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### The Opinion Volume 43 Issue 1 – October 1, 2004

The Opinion

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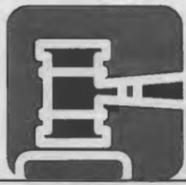
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Justin Whittaker, '06 looks for his new mailbox in the Law School Food Court

## Where, Oh Where, did our Little Food Court Go?

### Dealing with Mailboxes in a Post-September 11th World?

O'Brien Hall—At one point during the summer a decision was made to move law student mailboxes from the third floor behind the elevators to a secure location known as the law school food court. For the 1Ls out there, the "Food Court" was a group of vending machines that had a plethora of tasty delights, such as Michelina's frozen dinners and microwave burritos. Then, there were a few booths with tables upon which students could eat between classes.

The mailboxes now sit in this very room. (For those of you who do not know where it is, it is on the second floor just past the library, behind large wooden doors with key-swipe access).

I suppose that the old mailboxes were a fire hazard, as they were made of treated plywood and had lots of papers stuffed inside. And, I can understand why it would be good to prevent open-access to the mailboxes.

But take away my food court, and I get upset. I was hoping that one day the little food court on the second floor would compete with the vibrant foods of the Baldy walkway. But alas, now the food service on the walkway is unconstrained. We can only hope that the quality of that food will remain. Every student's dream of a satisfying menagerie of scrumptious morsels has been dashed. At least we can sleep well at night, knowing that in this dangerous, post-9/11 world, our mail is safe.

But in all seriousness, I just cannot understand the rationale. The last thing I want is snoopy law students looking for my graded papers—but law students can still do this. I agree that I get lots of mail that is worthless—but it is law students who are putting this mail in my mailbox. I don't know who keeps what in their mailbox, but whatever it is, all law students *still* have access to it (at least when those UB cards are working).

The food court is just not the same, but in this day we law students must recognize that security comes first.

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## SBA Cruise'n to a Successful Start

### Students Find "Booze Cruise" a Nice Change of Pace

By Pat McNelis, '07

Buffalo, NY—The new SBA has pulled off another great event this year with their (this is *NOT* a booze cruise if anyone asks) Cruise Down the Niagara River.

With the help of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA), the Jewish Law Students Association (JLSA), the Environmental Law Journal and the Prosecutors Club, Buffalonians found their downtown marina overrun with UB Law students arriving for the SBA's first "Cruise Down the Niagara River."

Nearly 200 students purchased \$15 tickets which included the cruise, food, drinks, and great music. The crowd was mixed with members of all three classes—but 1L's showed in the largest numbers.

As the ship departed students were treated to a colorful sunset which reflected off the river and for the next three hours they enjoyed food platters and "beverages."

The cruise served as a nice change from the usual bar night visits to the downtown bars and clubs of Buffalo. The exclusivity of allowing only law students and the isolation out on the river really made the atmosphere just great.

Event coordinator Molly Donnelly, '06, who dreamt up the plan early this summer was visibly happy and relieved as she collected admission tickets from cruise patrons. Two thumbs up for the SBA, "Quote" was fun, but this was great!



## Student Bar Association Executive Leadership Set for Upcoming Year

By Mike Mann, '06

President, Student Bar Association

On behalf of the Student Bar Association I would like to welcome you back to school. There is an exciting year ahead of us regardless and the SBA Executive Board is hard at work planning a number of exciting social and educational activities for the 2004-05 school year.

If you were able to join us at our Bar Night the first week of school at "Quote" or at our recent "Cruise Down the Niagara River" event, you know the Student Bar Association is moving in the right direction.

However, when I sought the office of president I promised a new Student Bar Association. We can be so much more than mere party planners or an accounting service for student groups. The SBA has the ability and resources to be a real agent

for change within the Law School and the entire campus community.

Such leadership is only possible if we receive the positive feedback needed from you, the students. I am proud to say we have started down the right path with a Law School Book Exchange, an updated Student Bar Association website ([www.ubsba.com](http://www.ubsba.com)), a soon to be built outline database and a way to finally evaluate courses so that other students may learn about a course before they register.

I encourage you to get involved if not with the Student Bar Association, then with a student group that is of interest. You can help move UB Law in the right direction.

Good luck with the new year!

## Join the American Bar Association Law Student Division

Great benefits for just \$20

Visit [www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org)

### Join an SBA Committee

- Academic Standards -
- Budget Review -
- Public Interest -
- Students of Color Dinner -
- Social/ Public Relations -
- Diversity -

and many many more!

Visit [www.ubsba.com](http://www.ubsba.com) for a full list of committees.

Send a letter of interest to Brian Langenfeld, SBA Vice President at [bd13@buffalo.edu](mailto:bd13@buffalo.edu)

## No End in Sight for First Year Ambitions...

Sixteen First Year Candidates file to run in SBA Election

By Opinion Staff

Buffalo, NY—A record number of 1L students have submitted petitions for this year's Student Bar Association Class Director Election.

Sixteen names will be placed on the 1L October 5 & 6 ballot. This is not even considering the number of write-in votes that will be cast for other 1L students. Students may vote for six (6) candidates on their ballot.

With such excitement for this year's election, the SBA is printing up extra ballots just to be sure there is no shortage. Student Bar Association president **Mike Mann, '06** has spoken with many of the candidates.

"I have heard all sorts of reasons why [students] are running in this year's election and it is very exciting from where I am sitting," said Mann.

As president Mann also expressed some disappointment with the number of 2L, 3L and LLM petitions submitted.

"I wish there were more petitions from upperclassmen. [Upperclassmen] are the leaders for this year's Board. I just hope past Class Directors did not leave the Association with a bad taste in their mouth—this year will be different."

However, this is a new year and many fresh faces have stepped up to the plate to lead as the future of the Student Bar Association.

This year, to help better educate first year voters, *The Opin-*

*ion* has decided to briefly introduce each of the first year candidates based on candidate statements submitted to the newspaper. *The Opinion* is not for or against the election or defeat of any candidate and hopes this helps educate the student body about their candidates.

**Adam Bushey, '07** is running for class director. He has had extensive student government experience as an undergraduate, coordinating successful events such as a campus wide service day. He has lived in South Africa for 8 months and worked at a rural school that lacked running water and electricity. He hopes to one day hold public office.

**Amanda Bowman, '07** is from just down Route 90 in Rochester. She has been involved with student government in high school and knows what the job of Class Director requires. Bowman missed the chance to be involved as an undergraduate student because of the birth of her son and now that her time is manageable she hopes she will have to opportunity to be involved in with student government again.

**Harven Victor De Shield, '07** has presented a 6 point platform which includes receiving student feedback through surveys, encourage more proactive student activity, increase mentorship opportunity for students with area attorneys and seek to raise money to help cover the cost incurred by students traveling for

interviews, commercial outlines and child care costs. He is a PhD student seeks to one day be a patent attorney.

**Jason Joaquin Almonte, '07** is by nature a "grassroots" kind of guy. He has been involved with the American Public Health Student Caucus and found his work rewarding and taught him not to be afraid to speak up for others. Being Hispanic and gay, Almonte knows what it is like to feel unaccounted for, serving as Class Director will give him a chance to be a voice for others and make him a different kind of class director.

**Melissa Piotrowicz, '07** wants to zealously represent her class and foster a greater sense of pride and unity within the class—while earning the respect of upper classmen and the greater Buffalo community.

**Sri Sekar, '07** wants to make life both inside and outside O'Brian Hall more fun for everyone. Sekar believes that being happy and healthy makes us all better law students. He wants to ensure the library is open late during finals, eliminate the cost to participate in intramural sports, improve the Law School's website and increase the number of top law firms that recruit here at Buffalo.

**Arianna Gleckel, '07** wants you to vote for her because of her leadership skills she demonstrated as a member of student government in college and high

school. She is a team player and always available to listen to 1L concerns.

**Jessica Bielecki, '07** has been involved with student government for a long time and served as a member of her undergraduate student government's Executive Cabinet, president of her Judicial Review Board, member of the Honor Advisory Board and a class representative for all four years.

**Trisha Kirsch, '07** was a member of the Ithaca College Women's Crew team that won the 2004 NCAA National Championship. She knows what teamwork means and hopes she can be involved in planning nights on the town and other fun social events.

**KelliAnne Kelly-Williams, '07** has spent her entire college career working for economically disadvantaged communities. She is a very determined person and wants to work hard on ensuring the distribution of student funds are fair.

**Jacia Smith, '07** wants to "Bridge the Gap" between first year students and upperclassmen. She believes as a class director she can unite different ideas and points of view to help us all become better lawyers.

**Victor Gonzalez, '07** wants to work hard to increase the amount of appropriations student groups receive from the Student Bar Association. His top priority is to help increase funding for student groups that participate in regional and national competitions or activities that can attract positive national media attention for the Law School. Mr. Gonzalez wants to make sure he reflects 1L

*Continued on p. 4*

# Student Bar Association

Wishes Candidates the Best of Luck!!

Elections will be held

October 5th & 6th

Ryan Micklus, 2L  
Leonardo Sette-Camara, 2L  
Jessie Santiago, 2L  
Dave Archer, 2L  
Steve Trynosky, 3L  
John Rudy, 3L  
Adam Bushey, 1L  
Amanda R. Bowman, 1L  
Harven Victor De Shield, 1L  
Jason Joaquin Almonte, 1L  
Jacia Smith, 1L

Melissa M. Piotrowicz, 1L  
Sri Sekar, 1L  
Kelle Kuebler, 1L  
Arianna Gleckel, 1L  
Jessica Bielecki, 1L  
Trisha Kirsch, 1L  
Nicole Haff, 1L  
Johnnie El-Gharib, 1L  
Shannon Filbert, 1L  
KelliAnne Kelly-Williams, 1L  
Victor Gonzalez, 1L

For more information visit [www.ubsba.com](http://www.ubsba.com)

## School After Law School

*UB to Offer New Post Graduate LL.M. Program*

Buffalo, NY—Not sure what you want to do after graduation? Want to go back to law school?? UB Law is now offering a new General Master's of Laws (LL.M.) program. This post-professional degree program is open to students who have completed their first law degrees. For now, the program will admit international students who hold a first degree in law from a university in their own country.

The new general LL.M. is designed to offer a variety of options for graduate legal study and research. Other programs will be phased in gradually, the Law School has already launched the program this fall with a program that gives lawyers from other countries an overview of the American legal system, as well as the chance to specialize in a specific subject area—such as finance transactions, IP, family law, labor law, corporations, tax or law and society.

For more information visit [www.law.buffalo.edu/lmgeneral](http://www.law.buffalo.edu/lmgeneral) or contact Johanna Oreskovic, director of post-professional education at the Law School.— *UB Newswire*

## UB Law Grads Establish Fund to Honor Former Professor

Buffalo, NY—Seven former students of Louis A. Del Cotto, '51, a highly respected tax authority and professor emeritus in the University at Buffalo Law School, have established an endowment fund -- kicking it off with \$75,000 in gifts and pledges -- to honor the man they credit with providing the foundation for their own successful careers.

An expert in the intricacies of the tax code, statutes and regulations, Del Cotto taught at the Law School for more than 40 years, redefining the curriculum in tax law. In addition to his teaching, Del Cotto collaborated on the Bittker Federal Income Estate and Gift Taxation treatise, was counsel to the New York State Society for Certified Public Accountants and New York University/ Internal Revenue Service Board of Advisors, along with a host of other tax panels and institutes.

In appreciation for his devotion to the law and his dedication to teaching, his former students have created the Louis A. Del Cotto Fund for Excellence in Tax and Tax-Related Studies and are urging other fellow alumni to join in the effort.

"Professor Del Cotto was pivotal in my life and the lives of so many other successful UB Law School graduates," said Dianne Bennett, '75, chair, Hodgson Russ LLP. "He helped launch the careers of his former students, many of whom have gained prominence and stature in the legal profession and assumed leadership roles in their communities."

Dean Olsen noted, "During my tenure or more than 25 years at the law school, Lou Del Cotto, along with Al Mugel, Ken Joyce and Bill Greiner, created a tax program with a national reputation that profoundly affected the careers of many of our graduates, many of whom now lead their firms in tax law. Lou and his wife Bee, are close personal friends of all of us at the Law School, so it is particularly appropriate that we honor him -- just as he brought honor to us for so many years.

The fund will supplement resources for research and instruction. Preference will be given to lectures by visiting faculty and tax practitioners, scholarships for 2L and 3L students intending to focus their careers in the area of tax.—*UB Newswire*.



Former Law Professor Louis Del Cotto, '51

### UB Ranks 82 in U.S. News & World Report Survey

Washington, DC—The Law School is leaps and bounds ahead of other Upstate and Western New York law schools and tied in the controversial rankings with Catholic University of America, St. Louis University, University of Hawaii, University of Louisville, University of Nevada—Las Vegas and the University of South Carolina.

Syracuse Law School was ranked in the third tier along with Albany Law School—Union University. The top five schools included Yale University, Harvard University, Stanford University, Columbia University and New York University.

## The Opinion - Commentary

Please Leave Future Commentary Submissions of no more than 250 words in Mailbox 642

## The Rat Race to 180

*What matters in law school admissions and how schools can change it*

By Mike Mann, '06

Over the next few months first-year applicants to UB and law schools across the country will find their long anticipated admission results stuffed in their mailboxes. Some envelopes will carry acceptance letters and glossy brochures inviting them to join a prestigious school, while many—more than ever before—will have a one-page form letter that reads something to the sound of: "The admissions committee has completed a thorough review of your application and regret to inform you that it is our decision to deny admission."

As the nation's economy continues to slope downward and the job market shrinks, the number of applications to the 181 ABA law schools will continue to rise. Graduating college seniors will do almost anything to avoid the marketplace and have found temporary cover in prestigious graduate programs. The sharp increase in applicants has put even more pressure on law schools to court the most talented students to join their ranks. While students have put their reputations into the hands of law school admission committees, admission committees have

placed their school's own academic reputations into the hands of commercial law school rankings such as the one released annually by *U.S. News and World Reports*. In the world of academia, it seems like an ugly race to reign at the top of the top, and through pressure from alumni and administration, admission officers have been reduced to relying too heavily on standardized exams as the deciding factor for an applicant's acceptance.

Perhaps I am naïve and cannot grasp how an applicant with exceptional grades, a challenging undergraduate curriculum, unique life experiences, a Nobel Peace Prize, space travel on a shuttle mission and four Pulitzer Prize's would be unlikely for admission if their LSAT score falls short of a school's arbitrary cutoff number. It seems unjust that an applicant who has not shown themselves capable of anything for their first twenty-one years on Earth and has shown absolutely no indication of any future contribution will be a better candidate for admission if they meet or exceed the same arbitrary number. As someone who might be a colleague of yours one

day, which student would you want working alongside of you?

One possible solution is for schools to collectively agree to release data to law school ranking services on only their top twenty five percent of LSAT scores from admitted students, which would relieve the pressure felt to admit students strictly by their numbers.

Law schools choosing to omit information on students whose LSAT scores were not in a class' top quarter, would allow more leeway for admission officers to review the other seventy five percent of its applicants holistically. Perhaps if schools were able to remove some of their accepted students from the scrutiny of magazine editors, admission staff and talented professors serving on admission committees could return to the practice of admitting the most qualified applicant, even if their standardized test scores fall short of an arbitrary number. Sure, schools could pad their LSAT scores in the top twenty five percent of their class through large scholarships for high scorers, but then ranking services would be forced to look past a number and evaluate other



important elements such as its faculty, program diversity, bar passage rate and percentage of students employed after graduation.

Law schools should be in the business of accepting applicants that will make the best students and the best lawyers, not only opening their doors to the best test takers.

Many of these flaws will continue to remain on the backburner, but the influence of the LSAT raises the essential question of what schools should be looking for in its applicants.

Perhaps it is time to end the LSAT numbers game and return the exam to the place it was originally developed for, a mere component to an admission process, developed to predict an applicant's fitness for legal studies and ultimately the practice of law. It is scary to think there will be soon be an outrageous number of new attorneys who have never really had a prior commitment to the study of law or any future interest in the practice of it.

# Summer Spotlight: 10 Years of Democracy in the New South Africa

By Justin Whittaker, '06

**Cape Town, South Africa**—This summer many students chose to get a firm job or clerkship in Buffalo, New York City or Washington, D.C. Some of us who have a distaste for office work chose to extend our first year studies by going abroad to learn about the world outside the U.S. and to gain some perspective not afforded in Western New York.

My destination of choice was Cape Town, South Africa, a gorgeously diverse city full of life, photo opportunities, and reasonably priced cocktails. The view from my apartment on the Atlantic Ocean could be compared only to the feeling of standing on the edge of the world. If any of you have stood on the beach on the coast of Oregon you know what I am talking about. From the Cape Peninsula one's next landfall is Antarctica.

My original trip plan was to embark upon a private loan-funded photo excursion into the natural wonders and urban life of an international city (and yes, that was accomplished). I expected to pick up some knowledge along the way as well, and earn a few credits toward graduation (I swear this is all very legal in nature).

Most people think about the racist national policy of apartheid when they think of South Africa. Some people remember that the United States considered Nelson Mandela a terrorist in the 1980s and early 1990s. In South Africa Mr. Mandela is regarded as a living saint. Everywhere one goes there are murals and tributes to him on the streets and poor townships surrounding Cape Town. The country even has a new and ambitious constitution, which emphasizes the dignity of the individual. It's equivalent to our equal protection clause, but reads more like a laundry list of prohibitions against discrimination on virtually any class of citizen imaginable, including race, language, and sexual orientation. In this sense South Africa is certainly the most progressive nation in Africa and an emerging example of individual and human rights thought throughout the world.

As an American I was somewhat disheartened by the progress South Africa has made in the last ten years. Daily life for most South Africans is a struggle for survival, which cannot be understood until one sees it. While the country has taken great strides in its ten years since the abo-

lition of apartheid, the ghosts of segregation, inequality, and poverty still hovers about. For example, one in nine people in the country is living with HIV/AIDS; forty-seven percent of South Africans are unemployed; the city police force look like teenagers in Halloween costumes; and gang violence can only be described as devastating. All that being said, the people of the country are aware of the troubles facing them, and they are not blind to their situation. There is a great optimism about the future of their country which leads me to believe that they will not abandon their new democracy and revert to the previous ills brought about by extreme nationalism.

South Africa taught me more about humanity, diversity, and struggle than I ever imagined possible. If you have an opportunity to go abroad in the coming semesters and have an interest in gaining some perspective, South Africa will offer you a valuable glimpse into an struggling democracy fighting for world recognition, forgiveness, and understanding.

And like I mentioned previously, the cocktails are easy on the wallet.

## Election Profiles

Continued from page 2

opinions.

Other candidates on the October 5th & 6th ballot include **Kelle Kuebler, '07; Nicole Haff, '07, Johnnie El-Gharib, '07; Shannon Filbert, '07.**

The *Opinion* staff hopes this brief profile of first year candidates better assist students in deciding who to cast their six votes for.

The brief candidate profiles found in this article are just that—brief. Each candidate had the opportunity to submit a statement and the editorial staff have taken the liberty to take the submitted statements and make them even more concise. We sincerely apologize if your statements are taken out of context or if we cut your most passionate line.

The writers of *The Opinion* wish the best of luck and the writer of this piece knows not one of the candidates.

Class Director's are responsible for attending meetings twice a month on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 PM. If you have interest in running for a director position as a write-in candidate you should contact the Student Bar Association for more details. -  
*Written by The Opinion Staff*

# The Docket



**Who:** Student Bar Association Class Director Elections  
**Info:** Tuesday & Wednesday, Oct. 5, 6, 9 AM—4:30 PM; Outside 101 O'Brian Hall  
**Scoop:** Not quite the presidential election, but almost as important.

**Who:** Student Bar Association Meeting  
**When:** Wednesday, Oct. 13, 7:30 PM; O'Brian Hall, Room 10  
**Scoop:** This is the first meeting of the year for Class Directors and for student groups to beg for more money...

**Who:** Steven Squyres, Principal Investigator, NASA Mars Exploration Rover Project  
**When:** Wednesday, Oct. 13, 8 PM; Alumni Arena  
**Scoop:** This is part of the Distinguished Speakers Series and free tickets are available for students...shocker.

**Who:** Investiture of Dr. John B. Simpson as the 14th President of the University at Buffalo  
**When:** Friday, Oct. 1, 3 PM; Center for the Arts  
**Scoop:** Yea, like students are "really" invited to this. Should be a nice ceremony, but likely a snoozer.

**Who:** American Bar Association Law Student Division Fall Roundtable  
**When:** Friday, Oct. 15 - Sunday, Oct. 17; Fordham University Law School in New York City  
**Scoop:** Great opportunity to network with other law students, speak to the SBA if you have interest...

**Who:** Desmond Moot Court Competition  
**When:** Monday, Oct. 25 - Friday, Oct. 29; 6:30 PM & 8 PM  
**Scoop:** This is a pretty big deal. It is not open to 1Ls, but a great experience for 2Ls. Contact the Buff. Moot Court Board.

**Who:** Student Bar Association General Meeting  
**When:** Wednesday, Oct. 27, 7:30 PM; O'Brian Room 10  
**Scoop:** Enough said.

**Who:** Alumni Convocation and Jaeckle Award Luncheon  
**When:** Saturday, Oct. 30, 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM; University Inn and Conference Center  
**Scoop:** If you are interested in this you are probably a networking guru, so speak to Dean Fleischmann.

To submit future events to *The Docket* leave a note in mailbox #642 with all the important information.

**Who:** SBA Halloween Party (To Be Announced)  
**When:** October 30, not on the actual day of Halloween.  
**Scoop:** Ummm, rumor has it these used to be nuts! Keep the night free it WILL again.

**Who:** Buffalo Public Interest Law Program Bar Night  
**When:** Thursday, Oct. 7, 9 PM; Blu (Main Street)  
**Scoop:** \$3 specials on Newcastle and Guinness—need I say more?

**Who:** Students of Color Dinner Committee Bar Night  
**When:** Thursday, Oct. 14, 9 PM; Sphere Night Club  
**Scoop:** Will be a great time and raise money for a great cause.

**Who:** Latin American Law Student Association Food Sale  
**When:** Monday, Oct. 4; 11 AM; 1st Floor O'Brian Hall  
**Scoop:** Yummy, I need some LALSA food in my tummy.

**Who:** Black Law Students Association Food Sale  
**When:** Wednesday, Oct. 20, 11 AM; 1st Floor O'Brian  
**Scoop:** I would definitely get down there and get some good ole soul food.

## The Opinion

The Official Student Newspaper of UB Law School  
October 2004—Volume 43, Issue #1

### STAFF:

**Co-Editors-in-Chief:** John Rudy, '05; Mike Mann, '06  
**Staff Writers:** Justin Whittaker, '06; Patrick McNelis, '07

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