



Welcome to the new Forum

First, and foremost, a thank you to those that have contributed to the first issue of *The Forum* under new management. We, the voluminous and over-qualified staff of *The Forum* (see page 2), are confident that the articles that follow epitomize our objective of creating a paper that, while humorous and down-right idiotic at times, maintains an insightful and candid character aimed at fostering and encouraging student involvement. In as much as this may be a departure from what *The Forum* once was, we hope that this approach will nevertheless promote student interest and participation as diverse as the student body.

However, with these aspirations in mind, each issue can only be as diverse and engaging as the submissions will allow. This will be our only issue of the fall semester, but we hope to have 3 or 4 in the spring, and we can only do that with your help. Accordingly, we reiterate our open-ended invitation to all students to submit rebuttals, counter-points or follow-up responses to previous articles—and, of course, original articles are always welcome. Basically, enjoy this issue and keep us in mind.

The Forum Staff

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Grading Curve Increase May Be On The Horizon

By Dawn Maruna '09

According to Andrew J. Simons, associate academic dean and chair of the Committee on Grades, the Committee is "actively studying" St. John's University School of Law's current grading curve, a sentiment also echoed by Dean Mary C. Daly at last month's Town Hall meeting. While reluctant to share the specific details of any amendments receiving close consideration, Simons emphasized that the current curve is "not likely to remain" and is hopeful that a final decision may take effect as early as this fall semester's grading period.

The movement to reevaluate and potentially increase SJU Law's grading

curve, inspired in part by proposals made by Francesca Liquori '07, Professor Margaret N. Kniffin, and Professor John E. Davidian last semester, has gained renewed vigor this fall with the recent circulation of a student-driven petition and plans by the Committee on Grades' to revisit the issue during their October 31 meeting. If the Committee does recommend a change, that recommendation will be forwarded to the attention of the Faculty Council, who will next convene, and cast the decisive vote, at the end of November. SJU Law's grading curve was last amended on March 30, 2001.

SJU Law currently employs a grading curve that aims for a mean, or average, grade point average (GPA) of 2.87 and

a median grade of 3.00. In applying the curve, faculty are held to an expectation of "substantial, but not literal, compliance", with target percentages for each grade category ranging from A+ to F; grades of D+ and D- are excluded from the system.

While substantial compliance, whether it be through the use of ranges or percentile distribution of grades, is not an uncommon feature of law school grading systems nationwide, SJU Law stands alone among its New York City area peers—Brooklyn, Cardozo, Fordham, New York Law, New York University, and Touro—in its mandatory assignment of grades of F, and is only one of three schools with
See Curve, page 10

The Forgotten Team

By Brian G. Smith '08

One of the reasons I came to St. John's is because it felt like home before I was ever here. Both of my parents graduated from the law school, and my mom double lettered at the school formerly known as Redmen U. I went to countless St. John's basketball games at Alumni Hall (now Carnesecca Arena) and Madison Square Garden, and saw the likes of current Warriors GM and Original Dream Team member Chris Mullin (ok I was too young to remember but I WAS there), longtime Knicks and Pacers standout Mark Jackson (ditto), Walter Berry (x3), the late Malik Sealy (my favorite of all time), Matt Brust, Shawnelle Scott, Felipe Lopez (the prematurely anointed next Jordan), Ron Artest (when his flaws were eating nine cheeseburgers from Mickey D's before a tournament game, instead of running into stands), Erick Barkley, Bootsy Thornton (of dropping 40 points on Duke at MSG fame), Lavar Postell, and Marcus Hatten (Man-Hatten).

The most disappointing thing to me is that more of you are familiar with my name than

the majority of names on that list. What's even MORE disappointing, is that I have seen the one and only legendary St. John's basketball coach, Lou Carnesecca, in the law school cafeteria, and I have never seen anyone else notice him or give out a "Hey Coach!" yell to Loooooouuu. And I know the problem isn't that law students aren't sports fans by nature, as I know a great amount of fantasy sports players, Yankees fans, Red Sox fans (OK maybe just me and a few others), Knicks fans, Giants and Jets fans, and huge sports fans of your respective colleges.

In my humble opinion, the biggest problem is that law students here don't feel a sense of community and school spirit connection to St. John's like they did to their colleges. The reasons behind this are beyond me. Almost everyone went to the semi-formal, Last Call is packed with students on Thursday nights, and everyone's hanging out in the cafeteria between classes, and for the most part, while people are very stressed out, they also seem really happy here. Maybe a problem is that too many people spend their free time worrying and complaining about the amount of

work they have rather than putting that energy into getting involved in student groups, local politics, playing intramural sports once a week, or attending games of what will be the most exciting basketball team in New York City this year, the St. John's Red Storm.

What many of you do know is that St. John's used to have a solid basketball team at one point (the 5th most wins of any D-1 school, only behind, Kentucky, UNC, Kansas, and Duke, I might add), and what almost all of you do know, is that the last few years they have been a sub .500 team. Maybe this adds to the disinterest among the law school population, but, trust me, if you want to jump on the bandwagon before all of NYC is jumping on the bandwagon, you better put on your Air Jordan's and jump on right now.

Okay, I'll be real with you . . . I'm not going to sit here and tell you St. John's is going to be a top 25 team this year (although you never know), but I am going to tell you that they WILL win more than they lose, they will at least make the NIT, and they may even be an NCAA bubble team (which WILL be about 100x better than the Knicks,

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If you are interested in working on the forum, please contact Mike Werner, Peter Ryan, or email TheForumSJU@gmail.com

It's beginning to look a lot like 1984

By Michael Catallo '09

It's getting close to that time of year again, nope not Christmas, but the November elections. And with Halloween just behind us, the Republicans are trying to 'scare' us into voting for them again. With a new ad campaign featuring terrorist leaders promising death and destruction to the United States, and a voice stating "A lot is at stake this November, vote Republican", it is clear what the voters must do; vote Republican or die.

I don't want to die, so I am going to vote Republican, but just in case that is not enough, lets take a look at what other reasons to vote Republican this November. If you are pro war, the Republican party is for you. With two wars under their belt already, and a third one pending with Iran, we know it is going to be an explosive two more years if the Republicans win again this November. Now most people might be thinking. Well what about North Korea? Well, what about them? Just because Kim Jong Il actually has weapons of mass destruction and has already tested nuclear weapons is not a reason to start a war with them. Bush has made it clear we will only start a war with countries that do not pose a threat to us.

Take Iraq— it never threatened the United States, and, surprisingly, we did not find any weapons after we invaded them. The Bush administration certainly found this surprising, considering Bush Sr., Rumsfeld, and the whole posse now in control sold chemical weapons to Iraq and Saddam in the late 80s. That is why they were so sure we needed to invade them— because they actually sold them the

weapons. I wonder, does Bush Jr. has his father on the terror watch list? Bush has admitted that Iraq had nothing to do with the tragic events of September 11th, and has admitted we did not find his father's weapons of mass destruction. At least he's honest it. Iran is also a danger to the United States; a danger to our gas prices. That is why we must invade Iran, who does not have any weapons currently, and by some estimation will not have them for at least a decade. Chaney and the Neo -Cons did not get rich enough from 'liberating' Iraq so we need to liberate Iran's oil (and then maybe Syria down the line).

If you are against civil liberties, the Republican party offers a buffet of programs ridding you of your rights. After all, the terrorists want to take away our freedoms, so what better way to defeat the terrorists then by having our rights taken away first, that way there will be no more rights for the terrorists to take away! Perfect logic. We all remember the Patriot Act, which terrorist groups like the ACLU were against, but this recently signed law by Bush Jr., the Military Commissions Act, will really undermine the terrorists goal of destroying civil liberties. Some may say (liberals, ACLU, and anyone who hates America) that by giving Bush the power to suspend habeas corpus, determine by his own discretion who an enemy combatant is and use military tribunals to try combatants is a little much. However, as future lawyers of America, I'm glad we have this law because it will make going to court a whole lot easier— just as long as you're with the Bush administration and not with the terrorists. Think about it though: With hearsay being admissible and

defendants being denied access to evidence against them, all of the civil procedure laws about discovery are now irrelevant. Actually, civil procedure might as well be dropped as a course, and if we have any questions about how a procedure should be applied we can simply ask Our Leader Bush. And to think I wasted money on Civil Procedure books. Oh, and Bush can now also determine what torture is or isn't, so we might as well get rid of any law related to that too (the Geneva Conventions, for example). If we can just get a few more laws like this into play going to law school is going to be a complete joke. I can't wait!

The Republicans are the party of values and morals. We all know it was the Democrats fault that the story about Mark Foley sending sexually explicit instant messages to teenage pages got leaked. The Republicans have a clear, unambiguous moral principle on this. You can be as immoral as you want to be, as long as the public does not find out about it. And is what Foley did that bad? We've all sent sexually explicit messages over AIM at one time in our lives. It just so happens Mark Foley is a fifty two year old politician that seduces under aged-boys. Same thing. Foley has also recently come out of the closet to admit he is gay, and, since the Republicans are against gay marriage, everyone would have been happy had the Democrats not leaked this story.

In closing, vote Republican this November, otherwise Osama bin Laden or Mark Foley might come over your house and terrorize you. (Not valid if you work for Haliburton)

Student Apathy

By Jimmy O'Rourke, Student Bar Association Day Vice President '08

As a result of my responsibilities as a Student Bar Association board member, I have become relatively involved in a variety of projects at St. John's. Some of these projects have been strictly social, and of no academic credibility whatsoever, while others have been quite the opposite. One recurring theme has emerged, regardless of the nature of the particular project or activity I am involved in: Apathy. More often than not, it is the student body that is to blame— although the faculty and administration could certainly take steps that could contribute to the atmosphere as well. Allow me to start with student apathy.

Why do we, as students, seem to not care about most things? Is it because there are those here that are unsure of what, if anything, they will do with their law degree? Is it because there are those that want to just keep their head down, do their work and get the hell out of here? Is it because there are those that are here merely to placate demanding parents? Or, is it because we are overloaded with reading, jobs, familial obligations, journals, organizations, activities, clinics, and/or externships? As for the last hypothesis— I feel this is entirely insufficient as an explanation, because those individuals that seem to be active in some areas at St. John's tend to be involved in most areas at St. John's. Conduct your own little experiment. Go to several panel discussions in the atrium, and look around. You'll notice that there are a revolving cast of characters that attend. Unfortunately, these students are few in number.

Why do we continually host events/symposiums/panel discussions that are sparsely attended? Some would argue that we are too busy— but that's a cop-out. If you could take
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If you would like to reply to any article printed in this issue, or if you would like to write an opinion piece, The Forum encourages letters and submissions to TheForumSJU@gmail.com

The Party Is Over

By Ryan Mahoney '09

College Graduation Day—a coming of age in the lives of many young men and women, the next step in the staircase of life for America's future leaders, a day of pictures and hugs and kisses and laughter; a day we will remember forever. Some of us will go to grad school. Some will get jobs, while others will wish they did. Some will travel the globe in an effort to find themselves. Some will continue to suck the proverbial parental teat until the monetary nipple is tougher than shoe leather. Regardless of what path one takes, we all have the great experiences and memories of college to take with us on our journey into the real world.

With the passing of yet another September, the stark and undeniable reality that the four-year life-vacation has come to an abrupt and permanent end is wreaking havoc on the emotional equilibriums of recently-graduated young adults everywhere. Although we all knew this ominous day would inevitably come, most of us are not yet prepared to fill the cavernous void in our hearts with rigorous academics or monotonous work schedules. We enjoyed every second of those four care-free years, but it is not until now that we realize: *You don't really know what you have until it's gone.*

And it is gone. Gone like a penny down a sewer; like Clark Gable with the wind; like Wyclef 'til November; like Nicholas Cage in 60 seconds. It is gone forever and it's never coming back. Even if you decided to bolster the old resume and go to school for another 4 years and get that second BA you have always wanted, it just wouldn't be the same. It could never be the same—that's what made it so great. The glorious self-discovery process which replaces a young high-school graduate's apprehension and naivety could never be recreated. It seems like just yesterday I was packing my life into the family SUV in anticipation of the mysterious and glorious adventure of living away from home. Four years later, after

what felt like four seconds, it's all over.

My friends who reluctantly joined America's workforce after college constantly remind me of how lucky I am that I'm "still in school." To use the word *still* would imply the continuance of an action or condition which began in the past. Could someone really have the audacity to suggest that law school is a continuation of college? The two may seem somewhat similar to the layman, but the ferocious reality of the situation is quite different.

Going to college is like eating the most delicious, savory, delectable piece of chocolate in the world. Its flavor crystals bounce wildly off of your palette, causing an offensive amount of physical and psychological pleasure. Overwhelmed by the experience, you devour the chocolate in what seems like an instant. While basking in the afterglow of your chocolate induced euphoria, someone tells you that you can never have another piece—ever. You frantically search every corner of the universe for just one more piece, one tiny morsel, one stray sprinkle to provide just

a tinge of that amazing milk-chocolate goodness for one last time. Sadly, you come up empty handed. Suddenly, a man in a white cloak, a long silver beard and a sparkling jewel-clad scepter appears seemingly from thin air and floats over to where you are standing. He holds in his hand a single, glowing piece of chocolate. He says, "Eat this my child. It is called *law school*. It is just as delicious as college." It looks amazing. You put it in your mouth, waiting for the release of flavor crystals to send you into a fit of culinary ecstasy, when you realize that what you have eaten is not a piece of chocolate like the one you had before. Instead, it is a small nugget taken from a sick cat's litter box, souring your mouth with the fiery tang of digested Fancy Feast and warm milk, thus serving as a bitter reminder that your precious collegiate chocolate is gone forever.

That is precisely what the transition is like. Although, on the outside, law school may seem just like college, it is actually something shockingly different. The days of dorms, parties, funnels, kegs, rampant apathy, general happiness, and

frequent alcohol-induced unconsciousness are over. There are no easy professors. There are no joke-classes. There is no smiling. This is law school. The party is over. Weep accordingly.

A Thank You

Dear Editors:

After a year of harassing the school's administration at dinners with the dean, with phone calls to the facilities administrator, with notes in the suggestion box and finally with a letter published in the last issue of *The Forum*, I actually have some good news to report. That yes, finally, the grill in the school's cafeteria has been repaired and is able to provide the low fat cooking that had been missing from the menu for a year. I had been told it was 1) Sodexo's fault 2) no wait, the law school's fault and 3) really it's the University's fault for the LONG delay in repair. I would like to thank whomever it was to finally get the thing working. I figured that it was high time that credit should be given to the proper source.

Paula Clarity 4LE

An Interview with Jim O'Rourke, by Jim O'Rourke '08

Quite Simply, A Lot of Jim O'Rourke

- Q: Please state your name, age and occupation for the record.
- A: Um...what record? Am I under oath?
- Q: Nevermind. Tell me something about ourselves, Jim.
- A: Well, I'm 26, I'm from Suffolk County, Long Island, and umm...I don't really know what to say to myself. I have two dogs...?
- Q: Why not just start with why you are interviewing yourself?
- A: My hetero-life-mate, Mike Werner, suggested the idea because he thinks I'm the most interesting person I know—so I kind of just took the idea and ran with it.
- Q: Do you often steal other people's ideas Jim?
- A: What? I didn't mean that, I—
- Q: How do you sleep at night?
- A: On my side, with a fan on. Sometimes with the light on, sometimes not. I recently saw Phantom of the Opera, which scared the hell out of me, so I'll be sleeping with the light on for a while.
- Q: Tell me three words you use to describe yourself.
- A: Brilliant, Extraordinary, and Modest.
- Q: That was actually four words.
- A: I didn't think that "and" counted, so...
- Q: I'll ask the questions here, thank you.
- A: But that wasn't a question...
- Q: So, why do you want to be a lawyer?
- A: What?
- Q: I said, "Why do you want to be a lawyer?"
- A: I'm sorry—I'm having trouble understanding you. The acoustics are awful in here.
- Q: Nevermind.
- A: What?
- Q: NEVERMIND!
- A: Oh, okay. And, for the record, you don't have to scream; I'm sitting right here.

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GOTTI WALKS

St. John's Law alum represents Gotti while Curtis Sliwa argues Statute of Limitation laws

By David Pachner '09

Talk show host Curtis Sliwa made fun of Charles Carnesi on the radio by calling him fat. But the New York criminal defense lawyer struck back, helping lead John "Junior" Gotti to freedom, as a third mistrial was declared in the racketeering case. The jury, unable to decide if Gotti, 42, quit the Gambino Crime Family in 1999, announced they were deadlocked this past September. Meanwhile, here in Queens, Junior enjoyed new-found freedom by having a pizza party with his sister, Victoria Gotti of A&E's *Growing Up Gotti*, and watching his star football player son's games. "I'm John A. Gotti," he told reporters outside the Manhattan Federal Courthouse. "John J. Gotti is in Tomb 451, St. John's," referring to St. John's Cemetery on Metropolitan Avenue.

In 1992, Sliwa, the talk-show host and founder of the Guardian Angels, publicly criticized former Gambino Family Boss John Gotti (who died in prison in 2002). After being kidnapped and shot in the back with hollow-point bullets, Sliwa claimed that Gotti's son, "Junior," a former bodybuilder, was responsible. However, after three mistrials, it seems that federal prosecutors will not try a fourth time.

Sliwa, who almost died as a result of two attacks on his life, has recently commented about statute of

limitations laws on his morning radio show. What bothered him the most is that if he died, Gotti would be doing time, as there is no statute of limitation for murder. Sliwa seems to be angry about the fact that there are statutes of limitations on "almost killing someone." Sliwa was quoted by the *International Herald Tribune* as saying, "The statute of limitations has kept justice denied," he said. "When you're the victim, you say, 'Are all these people out of their



Gotti, left, and Carnesi outside the federal courthouse. (Reuters)

minds?' This guy tried to kill me twice, and he got away with it."

U.S. Attorneys Victor Hou and Miriam Rocah prosecuted the case. Gotti was represented by St. John's Law alumnus Charles Carnesi, who practices in Garden City, and Manhattan attorney Sarita Kedia.

The atmosphere of the trial was reminiscent of the numerous federal cases brought against the late John Gotti in the 80's. Attorney Bruce Cutler gained notoriety by winning two acquittals for Gotti.

Cutler's signature style was the intense cross-examination of prosecution witnesses, who were willing to testify only to reduce their prison sentences. Nicknamed "Brucifications" by the press, these cross-examinations exposed behavior in the prosecution witnesses which undermined their credibility to the jury.

Attorneys who represent reputed gangsters are often criticized by the press and the public. For example, many believed that Cutler was somehow involved when George Pape, one of the jurors in John Gotti's trial, accepted a bribe to find Gotti not guilty. The former mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani attacked "mob lawyers" in a 1985 *Time* article. "Some law-enforcement officials are suspicious

when a large percentage of a lawyer's clients are gangsters." Giuliani continued: "You don't make your living that way and not get involved in shady things."

However, many New Yorkers have praised Gotti's legal team for their hard work and dedication. One St. John's student who wished to remain anonymous argued, "I don't understand why people look down on these lawyers. They fought hard and came out on top, and they deserve respect for that." ■

LALSA Street Law "en Español" visits Astoria Community Center

By Rob Wilson '09

On Saturday, October 28, second-year students Giannina Berrocal and Robert R. Wilson conducted a presentation on Immigrant's Rights at the Arrow Community Center in Astoria. This was the first of several Street Law en Español events that will take place during the 2006-2007 school year. Among the attendees were other SJU Law students, lawyers who participate in the program and a reporter from the Spanish language newspaper *El Diario*.

Each presentation, aimed at the Spanish-speaking communities of Queens, is an effort to raise awareness within the community of people's rights. The majority of the audience consisted of Queens

residents who attend a citizenship class at Arrow and hope to become American citizens. Over the course of an hour students covered various aspects of immigration law, including protecting oneself from fraud and the process through which one can become a permanent American citizen and obtain a work permit.

Each event includes a question and answer session conducted by a supervising attorney who practices in the relevant area of law. Attorneys Mercedes Cano and Carmen Velasquez answered questions relating to post-9/11 changes to the driver's license and citizenship application process.

Street Law en Español was created in the 1980s by José Perez,

now a SJU Law alumnus working for the attorney general's office of New York. The program, though successful, was dormant during recent years until revived two years ago by Juan C. Restrepo, among other LALSA members. Today, with the assistance of José Perez and the Latino Lawyer's Association of Queens County (LLAQC), the program is expanding and St. John's LALSA has been recognized by both the New York State Bar Association and Hispanic National Bar Association for outstanding work by a student organization.

Though the October 28 event focused primarily on immigrant rights, presentations scheduled for later this year will cover topics such as Landlord/Tenant rights, Domestic Violence,

Jim on Jim; You're Still Reading? from page 5

- Q: So, what brought you to St. John's?
A: A Pontiac and a thirst for Justice.
- Q: Justice... is that a new SoBe flavor?
A: No. Its something you wouldn't understand—you're too fat.
- Q: What the hell is that supposed to mean?!?!
A: Nevermind.
- Q: Okay then.
A: Alright.
- Q: What is your favorite aspect of St. John's?
A: The people.
- Q: Which people?
A: All the people.
- Q: All the people?
A: Okay, maybe not ALL the people... some of the people.
- Q: Well, which people?
A: I guess myself, primarily. I love St. John's because where else can I sit in class with someone like myself? I mean... honestly.
- Q: Boxers or briefs?
A: Boxers. But only briefly.
- Q: Tastes great or less filling?
A: This is re-goddamn-diculous
- Q: You're telling us.
A: I am telling you.
- Q: Stop that.
A: Sorry.

See *Jim*, page 9

Family Law and Education Law/ Parents rights. The presentations are held at venues across Queens, including public libraries, churches and community centers. The next LALSA presentation is scheduled for the evening of November 30, at the Corona Branch Public Library.

If you are interested in contributing to the Street Law en Español program, contact LALSA at lalsasju@gmail.com, or keep an eye out for their next general meeting. Students who speak Spanish are encouraged to be presenters and all students are encouraged to contribute to the materials used in the presentation. ■

The Red Storm is brewing, from page 1

so my assertion that they will be the most exciting basketball team in NYC will absolutely materialize). Don't worry, I'm not going to ask that you accept me on blind faith, I have a list of 5 reasons why this year will be different than the last few years for the men's basketball team (not in any particular order of importance).

1. **Daryll "Showtime" Hill's knee is fixed.** Two seasons ago, Daryll Hill, a combo guard and St. John's' most talented guard, averaged 20.7 points per game on 41.9% shooting with a 35.7% percentage from beyond the arc. Last year, battling a knee injury all year which he corrected with off-season surgery, he only scored 12.3 points per game on 36.4% shooting and a miserable 15.8% shooting the trifecta. Having a fully functional knee again may not get him back all the way to his 2004-2005 performance, but it will be a far cry from the low shooting percentages and missed games that occurred last year. But even if his three point percentage doesn't improve drastically, it won't matter as much because Coach Roberts has brought to Jamaica . . .

2. **A trio of newcomers who can shoot the three.** One of St. John's biggest downfalls last year was the three-point shooting. The team three point shooting percentage last year was an anemic 26.6% and other than one of the big men, Lamont Hamilton, and a walk-on, Liam Biesty, who only attempted 2 threes, no one on the team had a three point percentage higher than 32.2%. These three perimeter players, junior college transfer Avery Patterson, and two freshmen, Larry Wright and former Billy Donovan recruit Derwin Kitchen, are going to help in the shooting department, but will also change



Avery Patterson

the entire dynamic of the team (special shout out to sophomore Ricky Torres who could also help from three point land). By having legitimate outside shooters for the

first time in the Roberts Era, St. John's may not be zoned by every opposing team, thereby allowing them to exploit the best parts of their game: their speed, athleticism, and one-on-one ability of the post players.

For those of you who don't know basketball at all, a zone clogs the middle and makes it difficult for players to drive or work from the post, forcing the team to settle for open three-pointers. If the Red Storm can shoot three pointers, many teams won't zone them. If they aren't being zoned, penetration by the guards and post play by the big men will be more effective, playing to one of St. John's' strengths . . .

3. **Their post play.** Aaron Spears, a former Illinois player, and Lamont Hamilton, pre-season first team All-Big East selection and pre-season John Wooden Award nominee for national player of the year, were great last year, and with another year of experience and practice, they are bound to be even better (special shout out to Tomas Jasiulionis who will also provide some valuable minutes inside) . Lamont Hamilton really asserted himself in some big games in the second half of last season, putting up 18 points and 11 boards in a close loss to nationally-ranked West Virginia, 19 points and 14 boards in a big win at Rutgers, and 19 points and 15 boards in a dominant win against Seton Hall. He has a lot of talent, and there is no reason not to expect that in his senior season he should be putting up double-doubles on a regular basis. Spears showed flashes of greatness, although got into foul trouble early, in many games. If he can stay out of foul trouble this year they will be a tough tandem to bang against, even in the Big East. The big men might even get some help down low from some of the . . .

4. **The X-factors.** Anthony Mason Jr., freshman Qa'rraan Calhoun, and floor general Eugene Lawrence. Mason Jr. has a great game. Although not as powerful as his father, he is lanky and can hit outside jump shots, as well as post up inside and go up for some incredible dunks. Calhoun, who is a 6'8", 225 lb. freshman, should help Coach Roberts' ability to rotate people in and out easily, as he can play both wing or the post. Finally, Eugene Lawrence, a role player who turned into a true leader last year

in Daryll Hill's absence, won the MVP of the Holiday Festival at MSG and never looked back. Although at times he was prone to throw up too many t h r e e - pointers, from an outsider he really seemed like the glue that held the team together. He seemed like so much of an on-court leader that I was almost inclined to put him in the c a t e g o r y of . . .



Head Coach Norm Roberts

5. **The Coaches.** Head coach Norm Roberts and his staff have done a great job on the recruiting trail for both this year and next year. Just as importantly, he helped orchestrate some big upsets against ranked teams, such as Louisville and Pittsburgh, at home last year. Because St. John's is his first D-1 head coaching job after being Bill Self's longtime assistant coach, we should expect exponential improvement from Norm as we would with any player. With another year under his belt in the Big East, he is bound to have improved his coaching strategies, and will be ready to knock off some even bigger boys this year (St. John's just happens to play a Duke team without J.J. Redick and Shelden Williams, and a UConn team without Josh Boone, Marcus Williams, and Rashad Anderson, both at MSG, and both ripe for a picking). On top of that, he has a great assistant coaching staff between Coach Fred Quattlebaum, who was an assistant coach at both UNC and Notre Dame under Matt Doherty (and who actually at one point coached the Junior Varsity team at Rye High School, where I roamed just 6 years ago), Glenn Braica and Chris Casey.

Now you know some of the reasons why I think the team is going to be much improved this year, so how about a prediction? I predict they will be 18-12 before the Big East tournament, putting them right on the bubble for a NCAA appearance; and I believe that is even being somewhat conservative. Hopefully you

will follow the team, whether at the games or simply in the box scores. You can even just ask me about the team if you

want because I will be attending every game I can get to. But at the very least, go online, look up Lou Carnesecca and learn about the St. John's coaching legend so that the next time you see him around campus you can give him a friendly "Hey, Coach!" like he deserves.

B-Dawg Out.

Jim on Jim from page 3

Q: What is something about yourself that you don't even remember?

A: How am I supposed to answer that?

Q: I said I'll be asking the questions here.

A: Sorry. I mean, I can't think of anything.

Q: Make something up.

A: I will not.

Q: Fine.

A: Okay.

Q: Okay.

A: Fine.

Q: Fine.

A: We aren't getting anywhere.

Q: YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANYWHERE.

A: ...

See Jim, Page 4

Scenes From The Public Intererst Committee Poker Tournament



Let's Throw Open Another Window

By Jason Bartlett '09

In recent years, specially with the transition in the papacy, there has been much discussion about the policies and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Many have questioned doctrine regarding contraception, homosexuality, and the role of women. With the election of Pope Benedict XVI, widely recognized as holding a conservative, traditionalist dogmatic philosophy, it appears the Church is positioned firmly in its current teachings, if not leaning to become even more hard-line conservation in nature. This, I believe, may lead to serious problems in the not-so-distant future.

It is hard for many young people in North America and Europe to unequivocally accept all of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Having grown up in a society permeated with a socio-political philosophy of inclusion, non-discrimination, open dialogue, and understanding, it is hard for many socially liberal or moderate individuals to reconcile their own ideologies with the teachings of the Church. For example, how can one who strongly believes that discriminating or excluding others on the basis of race, sex or orientation is wrong still profess

to be a member of a faith that teaches that falling in love with certain people is a sin; or, those of one sex are incapable of becoming priests, no matter how otherwise qualified? How can that person be a good American? Are we really supposed to believe we can truly be tolerant of those who think differently than us but, at the same time, believe they are damned to hell for those thoughts?

Moderate and liberal Catholics are increasingly forced to choose between their philosophy and their religion. The result of this unfortunate dilemma, as evidenced by the marked rise in apostasy and social secularization in Europe and North America, has been a decline in participation in the Church. Dogma is literally driving members away, and those who do decide to remain are increasingly hard-line conservatives, inching ever onward toward fanaticism.

Can anyone think of another religion commonly associated with hard-line conservatism to the point of fanaticism? I'll give you one hint: many of its practitioners like to watch Al Jazeera. . . Indeed, what is Osama Bin Laden but an extremely conservative Muslim?

Is this the future that Catholics want for themselves? Perhaps it's time for the Church to re-examine some of its teachings. Such reconsideration is not unprecedented: it happened in the 1960s during the Second Vatican Council. Among the issues that were clarified or redefined were the use of vernacular in the liturgy, the role of bishops, and the relationship between Catholicism and other religions, especially Judaism. Pope John XXIII famously remarked when asked about the purpose for Vatican II: "I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out and the people can see in." It seems we're due for another gasp of fresh air.

Some might say that to contemplate redefining Church positions would be to acknowledge prior fault or that the Church is "flip-flopping." Without belaboring the point too much, it's not that the current teachings are necessarily "wrong," it's that different times often call for different ways of thinking. (And if some doctrines are indeed wrong, isn't it better to amend them now before religion devolves into fanaticism?) The Church has, in the past, found itself justified in declaring jihads— I mean "crusades"—against different faiths, put non-believers to death as heretics, and even issued what can truly only be described as a fatwa against the King

of England, driving a few Catholics to attempt to blow up the English government. It is unconscionable to imagine the consequences if similar decisions were to be made in Rome tomorrow. Yet this is what I fear may lay down the road on which the Church is currently cruising if it does not reconsider its heading. Apostasy rates continue to rise, and those who do remain are increasingly hard-line in their doctrinal belief.

The world can be a tumultuous place. There are many differences between the six billion-plus that inhabit this planet. We can choose policies of exclusion and ostracism, or we can tend toward inclusion and understanding. It seems the Church, in order to fulfill its pastoral mission, would be wise to appeal to a more liberal philosophy rather than damning those who disagree with its oft-discriminatory teachings as sinners—after all, the word "catholic" is a synonym for "liberal" and "inclusive". It seems the Church would be better served by harmony rather than division; openness rather than intolerance; peace rather than fanaticism; and the development of new and enlightened ideas rather than a refusal to even hear, much less accept, new ways of thinking.

But we can all only hope. ■



Katrina: One Year Later

By Amanda Golub '08

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall, creating a federal disaster area of about 90,000 square miles. Although it has been over a year since Katrina devastated the Gulf Region, the area is nowhere near recovered. Wind and water destroyed tens of thousands of homes and displaced approximately one million people. There were fourteen counties with a combined population of 2.5 million people in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana that experienced flooding and/or structural damage. Approximately 134,000 homes were damaged and at least 65,000 completely destroyed in Mississippi; 160,000 homes and apartments destroyed or severely damaged in the greater New Orleans area. Currently, there are over 70,000 people living in 240 square foot FEMA trailers,

and 90,000 evacuees remain in Houston. Only 30% of schools in New Orleans have reopened. The courts are a wreck. Over 75% of the legal staff evacuated or lost their homes, thereby causing a legal labor shortage. In turn, courts have been closed for over four months. At present, public defenders have an average of 3,000 cases per defender.

Unfortunately, the media has moved on and so has that strong call to arms across our nation and in our government to help those in need. Still, many victims of Katrina are in desperate want of shelter, employment, food and other basic life necessities. Additionally, other problems plague the area. Not only is there a housing shortage, but rents have increased exponentially. At the same time wages, which were already low, have remained unchanged. Thus, evacuees returning home cannot afford to resume their

old jobs and old lives and move on past the damage Katrina has wrought. To make matters more complicated, contractors and sub-contractors hired to rebuild New Orleans recruited immigrant workers, both documented and undocumented, often at nominal wages. These workers are facing two problems: 1) evacuees who returned to rebuild their city are angry that their jobs have been stolen and 2) the immigrant workers do not always work in safe conditions or receive the wages and benefits that they were promised.

This year, with the help of the Student Hurricane Network (SHN), a group created and run by law students dedicated to helping hurricane victims, St. John's has a group of students making the trip down to New Orleans over winter break to

help with the legal relief effort. With a special thanks to Professor Ann Goldweber and Sara Mason of Career Services, the Public Interest Committee is offering funding for the trip. And a special thanks to Dean Simons for helping with additional funding for the trip.

The reality of a natural disaster like Katrina is that an immediate relief effort, while necessary, is not enough. Insurance claim disputes, bankruptcy proceedings, criminal actions, housing violations, and many other issues do not begin to arise until much later. Victims' lives were, and still are, completely disrupted if not destroyed, and it will, in some cases, take years to rebuild them. The dedication of the St. John's students going on the trip and helping in other ways with the relief effort is overwhelming. ■

Star Study

By Dianne Arrue '09

Aries: The classes that you love, you never have to worry about – you've been attentive to every word coming out of the professor's mouth and might be able to teach the class yourself. As for the classes you don't love, however, there might be a bit of a problem... best thing for you to do in those cases is to link up with someone who seems to be interested in the material and feed off of them in barter for your strong classes. Spending time with an actual human will help when you want to throw your textbooks in a fire.

Taurus: Failing never looks good to a sign that revolves around Venus' beauty, so you may find that you're freaking out over the minutest of details. Your outline does not need to be gorgeous; stop focusing on the layout and rote memorization, and instead spend your time applying it. There are contracts in all shopping sprees, you have friends with great criminal law fact patterns and you surely could find potential liability suits in any bar you frequent.

Gemini: Yeah, you'll study... Tomorrow. The master procrastinator will find a million and one things that *must* be finished before sitting down to look at notes. What's worse is that once you do study, you'll be chatting on AIM the whole time anyway. Until a week before the final, of course, when you freak out and decide that you're dropping out of law school and becoming a starving artist instead. Multi-task and you can undermine that habit. Make a drinking game that includes your material (beer pong with a twist of civil procedure, perhaps), tape notes to your bathroom wall, etc. Start tomorrow.

Cancer: It's not the end of the world, just one semester. Every semester you say it, ignore it and freak out, like one slip-up will make your world shatter. Don't bother with study groups if it's not working for you. Rather, arrange with another student, preferably an Earth sign—Virgo, Capricorn or Taurus, as they keep you grounded—that you'll study on your own, but also be on AIM or by a phone for any questions. Long-distance, small study groups might be better for you since sometimes you get

flustered when everyone else seems to understand something and you feel lost.

Leo: If you've been staying on top of the material so far, then you feel confident going into the finals, like you're doing back-flips around the Moot Court room. BUT, if you're not, you're probably doing a lot more drinking or video game playing than class work. Leos, in their all-or-nothing way, have to feel in control of their situation. If you do not understand the material you're doing in class, make a list of all your questions. Grab the professor's attention (or the hot classmate in the front row) after class and ask away; showing that you're intrigued by the material never hurt a student and you might get a hook-up out of it.

Virgo: You have great connections, having managed to secure a network of intelligent, capable friends and peers. Up until about Thanksgiving you may just want to organize your notes and get a firm foot on your material; afterwards get your study group together and start raking through practice exams together. You'll appreciate the varying ideas of the groups and it will inspire you in the classes that you weren't so interested in initially.

Libra: The stars suggest that you need to keep doing what you're doing... easy, right? The balance of astrology—you're icon—is very sensitive. You should always think of your environment as a scale measuring to a hundredth of a pound (i.e. that, by creating a healthy mix between pleasure and practice, you're also becoming a successful lawyer. Study for an hour, walk the dog, go through your outline for another hour, watch Grey's Anatomy, repeat. You get the gist.

Scorpio: Chances are there is (at least) one class that you know better than anything and (at least) one class that boggles your mind. But don't ignore the strong classes and drive yourself nuts over the remainder. Instead, think about why you enjoy the former's material more and then try to integrate the other courses to those methods. If it's just the professor then you need a tutor. If it's that the class won't apply to your future profession, then that's a façade, because everything in law can apply (you just have to be creative). Google some of the themes that come up repetitively in the class to get started.

Sagittarius: This sign is the perfect candidate for a study group, because you become passionate about ideas through other people, understand the material better as you talk informally about it and will actually sit still if people are there to tether you down. Find people that you would want to throw a round of darts with after a study session, but that also take it seriously with you. For example: Astrologically, one Gemini for conversation, a Virgo to keep you focused and an Aquarius to throw out a random fact pattern or two and you'll be the enthusiasm to make a perfect group.

Capricorn: Although working in a study group may be desirable for you on good days, you're pessimism may affect others negatively, and it won't be as productive as the sessions are meant to be. To keep your attitude perky as we get closer to finals, make sure that you are attentive to time management; keeping clearly defined, but flexible times for yourself, your studies and your social life will give you a stable approach to your law school lifestyle. Don't let yourself get too rigid, however; forcing yourself to study when all you really want is a nap or a Bud will make you irritable and you won't even retain the knowledge that you're most comfortable with.

Aquarius: You, as a very observant person, have seen how other students stress and prepare over their courses. Whether 1L or 3L, you have a stubbornly clear way of what works for you (or at the very least, what doesn't). Only advice that is important for you to remember nearing finals is that your personal life has to be separate, but not obsolete. Address issues at their time, remembering *always* to be clear with loved ones. Let them know that December 22nd is a great day for you, but now you have to focus. If they're worth it, they'll understand.

Pisces: Things seem to be going too quickly right now; you barely get one concept and the professors, students and the whole global economy is moving onto something else. It's flustering and you're tired, and if it's moving so damn fast, where's Thanksgiving break already? Relax. You need a mantra badly. And just realize that if you let yourself drown out now you're going to get sick soon. It's still early enough to go to yoga, get the guys out for golfing or just have a Tony Hawk marathon.

Scenes from the Front Row

By Chris Kidonakis '09

Let's get one thing straight, I don't belong here. Even with a 106 degree fever, raging migraine, mother in the hospital and a brother in jail I managed a 179 on my LSAT. That, plus my 4.01 average at Columbia undergrad, got me into Harvard's "Better Than You" (BTY) program.

So, why am I here? I can answer that in two words: You're welcome. I consider it my civic responsibility to enlighten the masses—or, as the people in my elite circle call you, the natives. I plan out my attacks carefully (I have the time since I finished all my first year reading in my last semester in undergrad). They say if you give a man a fish you feed him for a day; you teach him to fish you feed him for life. I'm not interested in that—I have enough fish for everyone for the rest of the year. I'll give you the right answer every time, and I'll pose more questions, to give you more right answers. I mean, it's not the professors' fault they can't come up with the right questions, they're hardly qualified.

I was a quadruple major, with a minor in hand raising technique. I wrote a master's thesis in snobbish tone, and that was back in high school. I worked under a senior partner at Dewey, Cheatum, and Howe for three months until they promoted me to senior partner, and fired themselves. In short, I am *perfectus*—that's Latin, look it up (that means check Black's law dictionary).

So what's in it for you? Well, I have two more words for you: I'm single. Shocked? I sure am. I'm the complete package. I know how to work the curves. (I'll bang you like a gavel, if you know what I mean). I can recite Monty Python's Holy Grail to one million decimals. My hobbies include reading, the library, interrupting you, telling you your wrong, telling me I'm right, letting you tell me I'm right, and fencing. So if you're an easily manipulated, self-conscious, introvert with a passion for intellectuals in tweed coats with leather elbow pads, then facebook me.

- Lord Christopher Von Abbington Kidonakis *Excelsior* (that's one higher than esquire)

TOP 10 REASONS TO POUR KEROSENE IN YOUR COFFEE

By Arlene Levitin '09

1) A 3L hasn't proposed and you've worn your prom dress to both school and the Cipriani formal.

2) *The Forum* staff won't let you organize a "Lonely No More" law school personals ad service.

3) The outline you printed off SBA was useless in your open book practice test—thank you, Jeff Amato.

4) Your boyfriend—the one with a stable job—dumped you and you can't mourn in bed with a bottle of Xanax while watching Lifetime television because no one in your section will give you their notes.

5) Despite having breakfast with him and flashing your desperate, toothy smile, your Contracts professor still won't acknowledge your existence.

6) Legal Writing.

7) You owe the bursar \$40,000 and the most you've been offered for fellatio is \$6.

8) You've just been hazed—unwillingly, mind you—into an undergraduate fraternity because you were sitting at one of the many tables they dominate in the cafeteria.

9) You can't afford the school salad bar because the allowance your parents give you (yes, you now live at home) has to go to the Adderall—or for you minor addicts, Ritalin—fund you've created so you can actually make it into the bottom 10% of your class.

10) Your SNAP partner won't date you.

Restaurant Review: Zum Stammtisch

By Kimberly Linkletter '09

From traditional architecture to delicious food and a quaint ambiance, Zum Stammtisch leaves nothing to be desired for those interested in an authentic German dining experience. The name is derived from the words “stamm,” meaning family, and “tisch,” meaning table; after eating here you will certainly understand the accuracy of the name. The owners invite their diners to step out of the hectic streets of Queens and feel as if they’ve been transported to a small, old-fashioned Bavarian Inn. This is no wonder since they have had a number of years to perfect the dining experience. Zum Stammtisch was opened in 1972 by a married couple while Glendale, the city in which Zum Stammtisch is located, still had a predominantly German population. Several years ago the restaurant was passed on to their son, and it has continued to flourish and gain widespread recognition under his ownership.

The outside of the restaurant is reminiscent of buildings in Munich, with stucco walls, dark wooden trim, and hand carved shutters. The interior is divided into two separate and uniquely decorated dining rooms. The first room has the air of a Bavarian ski resort, with dim yellow lighting and a rich wooden interior, while the second, providing a lighter atmosphere, has stained glass

windows bearing German crests. Dividing the rooms is a magnificent bar area serving some of the best German beer in Queens. Regardless of where you sit in the restaurant there are plenty of paintings, relics and decorations to admire, including a gigantic moose head, wooden kegs under each table, old-fashioned placemats, intricately carved beer steins, and even a traditionally German-clad waitress or waiter.

The real heart of any restaurant is in the food; Zum Stammtisch is arguably one of the best German restaurants in New York. The meal starts with a loaf of hearty German rye bread served steaming hot. There are several appetizers, all of which looked appealing, and the soup is thick, delicious and undoubtedly one of the best beef stews I have ever tasted. Anyone familiar with German food knows that the dishes focus on meat, mostly red, and plenty of it. Although I can’t attest for all of the dishes on the menu, my date’s order consisted of a little bit of everything, including Kassler Rippchen (pork chop), Bratwurst (sausage), Leberkase (I don’t quite know what this is, but its pork), homefries and sauerkraut. Everything was flavorful and tasted very authentic.

For those that may desire slightly less meat, I highly recommend Jaegerschnitzel and Chicken

Riesling. Jaegerschnitzel is a fried veal cutlet, in a thick hunter sauce with mushrooms. Chicken Riesling is combination of broiled chicken cutlets and mushroom smothered in a Riesling wine sauce— basically Germany’s answer to Chicken Marsala. For those interested in bringing someone with a less ethnically-developed palate, have no fear: There are number of entrees available— such as hamburgers, steak, flounder and salmon— for those not willing to experiment with authentic German food. To finish the meal, I highly recommend the vanilla ice cream with hot raspberries (although they also serve excellent ice-cream liquor concoctions and various strudels). Finally, although it is not listed on the menu, be sure to ask which German beers are on tap for the evening (and be prepared to drink a liter’s worth).

The bottom line is that this restaurant is certainly worth the short drive it takes to make you feel as if you’ve been transported to another continent. So put on your lederhosen— or maybe just your favorite jeans— and head to Zum Stammtisch for an enjoyable and authentic German experience.

To learn more information about the menu, or to get directions, visit the restaurant’s website at www.zumstammtisch.com.

Jim on Jim: Last One, Honest from page 4

Q: On a more serious note, could you please describe to the ladies and gentlemen of the jury—
A: There’s no jury here!!

Q: —I’ll be the judge of that.
A: Oh C’MON! I will not stand for lame law school jokes.

Q: Alright. I’m sorry. I was having too much fun. And you’re sitting.
A: I’m sorry too. We promised ourselves we would never fight with each other in public. And it was a figure of speech.

Q: I know. Let’s make up.
A: Proceed with the interview.

Q: What interview?
A: Oh boy.

Q: If you could punch one historical figure in the face, who would it be?
A: WHAT?

Q: You heard me.
A: I don’t want to punch anyone in the face!

Q: Fine. If you could drop kick any historical figure, real or fictitious, down a flight of concrete stairs, who would it be?
A: Estelle Getty; the old chick from Golden Girls.

Q: If you could be trapped on a desert island with three food-stuffs, what would they be?
A: Ketchup, Splenda, and Water.

Q: You’d be surrounded by water though.
A: Yeah, but salt water.

Q: Your hetero-life-mate has suggested that we continue this interview on page 19; do you consent?
A: You watch your mouth!
Q: I don’t know what that means...

See Jim, page 19

HAIKU CORNER

Anonymous

*Telling jokes in class
smiling laughing while failing
Instant Messenger*

Christopher Kidonakis

*Instead of the show
we now watch tv and see
liability*

Matt Mulqueen

*Rules rules rules rules rules
rules rules rules rules rules
rules rules
Mitchell’s beard was long*

Matt Bezerman

*So many options
Why did I take the LSAT?
Library weekend*

Anonymous

*Memo memo death
Memo memo memo death
Memo memo death*

Peter Ryan

*First Round is on me
law review beyond My reach
last round is as well*

James Rovello

*Law is a human.
flawed, contradictory, and
not afraid to fight*

*Law teaches you that
mock trials are fashion shows.
Real lawyers omit pants.*

Rich Speidel

*Why do undergrads
choke the law school lunch line when
they have Taco Bell?*

Curve Changes Likely, from page 1

mandatory grades of D. The curve is applied to all courses at SJU Law with the exception of those with enrollments of less than 20 students and Legal Writing sections, in which the norm is not strictly applied.

To prevent any unreasonable deviation in grades before posting, an evaluation of substantial compliance is conducted each semester as grades from each class are submitted to Dean Simons for review. In the interest of grade normalization, substantial compliance, as explained in the St. John's University School of Law Student Handbook, aims to ensure the "fair and just grading of students . . . regardless of the particular course taken, the section to which [they are] assigned, the degree of difficulty of the examination, and the identity of the professor teaching the course."

Those members of the faculty and administration opposed to an increase in the grading curve are quick to defend the curve as being indicative of the rigor of SJU Law's curriculum and caution that an increase may invite allegations of grade inflation. Meanwhile, supporters of the increase argue that a change in the curve would actually signal the school's confidence in the abilities of its students and that implementing a non-drastring increase in the curve would help SJU Law students compete with their peers on the basis of GPA.

"Many people are concerned that adjusting the curve is the same as grade inflation, making our students seem stronger than would otherwise appear," observes Tom Gerrity, Class of 2009. "This misses the point, though, because we are a part of the legal community in the New York area. All of our students, strong, average, and weak, must compare to their counterparts at other New York schools. It's not about receiving an unfair advantage over those schools and their students; it's about maintaining competitiveness. I had no idea we had such a grade disparity with the other New York area law schools, and I suspect most other first-years don't know, either."

Dean Simons believes that "the strongest argument in favor of changing the grading curve is that the quality of SJU Law's students today is quantitatively better than the incoming class of 2001," the year when the current curve was set.

However, he also cites a "direct correlation" between the maintenance of a stringent, fair grading curve and strong bar passage rates, as evidenced by the steady increase in SJU Law's bar passage rate from 78% in 2000 to its current rate of 89%.

In the fall of 2005, Dean Daly asked the Student-Faculty Liaison Committee to evaluate the SJU Law grading curve and determine whether

"Many people are concerned that adjusting the curve is the same as grade inflation, making our students seem stronger than would otherwise appear." - Tom Gerrity

it should be amended. In response, Professor Charles E. Biblowit, committee chair, and Katherine G. Sullivan, assistant dean for students, gathered data regarding the grading curve and Dean's Lists at most of the law schools in the New York region, including New York, Fordham, Hofstra, Brooklyn, New York University, Touro, Albany, and Cardozo, and circulated their findings to the members of the Student-Faculty Liaison Committee. After reviewing the data, which revealed SJU Law's mean GPA to be the lowest of the schools surveyed, the committee voted against making any change to the curve.

However, the vote did not settle the issue, as a series of proposals calling for an increase to the curve arrived the following semester. Professor Kniffin presented a proposal to the Faculty Committee on March 22, 2006, suggesting that the grading curve be raised to "a B mean [3.0 G.P.A. average]." She maintained that doing so would help SJU students to "compete more equally for job interviews when a minimum GPA is required." In particular, she advocated a mean grade, as opposed to a median, to be used because it "indicates accurately and precisely how high or low a curve is, because every single grade affects it." She also noted in her proposal that SJU Law's curve "calls for more F grades than the curves of all [local] schools."

Also in March, *The Forum* solicited the faculty to submit their viewpoints on the grading system for a point-counterpoint debate; only Professor Kniffin responded to the offer, thereby prompting *The Forum* to publish her submission, "Why the St. John's Law Grading Curve Needs to Be Raised", in its March 2006 issue as a standalone piece. The following month, on April 21, 2006, Professor Davidian submitted his own proposal endorsing an adjustment to the grading curve, specifically calling for

the mean GPA to be set to 2.99. However, neither Kniffin nor Davidian's proposals managed to effect immediate change.

Next, Francesca Liquori, academic vice president of the Student Bar Association, was asked by the Faculty Committee to submit a proposal on behalf of the student body regarding the grading curve. She presented it to the Student-Faculty Liaison Committee on April 26, 2006, requesting that the curve be set to a mean GPA of 3.0.

Drawing on her personal experience as a participant in the On Campus Interviewing (OCI) process the preceding fall, Liquori observed in her proposal that "most firms and government agencies will only interview students with particular grade point averages and class rankings." Concerned that the current system could result in a scenario in which "two similarly situated students, one from SJU Law and one from Brooklyn Law, may be ranked the same, but the student from Brooklyn will likely have a higher GPA," Liquori felt it "absolutely necessary" for the faculty and administration to reevaluate the curve to "level the playing field" as SJU Law students compete with local peers. Her proposal also called on SJU Law to proactively educate interviewers about the curve.

According to Dawne M. Smith, assistant dean of Career Services, Career Services does not have a policy of distributing any materials that specifically inform employers of SJU Law's 2.87 grading curve mean. However, it does provide all employers that participate in on campus recruiting with "Evaluating the Resumes of St. John's Students", a pamphlet aimed at assisting employers in "evaluating students' grade point averages vis-à-vis their class ranks"; the rank is broken down further by class and division, including the first-year evening, second-year, and third-year classes. The pamphlet features conversion charts that provide numerical equivalents for all lettered grades assigned from A to F and breaks down GPA ranges—such as "3.569 and above"—into percentile rankings ranging from the "Top 5%" to "Top 50%" of each class.

Of the "elite" firms that interview on campus, Dean Smith noted that, in seeking candidates with "top academics," they predominately look at rankings rather than GPA. However, she remarked that an even

larger number of firms contact Career Services without specific cutoffs according to rank or GPA, instead seeking candidates based on more "subject-oriented criteria" such as class year, specific skills, elective courses taken, and journal participation.

However, a new student-driven effort, in the form of a petition, has been circulating among the student body. This petition expresses concern that, despite the lack of GPA emphasis reported by Career Services, SJU Law students may be at "a serious disadvantage when competing for employment with graduates of other schools." It argues that SJU Law students are "placed on the defensive by having to justify [their] lower grades on interviews" as they seek jobs inside New York City; this is especially true if students interview with firms across the country that may be less familiar with SJU Law's grading system. In arguing for an increase, the petition turns on the issue of whether potential employers are in the dark about the grading system in effect, posing the question: Is it reasonable to expect employers to remain cognizant of our curve as they sift through piles of resumes?

Begun by a small group of first-year students, the petition has signaled a renewed student interest in increasing the grading curve by requesting that it be raised to a 3.10 mean. It compares the SJU Law curve with those of some of its local competitors, such as Brooklyn, Cardozo, and Fordham, and contends that while those law schools apply mean curves of at least 3.10 and allow for between 10 and 15% of grades given to be in the A to A+ range, and between 48 and 50% in the B+ or higher range, SJU Law limits the same range of grades to set percentages of no more than 6% and 36%, respectively. Calling the current curve "excessively demanding," it identifies SJU Law's mean curve to be the lowest among law schools in New York City.

With plans to submit the completed petition to the Committee on Grades and the Faculty Council in time for their next meeting in late November, the creators of the petition hope that it will not only motivate their fellow students to support an increase, but leave them better informed as to the curve currently in effect. ■

"The strongest argument in favor of changing the grading curve is that the quality of SJU Law's students today is quantitatively better than the incoming class of 2001." - Dean Simons

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barbri Fall 2006 Review Lecture Schedule

<p>CIVIL PROCEDURE Running time: 7:30 except where otherwise noted</p> <p>LIVE Sun., Nov. 5 - 10:00am (hrs. 1-3) Sun., Nov. 5 - 2:00pm (hrs. 4-7) Tue., Nov. 14 - 6:00pm (hrs. 1-3) Wed., Nov. 15 - 6:00pm (hrs. 4-7) Mon., Nov. 20 - 9:30am (hrs. 1-3) Mon., Nov. 20 - 1:30pm (hrs. 4-7) Sun., Nov. 26 - 9:30am (hrs. 1-3) Sun., Nov. 26 - 1:30pm (hrs. 4-7) Tue., Nov. 28 - 6:00pm (hrs. 1-3) Wed., Nov. 29 - 6:00pm (hrs. 4-7) Fri., Dec. 1 - 9:30am (hrs. 1-3) Fri., Dec. 1 - 1:30pm (hrs. 4-7) Tue., Dec. 5 - 9:30am (hrs. 1-3) Tue., Dec. 5 - 1:30pm (hrs. 4-7)</p>	<p>CRIMINAL PROCEDURE Running time: 3:30</p> <p>Sun., Nov. 12 - 2:30pm Mon., Nov. 13 - 1:30pm Wed., Nov. 15 - 6:00pm Sat., Nov. 18 - 1:30pm Wed., Nov. 22 - 9:30am Thurs., Nov. 30 - 9:30am Wed., Dec. 6 - 6:00pm</p>
<p>CONSTITUTIONAL LAW Running time: 3:30</p> <p>Sat., Nov. 11 - 9:30am Mon., Nov. 20 - 4:00pm (hrs. 1-3) Tue., Nov. 21 - 4:00pm (hrs. 4-7) Thurs., Nov. 30 - 9:30am Sun., Dec. 3 - 9:30am Wed., Dec. 6 - 4:00pm (hrs. 1-3) Thurs., Dec. 7 - 4:00pm (hrs. 4-7)</p>	<p>EVIDENCE Running time: 7:00</p> <p>Sun., Nov. 12 - 10am LIVE Wed., Nov. 15 - 9:30am Fri., Nov. 17 - 9:30am Sun., Nov. 19 - 9:30am Wed., Nov. 29 - 9:30am Sat., Dec. 2 - 9:30am Mon., Dec. 4 - 9:30am</p>
<p>CONTRACTS Running time: 7:00</p> <p>Fri., Nov. 10 - 9:30am Sat., Nov. 11 - 9:30am Tue., Nov. 21 - 9:30am Sun., Nov. 26 - 9:30am Mon., Nov. 27 - 9:30am Mon., Dec. 4 - 9:30am Fri., Dec. 8 - 9:30am</p>	<p>1L ESSAY ADVANTAGE Running time: 4:00</p> <p>Sun., Nov. 12 - 10:00am LIVE Thurs., Nov. 16 - 9:30am Sat., Nov. 18 - 9:30am Fri., Dec. 1 - 9:30am Fri., Dec. 8 - 9:30am</p>
<p>CORPORATIONS Running time: 3:30</p> <p>Sat., Nov. 11 - 2:30pm Tue., Nov. 14 - 6:00pm Fri., Nov. 17 - 9:30am Wed., Nov. 22 - 9:30am Fri., Dec. 1 - 9:30am Thurs., Dec. 7 - 9:30am</p>	<p>FUTURE INTERESTS Running time: 1:30</p> <p>Sun., Nov. 12 - 10:00am Mon., Nov. 27 - 3:00pm Sat., Dec. 2 - 2:00pm Fri., Dec. 8 - 9:30am</p>
<p>CRIMINAL LAW Running time: 3:30</p> <p>Mon., Nov. 13 - 9:30am Sat., Nov. 18 - 9:30am Wed., Nov. 22 - 9:30am Sun., Nov. 26 - 1:30pm Tue., Nov. 28 - 6:00pm Thurs., Nov. 30 - 1:30pm Wed., Dec. 6 - 9:30am</p>	<p>NEW YORK PRACTICE MINI REVIEW Running time: 3:30</p> <p>Fri., Nov. 17 - 9:30am Sun., Nov. 26 - 9:30am Wed., Dec. 6 - 4:00pm Thurs., Dec. 7 - 4:00pm</p>
<p>REAL PROPERTY Running time: 5:30 except where otherwise noted</p> <p>Fri., Nov. 10 - 9:30am Thurs., Nov. 16 - 9:30am Sun., Nov. 19 - 9:30am Wed., Nov. 29 - 9:30am Sun., Dec. 3 - 9:30am</p>	<p>TORTS Running time: 3:00</p> <p>Sun., Nov. 12 - 9:30am Thurs., Nov. 16 - 9:30am Tue., Nov. 21 - 9:30am Tue., Nov. 28 - 9:30am Sat., Dec. 2 - 9:30am</p>
<p>NEW YORK TRUSTS Running time: 3:30</p> <p>Sat., Nov. 4 - 10:00am Sun., Nov. 19 - 10:00am LIVE Mon., Nov. 27 - 6:00pm Wed., Nov. 29 - 6:00pm Sat., Dec. 2 - 9:30am Mon., Dec. 4 - 9:30am</p>	<p>NEW YORK WILLS Running time: 7:00</p> <p>Sat., Nov. 18 - 10:00am Thurs., Nov. 30 - 9:30am Sun., Dec. 3 - 9:30am Tue., Dec. 5 - 9:30am</p>

ALL LECTURES MEET AT THE BAR/BRI LECTURE HALL (1500 BROADWAY @ 43rd St)

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED AND CAN BE MADE BY PHONE ONLY
Between 11:30am-3:30pm (Monday through Friday ONLY)
Call 212-719-0200 to make a reservation.
⚡ RESERVE EARLY ⚡ SEATING IS LIMITED! ⚡
LECTURES ARE FREE TO BAR/BRI ENROLLEES WHO PRESENT A VALID 2006/2007 BAR/BRI MEMBERSHIP CARD AND A GOVERNMENT ISSUED PHOTO ID (i.e. driver's license).
Reservations will be held until 10 minutes before the lecture begins.
"Walk-ins" allowed on a space available basis only.

What Classes Should You Choose at Registration Time?

by Erica Fine and Carl Gillen

Among the two most common questions asked by law students each year are, "What classes should I take?" and "Should I choose classes that are tested on the bar exam?"

At the core of this question lies the misperception common among law students that their law school should prepare them for the bar exam. Actually, such is not the case.

The purpose of law school is to develop critical thinking; to develop in each law student the ability to "think like a lawyer." Think back to your first year exams. More likely than not, your professor presented you with a somewhat lengthy fact pattern and then asked you to apply all that you had covered in class throughout the year as it relates to the facts presented. It was, for lack of a better description, a discussion oriented exam calling upon your ability to "think like a lawyer" as you strived to reach a conclusion.

The purpose of the bar exam is dramatically different. Bar examiners generally want you to learn an incredible amount of

material that often calls upon your knowledge of local law. Although St. John's incorporates New York law into many of its classes (which makes sense as most St. John's students ultimately practice in New York), most professors do not (and should not) teach with the bar exam in mind.

Adding to bar exam difficulty is the fact that the bar examiners are not looking for the discussion oriented approach that you applied so well in law school; instead, they are looking for an answer oriented analysis. Compounding bar exam difficulty even further is the fact that on a bar exam essay you can even reach a wrong conclusion and apply wrong law, yet achieve bar exam success through presenting a clear, logically flowing legal analysis. Obviously, you will score more points applying correct rules of law, however the analysis leading you to your definitive answer is the key.

Bar exam topics also change from year to year. By way of example, several years ago, the New York Bar Exam dropped the topics of Personal Income Tax and Bankruptcy and recently added New York Professional Responsibility. Although Tax

relates to almost every aspect of a legal practice and makes you a more well rounded lawyer, and Bankruptcy is currently one of the "hottest" fields of practice, they are irrelevant for New York Bar Exam purposes.

You should choose classes that are of interest to you. Choose classes in those areas in which you intend to practice. Choose classes offered by noted law school professors the likes of which you may never have the opportunity to take classes from ever again. Choose classes with an eye towards your legal future. Beyond your core courses at St. John's, if you are interested in a career as a District Attorney, choose electives such as Criminal Procedure and Trial Advocacy. If you are interested in a career in matrimonial law, choose Family Law as an elective. You may want to take a drafting course in wills or real estate or participate in the Elder Law Clinic, all of which will help you develop the practical skills and critical thinking skills required by a successful attorney.

Your second, third, and for evening students, fourth years of law school should prepare you for your future. Leave bar exam coverage to your bar review course.

Most classes deemed critical to "thinking like a lawyer" have already been set out by St. John's as your core courses. If, however, you are making a choice between two elective classes that you are interested in, both of which are offered at the same time, at that point you may want to choose the class that is more frequently tested on the bar exam. You should be able to obtain a bar subject frequency chart or speak to a director from your bar review course to assist in your decision.

The mark of a good bar review course is that it does not attempt to take the place of what you learned in law school; after all, how could you learn all of Criminal Law or Corporations in the time devoted to each subject in bar review? You can't. A good bar course instead takes you through what you either did or did not learn in law school, shows you how that subject will be presented on your bar exam and prepares you to succeed on the bar. A good law school education prepares you to succeed in life.

Erica Fine (St. John's, '82) is the Eastern Regional Associate Director of BAR/BRI. Carl Gillen (Fordham, '03) is an Assistant Director of BAR/BRI.

Congratulations to the 2006 Moot Court Competition Finalists

By Gina Santucci '07

The Moot Court Honor Society held its annual Reverend Joseph T. Tinnelly Moot Court Competition on October 14 and 15. Forty second-year law students wrote appellate briefs and presented oral arguments in an Equal Protection case based on *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District*

No. 1, in which a group of parents challenged the school district's secondary school assignment plan, which included a race-based "tie-breaker." In *Parents*, the Ninth Circuit applied strict scrutiny and held that the assignment plan withstood the Equal Protection challenge. The United States Supreme Court granted certiorari and will hear the case this term.

Steiner presided over one judging panel, while Professors Philip Weinberg, Timothy Zick and Paul Kirgis presided over another.

Four finalists argued before Dean Mary C. Daly, Judge Joseph Bianco of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York and Judge Israel Rubin of the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department. Lauren Fraid was named winner. Justin Grossman finished in second place, and Jessica Baquet and Matthew Weir were runners up. All four finalists received gift certificates donated by BarBri Bar Review.



During the semi-final round of the competition, Associate Academic Dean Andrew Simons and Professors Vincent Alexander and Julie

Devin Kosar received the Best Brief award and Naomi Taub received the award for Second Best Brief. Marijana Matura was named Best Oralist and Vanessa Pairis was named Second Best Oralist.

Congratulations to all who competed.

Student Apathy, from page 2

half of the people that are out at Last Call on a Thursday night, it would still be more than the attendance at many events held in the Atrium on a weekday. Although it is important, if not imperative, to have some semblance of a life outside of law school, it is also imperative to immerse oneself in the environment in which you will likely practice.

Many students say they don't know about these events before they happen. Nothing drives me crazier than this. All events are publicized by email (which is rarely effective because students refuse to read them or access their St. John's accounts), flyers, and television announcements. Professors will often make announcements of upcoming events at the beginning or end of class. Yet, despite all of these efforts to convey information, students seem to consciously ignore anything outside of what they have deemed to be relevant and/or important.

Why does any of this matter? Because when professors or administrators get speakers to come to St. John's Law—speakers that all-too-often speak before thirty empty seats—it hurts our reputation; because our national ranking is calculated through a complex factor, in which student participation is a variable; because when professors feel that they are speaking to disinterested students who are tuning them out, they get pissed off and disillusioned. It matters because our participation/involvement outside of the classroom speaks volumes about how we feel about our institution.

Make no mistake about it—**this is our institution.** Maybe it is a temporary one, but it is ours. If everyone treated their school as just a place that they took classes at for a little

while, this school would never have developed any type of character. We would have no atmosphere, no environment, no sense of camaraderie. This is the ultimate consequence of rampant student apathy.

One area of St. John's that students frequently criticize is Career Services. Many students will say that if you aren't in the top ten or twenty percent of your class and you aren't on Law Review, then the school doesn't care about you. These people would argue that the Office of Career Services (OCS) is only interested in securing employment for the upper-echelon students. This is blatantly untrue. These same students that bitch and moan about how no one pays attention to them are usually the ones that don't do anything to help themselves. People need to realize that the legal profession is a lot more competitive than most people think. You need to get off your ass and do something. The first question I ask of an individual that criticizes OCS is who they've met with at OCS; the most frequent response is that they have never even gone in for a meeting.

This is not to say that high ranking students—especially those on law review, although the two are usually one and the same—are not given a lot of attention by the faculty, administration, and OCS. They are. But I think the important question to ask is: Why? The school is trying to place outgoing alumni in jobs at high ranking firms because job placement is another factor in computation of national rank. There is currently a bit of a "changing of the guard" here, with the new school (so to speak) of professors actively trying to improve our school, both in truth and in reputation. These professors are offering high caliber education in class,

and want to push students to get jobs in well known firms of national, if not international, prestige.

Unfortunately, this leaves many students feeling out in the cold. Dissatisfaction fans the flames of apathy. So students pull back even further from the school, from events, from activities, and from professors. This downward spiral negatively impacts the student as well as the institution.

I believe that there are many things that can be done to avoid this systemic spiral. Students need to start caring. Go to panel discussions, join clubs, plan legitimate events. Its frustrating to me that the most successful event of the year is most likely only successful because of the prospect of four hours of open-bar. Become actively engaged in your education. Talk in class. Go to office hours. Get to know a professor better. I personally don't think it would be a terrible idea to mandate students to attend a certain number of events over the course of each semester—although I would hope that it wouldn't come to that.

We should also engage in a system of targeted job placement. The On Campus Interview process can be extended to incorporate smaller firms; less prestigious firms; to open up the applicant pool to those students here that are maybe in the top third of their class, top half, even top seventy percent. And guess what, OCS is currently investigating such measures. There has been a new position created to facilitate communication between St. John's Law and employers in the surrounding areas to place more students in jobs when they graduate.

Professors also need to shoulder some responsibility. Not everything can be blamed on the students.

Professors need to be more accessible (not just available, but approachable), and they need to take steps toward students. I believe that more students would become more engaged in their education if there was more interaction between professors and students. I think that the faculty advisory program should be dramatically overhauled. Every student will tell you: "Yeah, I met with my advisor once, and never spoke to them again." This isn't all our faults.

Allow me to set forth a recent dialogue between me and my faculty advisor from last year:

"Excuse me, Prof. _____?"

"Yes."

"Hi, you were my faculty advisor last year—"

"I was?"

"...um, yeah."

"Ok."

"Well, anyway, I was wondering if that spanned all three years or if it was just a first year thing"

"You can talk to anyone you want here at St. John's."

This last comment was stated with more sarcasm than I care to remember. And this person also knew me from class. This really pissed me off. At that moment we were interrupted and then the conversation ceased, but I have never attempted to seek counsel from this professor again, and I never will. This is the exact attitude that needs to be eradicated within the faculty.

In sum—something has to give. Although I truly believe that a dramatic change is impossible without both students and the faculty taking a more active role, it is the student body that must take the first step; let us lead by example. It's easy to sit in the cafeteria and bitch and moan about what you don't like—why not do something about it? ■