

University at Buffalo School of Law

## Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law

---

The Opinion Newspaper (all issues)

The Opinion

---

5-3-2000

### The Opinion Volume 51 Issue 10 – May 3, 2000

The Opinion

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/the\\_opinion](https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/the_opinion)



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Legal History Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

The Opinion, "The Opinion Volume 51 Issue 10 – May 3, 2000" (2000). *The Opinion Newspaper (all issues)*. 413.

[https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/the\\_opinion/413](https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/the_opinion/413)

This Newspaper is brought to you for free and open access by the The Opinion at Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Opinion Newspaper (all issues) by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. For more information, please contact [lawscholar@buffalo.edu](mailto:lawscholar@buffalo.edu).



# THE OPINION

Vol. 51, Issue #10

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO SCHOOL OF LAW

May 3, 2000

## Visiting Professor to Teach IP, Econ Law

By David Allen '01

A visiting professor will boost the University of Buffalo law School's intellectual property and economic-related curriculum this fall.

Shubha Ghosh, an associate professor of law at Georgia State University will teach as a visiting professor of law at UB Law during the 2000-2001 school year. He will lead a course on intellectual property law and a seminar on Law and Economics during the fall semester, and in the spring will teach a copyright class and a seminar titled 'Antitrust and Intellectual Property.'

"It will be a good follow-up to the fall Antitrust course," said Professor Peter

Pitegoff, vice dean for academic affairs, about Ghosh's spring seminar.

Ghosh holds a J.S. from Stanford Law School, where he graduated with distinction in 1994. He also holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Michigan. He has taught as an assistant professor at the Oklahoma City University School of Law, and was a consultant for the Mellon Foundation.

While UB Law welcomes Ghosh in the fall, it will say goodbye to Professor Nancy Staudt, who will leave the school after the summer semester.

Staudt, a tax law specialist, has accepted an appointment at Washington University in St. Louis, where she is currently

a visiting professor. She will teach a federal tax course at UB Law during the summer before moving to St. Louis.

Three other faculty members will be missing from Buffalo next year, either as visiting professors or on fellowships.

Professor Judy Scales-Trent has received a distinguished Fulbright fellowship to teach in Senegal next year. She will teach in Buffalo this fall before leaving.

In addition, Professor Marcus Dubber has accepted a fellowship to teach in Germany next year, and Professor Frank Munger will be a visiting professor at New York Law School next year.

Outside of the faculty comings and goings, there will be few notable changes

in the curriculum. The most notable is the disappearance of the school's regulatory concentration. "It's on hiatus," said Pitegoff, who hopes to bring it back in the future. The concentration was doomed when Professor Michael Meuer, who managed the concentration, left to take another teaching position at last year.

"There are some new offerings. We're bolstering what's in place, building around concentrations," said Pitegoff.

To assist students in scheduling, the school has posted a list of tentative spring 2001 courses on the third floor of O'Brien Hall, outside the R&R office. Pitegoff stressed that the course list is only tentative, and subject to change.

### BPILP announces Fellowship recipients

The Buffalo Public Interest Law Program has announced the recipients of its summer fellowship program.

The program provides a stipend for UB Law students performing public interest work during the summer. Recipients include:

\*Sarah M. Smith, who will work at the U.S. Dept. of Justice, Environmental Enforcement Section in Washington, D.C.;

\*Jana Kosberg, United Jewish Communities, Washington, D.C.;

\*Jennifer Hall, Rochester legal Aid Society, Rochester;

\*Kim C. Koski, Women's Justice Center, Pace Law School, White Plains, New York;

\*Kristin A. Brenner, Legal Aid Society, Prisoner's Rights Project, New York.

\*Jerry Turcotte, Attorney General's Office, Augusta, Maine;

\*Micheal Leventhal, Brooklyn Domestic Violence Court, Brooklyn, New York.

In addition, the following students will receive the related BPILP-IOLA fellowships:

Elisabeth Calcaterra, Legal Aid Society, Juvenile Rights Division, New York;

Katie Land, Neighborhood Legal Aid Society, Buffalo; and

Joshua Farrell, Legal Aid Society of Buffalo, Buffalo.

## Five to receive distinguished awards from UB Law Alumni

Five graduates of the UB Law School will receive Distinguished Alumni Awards at the Law Alumni Association's 38th annual meeting and awards dinner, to be held at 5:30 p.m. May 3 in the Hyatt Regency Buffalo.

The awards, established by the association's board of directors in 1963, recognize the valuable contributions that UB law school alumni have made to their profession and community.

In addition, Paul Ivan Birzon, a partner with Birzon & Davis, P.C., and long-time faculty member in the UB Law School, will be honored for outstanding service to the community by a non-alumnus.

Awards will be presented to:

\*The Hon. Rose H. Sconiers, '73, of Buffalo, who in 1993 became the first African-American woman elected a justice of the New York State Supreme Court's Eighth Judicial District, "for her conscientious and diligent performance in the judiciary."

Sconiers and a panel of 12 advisors have been named to lead a community-outreach program to improve confidence in the fairness of the court system. A former member of the UB Council, she has held various positions, including assistant corporation counsel for the City of Buffalo, executive attorney with the Legal Aid Bureau and Buffalo city court judge. She serves on the board of the American Red Cross and is a trustee for Children's Hospital of Buffalo and St. Mary's School for the Deaf.

\*Kenneth B. Forrest, '76, of Roslyn, an assigning partner in the litigation department of the New York City law firm of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, "for his leadership by example as a private practitioner."

A specialist in commercial litigation, Forrest has had a leading role in the nationwide effort to get judicial approval for a \$200 billion settlement between various states and the tobacco industry. He is a member of the UB Law School Dean's Advisory Council and serves on numerous professional committees, including the committees on Federal Legislation and on Professional Responsibility of the Association of the Bar of New York City. In 1997, he received the National Kidney Foundation of New Jersey and New York Award of Excellence. His wife, Ellen, also is a UB Law School graduate.

\*Howard R. Relin, '68, of Rochester, Monroe County district attorney, "for his commitment to public service."

Relin is nationally known as a legal innovator for his efforts in prosecutions involving drugs, domestic violence, guns and elder abuse. Through his leadership, Rochester was the first city in New York State to have a Drug Treatment Court, the second city in the nation to have a combined federal and local task force to prosecute illegal-gun possession and distribution, and the first upstate New York community to have a specialized elder-abuse prosecutor. Other innovations include a program established in Roch-

ester City Court that gives special attention to victims of domestic violence.

\*Irving M. Shuman, '54, of Williamsville, a founding partner of the law firm of Gross, Shuman, Brizdle & Gilfillan, P.C., "for his many contributions to the betterment of our community."

Shuman has been active as a community leader in Buffalo, particularly in the Jewish community. He is a past president and vice president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo and a past general chair of the United Jewish Fund Campaign. He serves on the Jewish federation's executive committee and has been chairman of several of its committees, including those dealing with Russian resettlement, budget and allocations, governance, project renewal, Jewish agency and the joint Kadimah and Federation Review Committee.

Shuman has been a member of the boards of the Jewish Community Center, the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies, the National UJA Campaign Cabinet, temples Emanuel and Shaarey Zedek, Jewish Family Service, the Bureau of Jewish Education, Studio Arena Theatre, Calasactius School and the national Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. He also has been active in the United Way.

\*John J. Nasca, '46, of Amherst, a partner with Nasca & Nasca, "for his exemplary performance in business."

Nasca, whose law practice is in Buffalo, is a director of Joseph Naples & Associates, Inc.; Los-Green, Inc.; the Community Council Western New York Partnership and the Kaleida Health System Council. He is a past director of, and has served for 25 years, on the Executive Committee of Fleet Bank. He also is a past director and executive committee member of Irvin Industries and a member of its subsidiary boards in England, Sweden and Italy; a past chairman of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, Millard Fillmore Hospital and the D'Youville College Board of Trustees. In addition, he is co-owner of the Park, Buffalo and Transit Drive-In theaters and a co-founder of the Twin Outdoor Theaters and the six Twin Lakes Miniature Golf courses.

\*Paul Ivan Birzon of Attica, a partner of Birzon & Davis, P.C., "for outstanding service to the community by a non-alumnus."

An associate professor of evidence in the UB Law School and graduate of Columbia University Law School, Birzon is a nationally known specialist in matrimonial and family law. He is a founding member of the U.S. Chapter of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and the Western New York Association of Matrimonial Lawyers. He was listed by Town and Country magazine and in "Best Lawyers in America" for matrimonial and family law.

Reservations for the dinner must be made by April 28. For more information, call the UB law alumni office at 645-2107.

### Opinion elects 2000-2001 editors

The Opinion recently elected its editorial staff for the coming school year.

The 2000-2001 editorial staff includes Editor-In-Chief David Allen, Managing Editor Joshua Roberts, Business Manager Jenny Almanzar, Layout Editor John Llera and Art Director Jimmy Wang.

All of the editors are also members of the paper's editorial board. Allen, Roberts, Almanzar and Llera will be third-year students next year; Wang will be a second-year student.

Still open are the positions of news editor, features editor and photography editor. The Opinion is also seeking reporters and people to fill other staff positions.

Anyone interested in contributing to the paper next year should contact the Opinion at 645-2147.



## THE OPINION

Co-Editors in Chief: **Peter DeWind & Dave Allen**  
 News Editor: **Kevin Hsi**  
 Staff Reporter: **Peter Nicely**

Open Positions: **Op/Ed Editor; Layout and Graphics Editor; Business Manager; Web Editor; Photographer; Reporters; Columnists.**

The *Opinion*, SUNY at Buffalo Amherst campus, 7 John Lord O'Brian Hall, Buffalo, New York 14260, (716) 645-2147, is published bi-weekly throughout the Fall and Spring Semesters. The *Opinion* is the student newspaper of the State University of New York School of Law. Copyright 1999 by the *Opinion*, SBA. Any reproduction of materials herein is strictly prohibited without the express consent of the Editor-In-Chief and piece writer.

Deadline for all submissions is 5PM on the Wednesday preceding publication. Later submissions may be accepted at the sole discretion of the editors. Submissions may be submitted at the *Opinion* offices, sent by mail to the above address, or placed in the *Opinion* mailbox located in the SBA office vestibule. Submissions should be saved on 3.5" disks in either IBM or Macintosh format as either a Corel Wordperfect or Microsoft Word file and be accompanied by a printed copy. Disks labeled with a Lockwood mailbox number will be returned.

Letter to the Editor Policy: while the *Opinion* will not print libelous or anonymous material, all submissions shall be printed entirely and exactly, provided they are signed submissions from a member of the UB Law community (students, faculty, staff, alumni). Submissions will not be edited without the author's consent.

The *Opinion* in no way endorses the viewpoints of its various columnists and contributors.

### EDITORIAL

## The Joke's On Us

As part of the *Opinion*'s annual April Fool's celebration, we ran a fake front page, complete with a falsified story claiming that UB Law would implement a complete self-study curriculum, in which students would bypass flesh-and-blood teachers entirely and download instructory videos off the internet or check out video courses from the law library. The humor, we thought, was in the concept's outlandishness.

Little did we know.

Less than a week after the *Opinion* hit the stands, USA Today printed a front page story about the opening of Daniel Jenkins Academy, a completely cyber high school in Florida. The incoming class of 30 freshmen plan to complete their four years of high school by way of their home PC's.

School officials are selling the idea as an alternative for students who aren't thriving in a traditional educational environment. Many students can't maximize their potential, they argue, in the midst of overcrowded classrooms, busy teachers, school bullies and bomb threats.

Just think, we're told, of students meeting their potential by building their school days around their strengths. They can plug in when they're most alert. They can focus on a subject for two hours, instead of having to leave when the bell rings after 45 minutes. Or they can switch subjects before they lose attention.

Ok, let's see if we have this right. A student can stay up until midnight, wake up at 10, play video games until noon or so, and then, wearing his pajamas, can sit down with a bowl of cornflakes in his lap and go online, picking and choosing what he'll work on and coming and going as he pleases.

If I'm an employer, am I going to want this kid?

School is more than academics. It's where kids learn socialization skills; where they learn teamwork, routines, deadlines. It's a microcosm of the real world, where children build relationships, learn to be leaders, face their fears, make friends, play sports.

Let's see a kid build a lamp in an online woodshop class. Or play dodgeball. Driver's ed wouldn't be the same.

Physical schools aren't perfect; far from it. But parents aren't doing their children a favor by trying to sheltering them. Sooner or later they will have to face the harsh reality of the real world, and cyberschooling only ensures they'll face it unprepared.

Wang's  
Words .....

# STAR LAWS

EPISODE:  
ONE L  
THE PHINALS <sup>finals</sup>  
MENACE



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A Call For Mutual Respect

Dear Editor:

As reported in The *Opinion*, an unfortunate series of incidents has occurred in the wake of the March 22nd Student Bar Association meeting. While various accounts differ, a cloud of tension remains. We are saddened by these events and troubled by continuing expressions of anger, including ad hominem verbal sparring among several law students.

We urge all students, staff, and faculty to help foster a positive learning environment here and to respect the dignity of others. Anyone who disagrees with or is offended by the actions of groups or individuals in the Law School should address these issues directly and constructively with those persons involved. Any student may address specific concerns to the Associate Dean for Student Services.

Diversity is a signature strength of UB Law School. As the semester draws to a close, we call on all members of the Law School community to reinforce this strength - with cooperation and mutual respect.

Sincerely,  
 Nils Olsen, Dean  
 Peter Pitegoff, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs  
 Melinda Saran, Associate Dean for Student Services

**The Opinion  
wishes everyone  
a good summer.**





# A few words from your SBA President-Elect

By Emilio Colaiacovo '01

I wanted to take a brief moment to thank everyone for placing their trust and confidence in my abilities by electing me President of the Student Bar Association. While everyone keeps trying to convince me what a difficult task it will be, I am looking forward to working with everyone and having some fun. As always, if you have any suggestions or ideas, please let our office know.

Because I think the President has a tremendous responsibility to represent and serve the law school community, I hope to use this column next year to keep everyone up to date on what the SBA is doing and what we are planning for each month. Increasing attendance at bar nights, lectures, conferences and other events will be something I will diligently work on with my executive board through-

out the year. Yet, there are so many other things I hope to do, and with your permission, I would like to briefly outline them for you.

I spoke with Melinda Saran, Associate Dean for Student Services, about what we can do to improve student relations here at the law school. I am sure most of you read last week's rather large article that concerned SBA. I was disappointed with the tone and manner a student used to express his discontent. While we may not always agree with what others say or do, there are appropriate ways to voice such opposition. We need to engender a greater respect for one another. I hope that next year, we can introduce certain educational components in the curriculum that addresses these concerns.

Also, I want to work closely with student clubs and organizations. In order to better promote events, our ex-

ecutive board needs to be in tune with what clubs and organizations need. As an executive board, we plan on attending meetings and working closely with officers and advisors. Since clubs and organizations afford students wonderful opportunities to learn and gain experience, I think it would be entirely constructive for the SBA to play a part in assisting these efforts.

This year's executive board has done a tremendous job. Whether it has been improving facilities or working with the administration to help students, this year's executive board definitely leaves behind big shoes to fill.

I cannot say that everyone will agree with what the SBA does. However, I can assure you that no one will work harder for students than the SBA. I encourage everyone, no matter what the problem, to come and talk to us. We need your input for this law school to succeed.

## COMMENTARY

### OBSERVATIONS ON JOB HUNTING

by Kevin Hsi '00

Everybody has an opinion about the job search process. The bottom line is that most of us don't like it. Nonetheless, given the anxiety that many law students seem to go through with job searches, here are my two cents on what I've learned over the years about job hunting.

(1) Getting a full-time job as a lawyer is never as easy as you think regardless of what your credentials are - just ask some people on law review.

(2) On the other hand, don't be ashamed of not having a summer job or a full-time job at this point in time - everyone will eventually find something law-related, depending on how flexible and open-minded they are.

(3) Geographical flexibility is often very important when it comes to job hunting.

(4) Always do some actual research on a job that you have any interest in - it'll make the interview that much easier when you do get one.

(5) The quality-of-life in all law schools will probably be better if corporate law firms, honor programs, and clerkships didn't always try to hire people so early in the fall semester (i.e., at the end of the your first or second summer).

(6) The legal profession isn't as large as people might believe, so networking is crucial. However, it's always best to network in a manner that you're comfortable with (both socially and ethically) but always try to avoid F.I.S. (First Impression Syndrome) when networking.

(7) It's sad but true - there is a pecking order when it comes to law schools but it's definitely not as bad as many students at U.B. may think (unless you're trying to apply to the U.S. Supreme Court). Self-confidence and school pride can go a long way.

(8) As many people have told me, a fair number of legal jobs are either highly unpleasant and/or highly overrated to begin with so choose carefully if you can.

(9) To all 1Ls: law review, moot court, and high grades are definitely not the end-all, be-all for just about any job. If they were, there's a good chance that you wouldn't really like that kind of job since such the use of such criteria is somewhat superficial to begin with.

(10) Finally, as my father has taught me, it's better getting a job that involves doing something that you like so you can do it well rather than getting a job that involves doing something you don't like and doing it poorly.

P.S. I'm not going to say "be yourself" because you really have to "know yourself" first in order to "be" anything. Good luck!

## A firsthand lesson in civil disobedience

By Charles Cobb '01

As my wife, a friend, and myself exited a metro station in Downtown Washington D.C. last Sunday, we immediately became aware of the magnitude of what we were about to do. Overhead a police helicopter hovered loudly and in the distance three more could be seen. As we walked toward the Ellipse we saw dedicated activists participating in civil disobedience, in the tradition of Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr., by blocking an intersection with linked arms and chanting words of solidarity, while others participated in creative street theater or musical acts using nothing more than garbage cans or plastic buckets. The sun was out on a day when rain was predicted and there was not a cloud in sight. Though, the sight of rows and rows of police in "robocop gear" and the deafening sound of the helicopters was certainly frightening, the festivity and dedication of the activists reassured us that collectively we would be safe and we would be heard.

We walked around the Ellipse to the intersection of 17th and E Sts. where more activists were linked arm-in-arm in a showing of courage and solidarity. An elderly man, (at least in his late 70's) stood at the end of the line linking arms with a green-haired twenty-something girl with about thirty peircings in her face to his right and a middle aged man wearing khakis and a SEIU T-shirt to his left. The elderly man was tired, small, and frail (he could not have weighed more than 120 lbs.), so much so the others seemed to be holding him up. Yet, he had one of the largest and most beautiful smiles I have ever seen. He exuded hope, youthfulness, and courage that clearly energized those around him. And that energy would soon be challenged in the most brutal fashion.

The police had been guarding a gate behind the line of protesters. Shortly after I arrived they opened the gate to allow an unmarked mini-van to pass through. Inside the van a uniformed woman was driving and the only thing obstructing her progress was the human wall of demonstrators. The van approached the line and slowed down appearing as though it would stop. The activists tightened their grip determined to hold their ground. Then it happened - it was possibly the most terrifying and yet powerful experience of my life. With tires squealing, the van crashed through the line scattering human beings like bowling pins.

The screams and faces of the demonstrators on the line and those on the side of the road were starkly contrasted with the blank faces of the squad of mounted police lining the street. Luckily the van's wheels did not run over the legs or heads of the prone protesters. Most of them were knocked several feet into the air and away from potential injury or death. National Lawyers' Guild legal observers mobilized quickly to take down statements. People from the side of the street ran to reform the barricade as people helped the injured off to the side. So many people ran to solidify the resistance that instead of 40 protesters blocking the intersection, there were now over 300. People sat down and chanted "We're not violent how 'bout you?!" to the rows of police in front of them. The response from the police was that they put on large gloves and gasmasks, effectively conveying the message that they were about to "gas" the demonstra-

tors. This resulted in even more demonstrators sitting down and joining the chant - with the elderly man in the middle of it all yelling with all his might.

It should be noted that the van never stopped and the police at the scene did not move to help the injured. Regardless of whether or not you agree with the protesters' views (I am willing to bet none of you even know what those views are - especially if you have been reading or viewing the mainstream press), as future attorney's you have to and must be appalled! The authorities did not give the demonstrators a warning to disperse, break-up the line using non-lethal tactics that kept physical harm to a minimum, or simply detain them! It was an obvious move to harm and intimidate. This is disgusting. And if any of you feel otherwise then you are either discriminating against someone because of his/her views or you are simply hypocritical in your pretence of being conduits of justice as future lawyers.

But the revulsion does not end here. Early Saturday morning, the police raided the protesters "convergence center." The convergence center was a house that the protesters were using as a check-in sight and nerve center for the immense effort that they were planning. There, artists worked on monstrous puppets that would be used at the legal rally and parade, they planned parade routs, and they coordinated the civil disobedience. First the fire department entered the house saying that they were kicking everyone out for "fire-code violations" because of the existence of paint-thinner (used to paint the puppets and signs). Noting the obvious pretext of this pre-emptive strike the protesters refused to leave to which the fire department responded that if they did not leave they would call the police to remove them. And how convenient for the fire department that the police were right outside! The police came in and confiscated all of the materials in the house, including the immense puppets, signs, and food. Later the police noted that they had confiscated materials that the demonstrators would use to make "home-made pepper spray." This was an obvious lie that any reasonable person would detect. First, the demonstrators in the house were all dedicated to non-violence. Second, why in the world would anyone use pepper spray against armored clad, gun toting, gas-mask wearing police? It would make no sense! Effectively this usage of "prior-restraint" under the guise of a safety inspection is just plain insulting and unlawful.

Finally let me elaborate on one last illustration of the disgusting tactics of the authorities. Sunday's protest had two facets: 1) a legal rally where speakers and musicians energized thousands of demonstrators; and 2) direct action intended to shut down the meetings using civil disobedience. The protesters obtained a permit to have a legal rally on the Ellipse. Yet, the way it was arranged by the police, there was only one way in or out of the "legal area." The rest was fenced off. More than a few people addressed fears that once everyone was at the rally, the police would block the only way out, essentially sealing people in. The showing of dozens of mounted park police and unmarked riot police on the other side of Constitution Ave supported this fear. At about the mid-point of the rally, the mounted police began to march into the legal protest area. Protesters responded by gathering to block their progress. Everyone

(Continued on Page 6)



# Reflections upon a law school career

David H. Hawkins '00

I arrived in Buffalo, New York in late August 1997, which is the first time I had ever been in this part of the state. The summer weather, fresh air, blue skies and rolling green lawns made the campus appear serene, an idyllic atmosphere for learning the law. I knew the Lord had this place in mind for me, because I could not concentrate on learning the law, if I had remained in New York City. This was a bittersweet moment for me, because I would be leaving behind my family, loved ones and friends. But I would also leave behind the children I had been working with who are in the foster care system that I grew to love and who in turn loved and depended upon me. However, I knew that the Lord had placed it upon my heart to work for the poor and disenfranchised by effectuating change in their lives and communities. This was the ideal place from which to commence my dreams and achieve my goals, considering that this school is considered to be the best school in the state for public interest law.

The first person I was introduced to, that would set the tenor for my first year in law school, was an attorney who was a former drug addict and alcoholic. I said wow! The school sure knows how to sell this concept of becoming an attorney, because going through law school will drive an individual to take substances which will alter reality. Getting past this I said wow, I am finally fulfilling my dream, and I was caught up in the mystique of law school like many other lemmings being led to the slaughter. The best piece of advice I received while here is "Don't let the bastards get your head." I didn't know what that meant at the time, but as I traveled this road during my first year I found out. Please allow me to digress, one problem first year students have is that they get caught up in what I like to call the law school superiority complex. Where this institution becomes the end all and be all for them, this validates their entire being. First year law students believe that they are on the top of the food chain and that everyone they come into contact with should pay homage to them in some way, shape or form. Well get over yourselves, this is a process, not a determinant. "...Law school is good for what it does..." as was told to me by an esteemed judge. This institution gives you the tools you will need to be a practitioner of the craft, but this process does not determine what type of practitioner you will be in the future. Remain focused on the Lord and be grateful that he in his infinite wisdom has given you this extraordinary opportunity, and focus upon his purpose for you, and what you should do with these tools. Get out of your comfort zones take a stance on issues, challenge authority don't worry about how people will view you, you can't please everyone nor should you try. One thing I can guarantee is that everyone will respect you and know where you stand, don't remain cowards.

I too was guilty of this until I learned that this is not healthy for you mentally or physically, this cause you to become jaded and disenchant with the institution and the profession. I soon learned what the aforementioned "bastards" quote meant. After I came to realize that I had to have a balanced academic and social life, law school became quite enjoyable, dare I say even fun! It became fun because I made use of what other law students fail to use their support systems. My family, my former

fiancée (Teresa Lampley) for without her none of this could be possible, friends and oh yes the Canadian ballet. What I found here at law school was unexpected. I found a surrogate family that cared for, fed and loved me. Not for what I could do for them, not for my intellectual acumen, not for what I had achieved prior to coming to law school, but they loved me for me and nothing else, and for that I say thank you! I was blessed during my time here to meet many people; a few of whom I can be blessed to say are my friends, who will be in my corner and I in theirs for the remainder of our lives.

I was afforded the opportunity to go overseas to Johannesburg, South Africa my first year, and work for the South African Human Rights Commission. I had always wanted to see the continent of my ancestors. I was given this opportunity by the Lord who put me in contact with a man among men, Professor Makau Matua. This intelligent, gifted, gentle, and genuine man gave a first year student whom he did not know, put his reputation on the line to recommend me for the job. I don't know many people who would put themselves and their reputation on the line, in order for a student to fulfill his dream of helping the poor and disenfranchised on the continent of his ancestors. To him I say thank you. You have been there for many of us the last three years and we appreciate all of the time and effort devoted to us.

I returned to law school from South Africa, stronger, my focus reaffirmed, with a renewed sense of purpose and direction. My second year in law school was going to be quite different from my first. Instead of being an anal-retentive basket case, whose entire focuses and being is wrapped up in the law school mystique, I removed myself from any and all negative influences. The negative influences I refer to are the so-called friends you make during your first year, that are not there for you in your second year. A social Darwinist approach begins to form and take shape, whereupon you are no longer useful to them and therefore, you are devalued, disclaimed and discarded. These individuals then take on the persona (once they make an assortment of moot court boards and journals) that they are better than you in all aspects are, whereupon, you are not worthy of their precious time. When in fact these people are actually phony, insecure individuals not worth your time, trust or compassion. This new perspective helped me decide that; I would "circle my wagons" and value the true circle of friends I have accumulated that are genuine in their feelings and actions.

I knew I had to be a proactive instead of a reactive person. I knew that this particular stance would offend many individuals, who thought I was someone who would not rock the boat or make waves, WRONG! I was the newly elected president of the Black Law Students Association, I decided that the organization must become more involved within this institution in order to effectuate change as well as, to garner some much needed respect. This approach worked well in my academic life, and almost as well for BLSA. Many things we planned were accomplished, many were not, but all in all we were part of the solution instead of being part of the problem. This is the point where I would like to thank my administration for all of their hard work and effort. I also decided that I would continue to be as confrontational in my second year courses as I was in my first year courses. This particular stance of course did not make people

happy, I was attacked, but unlike many others I decided to fight back. The true measure of a man is not his courage to take a stance while in a crowd; a man is measured when he can stand alone in the face of adversity. I also fought for others who were unfairly attacked for their particular views and their ethnicity. I live by the quote "tell the truth and shame the devil", if this makes people uncomfortable, that's just too damn bad! We all need to be removed from our comfort zones in order to achieve change on innumerable fronts. That's one of the problems we have in this country we all want to compromise ourselves so that we don't offend anyone, even if it is to our mental and physical detriment.

In my last year at this fine institution, I reflect upon all of the good times I've had while, also reflecting upon the lessons I've learned, all in all I can say this has been one of the best experiences of my life. But by far the best experience I have had in my short life is experiencing the birth of my lovely daughter, Giselle Ashley Hawkins. Fourteen months ago I was concerned about effectuating change in the lives of others, but my true purpose in life, which is a beautiful gift given to me from God, that is the responsibility of raising, nurturing and loving another human being. She has taught me the meaning of unconditional love, and for that I am thankful.

I must take this time to give honor and praise to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for without him, truly none of this would have been possible. He heard my prayers and delivered to me these gifts. The times when I would worry about jobs or a class, he would ease my fears, and not allow me to focus upon negative influences. The Lord also removed negative individuals from my life, for which I am grateful, because this law school as well as society in general is filled with these jealous, destructive and deceitful human beings. But I know "No weapon formed against me shall prosper", it won't work. This year has been relatively uneventful, except for that fateful March SBA meeting. I have been asked, "If you had to do it all over again, Dave would you?" Yes I would. Certain things need to be said, if that makes you uncomfortable, then maybe you should do some introspection, instead of becoming offended. There are certain times in my life where I am wrong on many different issues and I will be the first to admit this. However, upon the SBA matter, I know I am not wrong in this instance. There was and is a larger issue involved here and I am not afraid to stand by my principles. I will be the bigger person and make a last ditch effort to salvage our relationship or what is left of it, to the two members who feel they have been offended. The ball is in your court if you wish to reconcile, if not may God keep and bless you on your journeys.

To my apathetic, disinterested third year colleagues before you go out into the world ask yourself, will I make a difference in society, or will I be just another indifferent, complaining, conciliatory parasite making my living off the

various plights of the masses. If you find it fun to go "backward up the cheese-grater" all for the pseudo-fulfillment of "bowing at the altar of materialism" then go right ahead, but this is not my calling. When we return to this beloved institution in ten or twenty years what will we be able to say for our careers, that we made a difference or that we accumulated a lot of really great stuff! Do not get me wrong I like stuff like the next guy, but will that really fulfill me. When I approach the "pearly gates" and St. Peter asks me what I did with my life, I don't want my reply to be I fucked over a lot of people, clawed and connived my way to the top, made a shit-load of money and accumulated a lot of really great stuff!

Finally, I would like to thank my Parents whose undying love spirited me through my academic career. Grand mothers, Grandfathers, aunts, uncles and cousins for the undying support in my academic life. To my Grandmother Gussie M. Hawkins, what more can be said than thank you so much for everything. To my Aunt Sedera and Uncle Eldred thank you for all of the care packages and financial support. To my Aunt Armentha, who has been my inspiration for so long, and who has been in my corner without hesitation thank you. Finally to Teresa Lampley, who has been with me through three degrees, all of which are half yours; to you I say thank you for everything. I will always love you! I also thank you for giving me the most beautiful gift in the entire world, our daughter. To my cadre of close friends, Tony & the Tribe, Angela & Adrian Jones, Will Marsaw, Jenny Lancaster, Jenny Almanzar, William Hankerson and Kevin Hsi thank you for your love and acceptance of me with all of my faults and frailties, and for not trying to change me or discourage my actions. To anyone I have left out please do not be offended, I cherish you all and do not think I take you for granted because you were not mentioned. Much love to all and farewell.





# UB Law grad part of Skakel defense team

David Allen '01

Just two years out of school, a UB Law is playing a major part in what will likely be coined, at least briefly, the 'trial of the new millennium.'

Stephan Seeger '98 is part of a legal team defending Michael Skakel, a nephew of Ethel Kennedy, charged earlier this year with the 1975 murder of a teenage girl.

"The media attention is crazy," Seeger said about the case, adding that a recent court date had attracted more than 100 reporters.

Seeger, who practices law in Connecticut, was recruited to work in the case by cohorts of lead counsel Micael Sherman. They were familiar with Seeger's work from trying other cases against him, as well as from his work in a pair of recent high-profile cases.

Skakel, who was 15 years old in 1975, is accused of brutally killing Martha Moxley, a 15-year-old girl with whom he socialized. They both lived in the same exclusive neighborhood in Connecticut.

Seeger's current role is researching Connecticut's statute of limitations; the defense plans to argue that the state's 5-year statute of limitations covered class 'A' felonies at the time, in which case Skakel could not be tried. A former

member of the UB's Criminal Law Review, Seeger believes it is his legal research and writing skills that attracted the attention of the defense team.

"The written work is key," Seeger said.

A native of Totonto, Seeger moved to Connecticut after graduating UB Law in February 1998. Since then, he has made headlines with a pair of high-profile cases.

In August 1998, Seeger filed a class-action suit against a mall and towing company for immobilizing illegally parked cars with metal 'boots,' and forcing the drivers to pay a hefty fine before releasing the vehicles.

Last year, Seeger filed suit against Connecticut on behalf of a man who had been listed on the state's internet list of sex offenders. Seeger argued that the site's wording implied that his client, as well as all those listed, were dangerous. He lost the case, which went to the U.S. District Court, but changes in the site's wording to prevent future suits are being considered.

He expects to have better luck in the Skakel case.

"Everyone on the team is convinced the evidence is weak," he said, adding that if motions to dismiss are rejected, the trial will probably be held this summer.



UB Law grad Stephan Seeger '98

## HUMOR

# Making Sense of the Census

Jason Davern '00

The dawn of a new millennium marks the first time in my existence on this planet that I have personally received a census form. I gazed at the envelope like someone has just handed me a shovel full of dog excrement. With enormous trepidation, I notice the bold-faced type on the envelope reading "YOUR RESPONSE IS REQUIRED BY LAW."

What the heck am I supposed to do with this alien form? Is it possible to ignore or delete this like junk mail, parking tickets, or a course syllabus? Despite my irritation and confusion about this form, I do comprehend the magnitude and absurdity of this whole process. It has been said that only about 50% of households in Western New York have sent in their census forms to date.

Perhaps 50 percent of those households have simply "vanished" from Western New York since 1990 and have since "relocated" to points south or west. I personally do not know of any individual in the past century who has voluntarily come to Western New York and spent the rest of their lives here. Perhaps the lone exception is President William McKinley back in 1901.

At the very least, if you come to Buffalo and exit in rather unfortunate circumstances, you will get a nice Washington Monument style remembrance that basically amounts to a "Sorry About That."

As I open the form, the Department of Commerce cheerfully writes that this census form is "quick and easy, and your answers are protected by law." Unfortunately, I regret to point out that there is nothing quick or easy about this process. It is highly dubious that the information furnished will in fact be kept private and used for lawful purposes such as gouging citizens through the tax code, facilitating useful "pork" such as bovine flatulence research, and preserving the status quo of the vested interests. Anyone who wants to take a blind leap of faith and trust the government should immediately cease all current activity and check the sky for flying pigs. (especially the "pork" around the legislative epicenters).

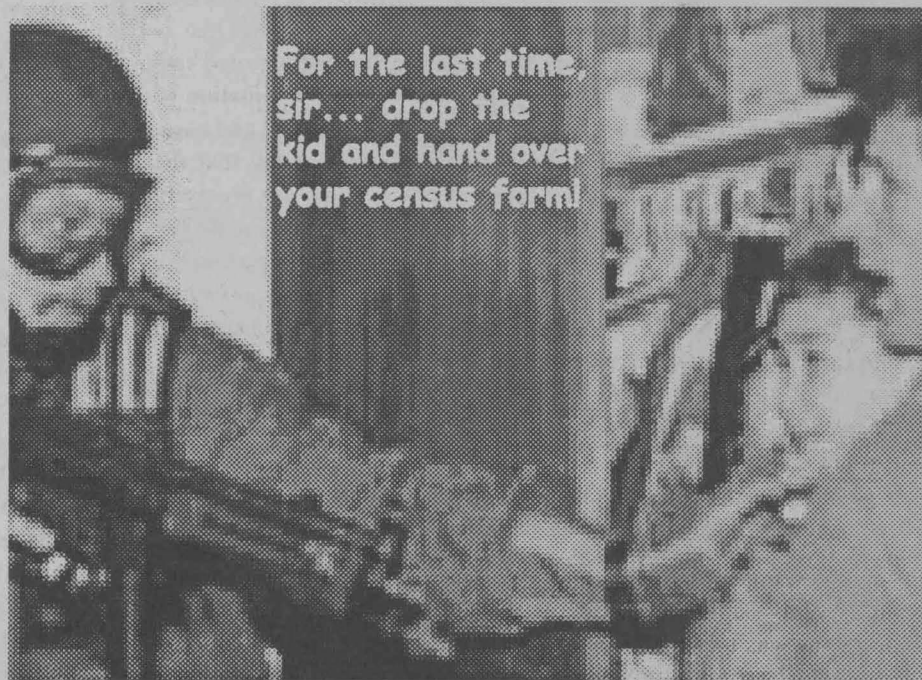
As I scan the pages, I am so thoroughly annoyed that I enthusiastically shift my attention to the 1040 EZ in a valiant effort to further "master the art of deduction."

It is now time to dive into the Federal Census and attempt to comprehend it. The first question asks how

many people are living in your household? This is very tough to answer. It varies from hour to hour and week to week. One roommate has since passed the bar exam and moved out to become a Swiss Guard at the Vatican. Another pays rent but is never here. What about weekend guests and ladies who come and go? Is it my civic duty to brag and inflate those numbers so that poor distressed Western New York can receive some more federal pork and maintain the same legislative delegation that passes bills without reading or comprehending them? The classic "more questions than there are answers" dilemma. The other major items on the census form pertain to so many persons and ethnic and racial options. This section frightens me. What if a small child gets their hand on this form and lists his "household" as comprising 90 million people? He could be eligible for his own military base. If that child making such a disastrous error happens to be Elian Gonzalez, that would give him and his Miami relatives the resources to launch another Bay of Pigs.

All he has to do is say that he has another 90 million drunk uncles and cousins and then there should be sufficient aerial cover this time around. The census form further inquires into how the persons listed on the form are related to each other in question #2. Appropriate categories to check are husband/wife, child, adopted child, sibling, grandparent etc.

I obtained a secret copy of the Federal Census for Mississippi and the categories for relationship with spouse include: sister, uncle, cousin, mother, father, son, daughter, or pet. Also this form lists Spouse's name, Second Spouse's Name, Third Spouse's Name, and Lover's Name. The Mississippi form also asks about the number of children living in the household, shed, number that are "yours," mother's name, father's name (leave blank if not sure). Another interesting aspect of the Mississippi form is that it asks if you "have a gun rack?" The appropriate categories to check are "yes," "no" and if "no;



please explain."

Finally, it is worth noting that the Mississippi form inquires about the number of times you have seen a UFO, the number of times in the last 5 years you've seen Elvis, and the number of times you have seen Elvis in a UFO.

I will now do my best to make sense of all of the ethnic categorization options available. In the interest of providing entertainment and specificity, I will put in my own ethnic variations. I changed the categorizations on my form to the following: Samoan Salmonella, Vietnamese Ho (sung to the tune of Billy Joel's "Goodnight Saigon") Native Hawaiian Tourist, Japanese Emperor, Chinese Nationalist, Filipino Marcos, Korean DMZ, and Pacific Islander "Lord of the Flies."

There are so many groups left out too. What about Mardi Gras Reveler, horny and crooked politician, or "learning disabled Norwegian of Alleutian descent?" I look forward to seeing what new categories the federal government can come up with for the 2010 census. For those of you who have not completed your census forms yet, don't worry. The federal government will find you and be at your door bombarding you with questions on a Saturday morning when you are coddling a hangover. If they ask for your social security number and too much personal information, just shut the door and go back to bed. You can always write about it later.



## COMING UP

### Ballgame Trip To Celebrate Senior Week

A UB Law Senior Week trip to see to Buffalo Bisons' game will be held May 12, 2000.

The game, which will pit Buffalo's AAA baseball team against Norfolk will be held at North American Park at 7:05 p.m. Pregame festivities will begin at 5 p.m.

Tickets, which will cost \$14.50 per person, will include a pre-game cook out featuring a chicken breast sandwich, choice of hot dog or hamburger, pasta or tossed salad and soft drink. In addition, North American Park now features a Bison's kids' zone, with special entertainment designed for young children.

There will also be fireworks after the game. Everyone (3L's, 2L's and 1L's, faculty) and their family are invited. See Kelly Zuch for Tickets in room 314, O'Brian Hall.

## Civil disobedience

(Continued from Page 3)

from black-clad anarchists to conservative union members rushed to the back of the rally to prevent the police from progressing any further into the legal rally. The mounted police attempted to force their way into the crowd but the protesters bravely stood their ground. I was with a 65 year-old ex-nun who I had worked with at the Institute for Policy Studies. She rushed to the front lines of this conflict to prevent the police from abusing their power. There was a standoff for about ten minutes with the protesters again chanting "we're not violent how about you?" and the police screaming at the protesters. Finally one of the cops unleashed a large dose of pepper spray into the crowd which my wife and I got a fair dose of. Yet the protesters did not move and forced the police to back off. It was quite a moment of power for the demonstrators yet it does not erase the despicable acts of the police trying to encroach upon a lawful assembly.

These were only a few of the many horrific acts I witnessed during the day and they spawned a powerful anger in me that is unlikely to leave anytime soon. My experiences also fostered this question: what use is the law when it is irrelevant in a situation of public dissent (which is essential to a working democracy) and basic fundamental rights are blatantly ignored? I now realized that the Constitution can be violated by those in power (who are precisely those who the framers wanted to curtail) if it is decided that they need to suppress views that could upset the status quo. What can the law, or specifically we as lawyers, do to prevent this? The answer is absolutely nothing. Maybe five years down the line a court might rule that the police's actions were wrong, but the objective was accomplished - democratic dissent was disrupted (even though the demonstration was overwhelmingly successful). This country has not yet learned from past mistakes such as the Sacco and Venzetti trial, Civil Rights demonstrations, and the Kent State shootings.

Ironically, every protester there was fighting to insist that the three most powerful organizations on the planet, the IMF, World Bank and the World Trade Organization be democratic and thus accountable to the people. All three Organizations affect every single person on this planet, yet they are not answerable to anyone. Do any of you know who the U.S. representative at the WTO is? Probably not, yet this body has overturned laws that our Congress and several state legislatures enacted through democratic processes. Contrary to most published news reports, a majority of the demonstrators were not against "globalization" per se, rather they were against corporate rule over this process which negates democratic processes. And the effects are devastating. Many third world nations are forced to utilize up to 70% of the GNP to pay just the interest on their debts! Thus there is no way that these countries can ever adequately feed, educate, or provide adequate health care to their citizens. Compound this with the fact that conditions are placed on these loans that force these countries to build dams that displace rural citizens, export lumber that were once parks and habitat for humans as well as animals, and cut social spending!

This movement is leaderless and limitless. It took hundreds of years of struggle to finally have a country to separate church from state. We now have a movement that is advocating for a separation of corporation and state. History has bestowed us with the great honor of pursuing this goal. I am encouraged by the knowledge that conservatism has always been on the losing side of history because history is inherently progressive. I will forever carry the image of the elderly man with me wherever I go with the hopes that I can live up to his example and show as much bravery as he did when the time calls. I hope to see some of you in Philadelphia in late July and at the Republican national convention and in L.A. in August at the Democratic convention. We will show our elected politicians what democracy is all about!

## Learning About Law, Learning About Life: Reflections from a 3L

Kevin Hsi '00

As a 3L who will be graduating next month, I want to take this moment to reflect publicly on some of my experiences and observations during my three years at U.B. Law School. To me, going through law school was like being on a roller coaster ride. It was remarkably fast and exciting and filled with more ups and downs and twists and turns than I could have ever imagined. Yet in the end, that roller-coaster ride through law school was also a lot of fun. After all, learning and having fun need not and should not be exclusive from one another. Therefore, to extend the roller coaster ride analogy further, the enjoyment that I got from what could otherwise have been a very nerve-wracking experience was made possible by my attitude while I was in law school.

Speaking of attitude, I feel there have been many recent events in the law school that seem to be affecting many students negatively. Simply put, I sense that there are a lot of "bad vibes" in the air and that they go beyond the daily pressures that all law students face. Instead, I am sensing a strong feeling of detachment and disillusionment among many students when it comes to interacting with their peers and perhaps, with the law school in general. Cliques are still common but even more people seem to be going their own separate ways. Also, social interactions between students, faculty and the administration seem to be declining as well. Most disturbingly, there are also some hidden and some not-so-hidden racial tensions in the air as more and more people of color struggle to define themselves both with the majority and with one another. Interaction among the three classes (by this I mean 1Ls, 2Ls and 3Ls) seems to be limited as few social events inside or outside the law school seem to be able to draw much of the law school community together.

The reason that I feel the need to mention all this is that my own experience when I first came to U.B. Law School was rather different. For example, here is an excerpt from a article that I wrote for the Latin American Law Student Association's newsletter *Palante!* during my first semester in law school:

"So far, I can honestly say that I have been having a good time in law school. Contrary to what most people say about law school and law students, almost all of the people that I've met so far have been very friendly and helpful. As far as I can tell, the competitiveness between students in the classroom seems very low - thank goodness! The last thing any law school needs is more cut-throats - after all, we all know how many of our fellow pre-law students were like in college. I am especially pleased that so many 2Ls and 3Ls seem willing to go out of their way to help 1Ls get by law school whether by providing study aids or by holding social events or both. Therefore, I would like to make a request to all my fellow 1Ls to try their best to try and meet some upperclassmen whether as advisors, friends, or hopefully both. Believe me, you would not be disappointed as there are many interesting and friendly personalities abound in this law school. P.S. - this advice can go both ways and it can apply to the faculty as well."

Based on my interactions with my fellow law students this year, it appears that my observations back then would now be considered either naive or inaccurate. I will admit that I was caught up in the law school mystique that many 1Ls feel during their first semester when I wrote that article. However, I do believe that the "bad vibes" that I've been sensing in this law school are far stronger now than they were three years ago. Now it may just be me, but I honestly believe that many of these "bad vibes" that people are feeling comes from the silent attitude that they take in public whenever anything even remotely controversial comes up. For example, the discussion of any is-

sue involving race seems especially taboo. The unwillingness of most people to speak up on any controversial issue inside or outside the classroom suggests a deeply-held fear of being seen as a non-conformist or troublemaker. Of course, being a reporter for *The Opinion*, I have noticed (through our lack of reporters and submissions) that there is an even greater hesitancy for most people to express their views in writing. To me, this self-censorship is both sad and disturbing. After all, in order to be an effective lawyer, one must be able to relate to people different from oneself. Seemingly unpopular ideas need to be debated and discussed openly and reasonably. Just as important, people (especially future lawyers) need to be willing to listen to viewpoints different from their own. Problems do not go away simply because no one talks about them.

Now these observations of mine are not new. In fact, I made many of these same observations in the Asian American Law Student Association's newsletter during my second semester in law school. However, I'm worried that the "bad vibes" I've sensed in the past may be growing and that most students have responded to it by becoming far less vocal and far less social as they move through law school. Now for a profession that expects its members to become forceful (yet ethical) advocates for their clients, why can't most law students be forceful advocates for what they themselves believe in? Is it simply because we're expected to be able to argue both sides of just about any given issue? Are we that afraid that our words will be used against us even though our future clients will be paying us to give them an opinion? For my part, I really don't think expressing an opinion on, say, whether or not the actions and attitudes of the lawyers for Elian Gonzalez's Miami relatives are driving down the reputation for all lawyers in this country even further would jeopardize the future career of anyone in this law school.

While in law school, I had the chance to visit and learn about infamous places in Western New York history such as Attica and the Love Canal and I was amazed at the level of silence from all parts of the Western New York community when it came to discussing such notorious incidents. I find it especially disturbing that so few people in law school seem willing to debate much less discuss the role that the legal profession and others have played in what many people would view as particularly egregious abuses of state and corporate power. Similarly, most people have stayed silent on the many problems now facing Buffalo. For example, do you know that Buffalo is one of the ten most segregated cities in this country? (What is more important, does anyone care that it is? If so, then speak out about it!)

The widespread political apathy in this law school (and many others across the country) is very troubling. After all, apathy and silence have always gone together hand-in-hand. The study of law is an inherently political act since all laws are created either by politicians (a.k.a. lawmakers) or by judges who are either elected or appointed by politicians. As such, trying to divorce the study of law from the political environment from which it comes from is ultimately an exercise in self-deception. As we all probably know by now, many statutes and cases aren't necessarily drafted or decided with the well-being of everybody in mind (that's one reason why there are so many lobbyists out there). Likewise, there are plenty of individuals and businesses alike who are willing to pay a lot of money to have laws drafted or applied in a certain way that would benefit them over others. Whether or not we would want to or be willing to represent such clients is something that we should all think long and hard about. After all, if money wasn't an issue, what kind of law would you want to practice? Would you still want to be a lawyer if you won't be well compensated in terms of money?

(Continued on Page 8)



By Mary Snyder '01

On Friday, March 31, more than 400 UB Law students attended the barrister's ball at the Hyatt Grand ballroom in downtown Buffalo. It was the largest Barrister's Ball the school has ever held, and the most-attended event by UB law students.

This year's Barrister's ball was organized by Mary R. Snyder and the Barrister's Ball committee of Jill Skretny, Betsey Snyder and Gabe DiMaio.

## Barrister's Ball attracts than 400 students

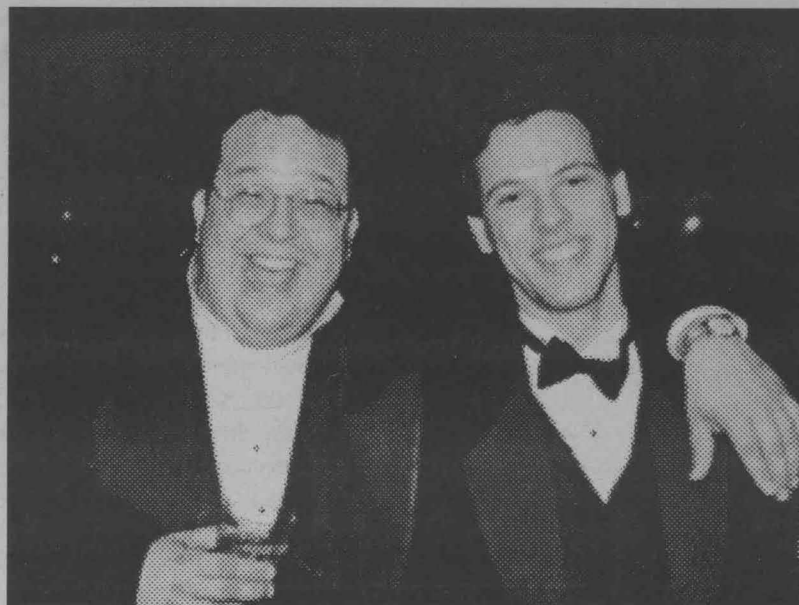
This year's Barrister's ball was the best one I attended," said Kevin Broch, 3L.

"We surpassed attendance at past balls by over 200 people," added Mary Snyder. "We really wanted to get the word out about the ball so more people would attend and have a good time, and it seemed to work. We have received a lot of positive feedback about the event and have already started booking next year's ball.

This year's location was more convenient than past balls. In the past the ball had been held at Samuel's Grand manor, which is about 25 minutes from downtown and 20 minutes from school. This made it harder for people to enjoy themselves, and not worry about drinking and driving. The location of this year's ball his year's ball allowed students to get hotel rooms at a reasonable rate so they couldn't have to worry about drinking and driving, and could go out downtown after the ball, without renting a limo.

Next year's ball hasd already been booked at the Hyatt for Saturday, March 31, at 7 p.m. It will also last an extra hour - this year it ended at midnight and people still wanted more. So next year it will end at one a.m.

"It was a lot of fun organizing this event, and I am very happy that so many peopel enjoyed themselves," sai Mary Snyder. "We hope next year's event will be even better. This year there was a waiting list because we sold out, so hopefully thos e people who didn't get tickets this year will be first in line next year so they don't miss out!"



Student Bar Association President Vincent Gregory, left, and Treasurer John Llera were among the more than 400 students and guests attending the record-setting Barrister's Ball March 31.



Top: Barrister's Ball committee members (from left) Betsey Snyder, Mary Snyder, Gabe DiMaio and Jill Skretney take a well-deserved breather.

Middle left: A couple enjoys the music.

Middle right: Matt Wolf, Mike Hollenbeck and Sheldon Smith wait for their meal.

Right: Friends gather for a photo.





# Learning about law, learning about life

(Continued from Page 6)

Do you really want to help the rich get richer even though "the poor are still getting poorer" (as a recent song by Carlos Santana points out)? These are questions we all must eventually answer on our own (and the sooner, the better). However, I also feel that all law schools need to address the relationship between money and the law in an open and honest way so that students (and the general public) don't operate under any illusions on what the law is actually about.

Of course, there are probably other reasons why there have been a lot of "bad vibes" and I'm sure everyone will have their own explanations. For example, one can argue quite credibly that what is really going on is that the facade of civility is simply breaking down faster as students become more blunt about why many (but not all) of them came to law school (i.e., to obtain a lot of money and/or power (whether real or perceived)). My own view here is that regardless of our differences, it would be far more pleasant and far healthier if everybody were to see each other as future colleagues rather than current competitors. Frankly, the legal profession is very hierarchical and the rules of the game aren't always premised on merit or fairness as Harvard Law Professor Lani Guinier put it so well during her recent lecture in Buffalo. In Guinier's view, trying to get into the power structure in this country - particularly in the legal arena - "is akin to trying to climb backwards up a cheese grater. We can either tear ourselves up trying to get to the top or we can try to work together to change the rules of the game."

Yet "bad vibes" aside, I can still state with certainty that I had a good time in law school and I consider myself fortunate for having gone through (and survived) the process. The knowledge and skills that I learned and the close friends that I made along the way are gifts which I would not give up for anything. Likewise, there are many professors whom I shall miss for their advice, support and dedication to their students - I'll refrain from embarrassing them so I won't mention them by name. However, I will strongly recommend that all 1Ls and 2Ls should try their best to establish a collegial, genuine and lasting relationship with at least one professor or instructor. I can't guarantee that it'll be easy but it would definitely make your law school experience so much more enjoyable once you do.

Perhaps the main reason I enjoyed

going to law school was that it gave me the opportunity to learn so much both inside and outside the classroom. Simply put, I did all I could to take advantage of the wide array of opportunities that Buffalo presented to me. For example, I attended many lectures, workshops and panels and learned about areas of the law that I did not have time to learn about in the classroom. I also had the opportunity to meet and interact with many people from both inside and outside the legal profession. For example, my experiences at U.B. have included lunch with Johnnie Cochran and dinner with Wang Dan (one of the student leaders of the 1989 democracy movement in China). Not all events were planned either. In May of 1998, I took part in an emergency rally, along with two law professors, outside the Cheektowaga Police Department to call for the release of Arturo Rodriguez (the president of the United Farm Workers and Cesar Chavez's son-in-law) who had been wrongfully arrested earlier that day. Furthermore, last semester, I got to ask a challenging question (about Augusto Pinochet, the former dictator of Chile) to former president George Bush by using information that I had obtained from LEXIS-NEXIS.

I've also kept busy inside the law school as well. I have been active in many law school organizations and I've attended many law school functions as well. For example, during my second year in law school, as the President of the Asian American Law Students Association (AALSA), I helped organize a campus-wide conference on fighting against sweatshops that attracted over 100 people from across the campus and the surrounding community. Over the years, I also had the opportunity to attend and enjoy numerous law school social events such as the Students of Color Recognition Dinner, the Barristers Ball, the Outlaw Dinner, the Faculty Jam, and even the Law School Convocation. I was able to assist prisoners in a legal research course at Wyoming Correctional Facility (next door to Attica) and work with Chinese refugees in Buffalo on their current attempts to gain asylum in the U.S. Likewise, I have remained an active member of the National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (NMASS), a New York City based advocacy group at the forefront of the social and economic justice movement in this country. (To see what I mean, check out the NMASS web-site at <http://www.nmass.org> - you won't regret it!)

In the end, law school, like college, is what you make of it. While it may

be possible to get by law school completely on your own, I doubt that you will be happier as a person for having done so. Besides, the ability to work and relate with others different from yourself is a crucial part of being an effective lawyer. Knowledge may mean power but it also means nothing if it isn't shared with others. For my part, it was through my active interaction with many different people and my involvement in many different activities both inside and outside the law school that have played such a major role in making my law school experience an enjoyable one. Furthermore, I learned more inside the classroom as a result because my experiences outside law school gave me the opportunity to humanize the issues behind the cases that we studied.

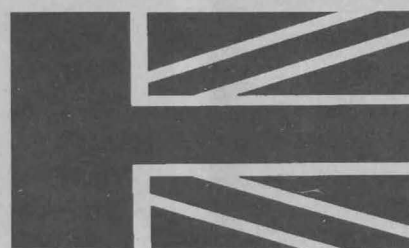
As such, my final words of encouragement to everyone are threefold: first, don't get too caught up in the perceived power and mystique of law school and the legal profession. Instead, use the legal knowledge that you are gaining to help address the multitude of problems facing society today - doing so will help give you a sense of perspective that would help you get by law school and make you a better lawyer in the process. Second, break the culture of silence and speak up both inside and outside the classroom. Challenge injustice whenever you see it. After all, real learning has always been a two-way street and silence benefits nobody

except for those who seek to exploit and oppress others.

Finally, remember what Professor Schlegel told many of us during our orientation to law school - "if you can only remember one thing from law school, remember this - don't let the bastards get to your head." Having been through three years of law school, I will second that statement wholeheartedly. It may not make sense now but, believe me, someday it will (unless you are one of those people to whom Professor Schlegel was referring to). It is my hope that the sense of community (whether real or perceived) that I experienced during my first semester of law school will be more widely felt at U.B. in the future. As such, regardless of what our individual goals are, we should all work together to help create a better society for ourselves and for future generations.

I will close by paraphrasing the words of Harvard Law professor Lani Guinier whose recent speech in Buffalo both affirmed and clarified my own view of what true success is all about. As Guinier puts it, the goal for all social justice movements "should not be to reform the existing power structure but to transform it from top to bottom. We need to get rid of the pyramid approach to power where success is defined by who is on top. We need to redefine what it means to be powerful and what it means to be successful."

## University of Detroit Mercy's LONDON LAW PROGRAMME



*Prepare yourself to practice in the new millennium*

Join us in London to explore the subjects you will need to practice in a global economy while you have your most exciting semester of law school.

Your educational experience will be enhanced by dining with the barristers of Middle Temple and through internships at the offices of members of Parliament, barristers and legal departments of international corporations, all while you live (not visit) in London.

The UDM Programme is open to second- and third-year students and offers you a choice of fall or spring semesters.



University of Detroit Mercy School of Law  
London Law Programme  
651 East Jefferson Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan 48226  
(313) 596-0264  
Internet: [capriok@udmercy.edu](mailto:capriok@udmercy.edu)  
Website: <http://www.law.udmercy.edu>

## SBA schedules Decompression Party 2000

The Student Bar Association has done it again!

For the third annual 'Decompression Party' the board has planned another two-day extravaganza. Both nights' events will be held at the SoHo in Chippewa Street.

The first night's party will take place May 11, from 7-10 p.m. Free beer, cine and

soda will be available. The second night's party, May 12, will be held from 9 p.m. - midnight. Again, free beer, wine and soda will be available. Free 'Decompression' t-shirts will also be available to the first 100 people to show up.

Questions about the events can be forwarded to [dpolak@acsu.buffalo.edu](mailto:dpolak@acsu.buffalo.edu).

**The Opinion wishes everyone a good summer!**