at a lower density level, as part of its environmental impact statement for the state, but the alternatives didn't get very far. The Public Service Commission determined that these options did not reduce environmental impacts significantly and were, therefore, inappropriate. The commission deter-

mined that all significant construction impact on the environment—with the exception of impact on traffic—could be eliminated or mitigated at the higher level. Shadows from the towering new buildings, say, might be mitigated by adjusting their shape and dimension. The commission also argued that under the lower-level options the neighborhood would forgo 3.3 acres of public open space and receive less in tax revenues.

Money matters in other ways. The developer estimates that construction alone will bring \$3 billion to \$3.7 billion to the state economy in tax revenue and employment opportunities, with an additional \$156 million to \$6.4 billion from annual operations of the proposed buildings. Still, community leaders argue that the development of the site should not be based solely on monetary gains, but rather on sound land-use planning principles.

“We expect a big fight, and the issue will wind up ultimately in the City Council,” Unterman says.

For now, though, community leaders are eager to attend the public scoping session. Arcaro of the Manhattan East Community Association already has one item that he'll insist be included in the scoping, and that's public safety, an issue raised with the delay of the Freedom Towers at the World Trade Center. Because the proposed buildings are close to the FDR Drive, there should be concern over car bombs, says Arcaro.

“We want to move the building as far away as possible from the FDR to mitigate public-safety concerns,” he says. “With 9/11, this should be part of the public discussion.” D&S

WALL FALL DOWN

Rubble Trouble in Washington Heights

BY FRANCESKA VACCA

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL KABATA

Jaded though New Yorkers may be, a massive pile of rubble blocking off a city street is not something that would usually go unnoticed. Yet in Washington Heights, more than 11 months after a 75-foot-high retaining wall collapsed onto the Henry Hudson Parkway, the tons of debris still blocking the street seems to have become a permanent part of the neighborhood's landscape.

On May 12, 2005, when a 150-foot-long section of the wall suddenly crumbled, the city jumped into action. Mayor Michael Bloomberg galvanized multiple city agencies along with the Police and Fire Departments to secure the area. In three days, 25,000 cubic yards of dirt and rock were removed, the rest of the wall was stabilized and the parkway was reopened with one northbound lane remaining closed.

Those early scenes of a steady stream of dump trucks hauling away rubble and bulldozers busy at work are now a distant memory. The remains of the collapse are now blanketed with shiny black protective tarps, surrounded by wire fences and concrete barriers. Between three and six cars are believed to remain buried under the rubble. And since the collapse, no move has been made to retrieve the buried vehicles or reopen the access road to the parkway.

A months-long engineering study is expected to determine what caused the collapse and how

stable the remaining wall is. But until the study is completed, work has come to a halt. That paralysis has been reinforced by the debate over who will pay for the initial cleanup and the future repairs.

Responsibility for the repairs rests with the wall's owner, the luxury co-op Castle Village, but it remains unclear whether the co-op's insurance company or the apartment owners themselves will have to pay for the damages. Bloomberg assured city residents that the city would bill Castle Village for the cleanup, saying, "This is up to the owners." Yet Theresa Racht, Castle Village's lawyer, says the city has yet to submit a bill for the work.

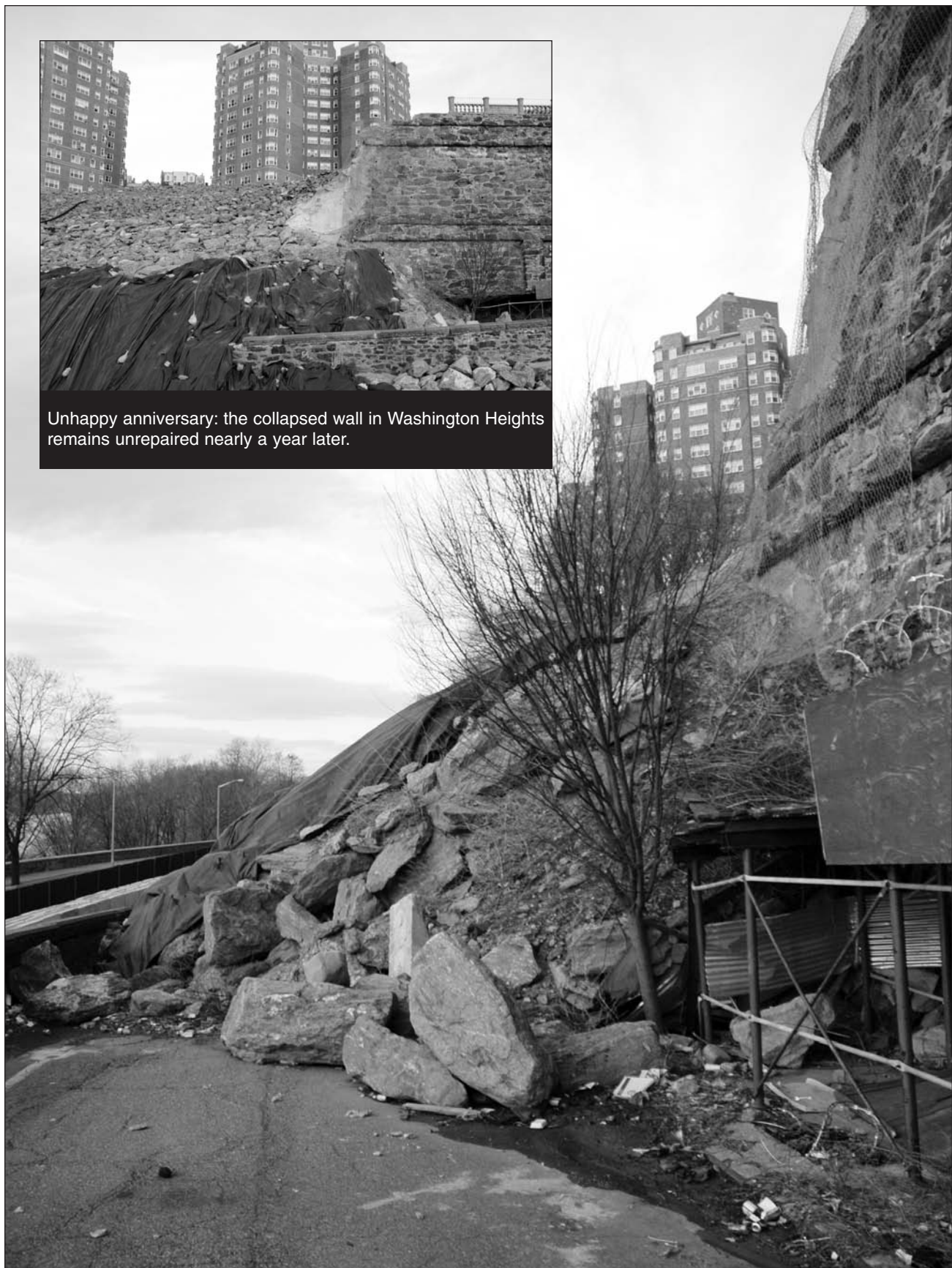
Though Castle Village must repair the wall regardless of the final cost, Racht says the deadlock stems from the insurance company's investigations into submitted claims. She says the co-op will not move forward with any work until it can be certain of where the money for that work will be coming from.

"We have not received any statements from the insurance companies," explained Racht. "They're still working on it." The insurance firm has presented no timetable for the completion of the investigation either.

Built in 1938, Castle Village, even post-collapse, remains a unique structure. Its builders took full



Unhappy anniversary: the collapsed wall in Washington Heights remains unrepaired nearly a year later.



advantage of the natural perch found at the highest geographic point in Manhattan, affording the buildings' 580 apartments with sweeping views of New Jersey's rugged cliffs towering over the Hudson River.

The planners also included park-like grounds behind the buildings. When the retaining wall collapsed, it took a large chunk of those grounds with it. Fortunately no one was on the grounds or on the street below at the time.

Since the retaining wall is on the grounds behind the buildings, there is a chance that the affected property may not be fully covered by the insurance policy. But Racht contends that the wall should be covered as part of the structure of the apartment complex.

While the insurance wrangling continues, at 1380 Riverside Drive, the rental building next door, the tenants are bearing the physical brunt of

Although 1380 Riverside Drive did not suffer any structural damage, landlord Vincent Garrow is suing the city for damage to seven steel apartment doors broken by the New York City Fire Department, totaling about \$6,000. Garrow recently retained counsel after the city's Comptroller's Office denied his claim for the cost of the repair of the doors. Garrow believes both the city and Castle Village have been negligent, not only with respect to his claim, but in their failure to remove the debris blocking the street.

"I'm at a loss to understand why the city has failed to take action," Garrow says. "Bloomberg is supposed to be a good mayor, but all I see is fumbling and bumbling."

At whatever time the decision is made for work to begin, restoring access to the parkway from Riverside Drive will present a major logistical challenge.

"I'M AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE CITY HAS FAILED TO TAKE ACTION."

the situation. The building, which has some of the same fantastic river views as Castle Village, now boasts a front-row seat to an unattractive heap of wreckage.

"Everybody's complaining—especially people with cars under there," says George Rодitas, who has been the doorman at 1380 Riverside Drive for the past seven years. The tenants with cars under the rubble are in a catch-22; they have been unable to receive compensation from their insurance companies because they cannot prove their cars are under there without digging them up.

The mixed-up traffic in the area is another problem for residents. Despite large orange detour signs posted at the three intersections leading up to their street, every few minutes another confused driver ends up pulling an awkward U-turn in front of the building. The countless U-turns are the result of a detour that can be difficult to maneuver for drivers unfamiliar with the area, particularly since the George Washington Bridge, the Henry Hudson Parkway and access to the Cross-Bronx Expressway are all within blocks.

Meanwhile, at the Departments of Transportation, Emergency Management, Design and Construction, and Buildings (all agencies engaged in the initial Castle Village response), no spokesman had knowledge of any continuing efforts to restore the roadway and recover the cleanup cost.

Matthew Monahan, assistant commissioner at Design and Construction, the city agency that headed the Castle Village cleanup, says he has no further knowledge of the site's progress. "The incident happened on a Thursday and we pretty much demobilized the following Monday," he wrote in an email.

The Department of Transportation, in charge of the city's roadways, has not acted to ensure the prompt reopening of the closed lane on the Henry Hudson Parkway and the Riverside Drive blocked access road.

For now, it seems that not just drivers will experience detours and U-turns. The city, Castle Village and the insurance companies will continue going in circles. D&S

IT'S NOT HARD BEING GREEN

Two Buildings, Two Paths to Energy Savings

BY CARLOS MACIAS

The Solaire, which stands 27 stories high in Battery Park City, is a 3-year-old luxury rental building with sweeping views of the Hudson River that caters almost exclusively to young professionals working in the financial district. A few miles away, on East Third Street stands the seven-story Diversity Houses, developed by the Lower East Side People's Mutual Housing Association to provide housing to low-income families from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Despite the obvious differences, both buildings are part of the current real estate trend to develop more environmentally friendly residential buildings. But while both Solaire and Diversity Houses claim to be “green,” or environmentally friendly, each has pursued very different strategies for the label. Just as the two buildings cater to tenants at opposite ends of the economic spectrum, they also represent conflicting views on how best to achieve energy savings.

The Solaire, which cost \$114.5 million to build and claims to be the nation’s first green residential tower, has received a gold LEED certification, the highest-level environmental certification of the U. S. Green Building Council (LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). The council was established by the real estate industry to set standards for environmental certification.

“We provide the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval,” says Michael Deane, chairman of the New York chapter of the Green Building Council and East Coast manager of sustainable construction at the Turner Construction Company. “LEED sets environmental standards for design and construction projects that are ‘quantifiable and measurable.’”

At the Diversity Houses, Mary Spink, the developer, asserts that a green building can be had through good engineering and a few practical ideas, without the costly LEED certification process.

“What do I need it for?” says Spink of LEED certification. “We will gladly show anyone our energy and gas bills to show you that we only use 22 percent of the energy an average New York City apartment house uses for making heat and hot water.”

Some environmentalists, builders and architects say the cost of filing for LEED certification—which can go as high as \$150,000 for administration and paperwork—excludes all but the largest developers and buildings. And the LEED rating system gives the same

number of points for minor environmental amenities, such as installing a \$350 bicycle rack, as it does for installing more efficient heating and air conditioning, which can cost tens of thousands of dollars and has a greater environmental impact, a recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* pointed out.

Yet some environmental organizations, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, embrace LEED certification. The Council’s Web site, for example, provides detailed information on how builders can achieve energy-consumption reductions while earning points toward LEED certification. The council’s own buildings in San Francisco and Santa Monica, Calif., are LEED-certified.

City and state governments have also endorsed the LEED standards. Legislation requiring most city-owned and city-funded construction projects totaling \$2 million or more to fulfill at least basic LEED standards was passed by the New York City Council in October and signed into law by Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The legislation, which will take effect next January, also calls for construction projects totaling at least \$12 million to achieve energy cost savings of 20 to 25 percent.

Five years ago, Gov. George Pataki issued an executive order that compels state agencies to use green construction techniques. The order provides tax credits to developers if they use eco-friendly materials and meet certain energy standards that comply with LEED standards. Between 2000 and 2004, tax credits worth a total of \$25 million were provided for nine projects; legislation for another \$25 million in tax credits for buildings constructed between 2005 and 2009 is currently being drafted.

Arizona, California and Washington have also endorsed the Green Building Council standards for new state buildings, and so have major corporations including Toyota, General Motors, Ford and Goldman Sachs, whose new tower in New Jersey is LEED-certified.

The certification was developed in 2000 to serve as a building design guideline for

“WE ONLY USE 22 PERCENT OF THE ENERGY AN AVERAGE NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT HOUSE USES.”

developers and architects, but LEED is an evolving process. For example, the current standard provides a one-time certification that considers only the energy efficiency of a building at the time of its completion or certification. The Green Building Council also offers a certification process for retrofitting existing buildings for energy efficiency.

However, a new standard expected to go into effect next year will stipulate a review process that ensures buildings maintain their energy efficiency and continue to meet LEED standards over time. The new standard will also include a process for certifying new residential homes and communities.

The LEED process is controlled by the construction and design industries, and there is no doubt that it serves as a marketing tool for developers. Just as vitamin water and soy milk are being marketed to health-conscious consumers, green certification is being marketed to tenants and buyers. How potent a force it will be in buying and renting decisions remains to be seen.

The Solaire boasts both improved energy efficiency and premium rental rates. On its western facade, the building is covered by solar panels that generate 5 percent of the building's electricity supply. Its hallways are equipped with automatic-dimming fluorescent lights. The developers installed 33 percent more sheetrock between apartments than is found in comparable buildings to improve insulation. And a rooftop garden improves the building's insulation, also lowering energy costs.

Water-treatment equipment recycles wastewater for use in toilets and central air conditioning systems, and 60 percent of the construction materials were made from recycled materials. The heating- and air-conditioning system reduces the building's electricity usage by 35 percent, according to the developer. The "greening" costs for the Solaire totaled \$17 million.

All this, taken together, sharply reduces the amount of carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides that the building emits, according to a case study by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The building, whose rents range from \$1,800 for a small studio to \$8,000 for a top-of-the-line two-bedroom unit, has a plaque near the entranceway that boasts "America's First Environmentally Responsible Residential Tower."

No such plaque hangs outside the Diversity Houses, where rents range from \$430 for a one-bedroom apartment to \$764 for a three-bedroom apartment. Residents for the 44 apartments were chosen in a lottery from a waiting list of more than 4,000 applicants, and all of them have family incomes of no more than \$31,400 a year.

Spink, the developer, is proud to point to many energy savings achieved at a fraction of the costs incurred by Solaire.

Like the residents of the Solaire, the tenants at Diversity Houses can enjoy a rooftop garden that lowers the building's energy costs by providing insulation. A new wall design using mineral wool insulation helps retain heat better than typical glass-fiber insulation.

“BUILDINGS 50 YEARS AGO WERE GREENER THAN SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS.”

Thermostats in every room can be set no higher than 73 degrees Fahrenheit. By placing the energy-efficient boiler on the roof rather than the basement, Diversity Houses claims it has cut its fuel bill by 30 to 40 percent from that of a comparably sized building.

Motion sensors are placed in stairwells to activate only upon tenant movement, much more efficient than traditional, constant illumination. The building's outdoor lights are operated by an inexpensive solar cell that turns the lights on only as darkness falls. And a low-voltage, low-speed elevator further reduced energy costs.

“I would never get certified, because I didn't put a vestibule in the building; some of the lighting fixtures and circulation fans we use are not 'Energy Star' certified,” says Spink, referring to energy-efficiency guidelines set by the Environmental Protection Agency. “But that doesn't mean that the building is not efficient. They fit our necessities and budget.”

Unfortunately, some experts caution that all the new environmental standards will do, at least in the short term, is little more than make up for the inefficiencies built into most construction projects in recent decades.

“Buildings 50 years ago were greener than some recent developments,” says Gregory Kiss, a founder of the architectural firm Kiss+Cathcart, which specializes in environmentally innovative architecture. The firm is responsible for the widely-acclaimed Stillwell Avenue subway station in Coney Island, the first green station in New York. “For example,

the Empire State Building has good daylight utilization; you can actually open some windows to get fresh air in the summer, lowering A/C costs.”

By contrast, says Kiss, most modern office buildings rely on powerful, inefficient climate-control systems that consume a lot of electricity and provide low indoor air quality. Indeed, indoor air pollution can be as harmful to people's health as outdoor air pollution, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Studies suggest that indoor air pollutants are two to five times outdoor levels, and sometimes much more.

Kiss notes that the ultimate goal for the green building movement is the so-called Zero Impact Building. The green building of the future will cause “no harm to the environment,” says Kiss. “Instead it must be an active benefit, it must generate all energy needed by itself, minimum or no water usage from municipal sources, minimum or no disposal of organic materials and when demolished at least 80 percent of the materials must be recyclable.”

Kiss had those features in mind when he designed the 2020 Tower, a 150-story building with solar panels and wind turbines designed to provide 100 percent of the building's energy needs. This project is still on the drawing board.

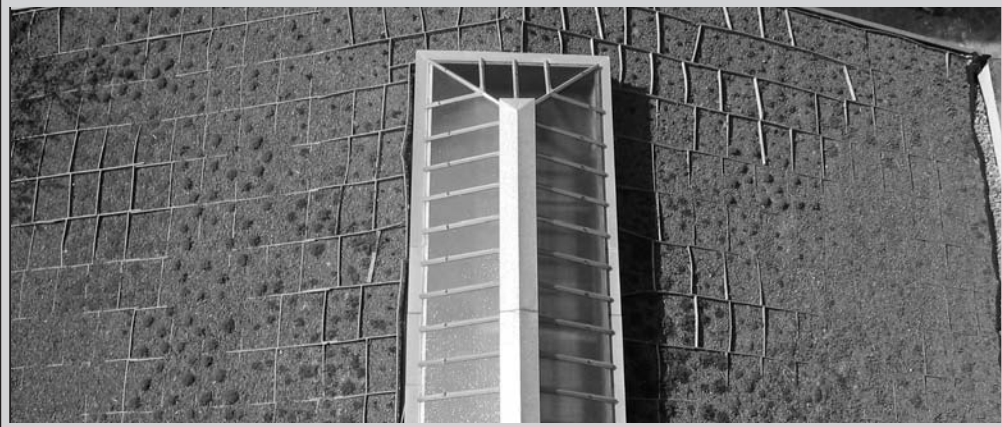
Such fully green buildings may be a concept for the future, but the Solaire and Diversity Houses demonstrate that environmental innovation is available at all price levels. D&S

HONEY, IT'S TIME TO MOW THE ROOF



CITY ROOFTOPS START
GOING GREEN

BY MARGARIDA CORREIA
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUSAN BOYLE



Green roofs provide insulation, reduce noise, filter air and reduce energy costs—but cost more to install than conventional rooftops.

Imagine New York City's black asphalt roofs evolving into fertile, soil-laden spaces where grasses, flowers, shrubs and even trees grow. Sound far-fetched? Urban planners, architects and environmentalists insist that flowering rooftops can be more than just a dream.

While far from taking over the city's building tops, green roofs are beginning to emerge on all sorts of roof surfaces, from residential and industrial buildings to museums and schools. The Solaire in Battery Park City, New York's first residential building to be designated as environmentally sound, or "green," has two green roofs totaling 9,800 square feet. A large 18,000-square-foot vegetated roof designed to attract butterflies sits atop the St. George ferry terminal in Staten Island. New York City's largest eco-roof to date—a 35,000-square-foot demonstration roof installed last year—covers Silvercup Studios, a film and television production facility in Long Island City.

Yes, green roofs beautify dreary urban landscapes, and they make them healthier, too. Green roofs as a whole help reduce what's called the "urban heat island effect," the trapping of heat in cities on account of their paving. Green roofs filter the air, reduce noise and more importantly retain rainwater, which relieves pressure on over-stressed city sewer systems. They also cool buildings in the summer and insulate them from the cold in the winter.

"A green roof is the tiara of a building," says Andrew Padian, a building scientist with Steven Winter & Associates, an architectural design firm based in Norwalk, CT. While a proponent of green roofs, Padian says they should be the last thing considered on a building because he claims the benefits associated with them can be attained with significantly less-expensive technologies. "Build a good building first," he says. "Then see how much money you have left and make the best decision for the lifetime of the building."

While green roofs offer environmental benefits and are believed to result in lower energy bills, they cost significantly more than conventional roofs—twice as much, by some estimates.

Colin Cheney, director of the Green Roofs Initiative for Earth Pledge, a nonprofit environmental group, says a lightweight "extensive" green roof

in New York goes for \$14 to \$23 a square foot, compared with \$10 to \$12 for a traditional roof. The heavier "intensive" green roofs cost even more. Cheney would not estimate the cost of intensive roofs, saying too many variables are involved.

Green roofs, however, last two to three times as long as conventional roofs, according to green-roof advocates. Eco-roofs protect roofing membranes from extreme temperature fluctuations and the negative impact of ultraviolet radiation, which cause traditional roofs to crack.

Green roof proponents contend that the initial higher costs of green roofs are recovered over time in the form of lower energy bills. Because eco-roof advocates don't have hard numbers to back up their claims, they are setting up demonstration green roofs to quantify the benefits. The eco-roof installed atop Silvercup Studios, for example, is a demonstration roof funded by the Clean Air Communities, a nonprofit environmental group. More recently, Gratz Industries, a light metal manufacturer and fabricator in Long Island City, installed an 11,000-square-foot green roof, also as part of a demonstration project. The roof makes Gratz Industries the first manufacturing building in New York City to have a green roof.

If green roofs prove cost-effective in the long run, they may start to crop up more on New York City's rooftops, especially if the city encourages their growth through monetary and other incentives. Urban planners and environmentalists say the lack of incentives has prevented green roofs from developing in New York as they have in cities such as Chicago, which supports and sometimes requires green roofs in developments undergoing an environmental review process. Chicago, which last year began offering \$5,000 grants to owners of residential and small commercial buildings, claims to have more than 150 public and private green roof projects totaling more than one million square feet. New York, in contrast, has only 60,000 square feet of green roofs built or under construction, according to *The New York Times*.

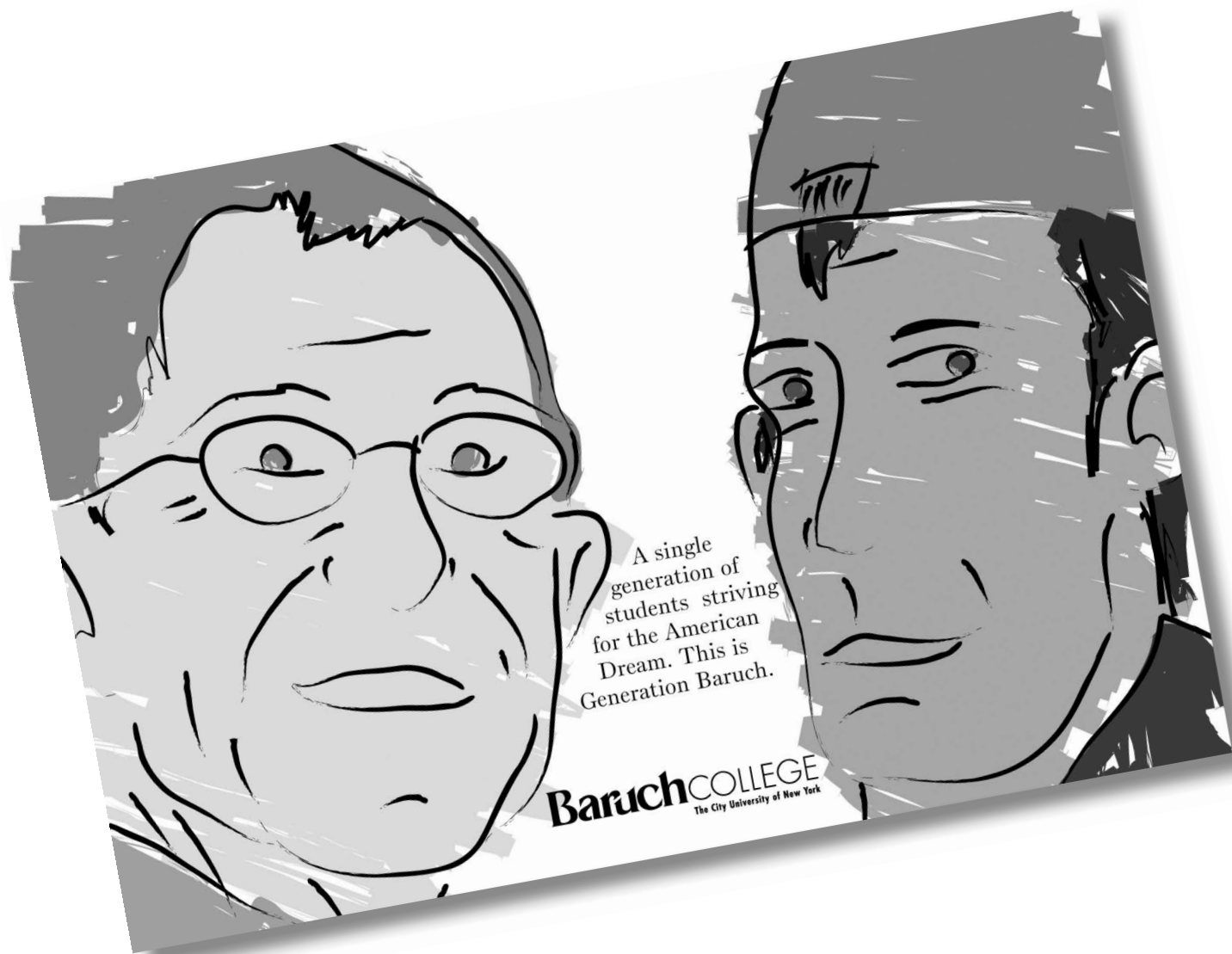
The familiar black tar roofs of New York City—the kind that turn sticky and gooey in the summer sun—may well have seen their glory days. But before they're pushed out by greener contenders, they might need a hard shove from City Hall. D&S



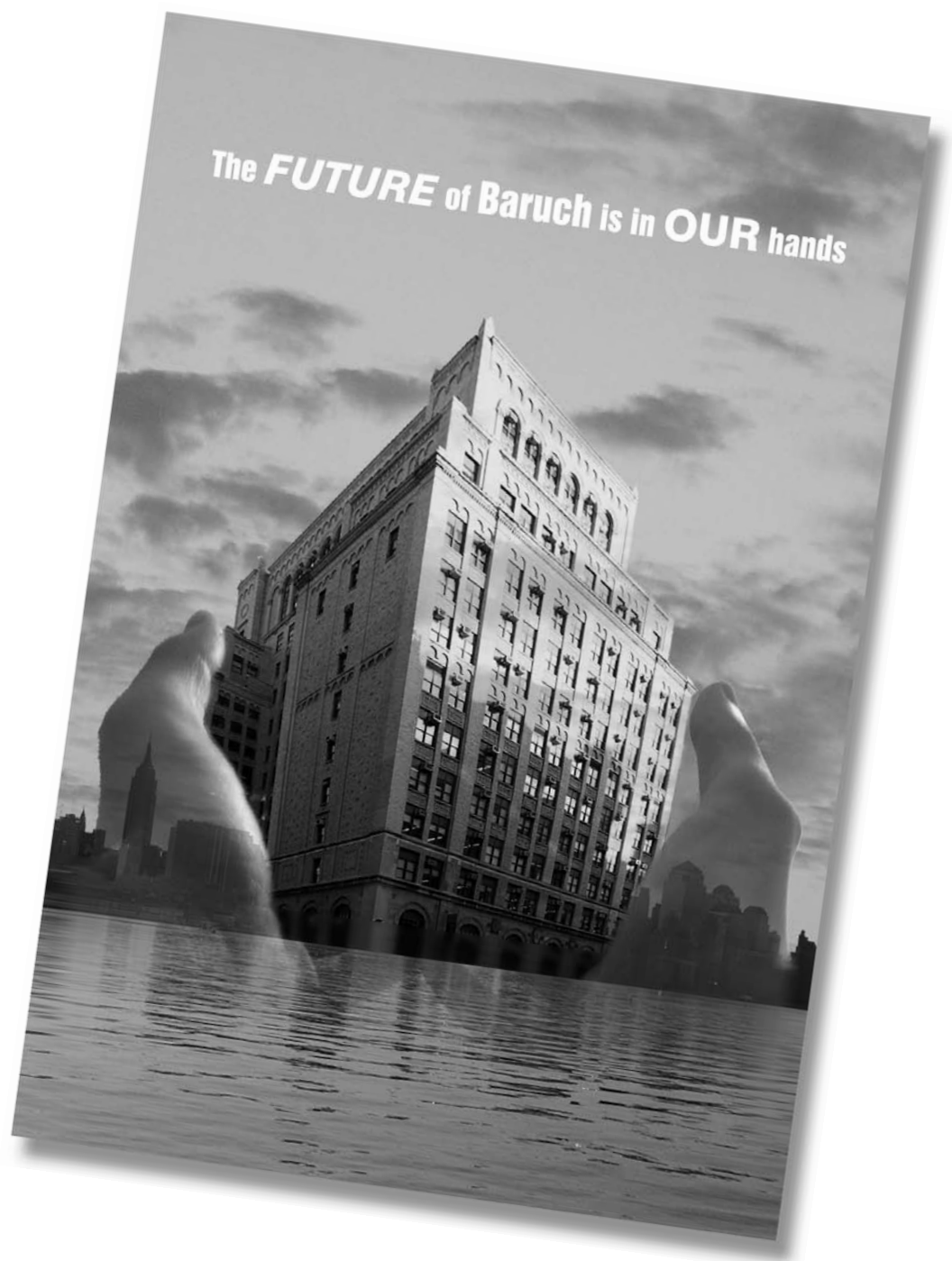
BARUCH POSTCARDS

The ubiquitous postcard can convey an outsized message in a petite package. Quite apart from the words we might inscribe on them, postcards transmit visions of places (whether truthful or fantastical), try to convince us to do something or serve as stand-ins for our memories. The best postcards grab our eyes and then reward our attention, while the worst are discarded.

As part of the capstone course in graphic communication and photography, students used the postcard form to communicate visions of Baruch College, our past, our present and our future.

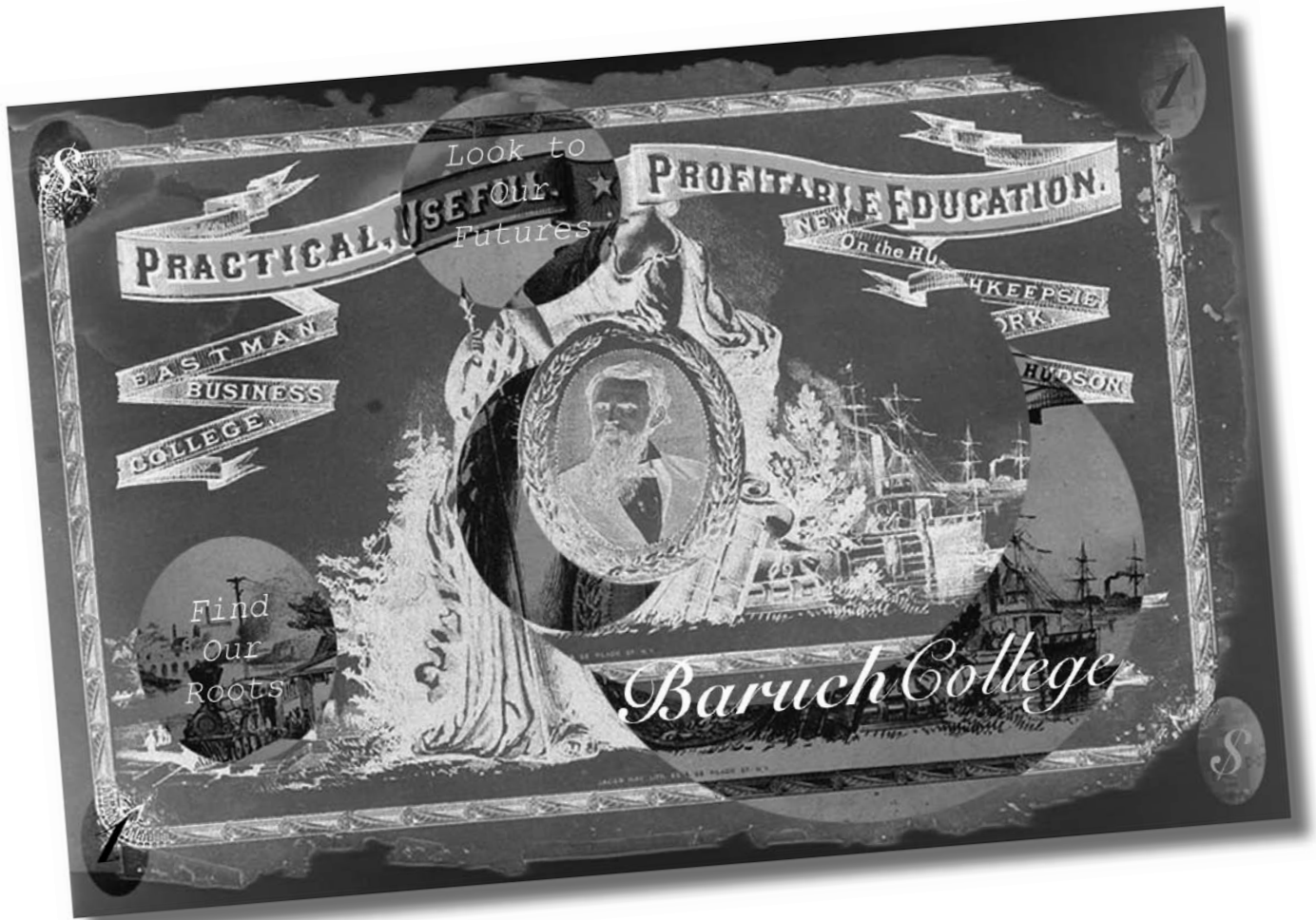


DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION
BY FRANKLYN ROA



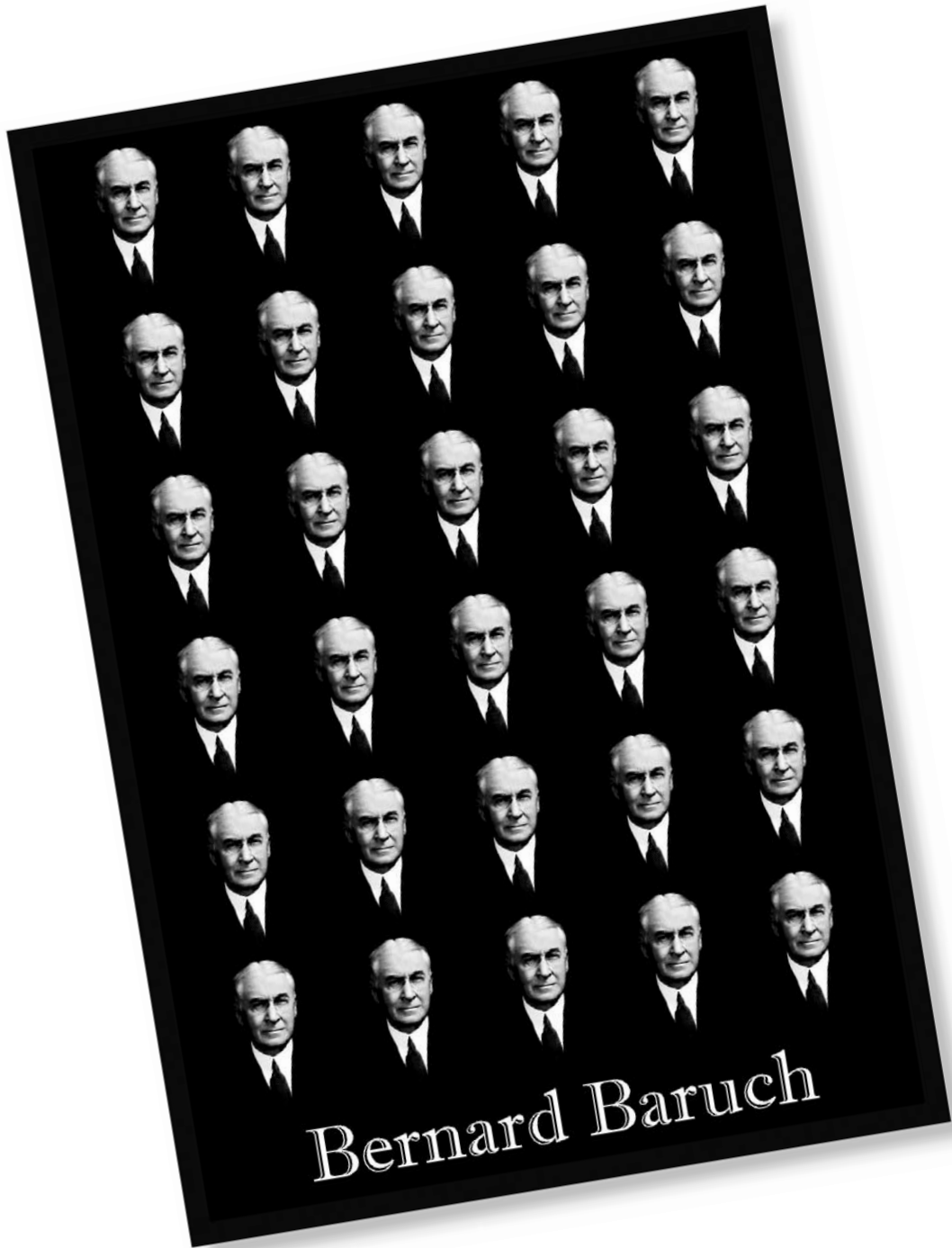
DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION
BY MAKIKO INUI AND PAULA TRACEY

DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION
BY HIROYUKI SAWATARI





DESIGN AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY ELIA WEG AND KEVIN CHU



DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION
BY MAKIKO INUI AND PAULA TRACEY

BASIC NEEDS



~LUXURY SWEET~
NO MATCH FOUND
IN SEARCH OF THE SANDMAN
BON APPÉTIT



LUXURY SWEET



Cultivating Connoisseurs of High-Priced Chocolate

BY XIMENA DIEGO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HELEN CHU AND HOLLY CHU



Lindsay Welsch works behind the counter and a tower of chocolate at the Jacques Torres Chocolate Haven.

When pastry chef Próspero Velazco designs a dessert menu for a restaurant, he often includes one of his favorites, the Chocolate Volcano bittersweet chocolate cake shaped like an individual-sized pudding, served hot over a puddle of *dulcé de leche* sauce and a scoop of cinnamon ice cream. The cake offers some resistance to the spoon, but once its wall is cracked, a stream of dark-brown silky lava flows freely onto the plate. “It’s the perfect combination of hot and cold, bitter and sweet,” says Velazco. “Everybody loves it.”

That’s true of many forms of chocolate, whether it’s a light mousse, rich truffle, sophisticated soufflé or a simple chocolate bar. The numbers say it all: the average American consumes more than 11 pounds of chocolate every year, and this industry represents a market of more than \$13 billion, according to the Chocolate Manufacturers Association. Chocolate is even more popular in Europe: the Swiss consume an average of 22.3 pounds a year, the Austrians 20.13 pounds. These numbers suggest that, despite chocolate’s origins as a drink for the elite, it is now a food for the masses.

But the democratization of chocolate has a bitter kick. As a BBC documentary first reported in 2000, and several surveys later confirmed, cacao farms in West Africa use child and slave labor to grow and harvest the beans. Investigations and negotiations on these issues continue. Though how closely consumers follow this or how much they care is not certain.

What is clear is that for millions of people, chocolate remains a pleasure, and the highest-grade, top-quality chocolate exists as an expensive pleasure.

While the Hershey’s bar has been the best-selling chocolate bar in the world for many years and now retails for 75 cents, its chocolate is not of the best quality. Hershey’s milk chocolate bar contains about 11 percent of cacao—just above the 10 percent minimum that the Food and Drug Administration requires for a



Jacques Torres operates his own chocolate factory and shop, on Water Street in Brooklyn, as well as the Chocolate Haven in Manhattan.

candy bar to be labeled as chocolate. (The amount of cacao paste, often called chocolate liquor, is a quality indicator in chocolate bars.) In a classic Hershey’s bar, the main ingredients are sugar and milk, not cacao.

By contrast, top-notch chocolate bars contain a minimum of 63 percent cacao. But such quality has its price. A single chocolate bar from Marie Belle, an established chocolatier in SoHo, costs \$15.

For chocolate connoisseurs, steep prices are part of the deal. And judging by the growing number of chocolate boutiques opening in the last decade, first in Europe and then the United States, this market is no small niche. In New York City alone, dozens of chocolatiers have flourished for those with the taste, and the wallets, for such delicacies. Some are impressive, even monumental, like Jacques Torres Chocolate, a factory and small shop in Brooklyn where customers can watch chocolates being made from scratch.

Others, like Kee’s Chocolates, in the West Village, are simple and unpretentious. Since opening in 2002, this tiny shop has made its superb truffles on the premises, its bare kitchen and customer space separated only by a wooden counter. The sweet smell of fresh

“THE REASON I CAME IN WAS THE DESIGN. THE REASON I COME BACK IS THE TASTE.”

chocolate welcomes everyone, but only a handful of customers can fit in at one time.

On a Tuesday morning, a petite and serious-looking Asian woman is busy working the shiny chocolate paste into plastic molds before the mixture gets too cold. This is Kee, who, unlike most successful chocolatiers, tends to her store in person. She takes two minutes to explain that “truffles are hand-rolled and bonbons are piped,” meaning they are made with molds. While she talks, her assistant whisks a bowl of warm, colorless cacao butter that will later become part of almond truffles.

While Kee’s is known for its truffles and bonbons, Marie Belle is famous for its hot chocolate and colorful ganaches. Located in SoHo, this ample French-looking store is nothing like Kee’s. Marie Belle is filled with the poignant smell of a rich, intense bittersweet chocolate that comes from a salon in the back room. Knowledgeable saleswomen in aprons wait behind the counters to address every question. Kate Lushpenko, for example, explains the difference between a ganache and a bonbon: “A ganache has chocolate with cream,” rather than milk, and is handmade. Before her, dozens of carefully painted ganaches filled with sophisticated flavors like caipirinha and lavender, look like pieces of art. Who has the courage to eat such gems?

From the velvety chocolate boxes to the old-fashioned tin for cocoa powder, everything is carefully designed, and customers take notice. June Wang, who works in midtown Manhattan but comes to Marie Belle for special occasions, recalls her first visit: “The reason I came in was the design. The reason I come back is the taste.”

For centuries, before Hernan Cortes landed

in Central America, the Mayans and Aztecs had been using cacao beans to prepare a thick beverage known as kakaw. Kakaw was not sweet and silky, but bitter, lumpy and laden with several hot spices. As early as the fifth century, priests used it in rituals; rulers and the wealthy served the foamy beverage at wedding ceremonies and other festivities, and members of the elite were buried along with vessels containing kakaw to keep them nourished on their journey.

“The drinking of chocolate was confined to the Aztec elite,” say historians Sophie and Michael D. Coe, in *The True History of Chocolate*. “Chocolate drinks occupied the same niche as expensive French champagne does in our own culture.”

When the Spanish learned of the cacao plant in the 1520s, they named it *Theobroma cacao*, or “food of the Gods.” They were fascinated by its flavor and invigorating qualities; many thought it was an aphrodisiac. But the beverage was too bitter for the European palate. When introduced in the Old World, chocolate underwent a transformation; it was sweetened with cane sugar, flavored with familiar spices like cinnamon and served hot. But as in the Aztec empire, chocolate remained a drink of the elite and was only used by royal families, the nobility and the wealthiest merchants.

It wasn’t until the Industrial Revolution, when the process of grinding the cacao was done by steam-powered machines, that the drink became more affordable and widely used.

By the mid-19th century, John Cadbury was producing his own cocoa powder and chocolate products. His British company figured out how to extract cocoa butter from the beans, melt it and mix it with the cocoa pow-

CHOCOLATE VOLCANO (PRÓSPERO VELAZCO)**INGREDIENTS:**

Bittersweet chocolate	1 lb.
Butter	1 lb.
Egg yolks	8
Eggs	8
Sugar	1/4 cup
Flour or cocoa powder	1 oz.

DIRECTIONS:

Melt the chocolate bar and butter in a saucepan at a very low temperature, stirring continuously. In a separate bowl, mix the yolks, eggs and sugar; beat until it grows to twice its volume. Slowly pour egg mixture into chocolate. Add the sifted flour (of, if you prefer, cocoa powder, to avoid a white appearance). Place the mix into buttered and floured four-ounce molds. Bake at 400° F for 8 minutes. Do not overbake. Serve with raspberry sorbet or a dulce de leche sauce (a mix of dulce de leche and heavy cream).

Serves: 16

BITE-SIZE CHOCOLATE ALMOND BROWNIES (JACQUES TORRES AND *MrChocolate.com*)**INGREDIENTS:**

Almond paste	1 3/4 cup + 2 tablespoons
Eggs	5
Butter, melted	9 tablespoons
Cocoa powder	Scant 1/2 cup or 7 tablespoons

DIRECTIONS:

Use a stand mixer with paddle to mix the almond paste. Gradually add the eggs, one at a time. Add the cocoa powder. Warm the melted butter and add to the mixture, stirring until completely combined. Butter and flour mini-muffin tins (if you prefer, you can use paper liners for muffin tins). Fill each cavity to 1/8-inch from the top. Bake at 350° F for 8 minutes. Do not overbake, or the brownies will be dry.

Serves: 24 brownies



“WE STRONGLY BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT COCOA IS GROWN RESPONSIBLY WITHOUT ABUSIVE LABOR PRACTICES.”

der to create a new, “more pure” form of chocolate: the chocolate bar. By 1897 Cadbury had created the first milk chocolate bar, mixing cacao with milk powder, sugar and cacao butter. Around the same time, chocolate bonbons were exchanged as tokens of love on Valentine’s Day. Today, people in the United States spend nearly \$1.1 billion on candies for Valentine’s Day.

Most of the cacao consumed in the United States comes from West Africa, particularly the Ivory Coast and Ghana. These two countries grow and export almost 70 percent of the cacao consumed worldwide. Considering that the chocolate industry is largely dominated by transnational corporations like Cadbury’s, Mars, Hershey’s and Nestlé, with Hershey’s and M&M/Mars controlling two-thirds of the U.S. market, chances are that the chocolate products many Americans enjoy have their roots in slave and child labor.

A 2002 survey conducted by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in West Africa concluded that 64 percent of the children working in the fields were below the age of 14, and an estimated 284,000 children had to perform hazardous activities, like working with machetes and applying pesticides without protective equipment. Some of the 12,000 children working on these farms were living without families.

Pressured by lawmakers, the Chocolate Manufacturers Association signed an agreement promising to introduce voluntary measures to certify that no abusive child labor was used in the growing and processing of cocoa beans. Introduced by Senator Tom

Harkin, Democrat of Iowa, and Representative Eliot Engel, Democrat of New York, in 2001, and monitored by nongovernmental organizations like Free the Slaves and the International Labor Rights Fund, the “Harkin-Engel Protocol” calls for preliminary surveys to assess the problem and the implementation of a monitoring system that certifies that no slave workers are used in any step of chocolate production. The deadline for the implementation of these industrywide standards of certification was July 1, 2005.

But the deadline arrived without a certification system in place. “We are not really happy that they postponed the deadline,” says Marc Levin, development director for Free the Slaves, who adds that he is hopeful that the industry will continue working toward the elimination of slavery. “There has been enough progress so far.” Other NGOs are less optimistic.

No everyone agrees. “We would have seen much more progress if they were really interested in making changes,” says Bama Athreya, deputy director of the International Labor Rights Fund, referring to the chocolate multinationals. She points out that these corporations have total control of the fields; they set prices and always work with the same buyers. If the appropriate contracts were in place between farmers, buyers and corporations, she argues, slavery and child labor could be easier to prosecute. The rights fund has filed a lawsuit in United States District Court against Nestlé, accusing the company of “involvement in the trafficking, torture, and forced labor of children” who work in the cacao fields of Africa. In published reports, Nestlé declined to comment about the suit. A spokes-



woman added, “We strongly believe it is important to make sure that cocoa is grown responsibly without abusive labor practices.”

With or without child labor, farmers in West Africa have not benefited from the “democratization” of cacao. Though the production of cocoa beans has grown at record levels in the last four years, bean prices in world markets have declined by almost 25 percent, according to the International Cocoa Organization’s 2003-2004 Annual Report, in part because overall world consumption of chocolate has increased only one-half of 1 percent annually since 1995, says the World Cocoa Foundation.

Some chocolatiers like Marie Belle and Valrhona, in France, have decided to use only

cacao from Latin America’s cooperative farms. The socially conscious customer has some Fair Trade options in Dagoba Organic, Divine chocolate, Art Bars, Maya Gold or Omanhene, all produced by cooperatives whose workers are fairly paid. But it’s hard to say if consumers know or care much about this issue.

What is clear is how broad the fascination with chocolate is. “It’s ancient,” says Próspero Velazco. “It’s sexy, it’s an aphrodisiac, it’s one of the pleasures of life.” Having created the dessert menu at restaurants like Novecento, in SoHo, and Remi, in midtown Manhattan, he knows that every menu must include at least one chocolate dessert. “And it’s always the one that sells the most.” D&S

NO MATCH FOUND:

Flunking out@eharmony.com

BY KORI LYNCH

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STURNIOLO

PHOTOGRAPH BY HELEN CHU

As “Seinfeld” went to a commercial break, happy couples appeared on screen, proclaiming that their search for long-term companionship had ended; they had found their soulmates. These happy men and women attributed their success to eHarmony.com, an online dating site that matches people based on an extensive individual test.

Dr. Neil Clark Warren, the founder of the company, joined the couples and told viewers that eHarmony’s 29 dimensions could lead to strong long-term relationships.

I changed the channel.

After all, this was my typical Saturday evening, gorging on reduced-fat Oreo cookies and watching reruns with my younger sister.

“Do they really think they can put this garbage over on people?” I asked my sister. Could placing a doctor or psychologist in a commercial get gullible people to sign onto their site?

“You’re too pessimistic and cynical,” my sister responded and dared me to take the test.

I couldn’t take that dare sitting down... Well, actually I could, but I decided to simultaneously shut her up and satisfy my own curiosity: I took the eHarmony test.

This was no small thing. The test took an hour and a half and many Oreos to complete—more than 400 questions wanting to know things like what qualities I was looking for in an ideal mate, how I described myself and what I thought about my relationship with my parents. The test includ-

ed a series of word associations testing what I felt would best describe me. As my cursor finally scrolled over my last answer, I began to feel anxious. Whom would Warren’s system match me with?

I was holding my breath and suddenly, as I stared at the computer screen, I let out a sudden gasp.

“Unable to match you at this time,” read the screen. I didn’t realize this test was pass/fail... and I had apparently failed.

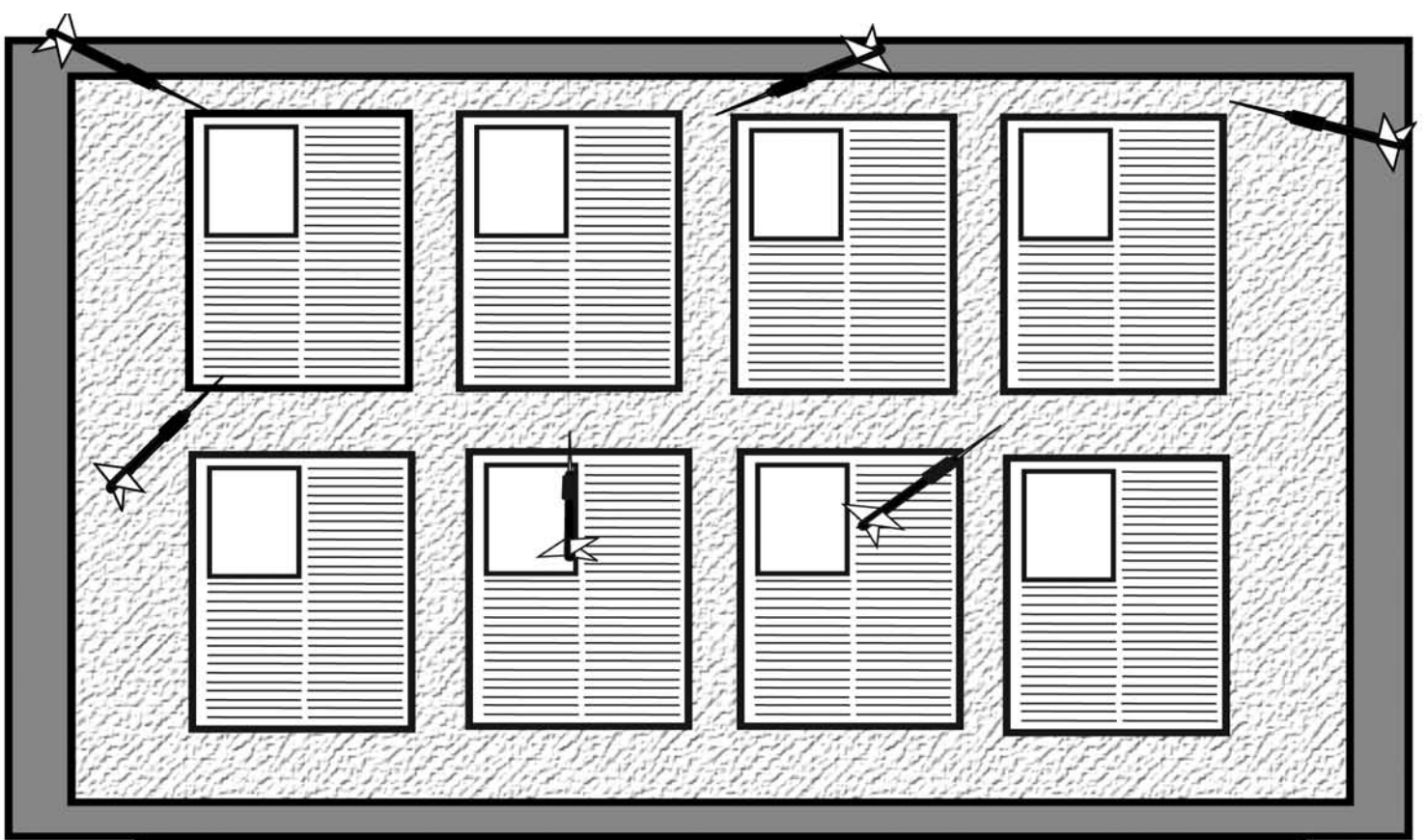
How could that happen? What makes me incompatible with the human race, or at least the human race registered with eHarmony?

“Man, they didn’t even want your money,” said my sister as I stared blankly at the screen.

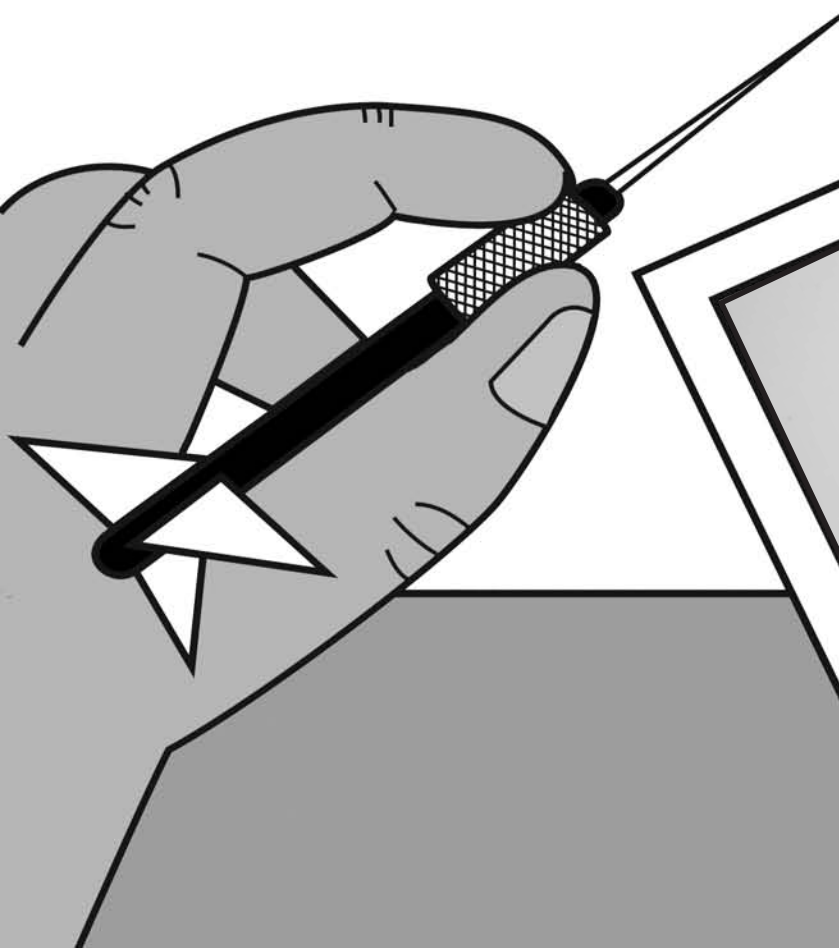
What a way to spend a Saturday night! I felt myself going into a panic state as I tried to guess what inadequacies eHarmony felt I possessed.

Warren, a psychologist, and his eHarmony site have continued to push the trend of online dating sites that rely on in-depth personality tests to provide what they say is more sophisticated match-making. Introduced in the latter part of 2000, eHarmony has built upon the successes of Yahoo! and Match.com, which have allowed users to comb through thousands of profiles to match themselves.

In eHarmony’s more selective approach, relationship experts compile questions. People who pass the eHarmony test then have the option of shelling out \$49.95 to meet their ideal matches.



eHarmony.com Match Board



Age: 23; New York, NY

About Me I'll tell you
First Name: Woman S
Gender: Single -
Marital Status: Single -
Body type: Avera
Height: 5'3"
Eyes: Br
Hair: D

About me and my match
My personality
View my Photos (1)

“UNABLE TO MATCH YOU AT THIS TIME,” READ THE SCREEN.
I DIDN’T REALIZE THIS TEST WAS PASS/FAIL...
AND I HAD APPARENTLY FAILED.

Those who flunk, like me, are not asked to pay.

As days passed, I became increasingly irritated by the results of my test. I cringed every time I saw an eHarmony commercial and found myself shouting obscenities at Warren whenever he appeared on television. I began asking my friends and family if something in my personality was unattractive. I don’t believe I possess ogre-like qualities that will send guys off quivering in fear. I consider myself easygoing and likable.

Too much was at stake for me to have to guess what was wrong with me. There had to be some logical explanation as to why I didn’t fit within eHarmony’s model.

So I called eHarmony.com to find out and, eventually, was connected with Joe Zink, a spokesman, who explained to me the criteria used in formulating eHarmony’s test. Zink said Warren’s test was based on predictors of compatibility by 5,000 married couples. He went on to say the test has internal validity checks to measure if responses given are truthful.

What about my particular case? According to the site, one in five people who take the test are left wanting—not that this made me feel any better. Zink led me through the various circumstances that could have knocked me out of the box.

First, I did meet the age requirement. People must be at least 21 to take the test.

Next, he said, test-takers sometimes just click through the profile without paying close enough attention to their answers. That didn’t fit my memory of how I took the test; I remembered being extremely focused as I answered the questions.

Zink then noted that the profile evaluation process “scales for depression.”

Uh-oh. Where was this leading? Did I flunk because the combination of working and attending school full-time has left me stressed-out?

Whatever its criteria, eHarmony.com has given its competitors a run for their money. Match.com launched Chemistry.com, a new site whose indi-

vidual tests are based on the scientific research of an anthropologist, Helen Fisher. A spokesperson for the company whom I spoke with before the launch of the site, Kathleen Roldan, said what will distinguish Chemistry.com from its competitors is that two people are matched through complementary traits and, once a suitable match has been found, Chemistry.com will set up face-to-face meetings.

According to Roldan, potential matches are based on the feedback given to the system by the user, based on the personal interactions. Besides Fisher’s work, Chemistry’s profile is based on years of research by the Match.com team, which examines aspects of human attraction.

When asked if Chemistry.com will be as selective as eHarmony, Roldan noted that it would depend on how fast new members sign up.

“It’s getting the word out to the Match database. The more people you have in the system, the more matches you’ll have,” she said. The site will also incorporate visual and audio data in their profiles to judge participants’ responses to photos and voice impressions.

Dave Evans, an expert on online dating who posts a blog about the latest news and trends, predicts that profile testing will continue to grow and evolve. He noted that online users are broken down into two distinct categories of “casual” and “serious” daters. Evans said “serious” daters benefit greatly from taking profile tests. “Serious” daters are the ones who say, “I’m willing to take the extra effort to meet someone.”

So that’s where I wound up—a “casual” dater who took a “serious” test. That’s what’s wrong with me!

Zink of eHarmony.com said those who were not selected had the option of retaking the test again through eHarmony’s customer care department. I won’t. I’ve come to terms my test result.

Besides I’ve heard speed-dating is much more fun. D&S



IN SEARCH OF THE SANDMAN

Sleep Disorders Plague Students

BY IRENE STARYGINA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DONG SUN CHOI AND DAVID STURNIOLO

Anna, a 20-year-old journalism student at Baruch College, stared blankly at the physics final in front of her. She tried her best to focus, but the perpetual haze that inhabited her head and floated around every single object in the room was making her fail. The entire weekend before the exam, she had not been able to sleep. Numbers and formulas had haunted her stress-ridden mind.

Desperate for rest, she finally ripped open a box of Simply Sleep Tylenol and gulped down two blue pills. Minutes went by: 10, 20, 60. The agonizing wakefulness persisted. Too tired to study the label, she took one more and finally drifted off to sleep by dawn.

For Anna, trouble sleeping was not uncommon.

Juggling college, work and an internship kept her stress level high, and a continual flow of caffeine fueled her exhausted body.

The National Institutes of Health estimates that more than 70 million people in the United States have trouble sleeping, and it is a chronic disorder for 42 million. Insomnia affects an estimated 20 to 40 percent of young adults, and females are twice as likely as males to suffer from sleep disorders.

The most common disorders are insomnia, or trouble falling asleep; sleep apnea, a condition in which a person stops breathing for short periods of time; and restless-leg syndrome, a disorder in which legs move constantly while falling asleep.

Young adults are often afflicted with sleep problems due to hectic schedules that cause them

“THERE IS A HAZARD OF TAKING SLEEP MEDICATION ON A REGULAR BASIS.”

to stay up all night, upsetting their biological clocks. Their bodies are then programmed to stay up late and are slower to adjust to a normal schedule. Another contributing factor in sleep disorders is depression, which prevents the mind from relaxing.

Dr. David Sitt, a professor of psychology at Baruch, says stress and anxiety are probably the largest factors in sleep problems. He says most sleep disorders are not genetic, but learned.

“When someone has one bad night of sleep, they keep worrying that they are not going to fall asleep the next night, and develop a habit,” he says.

Young adults in high school and college are becoming increasingly reliant on artificial substances to help them sleep. According to Medco Health Solutions, a managed-care company, prescriptions for sleeping aids for people under the age of 20 increased by 85 percent between 2000 and 2004. The drastic increase occurred even though these drugs are not approved by the FDA for children under the age of 18.

Sleep medication prescriptions for adults doubled in the same time period, according to Medco. In 2004, nearly 3 percent of people between the ages of 20 and 44 took sleeping pills. “Although the elderly are still the most frequent users of sleeping aids, the evidence found in this study shows that younger adults and children are starting to use these medications with even greater frequency,” says Robert Epstein, Medco’s chief medical officer.

In the past, sleep aids such as Ambien and Sonata, which are not approved for long-term use and carry the risk of dependency, dominated the sleep-aid market. Now, with the introduction of heavily marketed Lunesta, the first prescription sleeping pill claiming to be safe for long-term use, and a slew of new “non-addictive” over-the-counter pills, the temptation to rely on a pill for

regular sleep is undeniable.

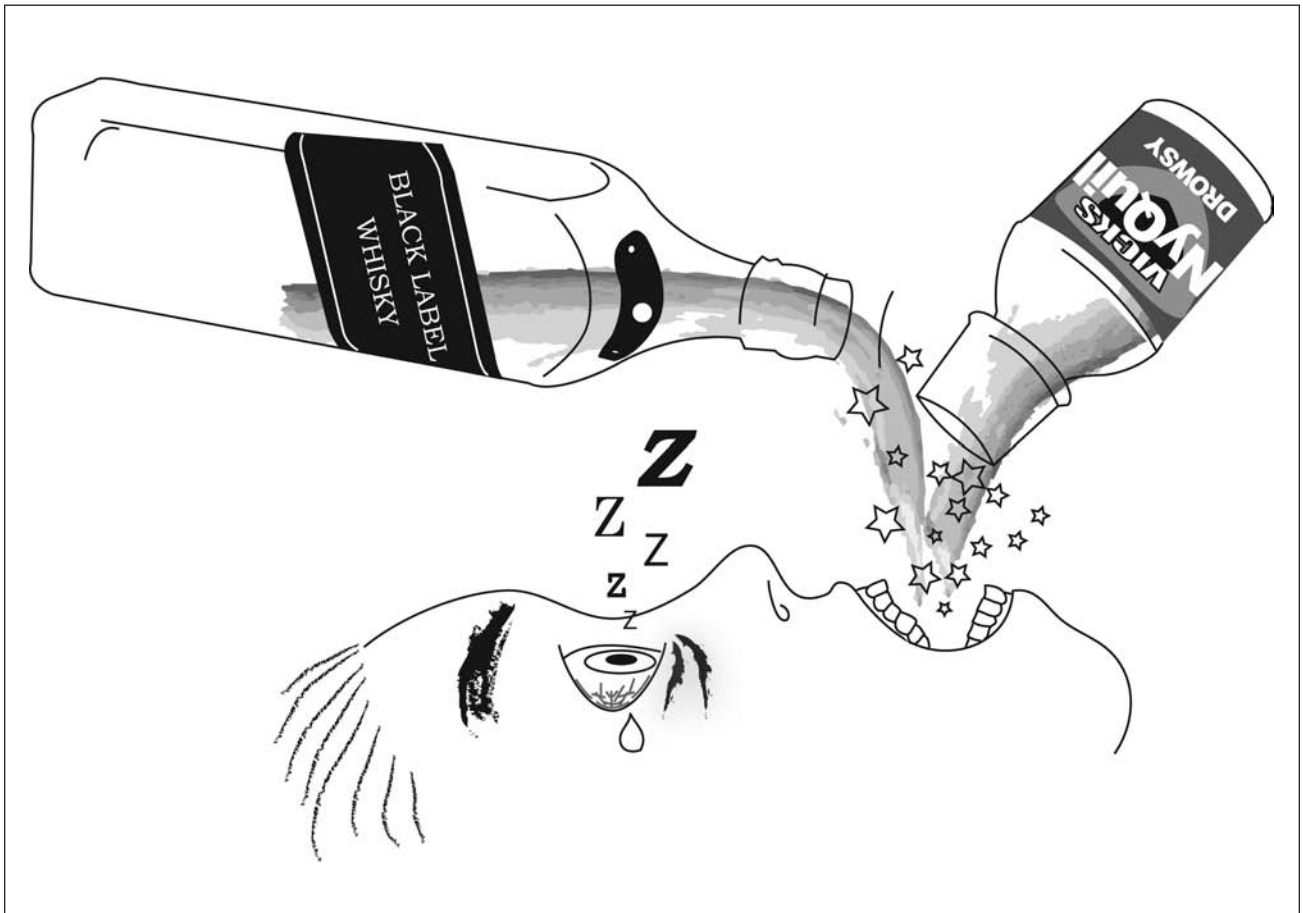
However, experts still worry about the possibility of psychological dependence. “There is a hazard of taking sleep medication on a regular basis,” Sitt says, explaining that even if there is no chemical dependency associated with these new drugs, a person who regularly uses them is bound to develop a psychological addiction. Stress and catchy advertisements are a potent combination. According to TNS Media Intelligence, a provider of advertising information, \$84.7 million was spent on marketing for Lunesta in the first five months after its release.

It is widely believed in the medical community that sleep aids alone do not significantly increase sleep. Moreover, as in Anna’s case, they often impair performance the next day.

Studies by Sepracor, which makes Lunesta, show that it reduces the time it takes to fall asleep only by 15 minutes. Lunesta’s label cautions that at least eight hours should be devoted to sleep when taking the drug. However, this is nearly impossible for many new users of sleep aids because they still experience anxiety about falling asleep and have to get up early in the morning.

Consequently, they wake up groggy and feeling high, as Anna did. Even more alarming is the increased experimentation with non-traditional methods of getting sleep. Many young adults, afraid to commit to a sleeping pill, turn to anything on the market that can make them sleepy, such as NyQuil, a cold treatment, and Tylenol PM. Alcohol is also popular for its sedative qualities, and a drink before bed for an insomniac is not uncommon. Sitt emphatically states, “Over-the-counter sleep medicines are very unsafe to use,” adding that they are too accessible for people of all ages, most of whom fail to adhere to the dosage amounts and do not know how to use them properly.

IT IS HARD TO RETURN TO A NORMAL SLEEP PATTERN AFTER RELYING ON SLEEP AIDS.



Contrary to popular belief, Sitt says, NyQuil and other medicines that cause drowsiness affect the quality of one's sleep in a negative way. He says they reduce REM sleep, a part of the sleep cycle believed to be responsible for making you feel rested and refreshed. Sitt says it is hard to return to a normal sleep pattern after relying on sleep aids. He advocates cognitive therapy in treating sleep disorders and says the majority of sleep problems can be resolved through behavior modification.

There are natural ways to help sleepless-

ness. Psychologists agree that food should not be eaten three hours before bedtime and television should be avoided an hour before. Frequent exercise and replacing caffeine with all-natural products such as chamomile tea and valerian root also helps. Earplugs and eye masks can significantly help prolong sleep after sunrise.

Getting a good night's sleep, Sitt says, cannot come from chemicals, but from understanding what causes sleeplessness and not worrying too much about sleep. D&S

BON APPÉTIT

What's Left to Eat but Each Other?

BY ALANA ALLETTE

ILLUSTRATION BY ZON L. CHU

Let's all sit down, relax and take a big bite out of... each other. With the growing interest in eating wisely, nutritionists and other scientists are uncovering more and more foods that are unhealthy for us. As we look at the list of things that we can't or are not supposed to eat, we have to ask ourselves: what's left to eat but each other?

Jonathan Swift had the right idea. If humans were to eat each other, a lot of problems, including nutritional ones, would disappear. The majority of foods on the U.S. market are too salty, too fattening or too something else. Some are the culprits behind a slew of physical ailments. Beef and pork can give us tapeworms if not cooked properly. Even if we prepare beef right, we can still get mad cow disease. If we eat chicken, we can get salmonella. Consuming other fowl might give us avian flu. Frying starchy foods could cause cancer, *The New York Times* reported.

So what does that leave but vegetables and some carbohydrates? Veggies are supposed to be healthy but are often packed with chemicals and pesticides that can wreak havoc. Carbohydrates are fattening and can cause obesity. So much food is filled with so many preservatives that it is as if

we are embalming ourselves for our inevitable and not-so-far-off tombs. So why risk it?

Instead, why not take a big bite out of a human carcass? Humans are supposed to be the most toxic animal alive, but that's not true. After we have digested all the good nutrients from these foods, we let out the bad when we defecate. Thus, if we eat humans right after they egest, we would be getting nutrients valuable to our bodies.

Accept this approach to life and diet and we have a good reason to keep abortion clinics open—as a source of food. Human fetuses are filled with proteins and minerals that can sustain life. Embryos are supposed to be good for your skin, general health and cure asthma. They are a good source of minerals that could be found in their bones, as well as mucopolysaccharide, which is good for our metabolism.

Think about it. If we get over the fact that they stink and they are human, we can benefit. Is it any different than eating other animals' carcasses? Once we get over the smell, we have the makings a great soup or stew—good, nutritious meat that could be found nationwide.

Even unwanted babies would make a succulent meal, with proper preparation. They are not

yet tainted with the poisonous foods of our world. The most desirable, of course, would be those babies who have been breast-fed. And if they are force-fed healthy nutrients to keep them alive, what is to stop us from benefiting from them? Their flesh, so cuddly and soft, would make nice tender meat, so sumptuous, satisfying, and yes, good for you.

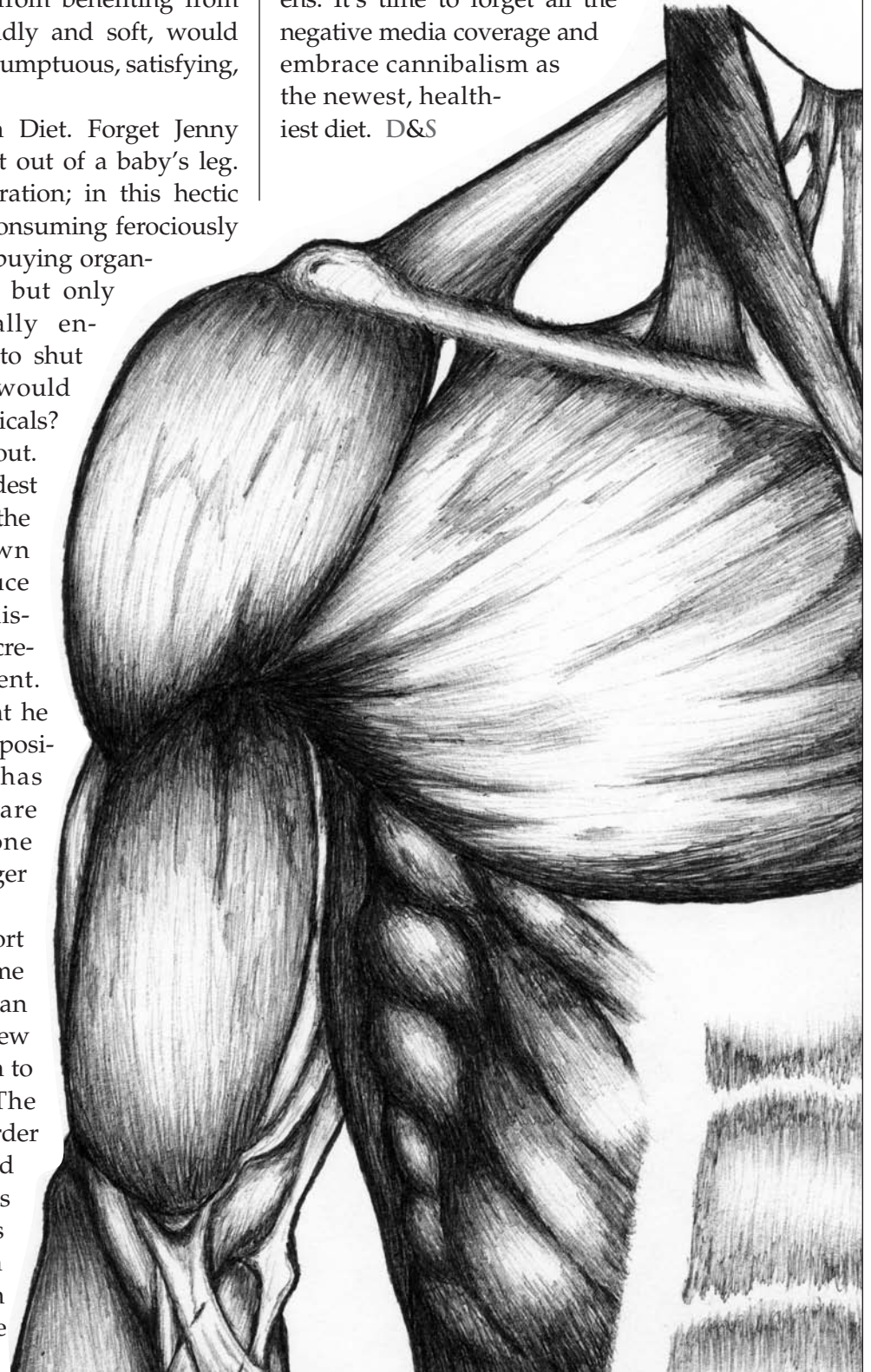
Forget the South Beach Diet. Forget Jenny Craig. Take a nice lean cut out of a baby's leg. Don't worry about moderation; in this hectic world, we all need to be consuming ferociously at all times. Growing and buying organic foods would not help but only encourage the chemically enhanced produce growers to shut down. And then what would they do with all their chemicals? It's frightening to think about.

Jonathan Swift, in "A Modest Proposal," suggested that the Irish poor eat their own babies. This would reduce crime, spread wealth, discourage child abuse and create a cleaner environment. People were disgusted that he would make such a proposition. But the world has evolved since then. We are ready to start eating one another; it should no longer be taboo.

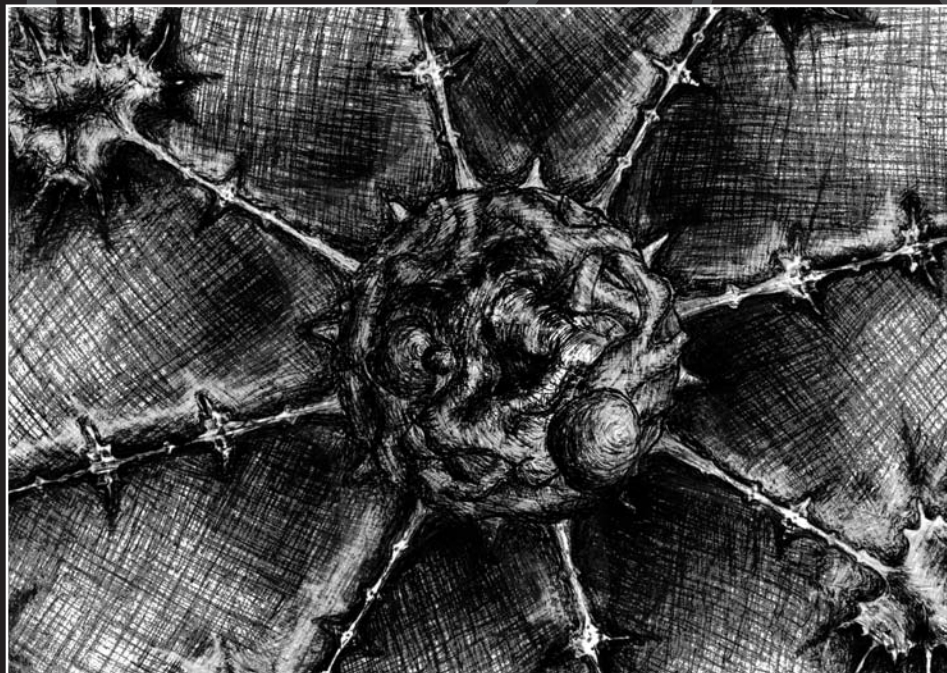
The only confirmed report of modern cannibalism came in October 1972, when an Uruguayan rugby team flew across the Andes mountain to Chile to play a game. The plane crashed near the border between Argentina and Chile. After several weeks of no food, the survivors decided to eat the frozen bodies of the deceased in order to survive. They were

rescued more than two months later.

Cannibalism has been described as a form of sexual perversion and as psychological revenge. Now let us consider it as nutrients for *Homo sapiens*. It's time to forget all the negative media coverage and embrace cannibalism as the newest, healthiest diet. D&S



IDEAS & ISSUES



„LIGHT ON THE CUTTING EDGE“
STEROIDS STRIKE OUT
THE BONDS THAT TIE
DRIVING ON BEANS

LIGHT ON THE CUTTING EDGE

Laser Surgery Goes Internal

BY SHERRY MAZZOCCHI

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZON L. CHU AND BRIAN M. SIERRA

Anna S., a patient in her late 50s, was in danger of suffocating. She suffered from a chronic condition of Recurrent Respiratory Papillomatosis, or benign growths, on her larynx and trachea. She had undergone more than 300 procedures to remove the growths.

"They kept growing back. They grow like weeds," says Dr. Jamie Koufman, her otolaryngologist.

This condition is routinely treated using a CO2 laser, which would destroy the growths, but that was impossible this time. Because surgical lasers employ a rigid arm, internal use is feasible only when a clear line of sight exists between the fixed beam of light and the affected tissue.

"The growths were so big, you couldn't see into her larynx," says Koufman, the director of the Center for Voice and Swallowing Disorders at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, in Winston-Salem, NC. "Her case was the worst of the worst."

Laser surgery has been around since the '70s. But until recently, because lasers had a rigid structure, they were employed mostly for surface procedures, in dermatology or ophthalmology. Now, new fiber-optic technology has created the possibility for using lasers internally, with a flexible

tube that can be inserted into the body, much like the endoscope and arthroscope used for other procedures. After developing an omnidirectional mirror (which can reflect light from every angle), MIT researchers found that they could wrap the mirror around the interior of a thin hollow core fiber and the light would reflect with very little absorption.

The flexible fibers can go around corners and can provide access to areas of the body that were formerly difficult or impossible to reach using a laser with a rigid arm. "It makes for a much faster procedure," says Einat Harel, spokesperson for OmniGuide Inc., which developed the technology. "This basically allows doctors to switch surgeries from the O.R. to the office."

OmniGuide was founded by Dr. Yoel Fink, when he was an MIT graduate student, and faculty members John Joannopoulos, Edwin Thomas and Uri Kolodny of MIT's Sloan School of Management. OmniGuide develops and manufactures optical fibers with medical, industrial and telecommunications applications. "Traditional lasers would melt fibers," says Stephen Johnson, an MIT physics professor and consultant to OmniGuide. "Exotic fibers are big markets, and the nearest-term application is for surgery."



“THIS BASICALLY ALLOWS DOCTORS TO SWITCH SURGERIES FROM THE O.R. TO THE OFFICE.”

The hollow core of the fiber is surrounded by layers of different materials to form a photonic band gap, a structure that prevents the propagation of a specific frequency range of light. The optical equivalent of a semiconductor, it enables light to produce effects that are impossible with conventional optics.

The brilliant wings of the South American Blue Morpho butterfly are a classic example of a naturally occurring photonic band gap. Isaac Newton examined the colors of insects in his classic *Opticks*, but it wasn't until recently that scientists understood how the structures of the scales produce an iridescent effect. Ridges in the scales create a strong reflection in a specific wavelength range. The irregularity of the ridge height, tapering of the scales and two types of lattice structures combine to form a highly reflective, diffractive and glittering effect.

Laser is an acronym, representing Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. In essence, lasers emit a tight beam of a specific wavelength (or hue) of light. The stimulated emission is caused by light—specifically photons—being passed backward and forward, hitting mirrors at either end of the laser. A photon will knock into an electron, which causes the electron to emit a new photon. These two photons prompt more electrons to release further photons, causing a chain reaction where the photons produce a powerful beam of light that is not scattered or diffused like an ordinary light bulb.

Lasers work as surgical tools because living cells are approximately 75 percent water.

Tumors are destroyed as lasers evaporate water in the cells. Among the advantages that laser surgery offers are that the incision area is sterilized by the heat, reducing the risk of infection, and certain lasers can cause the blood to clot quickly, providing greater visibility for the surgeon and faster surgical procedures.

Carbon dioxide lasers are capable of removing a thin layer of tissue from the skin. “They have a larger wavelength and are very precise,” says Dr. Chris Holsinger, of the Department of Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

OmniGuide was started in 2000 with funds provided by Ray Stata, chairman of Analog Devices, and Mukesh Chatter, who founded Nexabit Networks, and then sold it to Lucent for \$900 million. Later rounds of venture capital funding were provided by Alliance Technology Ventures, Westbury Partners and Gainsborough Investments. In all, the firm has raised more than \$29.5 million. “We expect to break even in 2007,” says Harel, the spokesperson. They don't, however, have any plans to go public.

OmniGuide received FDA approval for its hollow-core lasers in May 2005. “The laser is used with a flexible endoscope, which acts as a channeling device,” says Harel. “We're giving doctors the same tool they had before, but with a new method of delivery.”

She estimated that the new technology allows doctors to save approximately 30 minutes on each procedure. Each minute can cost up to \$50 to \$60.



**“THIS IS A LASER KNIFE
WE CAN MANIPULATE
AS WE WOULD A SCALPEL.”**

Koufman put the savings rate even higher. “I’ve run the numbers,” she says, “and there’s a cost saving of \$4,000 per procedure.”

Holsinger, who is coordinating the laser project at the MD Anderson Center in Houston, performed the first fiber-optic laser surgeries on cancer patients in September 2005. In preparing for the initial surgery, he says, “we spent a lot of time to come up with a whole new way to manipulate the fiber.” The biggest concern, he says, was patient safety.

Holsinger said that using the new fiber optic laser is intuitive for a surgeon. He described the line-of-sight laser as awkward to use, where the tissue was 25 centimeters from his hands. “Surgeons are used to using instruments, not beams of light,” says Holsinger. “Now everything is just millimeters from your instrument. This is a laser knife we can manipulate as we would a scalpel.”

“It’s a more intuitive tool,” he adds. “Surgeons are much more liable to use it than a line-of-sight laser. It’s adding a lot more options.”

Not only does the new laser provide easier access to the site for surgeons, it causes less tissue trauma, which means less pain and faster healing for the patients.

The fiber was also just recently employed in the first laser-assisted robotic surgery. The fiber, coupled with a robotic arm, transmitted the laser energy to remove a massive cancerous tumor in a patient’s larynx and pharynx. This enabled doctors to avoid an invasive open procedure of the head and neck.

OmniGuide is planning to develop a laser specifically for the area of pulmonology, for lung-cancer patients. Most lung-cancer patients don’t die of cancer. Tumors block airways, which can lead to a build up of secretions that can prompt the onset of pneumonia. “Or patients just suffocate to death. Sometimes there is nothing doctors can do but give patients morphine,” Harel says. Surgeries that are performed on lung cancer patients usually involve removing whole sections of the lung.

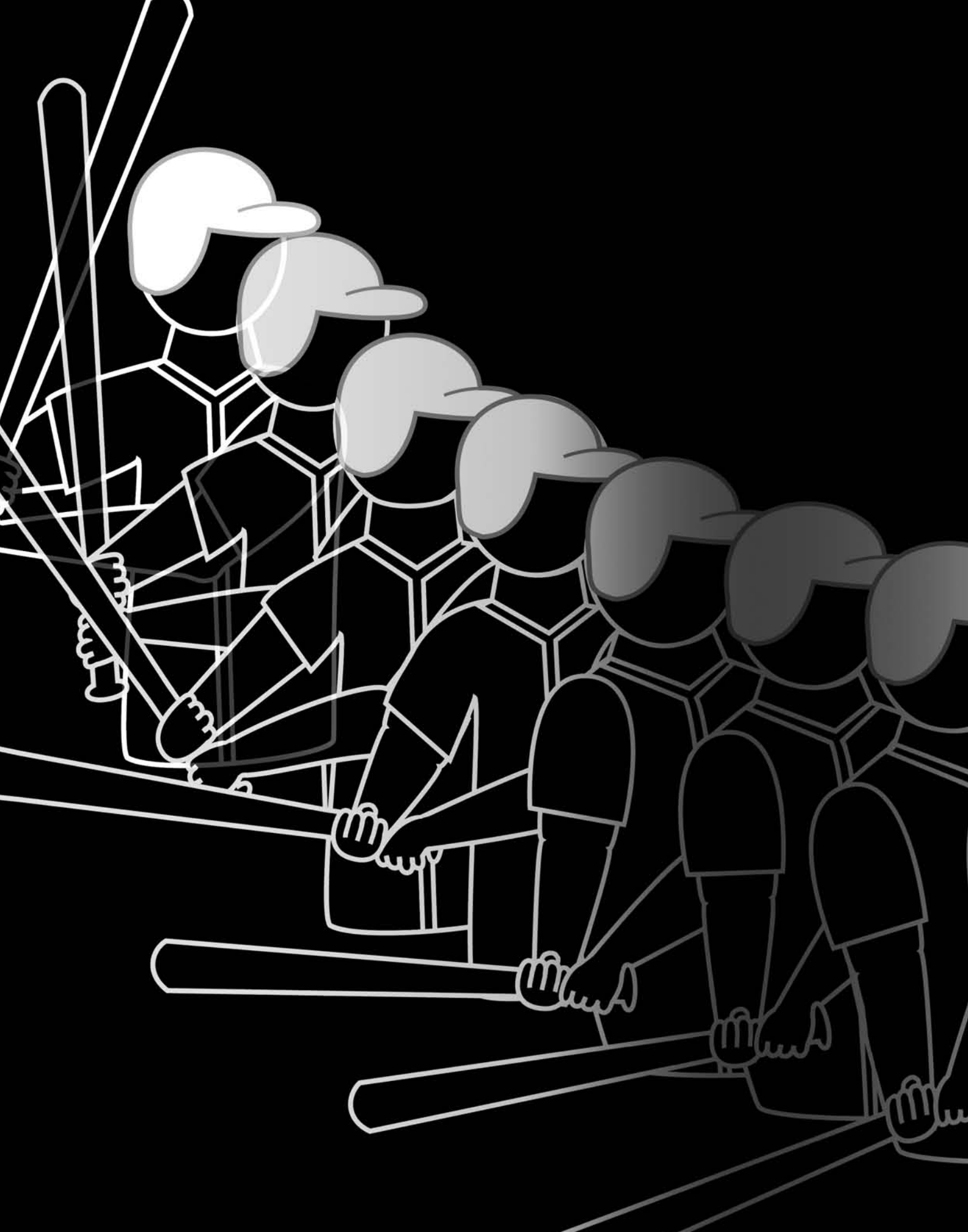
A new hollow-core laser specifically for lungs will allow doctors to insert the endoscope through the mouth and guide it through the breathing path so the laser can eviscerate the tumor, leaving the lungs intact.

Dr. Koufman says Anna’s condition was at such a critical stage that the FDA permitted the use of an experimental treatment that had yet to be approved. “The need for this woman was desperate,” Koufman says.

Anna’s throat and trachea were sprayed with a topical anesthetic. The laser was drawn through her nasal passage down to her breathing pathways, where it had a clear shot at the growths. Anna was awake the entire time.

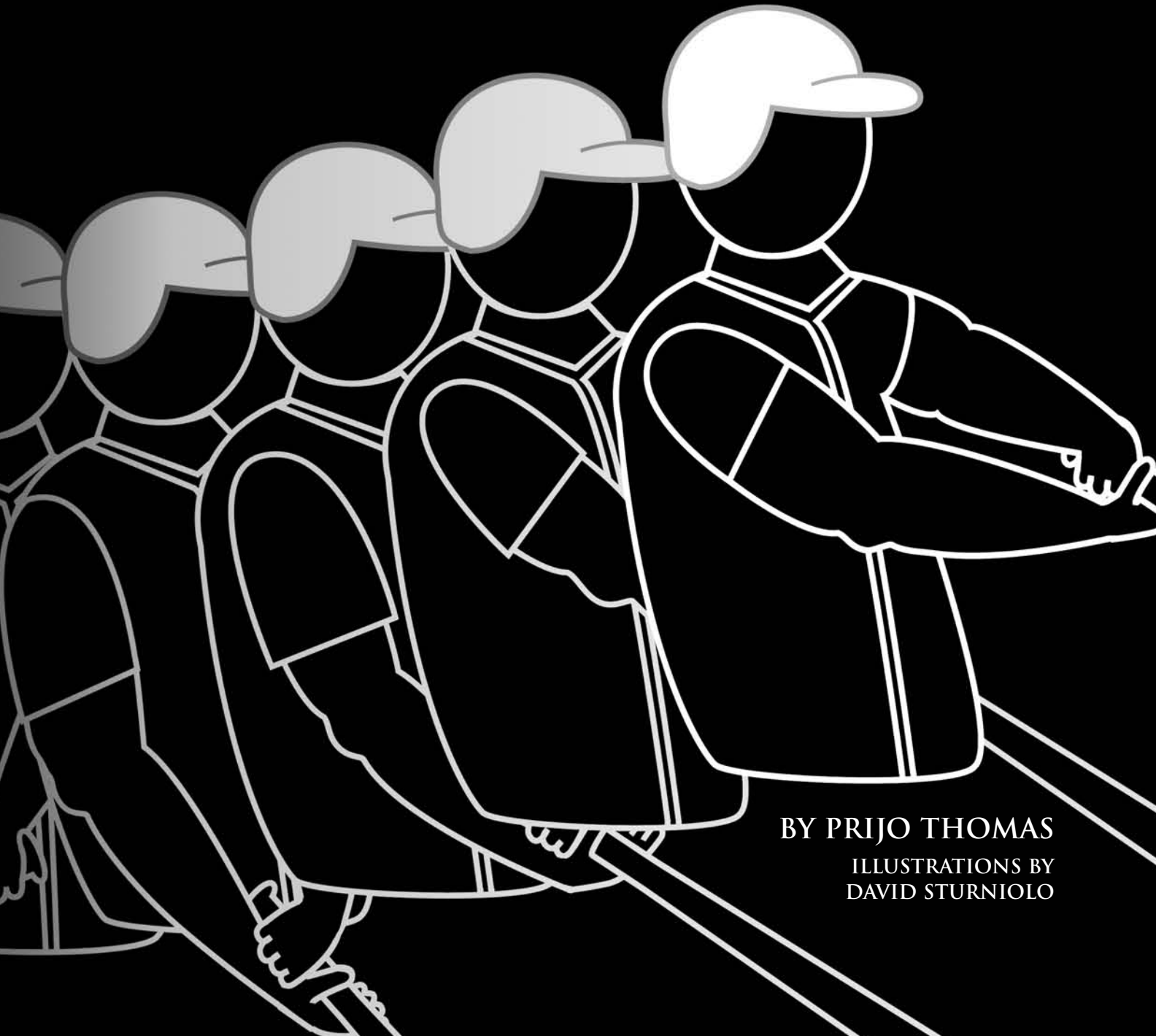
As she describes the new technology, Koufman is reverent. “It was a miracle, like a gift from God,” Koufman says. “We were in deep trouble with that woman. That tool had her name written on it.”

After the procedure, Anna was able to drive herself home and have dinner that night. “And now,” Koufman says, “she’s finally getting better.” D&S



STEROIDS STRIKE OUT

Baseball Finally Takes a Tougher Stand on Substance Abuse



BY PRIJO THOMAS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
DAVID STURNIOLO

When Major League Baseball and its players union announced in November 2005 an agreement to impose tougher penalties on players who use performance-enhancing drugs, they went out of their way to pat themselves on the back.

Commissioner Bud Selig called the agreement "a giant step forward," adding, "It's a very, very proud day for baseball." Union chief Donald M. Fehr said, "This

agreement reaffirms that major league players are committed to the elimination of performance-enhancing substances."

Some of baseball's congressional critics also joined in the lovefest. "This is what I had hoped for all along, for the two private parties to come to an agreement on their own without Congress having to do it for them," said Senator Jim Bunning, a Kentucky Republican and former All-Star pitcher. "Although it's not as tough as I'd



like, it is a definite improvement over current penalties.”

The new policy called for a 50-game suspension for Strike One of steroid use, a 100-game suspension for Strike Two and a lifetime ban for Strike Three. Also, beginning in the 2006-2007 season testing will be done for amphetamines.

Although MLB and its players' association should get credit for agreeing on this stringent policy, whether they should be

bragging about it is another issue. Why it took so long for this agreement to come about and why congressional pressure and the threat of interference was necessary—when other professional sports have had tough policies in place for years—are questions on the minds of numerous fans.

“It’s not complicated,” Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, told baseball officials in September at a con-





“THIS IS WHAT I HAD HOPED FOR ALL ALONG, FOR THE TWO PRIVATE PARTIES TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT ON THEIR OWN WITHOUT CONGRESS HAVING TO DO IT FOR THEM.”

gressional hearing. “All sports fans understand it. I suggest you act and act soon.”

For years, as the dark clouds of steroid use cast shadows over “America’s pastime,” MLB and its players were in a state of denial. An embarrassing moment for the sport, which sums up its official stance, came in March 2005, when congressional investigators called a number of star players to testify, and Mark McGwire refused to answer questions about steroid use, saying under oath: “I’m not here to talk about the past. I’m here to be positive about the subject.”

Charles Yesalis, a professor at Penn State University and a steroid researcher, says the snail-like approach of MLB toward steroids can be seen, and “from an ethical standpoint, they screwed up.” Baseball owed it to the fans and to children to set a good example, he said.

Just days before the season started, Selig appointed former Senate majority leader George J. Mitchell to lead an investigation into steroid use. Some critics were quick to note that Mitchell, rather than being inde-

pendent, has strong ties to baseball. He is chairman of the Walt Disney Company, whose ESPN broadcasts baseball and is creating a reality show starring Barry Bonds, whom many news reports and a recent book have painted as a poster child for steroid abuse. Mitchell is also on the board of the Boston Red Sox.

The National Basketball Association has had an accepted policy since 1999. The National Football League began testing for drugs in 1987 and to disciplining offenders in 1989. So why did it take MLB so long to develop an adequate plan?

The answer is that the MLB thinks it is completely different from the other professional sports—and under the law this has some validity. MLB is the only professional sports organization that has an antitrust exemption under federal law. In 1922, the Supreme Court ruled that MLB was not subject to antitrust laws, reasoning that it was a “public exhibition” and not interstate commerce.

The logic of this is hard to understand, given that teams cross state lines regular-



IF YOU’RE THE ONLY PROFESSIONAL SPORT GRANTED THE SPECIAL STATUS OF AN EXEMPTION, AND YOU DON’T ACT RESPONSIBLY, THEN YOU SHOULD SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES.

ly to play for substantial sums of money. They accumulate money from the sale of tickets, broadcasting rights and merchandising. Yet, because this decision has stood for more than 80 years, baseball has been allowed to function as a self-regulating body.

At congressional hearings in 2005, some members of Congress threatened to take away the exemption if MLB didn't change its ways.

Nor are the owners alone in thinking they are special. The Major League Baseball Players Association, regarded as the most powerful players' union in America, had claimed for years that by not strengthening its steroids policy it was protecting the players' need for privacy.

The MLBPA was formed because players wanted a union that would help them fight baseball's reserve clause, which bound players to one team for life. In the 1970s, after the establishment of the union, the issue was taken to court. The U.S. Supreme Court rejected the players' complaint. An independent arbitrator granted players free agency in December 1975. Through this triumph, the MLBPA developed an air of superiority. In a recent interview, Marvin Miller, the founder and first executive director of the union, said proudly that the MLBPA was an "established union," while the other players' associations were still in "experimental periods."

Requests for comments from the commissioner's office and the MLBPA went

unanswered.

By not acknowledging the extent of the steroids problem, baseball's owners and leaders sacrificed the health of players, hurt the image of the game and forced Congress to step in. Representative Henry Waxman, Democrat of California, said, "It's fair to say—and they told us—that if it hadn't been for Congress looking at this issue, [being] seriously concerned about it, there would not have been the impetus for them to come together."

Not so, says Mr. Miller. He argues that "there has never been a single, controlled test as to the impact of steroids on performance or health," so it was unnecessary for Congress to interfere, because the plan implemented in 2002 was adequate. What Miller says is accurate: no tests done on players have yet confirmed the long-term effects of steroids, but tests have demonstrated the short-term effects and it is widely accepted that not only do steroids enhance performance, but they are also harmful to one's health.

In defending Miller's point of view, the MLBPA attempted ferociously to avoid steroid testing, in contrast to other sports unions.

Now, even with the new policy in place, the controversy is by no means over. Bunning makes this clear: "I and my colleagues will be watching very closely, and if things unravel, we still have tough legislation we can move through Congress." D&S



"THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A SINGLE, CONTROLLED TEST AS TO THE IMPACT OF STEROIDS ON PERFORMANCE OR HEALTH."

THE BONDS THAT TIE

Venezuela's Chávez Plays Geopolitics With His Oil Revenue

BY SILVIA SANTACRUZ

Hugo Chávez, the bombastic anti-American president of Venezuela, is more determined than ever to reap both economic and political benefits from his nation's \$100 million in daily oil revenue.

Since taking office in 1999, Chávez has used Venezuela's impressive oil revenue to provide better health care and education at home, as well as other improvements. These policies have won him a 71 percent approval rating among Venezuelans, according to Datanálisis, a private research company based in Caracas.

This popularity, in turn, has provided a strong base from which to pursue an activist foreign policy, specifically targeting friends and allies throughout Latin America. Most galling to the Bush administration has been Chávez's decade-old friendship with Fidel Castro, a relationship that was lubricated by a 1993 agreement in which Venezuela promised to send 90,000 barrels a day to Cuba over a 15-year period in exchange for 17,000 Cuban doctors.

Now Chávez is using oil to expand what he likes to call a "Bolivarian Revolution," designed to create a Latin American bloc of nations with the clout to counter United States influence in the region.

In Brazil, *Petróleos de Venezuela* and *Petróleo Brasileiro* plan to build a \$3 billion refinery in Brazil's northeastern state of Pernambuco that would process 200,000 barrels of heavy oil. Meanwhile, the presidents of Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela signed an agreement in January to build a pipeline to connect three nations. The 6,000-mile pipeline will cost \$17 billion to \$20 billion and will

be financed by Venezuela's 150 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves.

In Bolivia, the new socialist president, Evo Morales, who took office in January, has expressed support for Chávez and declared himself an ally of the Bolivarian Revolution. Shortly after Morales took office, *Petróleos de Venezuela* opened its first office in Bolivia to exchange diesel for food.

Chávez has also tried flexing some regional muscle by announcing his plans to buy hundreds of millions of dollars in Argentinian and Ecuadorean bonds, which are the lowest-rated bonds in the Americas.

Last year, Venezuela bought \$1 billion of Argentinian bonds. In a news conference after the deal, President Nestor Kirchner of Argentina called Venezuela a "friend investor."

Ecuador's friendship is proving more difficult to buy. In December, Venezuela offered to purchase more than a third of a \$750 million bond issue by Ecuador, but its government demurred. Instead, Ecuador scaled back the bond issue to \$650 million and sold only a \$30 million stake to Venezuela—10 percent of what Chavez had originally offered to buy.

"It wasn't that Venezuela didn't want to buy more," said Economy Minister Magdalena Barreiro at a news conference in Quito in December, after Ecuador sold more than 90 percent of the issue on the New York Stock Exchange. "We decided to sell our bonds to other international investors," she adds.

The bond purchases are viewed in some quarters as a clear gambit to further Venezuela's political

THE BOND PURCHASES ARE VIEWED IN SOME QUARTERS AS A CLEAR GAMBIT TO FURTHER VENEZUELA'S POLITICAL POWER THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

power throughout the region. "What Chávez cares about, and he has said so publicly many times, is making allies that potentially will be a coalition against other world powers," says Ana Eiras, senior policy analyst in international trade and economics at the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based conservative think tank. "So, Chávez is giving Argentina and Ecuador money, which is a very effective way of making allies."

Chávez has denied that his investments in Argentinian and Ecuadorean bonds are intended to gain political influence in those countries. Edgar Hernández, vice minister of development in Venezuela, disagrees. "These purchases of South America debt are part of a policy impelled by Chávez to accelerate the economic and social integration in Latin America," he told Agence France Press.

Another striking component of Venezuela's bond transactions is the size of the investments relative to Venezuela's gross domestic product. Overall, Venezuela has invested 20 percent of its GDP in Argentinian bonds. By contrast, the \$60.9 billion in U.S. Treasury bonds held by China's Central Bank represent only 11 percent of China's GDP. Had the full amount of Chávez's planned investment in Ecuadorean bonds gone through, the purchase would have totaled another 6 percent of Venezuela's GDP.

"A whole number percentage with a country's GDP is a big one," says Jeffrey S. Wiesenfeld, senior advisor of Bernstein Research, an investment management firm in New York. "If the investment is over 5 to 10 percent, it ties Venezuela to Argentina in a big way. Clearly, Chávez is doing the Argentinian government a very big financial favor."

The Consul of Ecuador in New York, Francisco Correa-Bustamente, disputes that statement. "Every public contract is that, public. Ecuador cannot engage its political decisions. The issue will be only an economic agreement."

Also compelling is the fact that the Argentinian

and Ecuadorean bonds, which pay an 8.5 and 9.37 percent annual interest rate, respectively, are among the riskiest in the world. Both countries recently defaulted on international debt payments. According to JP Morgan's most recent investment risk report on Latin American, released in July, Ecuador is the least stable nation in the region to invest, followed by Argentina.

Aside from Venezuela, few large investors have been interested in the investment opportunities held by Ecuadorean or Argentinian issuers. Ecuador offered a \$1.65 billion bond issue on the NYSE and was able to sell most of it to 133 investors from Europe and the United States.

Ecuador was the first Latin American country to default on so-called Brady bonds—named after former U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, who, in association with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, helped to restructure the debt of a number of Latin American countries in the first Bush administration. Brady bonds, nevertheless, are not considered junk bonds because they have collateral in the form of a cash account at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Ecuador defaulted in October 1999, after its banking crisis in 1998. The scope of the catastrophe is hard to forget: half the banks in the country were rendered insolvent, which caused a 200 percent devaluation in the country's currency, the sucre, and a 7 percent decrease in GDP.

Soon afterward, Ecuador stopped making payments on \$13 billion in external debt. Argentina, meanwhile, defaulted in November 2001, after a three-year recession, on \$132 billion debt.

Despite these staggering figures and looming debt, Chávez seems determined to push forward with his Bolivarian Revolution. In a recent speech at the University of San Andres, in La Paz, Bolivia, Chávez said: "We will bury this century the North American Empire. If we cannot do so, the Empire will bury us." D&S

DRIVING ON BEANS

BIODIESEL IS
PICKING UP SPEED

BY TAKENORI KANEDA

ILLUSTRATION BY DONG SUN CHOI

Fat, oils and grease that are used by restaurants and are thrown out each night might help solve a problem. Collected and mixed with alcohols such as methanol or ethanol, a source of alternative energy called biodiesel can be created.

Experiments with biodiesel are nothing new. In 1900, when Rudolf Diesel introduced the diesel engine, he ran it with peanut oil. Now, biodiesel is a registered fuel and fuel additive, approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Its supporters say biodiesel is cleaner-burning and releases less pollution than regular diesel, and the United States can depend less on foreign oil because it uses sources found domestically, such as soybeans.

"It's available, easily accessible and you don't have to change the vehicles in any way," says Brian Roughley of the U.S. Postal Service, which uses about 700 biodiesel vehicles in New York City, as well as 50 compressed-natural-gas vehicles and 34 electronic-run vehicles. Their use "helps the economy and helps the environment and lessens dependency on foreign oil," Roughley says. The Postal Service is also using biodiesel in Miami and San Francisco.

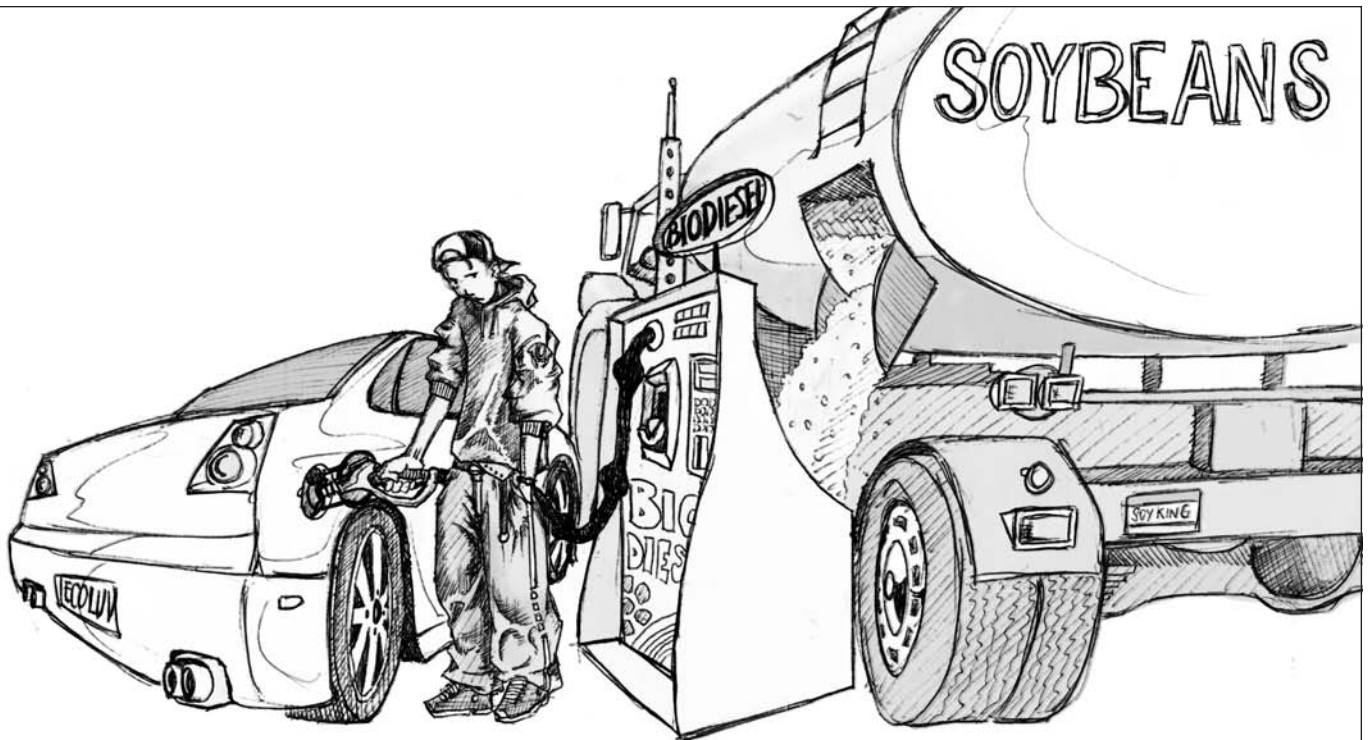
The government is one of the biggest users of biodiesel. In 2001, several military bases started to use B20, a biodiesel blend made of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent petroleum

diesel, and in March 2005 the Navy decided that "non-tactical diesel vehicles" must run on B20 wherever possible. The National Parks Service and various state departments of transportation use biodiesel as well.

Biodiesel can be used unblended, which is known as B100 or pure biodiesel, or it can be mixed with petroleum diesel. B20 is the most popular formula because it does not require any modifications to vehicles with diesel engines.

All levels of biodiesel emit fewer pollutants than diesel fuel, reducing the amount of sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxides released into the air. However, biodiesel is not pollution-free. B20 releases 2 to 4 percent of nitrogen oxides, a contributor to smog formation. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, B100 can reduce certain cancer risks by 94 percent, while B20 will reduce the risk by 27 percent.

Biodiesel has some disadvantages. Pure biodiesel freezes at 25 degrees Fahrenheit, but biodiesel blends do not freeze as easily. Biodiesel is also more expensive than regular diesel.



But the biggest problem is not price or temperature, but accessibility. According to the National Biodiesel Board, a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public about the fuel, about 600 retail stations and 1,500 petroleum distributors nationwide carry biodiesel. The numbers are relatively small compared with the thousands and thousands of gas stations in the United States.

Amber Pearson, a spokesperson for the National Biodiesel Board, says the Midwest uses biodiesel more than other parts of the United States, because 90 percent of biodiesel is made from soybean oil, and a majority of the soybean oil is grown in the Midwest. Yet biodiesel is available in all 50 states.

"New York is growing as a biodiesel state," she says, noting that in addition to the Postal Service, the city of Amherst in upstate New York has been using biodiesel vehicles. Currently, a number of companies are distributing biodiesel or selling it at the pump, and a plant that makes biodiesel is operated in Brooklyn by Environmental Alternatives. NextGen Fuel Inc., a leading developer of new technology and chemistry

for the production of biofuels and fuel additives, has proposed to build the second biodiesel plant in Albany.

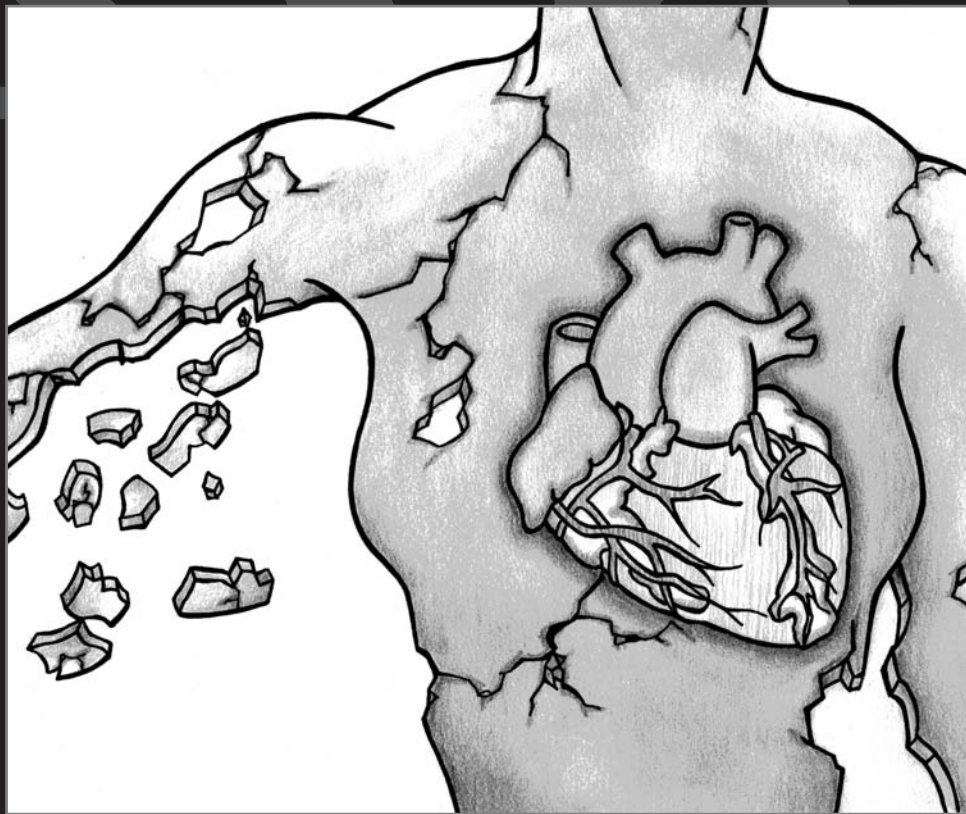
"Going into the biodiesel business also lets us into the bio-heating business," says David Schildwacher of Fred M. Schildwacher & Sons, Inc., a Bronx retailer and distributor of biodiesel. The company has been in the fuel business since 1904, and he says the company started to sell biodiesel in 2002.

Schildwacher says home-heating fuel made of B20 is "a value-added product, far superior to actual gas. All these years they say oil is a dirty product. Well, certainly with 20 percent soybean, it's a preferred value-added product: it's clean, there's no sulfur at all and it reduces foreign sources of oil."

In fact, the company believes biodiesel will sell so well that it is modernizing and modifying its truck-loading rack so it can store B100 and blend it into B20.

"We think that it's going to be a really growing product," Schildwacher says. "That's our reason for making the significant investment to our existing plant." D&S

INSIDE OUT



HAPPILY EVER AFTER
BLOW BY BLOW
LOST CONNECTION
~SCARED OF DYING~
BOYS IN THE 'HOOD
THROW THE BUM OUT!
A SALES CLERK'S LAMENT

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

A Man Escapes, a Nation Collapses

BY DINA ODNOPOROVA

ILLUSTRATION BY FRANKLYN ROA

My mother kisses me goodnight. “Can I stay with you in the kitchen?” I ask.

“Only when you grow up,” she whispers. “Be quiet, we have a guest.”

My mother walks out of the room on tiptoes. I crawl to the cupboard, climb on a chair and reach for the forbidden box that my parents hide on the top shelf. Inside, along with bright liquids, colorful pills and needles, I find a stethoscope, my favorite spying instrument. I put the diaphragm to the wall and listen. Usually I hear my parents’ voices or just dad quietly singing in English.

Mom is always afraid when he sings American songs. “He will be taken away if somebody finds out. It is a secret,” she often tells me.

This is Russia before the collapse or, as we say, “razval.”

But tonight, in addition to the voices of my parents, I hear a creaky, unfamiliar male voice. “I need to ask you for help,” the stranger whispers to my parents. “Hospitalize me.”

Someone turns on the radio. “And Lenin is always young,” a histrionic voice sings on the radio. But I can still hear the words of the mysterious man. “I need to hide. The government is on my case.”

It was the winter of 1991 in Soviet Russia, a winter of long lines and thin walls, the last one in which doctors and writers and lovers had to play loud patriotic songs to drown out their conversations.

In 1991, I did not yet know that the stranger would become one of my family’s closest friends and my wisest mentor.

That night I had to abandon the stethoscope and yield my bed to the guest, whose appearance turned out to be as unpleasant as his voice. To me, a 5-year-old girl, he looked like an ogre. He was a middle-aged man, in a furry hat and boots, who smelled of alcohol. He used curse words I had never heard before. My parents called him by his last name, Ishmuratov, as if he were an outsider.

Ishmuratov certainly did not belong to the intellectual circle of my parents, who were well-educated, well-known doctors and very selective in their choice of friends. The friends in my parents’ circle spoke perfect Russian, read forbidden literature and were concerned with the fate of Russia—and humanity in general, which seemed even more futile to me. Their ways were ahead of the times.

But unlike my parents’ friends, Ishmuratov had a naïve, almost childlike smile that one rarely saw in the gray streets of Russia. Inspired by fairy

tales, where magic words would turn ogres into princes, I kindly asked, "Mr. Ishmuratov, do you want to sleep with my teddy bear tonight?"

He smiled at me: "Tomorrow you will see a rainbow. Rainbow means you have done a good thing." But instead of a rainbow, my room was lighted by the flashing lights of the ambulance that stopped by our house to take Ishmuratov to the hospital.

I hid my teddy bear in his backpack, as a keep-sake. I felt that I would not see Ishmuratov's furry hat for a long time. Before leaving our house, he whispered: "My life changed, and Russia will change for better, why this damn pessimism? All your dreams will come true, I know."

I could not believe this smiling furry man would do something to outrage the government.

I did not dare to ask my parents why Ishmuratov needed to be put into a hospital. I learned his story a few months later, when Russia changed, when the collapse of communism put an end to long lines, thin walls and patriotic songs.

Ishmuratov was born in a small village and never received an education. He left his village in 1989 after a "life-changing enlightenment." He helped a village priest build a church, hoping to earn some money. But the priest gave Ishmuratov only a blessing.

"God will be with you," said the priest. "From now on you will succeed in all your beginnings, as long as your intention is good."

Ishmuratov, who never believed in God, laughed at the prediction. But in a few weeks things did change for him. He met his future wife,



who happened to knit exceptional wool stockings. He started selling the stockings at a local market, and soon his business became so profitable that he decided to buy an apartment in the city.

Ishmuratov managed to travel secretly to Europe when the borders between the Soviet Union and the West were still closed. He spent half a year in Germany where he got an illegal job as a construction worker. He learned Western

the disorder of post-Soviet economy, while dad was enjoying the newfound freedom that allowed him to play American jazz and buy American music without the fear of “being taken away.”

In the midst of one of those arguments, Ishmuratov entered our kitchen with his usual smile, fur hat and cheerful words: “I told you Russia will change. And your lives will change also! Trust me—a millionaire in a fur hat!”

“THE FRIENDS IN MY PARENTS’ CIRCLE SPOKE PERFECT RUSSIAN, READ FORBIDDEN LITERATURE AND WERE CONCERNED WITH THE FATE OF RUSSIA—AND HUMANITY IN GENERAL, WHICH SEEMED EVEN MORE FUTILE TO ME. THEIR WAYS WERE AHEAD OF THE TIMES.”

techniques of environmentally friendly construction, earned money and came back to Russia with an aspiration to build houses from recycled plastic bottles. Ishmuratov started his own company, building houses from the new material that was cheap and light and stayed warm in winter and cold in summer.

The Soviet government, offended by his initiative, set out to “eliminate” Ishmuratov, as he later explained.

He turned to my parents, who were known for their liberal views and for helping refusniks, and saved Ishmuratov’s life on that cold winter night of 1991. They took him into the hospital where they worked. My dad made an incision in Ishmuratov’s chest and then stitched the cut together as if after a surgery. Ishmuratov remained in the hospital for five months, until the Soviet government finally collapsed.

Ishmuratov visited us two months after his release from the hospital. It was a dark winter evening, which I was planning to spend in my room, pretending to ignore the daily arguments that had been erupting between my parents since the regime changed.

Mom was struggling to find money for food in

Ishmuratov bought my dad a modern Yamaha keyboard and sponsored the production of his first CD in America. My dad had abandoned medicine to begin a new career as a musician, fulfilling a long-nurtured dream of making a living from art.

Ishmuratov sponsored my education at an art college in Moscow and taught me to search for my own rainbow.

A friendship such as we had with Ishmuratov is so closely intertwined with the times in which we lived, times in which the banality of everyday life sometimes made strange bedfellows of people.

I think that time is gone now—that world in which there was a common goal that transcended our small social and intellectual differences. Today’s Russia—bold, beautiful—is little like the world in which I grew up.

Today many Russians are in a race against time to make up for the 70-plus years during which we couldn’t run from A to Z. Of course there’s more freedom, so much so that today we do everything with an enthusiasm that is unparalleled.

We form our relationships while running and moving. It’s a moveable feast, this business of growing “old” in New Russia. D&S

BLOW BY BLOW

A Family Trapped in a Cycle of Abuse

BY RACHELLE ANDUJAR

PHOTOGRAPH BY HELEN CHU



The dishes hit the walls and shattered into tiny pieces across the floor. My sister, Danielle, who was only 7 at the time, escaped the confusion by hiding under the kitchen table. Our parents fought at least twice a week, so she knew to hide there.

Mom and dad married young. The relationship was doomed from the beginning. They met just before dropping out of high school. Their first meeting was during a party after a football pep rally; dad was a quarterback for the football team. They had a few drinks.

By the time my mom was 20 she had four kids. Aside from their children, our parents had little in common.

Holidays were a big family event for the adults at my house. The children had to play in the backyard until dark. We were not permitted on the porch, where the adults were drinking beer and eating clams. By midnight, we knew trouble was

started choking my mom. I began to cry. The lamp fell to the floor. The couch flipped over. Then, somehow she grabbed a knife. My father's blood was all over the floor.

The ambulance came, and my dad survived. It turned out he only needed a few stitches. Our parents, who never spoke much before the incident, became more distant.

We were always in trouble. One morning at 2 o'clock, my dad yelled for me to make him dinner. Danielle got up to help me. We didn't know how to cook. We decided to put frozen french fries in the oven. Danielle and I would have done anything to keep from getting hit with a belt. We put the fries on a plate and brought it to the bedroom, where our parents were asleep. We didn't care. We put the plate down and hid under our blankets together. By sunrise, my parents had forgotten the incident. At least, they never mentioned it to us.

“BY MIDNIGHT, WE KNEW TROUBLE WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN, WHEN OUR PARENTS WOULD START YELLING FOR US.”

about to begin, when our parents would start yelling for us. My mom would slur her words and blame me for things I did the year before. My brother would have to pick the clamshells and empty bottles up off the porch. Danielle would hide in a corner.

Before the evening was up, pandemonium would break loose. Either a parent, an aunt or an uncle would start yelling, “You never loved me” or “Dad always loved you more.” It was confusing, and none of it made any sense to me. I was too young to understand.

One day, I was home to witness my parents' escalating tempers. I heard yelling. My sister and I ran to the bedroom. Our parents were drunk and throwing things at each other. I screamed as I ran out of the room. They didn't listen. My dad

They divorced a year later. We moved out of the house into a small apartment, with my mother. Danielle became distant. She never played with kids her age. She didn't talk to us much and always stayed inside. My mom chose to ignore it. She said there was nothing wrong with her.

Danielle is 20 now. She married a boy she met in college. They met at a fraternity party and rent an apartment in upstate New York. She came home to visit last week. She looked sad, but no more so than I remembered from our childhood. She asked me to go to the movies with her. When the lights went out, she began to cry.

She said she wanted to get a divorce and did not want to go home. When my mom found out, she said that's normal. Danielle didn't respond; she stayed quiet as usual. D&S

LOST CONNECTION

A Young Woman Confronts
When It's Not Meant to Be

BY ANDREA CROCITTO

We met in the winter. Really met, I mean. We had been “chatting” online on-and-off for six months before that. Only it is strange to call what we did chatting. Although our Internet connections only took place sporadically, when we both happened to be online, when we did chat, no matter what the hour, we would quickly become engrossed in one another’s thoughts.

The day of our first meeting was completely spontaneous. I had been in Staten Island visiting a friend and, just as I was about to hop on a bus back to Brooklyn, I recalled that the neighborhood I was in happened to be where he lived. I initiated our first oral conversation and within minutes found myself sitting in the passenger seat of his car, the two of us shyly exchanging glances. As usual, the conversation was animated and continuous. The night wore on and, though it was late and cold, he wanted to take me to the beach near his house where he often went to think. Feeling delirious about how our instant online bond had survived the transition to real life, I ran into the water fully clothed and the two of us swam around like newly liberated creatures. I didn’t know then that the path to freedom was not so easy. The next day I woke up to my phone ringing. It was him.

“Hey. I think I am in your area,” he said.

“Oh. Cool. What are you doing?”

“Coming to see you.”

We were in his car again, at the beach again—we drove back to the same beach on Staten Island. We had been enjoying the view and letting everything sink in for a while before he said, “I know I haven’t mentioned this, but I am bipolar.”

A few seconds of anxious silence passed as I processed the news and decided if I should reveal my own secret.

“That’s OK.” I said. “I’m manic depressive.”

The silence in his car, at that moment, seemed deafening to me.

“Oh. Well, then we will be crazy together,” he said. “Maybe we can level each other out.”

I stared down at my hands. I had grown up an introverted child. My parents were too busy with work or tending to the needs of my prized older brother to pay me much attention. When I was 8, I met my best friend. She introduced me to my first fiction collection—the R.L. Stein *Fear Street* series, the seed of my devotion to reading and writing.

The depressions started when I was about 9 years old, as my brain matured and my limited awareness of the world was blasted open.

“I RAN INTO THE WATER FULLY CLOTHED AND THE TWO OF US SWAM AROUND LIKE NEWLY LIBERATED CREATURES.”

My friend and I clung to each other for reassurance as we watched ourselves and everything we thought we knew change. When she moved away, my depressions worsened. By the time I was 11, I had twice come close to committing suicide. My parents never found out because I always lost the nerve to do it when I thought about leaving my friend behind. She died when I was 17.

The night of our first swim meeting ended a three-year social hiatus. Our relationship gave me the opportunity to have a social life again.

The first time I went to his house, I was shocked by the chaos of his room. He told me it was a result of his “perfectionism problem”; he had trouble following through on things for fear they would not turn out as good as he hoped. I, the queen of neurotic order, quickly set to work folding his clothes, depositing the dirty ones in the hamper, categorizing his paperwork and organizing his CD collection alphabetically by artist. At one point, when he left the room to avoid being in my way, I started putting sticky notes containing my random thoughts and feelings in obscure places of the room. Each one was numbered so that if he found one, he would know to start looking for more. I loved the adrenaline rush of being sneaky. I hadn’t had that much energy in a long time.

One day three months after our courtship officially began, he phoned and curtly asked me to come over. When I got to his house, his eyes were vacant, his whole face expressionless.

“We have to end this,” he said. “My life is too difficult now.”

What he forgot to add was “because of you,” but I heard it anyway. Shocked by his declaration, I was immediately torn between wilting and screaming in despair. Outwardly, my own face was set in stone. I said nothing, gathered

my things and left. I remained in my room for the next two weeks, readjusting to the stillness until finally, my phone rang.

“How are you?” he asked in a calm, aloof voice.

I played along. He told me about how he, in the search for clarity, decided to get rid of his beloved cat and asked me if I wanted it; how he was quitting school and wanted to become a musician; how he was finally getting his life “on the right track.” I did not know it then, but my teeth were clenched for most of the conversation, hands balled into little fists at my sides.

Then he asked, “Hey, do you remember those things you used to write me? And the letters? Do you mind if I use some of that stuff in my songs?”

I stared at the phone, horrified. One hand unclamped and started shaking. “There is something wrong with you,” I whispered. And then louder, “What happened to you?”

He continued to talk over me in an unruffled, unreachable manner. Maybe he genuinely could not hear me.

When I hung up the phone a short while later, excusing myself to do some nonexistent homework, my brother was passing the doorway of my room. He stopped, noticing that I stood frozen in place, completely unaware of his presence. He took a few hesitant steps into the room.

“Are you...OK?” he asked.

“I am alone again,” I murmured. “I am no good for anyone.”

“Have you cried?” he asked.

“Not since I was little.”

He came forward and pulled me into an awkward hug.

“It’s OK to hurt,” he said. “Don’t lock yourself away again. I still like you.”

And the dam broke. D&S

SCARED OF DYING

Ignorance Is Not Bliss

BY ALANA ALLETTE

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE CORTES

I was dying. There was no other explanation for my sudden illness. At 21, I felt as though I had barely begun to live. Yet, I was becoming what I feared most: An invalid. It was scary.

The symptoms, at first, resembled an allergic reaction: Skin rashes that itched uncontrollably; sores from constant itching; ravishing fevers; and burning skin, a result of both the fevers and the open wounds on my skin. But there were other symptoms that seemed to have nothing to do with allergies: I felt tired all the time and I had no appetite. Or rather, I was plagued by hunger, but the thought of eating even a morsel

of food was repulsive to me. I lost the energy to do even simple tasks, such as brushing my teeth or even writing my name. My hair was thinning. I feared the worst.

I was sure that I had cancer and that I was dying. But cancer did not explain the rashes and the itching. It was too confusing.

Was I afraid? Wouldn't you be? My body seemed to be torturing itself.

In January, I began to search for the cause of my ailments. The family doctor, who had no clue what was wrong with me, was of no help. The rash baffled her, the fever intrigued her, and the anemia



scared her. Three vials of blood led to no conclusion. Yet the doctor said I should see a dermatologist for the rash and prescribed a small pink pill to be taken three times a day. They were of no help.

Instead, two months after seeing the doctor, I took a serious turn for the worse. The pain increased and my feet began to swell. My joints ached and my head felt heavy. My heart banged against my chest, causing heartburn and shortness of breath.

But I was afraid of the cost of seeing a specialist. I kept getting letters from the insurance company, which still had not paid for my earlier doctors' visit. The letters were not threatening, but they stated in bold typeface that they didn't recognize my claim. They repeatedly requested that I send information verifying that I was a full-time student and asking whether I was a dependent. In short they were trying to deny my claim, which meant I wouldn't have insurance and would have to pay for the previous doctor's visit as well as the extremely costly specialists that I would have to see in the future.

later, the biopsy confirmed the doctor's diagnosis.

Lupus is a puzzling malady that affects currently 1.5 million Americans, according to the Lupus Foundation of America. It is known as the woman's disease because it disproportionately affects young women who develop the disease at the onset of puberty. Lupus is described by the foundation as a widespread and chronic (lifelong) autoimmune disease that, for unknown reasons, causes the immune system to attack the body's own tissue and organs, including the joints, kidneys, heart, lungs, brain, blood and skin.

The only known remedy is less stress and steroids—both a 40-milligram dosage of an internal steroid, prednisone, and an external cream that would soothe the itching of my skin.

Gradually, my appetite returned and I regained my energy.

But there were side effects to my treatment. My joints often felt as though they were on fire. Sometimes I would wake up, as if out of a nightmare, screaming in agony.

"I WAS SURE THAT I HAD CANCER AND THAT I WAS DYING. BUT CANCER DID NOT EXPLAIN THE RASHES AND THE ITCHING. IT WAS TOO CONFUSING."

I finally decided to see a dermatologist. The visit would cost \$485 without the insurance and getting the results of test he took, during a second visit, would cost even more. But the doctor was worth every penny. One look at my face and he knew instantly what ailed me. The rash that covered my back and had spread across my arms, chest and legs, had finally reached my face. "Lupus," he said. "The shape of your scars tells me that it is so and the description of your symptoms points in that direction. A skin biopsy will determine if it is and then which kind."

The doctor explained that lupus is an autoimmune disease that, in effect, turned my immune system against my largest organ, my skin. A week

And the fear lingers. I am told that there is no cure. I will be dependent on medication for the rest of my life. Any itch, or any sign of fatigue alarms me. I now have to pay attention to my body, stay out of the sun, avoid unnecessary stress and take medicine. Work will no longer take precedence in my life; I can't risk a relapse.

Sometimes I feel like Eva Peron when she realized that she was dying of cancer. In *Evita*, the play about her life, Madonna sings: "Oh, what I'd give for 100 years, but the physical interferes... what is the good of the strongest heart in a body that's falling apart?" Peron lived to 33.

I have Lupus, but I am not dying. I no longer feel fatalistic. I know I can beat this. I can win, but I am not afraid to say that I am still scared. D&S

BOYS IN THE HOOD

Where Muslims And Jews
Come Together in Paris

BY JONATHAN WEINSTEIN

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE CORTES

“So you’re for Israel, right?”

When I heard those words for the first time, I laughed. I had been in America for a year, and I was still stunned by the inability of most people to distinguish the difference between a nationality and a religious heritage. After all, I even had a girl ask me if I “spoke Jew.”

Most people assume, because of the crisis in the Middle East, that Judaism and Islam are enemies. Up to six years ago, when I still resided in Paris, I couldn’t imagine there being any kind of animosity between my Muslim neighbors and me. I lived in the newest district of Paris, the 20th Arrondissement, the closest to the outer ring of the city. It was in St. Blaise, the newest section of the district, that all the immigrants—the Muslims, Jews, Vietnamese—lived, but it was mostly populated by people from North Africa, the region known as the Maghreb.

Since the day I was old enough to leave my house by myself, my most vivid memories have been of long days in the district’s new stadium, playing soccer with other kids from the neighborhood. We’d go home in small groups after a match to eat and play a few games on PlayStation,

but invariably, we’d end up back at the stadium until it closed around 10 p.m.

We often heard reports of fights between other kids in the neighborhood. We knew what that meant. The hangout of the “skinheads,” a really hateful bunch of right-wing nationalists, was an abandoned factory close to our neighborhood. They would sometimes come to the stadium at night, hoping to find a few “Arabs” or “Jews” by themselves.

The result of those incidents was almost always the CRS (the French version of SWAT), randomly arresting people who “looked Muslim.”

It was unjust, but we were used to it. As a child who looked neither “too Jewish” nor like a Muslim, I was usually left alone. But I also know that if Jews and Muslims didn’t stand together, they wouldn’t have a chance.

Religion was never an issue between my neighbors and me. Religion was something we were born with, but it never occurred to us that it might create a wall between us. As children on the soccer field, no one cared who was a Muslim or a Jew. All the problems in the Middle East were nothing but news reports to us.

“RELIGION WAS NEVER AN ISSUE BETWEEN MY NEIGHBORS AND ME. RELIGION WAS SOMETHING WE WERE BORN WITH, BUT IT NEVER OCCURRED TO US THAT IT MIGHT CREATE A WALL BETWEEN US. AS CHILDREN ON THE SOCCER FIELD, NO ONE CARED WHO WAS A MUSLIM OR A JEW.”

In my neighborhood, it was all about brotherhood. While adults looking on from outside were certain they could see a rift, one that needed to be “repaired” by kicking out the Muslims and sending the Jews to Israel, we never saw any kind of strain. We all lived in the same place, we all had similar background stories, and we all stood together. Whenever one person was in trouble for whatever reason, everyone would come to help—whether it was a monetary matter or something more personal, such as someone getting hurt by a member of a hateful group.

The only fights I remember were ones in which we were all on the same side. I recall one day,

during sports class, we were heading to the stadium. A private school arrived at the same time, and some of the private school students decided to utter the word “dog” to some of our classmates. Before any teacher realized what was going on, my class was out of the stadium running like fools while the other kids remained on the baseball field having had a taste of their own bats and soccer shoes.

As I look back on my childhood in my neighborhood, I don’t see the faces of enemies. Those kids were my friends—our religions didn’t make us enemies. They made our bonds stronger. D&S



THROW THE BUM OUT!

Spreading the Butterfly Wings

BY DENISE MONDESTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY MICHELLE CORTES

It's 2:30 a.m. as she presses her ear against her bedroom door. She hears loud, unsettling voices coming from her parents' room. They are at it, again. "I can't believe I ever married you," her mother Marie shouts at her father Pierre. "You don't do anything for this family."

"I'm always giving you money," Pierre replies. "What do you do with it? Without me you and the kids would have nothing."

One after the other, day after day, the parents insult each other, saying things no 16-year-old wants to hear, especially the name her father calls her mother: "whore."

She often thought of her mother as "a butterfly trapped in an evil world of honey," as the novelist and poet Gene Toomer wrote about women oppressed by their husbands. Her mother was a butterfly, beautiful, yet delicate and fragile in a world—his world—that she does not know how to escape.

Marie is 5-foot-5, beautiful and voluptuous with a café-au-lait complexion and long, straight black hair. Pierre is a well-built, dark-skinned, handsome, 6-foot-2 man. They met and fell in love in 1983, and married after they had their first child, Clifford. Their daughter Denise was born a short time later. They were in love then. But the way they talk to each other now leaves one to wonder: where did all the love go?

"Remember when you used to beat me day and night for no particular reason, huh?" Marie screams. Pierre sucks his teeth. "Remember the sunglasses I had to wear because of the black-and-blue marks you gave me and the constant lies I had to tell my friends and family?" He stops sucking his teeth. "Or what about the time when Clifford told his elementary school teacher that his father had a gun and was going to kill his mother because he heard you say that jokingly with your friends on the phone?" Pierre is still

"THE DAUGHTER HAS SEEN HER MOTHER WEARING THE SAME MUUMUU, DAY IN AND DAY OUT, WITH VERY LITTLE TIME TO DO HER HAIR AND ONLY PUTTING ON MAKEUP TO HIDE THE BRUISES."

silent. "Yeah, you can't say anything now, can you?"

After an hour of intense arguing that seems to last like an eternity, her mother rushes to her daughter's room. Tears fall down the daughter's face as she softly asks her mother what brought on the latest argument. Marie, fighting back tears, tells her daughter that she found pictures on his bedside dresser of a woman sitting on his lap and of other children whom she knows nothing about.

These are other things a 16-year-old does not want to hear. That her father cheated on her mother, and that she may have siblings she has never met. "I had a feeling he was cheating on me," Marie says. "But I never had the proof." The daughter hugs her mother and tells her not to worry because she still has her children, and that's all that she needs.

The daughter wonders why her father treats her mother like trash when she has devoted her life to him. For more than 10 years, her mother has put up with his false accusations that she has been sleeping with his friends, spending his money on herself, instead of the family, and plotting ways to

kill him. Yet how could that be true if she was home all day with the kids while cooking, cleaning and doing the laundry? The daughter has been seeing her mother wear the same muumuu day in and day out, with very little time to do her hair and put on makeup to hide the bruises. Her mother never went anywhere unless it was the grocery store.

Most kids want their parents to stay together forever, but not Marie's daughter, because she hates to see her mother cry. "Why won't you get a divorce?" the daughter asks.

"Because," says her mother, "believe it or not, I still love him. He is the father of my children and will always be a part of me and you."

Yet, after years of bickering and arguing over petty issues and big ones, the butterfly finally spread her wings and got out of the evil honey. Marie has finally built enough courage to demand that her husband to leave, telling him that he was not welcome anymore. Pierre left their home but not their hearts. Now the mother could begin to live her life in peace and freedom and so could the daughter. D&S



MUST I HELP SOMEBODY?



A Sales Clerk's Lament

BY NICOLE CARTER
ILLUSTRATION BY FRANKLYN ROA

Could I speak to someone who has worked here a little bit longer than you have?" squawked the old biddy, throwing her delicate hands up in the air in utter despair.

"Ma'am, it really isn't a matter of someone else helping you; Borders is not able to get this book. But I will call someone else for you," I said, gritting my teeth, but trying to sound friendly. Only two of the 12 people working at the Borders in Kips Bay had been there longer than me.

"Someone is coming, ma'am, just wait for a moment please," I said, surrendering to her command.

This is my job: I help people find books at one of the largest book chains in the country. It is called providing customer service. That job description is an understatement. It should be: I try to help cranky, negative, condescending and, most of the time, insane pseudo-intellectuals find books that usually can't be located. And then I endure their wrath.

"Can I help somebody?" I asked a long line of customers, the old biddy's insult still twitching in my skull.

A man stepped forward and inquired if we had any books on stretching. He followed me back to the section, where I bent down to point out the shelf. He leaned over me.

"You look great in those jeans, sweetie," he crooned into my ear. I straightened up and walked away.

"Stupid slut," he hissed, just loud enough for me to hear.

Back in the front of the store, I took a deep breath to calm down; ready to address the crowd, I forced a smile.

"Can I help somebody?"

The old biddy returned. "Where is this person, young lady? I have been waiting here for 15 minutes. I don't understand how people like you can keep your job," she said, the pitch of her voice high enough to drown out the sound of the people talking behind her.

"Ma'am, I called for a manager to come, but we are very busy. I told you before, ma'am, no one here can get this book for you. We just don't carry it."

"What is your name?"

"Nicole."

"Thank you, Nicole, I will most definitely tell your superior whenever she arrives about your rotten attitude," she huffed.

At that point, I wanted to tell every last one of these customers to piss off. Instead, I said: "Can I help somebody?"

My break finally came, and I ripped my name tag off and ran up the stairs to the "Staff Only" room, away from that madness. I got some school reading done while I ate a turkey sandwich. The break room is like a prison cell—four walls of gray metal lockers, a tile floor and the drone of the store's air conditioner. Yet it is a sanctuary of peace compared with the rest of the store.

My manager, Vojna, stopped to talk to me, as I ate and read.

"Oh, hi, Nicole, don't forget to pick up your check before you leave tonight," she said in a motherly way.

"I won't," I said, "Hey wait, Vojna, did a lady talk to you about me?"

"Oh yeah, but I know she is a nut case. Don't



"THIS IS MY JOB: I HELP PEOPLE FIND BOOKS AT ONE OF THE LARGEST BOOK CHAINS IN THE COUNTRY. IT IS CALLED PROVIDING CUSTOMER SERVICE."



“YOUR SEX PERPETUATES ITS OWN OPPRESSION BECAUSE PEOPLE LIKE YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT’S HAPPENING,” HE LECTURED.

worry,” she said and walked back out into the store. Done with dinner, I went downstairs to finish my shift at the customer service desk. A swarm of people was already hovering around the desk—wide-eyed and waiting.

“Can I help somebody?”

“I want to know why your cashier won’t give me the educator discount?” asked a man in a thick Russian accent. I asked for his identification.

“I am Professor Zarchinoff, I buy thousands of dollars of books here every week, I deserve to get this discount....”

“Okay, sir, where do you teach then?”

“Uhhh, the MIT.”

“The discount is for K-12 teachers, sir.”

“But I am a professor of biology!”

“At MIT?”

“I am a long-time customer....”

He had been in before, not to buy books, only to sleep on the lounge chairs scattered around the store. As he ranted on about his credentials, I zoned out. It was the only way to survive.

“Okay, okay, sir,” I interrupted, “I am going to have to call a manager to clear this up.”

“Thank you very much!” he said triumphantly.

After my hour at customer service was over, I was told to start doing “recovery”—Borders jargon for books that need to be re-shelved. I strolled around the store pushing my cart looking for abandoned books and magazines and ended up in the psychology section. A woman was sitting smack in the middle of the section, with books all around her, in every direction.

“Um, ma’am, could I take some of these to put away?” I asked, hoping that she would get the hint of how inappropriate it was to make such a mess.

“No, I’m still looking at all of them,” she replied with a piercing stare that dared me to bother her again. Really, I thought, all of them at the same time? But I couldn’t say that to her, I couldn’t be sarcastic or ironic or cheeky or defensive or anything that would compromise the friendly image of Borders.

I rolled on.

The night was finally ending, and all I could think about was my paycheck. The final closing announcement was being made as the last customers were coming in from the back. I found a couple who seemed to miss the announcement, and approached them.

“Hi, um, we are closing in five minutes. It would be a good time for you to check out before the registers close.”

“Oh, thank you,” the man said. He was blond with a tidy appearance and his blond girlfriend stood behind him.

“Let me ask you something,” he said to me, “do you read political books?”

“Well, I don’t really have time to, you know, I’m in school, with lots of other types of reading to do,” I said, trying to end the conversation.

“That’s why you are a second-class citizen. Your sex perpetuates its own oppression because people like you don’t know what’s happening,” he lectured.

I was too exhausted to argue.

After the doors were locked, we put all the books away and griped to each other about the “crazies” we had encountered during the night. Later, I stood in the break room with my unopened check in hand. Earning \$7 an hour, I wondered if it was all really worth it. D&S

D&S 2006 WHO'S WHO?

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(managing editor) is a senior majoring in journalism. She has also edited and written for *The Lexicon* and *Encounters* magazine.

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GRAPHIC DESIGN AT BARUCH COLLEGE

Students interested in graphic design should explore the graphic communication specialization offered by the Department of Fine and Performing Arts. Because the business communication field is essentially interdisciplinary in nature, the program integrates courses from several departments in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences and the Zicklin School of Business.

The graphic communication specialization provides training in graphics as well as basic training in the broader aspects of business communication and prepares the graphic artist to enter a business environment.

For more information, students should contact Prof. Zoë Sheehan Saldaña at zoe_sheehan@baruch.cuny.edu or 646-312-4063.

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JOURNALISM MAJORS AT BARUCH CHOOSE FROM TWO DIFFERENT SPECIALIZATIONS:

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What better place to study business journalism than the home of the major stock exchanges, many Fortune 500 companies and almost every major financial publication in the United States? What better place to study the global economy than a city where more than 150 languages are spoken, where you can be a foreign correspondent for the cost of subway fare? From the canyons of Wall Street to the fishing fleets of Sheepshead Bay and City Island, from investment bankers to dog walkers, from multinationals to family-run shops, New York City is a “news laboratory” where students learn to develop story ideas, identify trends and analyze their impact on society.

For information about the undergraduate journalism programs, contact Prof. Geanne Rosenberg at geanne_rosenberg@baruch.cuny.edu or 646 312-3974.

Students interested in graduate study in journalism can learn about CUNY’s new Graduate School of Journalism at journalism.cuny.edu.

DOLLARS & \$ENSE

Dollars & Sense, Baruch College's magazine about business and society... Created, written, reported, edited and designed by Baruch College students, with guidance from the faculty of journalism and graphic design. Through weekly meetings, brainstorming sessions and individual consultations with student editors and faculty advisers, students enjoy an intensive, hands-on experience and help create our wonderful, award-winning magazine. If you've enjoyed reading this issue, think about joining the fun next year.

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