

THE PLANET

October 9, 2003 - The Student Newspaper of The American University of Paris - Every Other Thursday

Trouble on Avenue Bosquet?

By Olivier Laurent

After several months of renovations, a huge building on 55, Avenue Bosquet has been bought by the *Mouvement des Entreprises de France* (MEDEF), the French union of chief executive officers and chairman of corporations. This powerful organisation is the enemy of all worker unions, and AUP students are to be the witnesses of their confrontations.

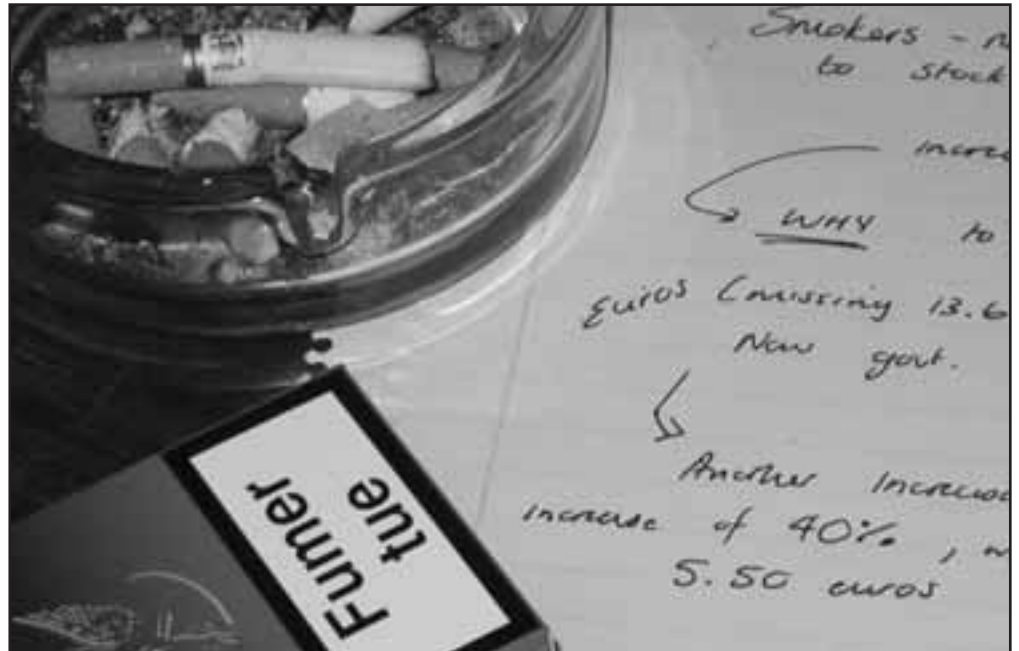
As you might have read in the Orientation Issue of THE PLANET (you can access our archives on our website), the French are famous for their strikes. Often, the public sector will stop working for several days to protest decisions taken by the government of Jean-Pierre Raffarin. When these *fonctionnaires* are on strike, you will have a hard time getting on a bus or subway, and your mail will not reach your destination as fast as usual.

But when the private sector decides to follow the example set by the *fonctionnaires*, they do not demonstrate randomly in Paris, they all meet in front of the MEDEF, the union representing their bosses. Now, the MEDEF is in our neighbourhood, and protests are already happening. Students can expect a closing of the avenue and delays on buses..

The MEDEF also causes problems for students living near its new building. "First there was the dust and the noise when they were renovating it," said Nathania Stambouli, the SGA Information Manager, "and now they installed an air conditioning system, which make an awful lot of noise." In addition to these nuisances, Nathania has to deal with cops protecting the building. "I sometimes have to show my passport in order to get to my street," she says.

In the first week of class, entertainment part-timers protested in front of the building, while some of them climbed on it. Yesterday, October 8, the unemployed demonstrated on Avenue Bosquet against the new law passed by the government calling for a reduction of unemployment benefits.

Many more demonstrations are planned for the rest of year, but Dean of Student Affairs Dean Marcille is not worried. "Nothing has changed, and the university is as secure as before," he said. Dr. Marcille also added that AUP was interested in acquiring the building before it was bought by the MEDEF. □



New tax burns holes in students' pockets. Photo: Olivier Laurent

Government Raises Taxes on Cigarettes!

By Xavier Kintzinger

Smokers, you now have a little over ten days to stock up packs of cigarettes. On October 20, French taxes on cigarettes will increase by 20 percent. The French Prime Minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, approved the move to help fight cancer and reduce the country's massive social security deficit.

It has been estimated that in 2004 the French social security will be missing 13.6 billions Euros, an all-time record. The French government is planning an overall reform of the system, which will help reduce the deficit. This reform will only be voted on at the end of 2004.

In the meantime, officials are finding ways to reduce government spending and to increase revenues. For example, a day in a hospital will now cost 13 Euros instead of the previous fee of 10.67 Euros. The government has also decided to reimburse only 35 percent of all homoeopathic drugs, while it covered 65 percent of the price before.

This month's increase on the price of cigarettes will be followed in January by an additional 20 percent augmentation. The average price of a pack of cigarettes will then be 5.50 Euros, compared to the current price of 3.90 Euros.

However, raising the price of cigarettes has always been viewed by the government as an effective way to find money when needed. It is believed that the two increases will bring 800 million Euros

to the government. This estimation also takes into consideration the possible drop in users' consumption.

Tobacconists are concerned that the government's decision will encourage the black market for cigarettes. But Alain Lambert, French minister for the budget, declared to *Reuters* that he would ask for an intensification of police operations against dealers. "The government will declare war on fraud," he said, "Sanctions will be reinforced."

France is now the leading country in Europe and one of the frontrunners in the world when it comes to taxation on smokers. A pack of cigarettes only costs 85 Euro cents in India, 1.20 Euros in South Africa or 3.40 Euros in Spain. □

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THE PLANET

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Letter to Our Readers

Avenue Bosquet is situated in one of the more tranquil areas of Paris, often dubbed by students as the "boring arrondissement." But things are going to heat up from now on... MEDEF has joined the neighborhood. Our front page introduces this union of CEOs, and tells you what to expect from this new arrival in the seventh. Seeing that many students are smokers, we thought you would like to know how the French government plans to empty your pockets so it can full their own.

From now on, THE PLANET will do regular features on various departments and professors

at AUP. In this issue, we open the door to academic affairs and to Professor Steven Ekovich, from the international affairs department.

From Afghanistan to Australia, the world news section brings you news that you might not have heard of yet. We also take a closer look at the recall elections in California, the results of which were not known when THE PLANET went to press. Until next issue...

Esther Etkin & Olivier Laurent

SGA/Pubs Network Status

By Dharit Anjaria

On October 3 the Senate Budget meeting was held. The SGA's request for a new server went through. Soon coming to join SGA's IT arsenal - Dell PowerEdge 1750. All muscle, no flab, dual-processor server capable of performing unfathomable operations. Humanly speaking, it will greatly simplify maintenance, and simultaneously will allow multiple systems (domain server, email server, file server) to run on one machine.

But the old one will not rest in peace. It will

be hacked and cracked until it becomes a reliable backup server.

As regards the SGA and Publications workstations, they are being individually formatted and cleaned of malicious worms and viruses. Thus, tightening security on the SGA network is my prime goal.

After the SGA/Pubs computers, comes the turn of the three (soon to be four - one coming soon at the library) SGN systems, one in Bosquet, Grenelle and Combes.

And for those of you equipped with laptops, time to go "Yippee... Hurray!" Bosquet's wireless Internet access is just waiting for AUP Computer Centre's go-ahead. This will allow all students to use Internet in the Amex Café, the lounge and the Grand Salon.

That is the latest on the front of technology at SGA. Feel free to stop by the office in B-12 if you have questions, or even if you are willing to offer a hand in lugging 287-kilogram bullet-proof servers. But keep in mind that the SGA will not be accepting responsibility for human errors that you might encounter... □

New Senate In Session

Two weeks ago, students at AUP elected their new Senate. Here are the results:

Freshmen Representative
Sebastian Ordelleide

Sophomore Representative
Candice Hunt

Junior Representative
Travis Grossi

Senior Representative
Caroline Laurent

Visiting Students Representative
Andreja Fornazaric

Six club leaders elected Cheney Munson as their representative in the Senate. As for the Comparative Literature Representative, the Senate nominated Ned Stanley during its first meeting on Friday, Sept. 25, 2003. Ulrike Trux

As for the Departmental Representatives, here is the long list of winners:

Computer Scienc: Scott Briggs
History and Social Sciences: Sarah Snider
European Cultural Studies: Sera Freese
French: Mariella Savvides
International Communications: Olivier Laurent
Applied Finances: Miklos Bankuti
International Business: Lia Lamonica and Vanya Kostadinova
Art History: Morgan Hensley
International Affairs: Adam Bohrer
International Economics: Suellen Heintz

resigned from her position of Publications Manager, and the editors elected Agnieszka Ignaczak to replace her on the Senate. The budget was examined and approved on Friday, October 3 after six hours of deliberations.

First Floor of Bosquet: Academic Affairs

By Olivier Laurent

Academic affairs is the "core of the university," explains Michael Vincent. It is all about the curriculum. "We work with the department chairs to put together the class schedule for each semester," says Brenda Torney, assistant to the vice president, "we work out the timing, conflicting classes and staffing." At the beginning of every semester, academic affairs asks all departments at AUP what they will need for the following semester. "They tell us what classes they want to offer next," says associate dean of academic affairs Marc Montheard, "and we make sure they stay in their budget and have enough staff members."

Then, academic affairs has to work out a schedule for all these classes. "We have to solve conflicting schedules," explains Montheard. The working schedule is then sent to the registrar, which has to assign rooms for all the classes. A proposed schedule is then sent to all departments for approval. The entire process takes a little more than two months, before being sent to the printer for all students to receive it at the end of October.

But, this is not the only task of the academic affairs department. "I also deal with students," says Montheard, "I help them with the paperwork. I make sure that they all get the classes they need for their diploma." But Montheard also serves as the carrier of bad news when he has to, "If a student comes to ask me if he or she can take the exams in advance because they got a cheaper plane ticket, the answer will be no."

Academic affairs is also responsible for making sure that there is enough equipment and resources for everyone at the University. They provide, for example, computers and funds to faculty members. "We help the faculty with their research," says Torney, "we have the Faculty Development Fund, which allows professors to present papers at conferences." At the same time, these professors help promote AUP around the world.



Photo: Leslie Hamilton

Michael Vincent

Dean of the University and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Before becoming vice president for academic affairs and dean of the university, Michael Vincent used to spend two or three months a year in Paris. "I was a student in French literature," says Vincent, "I was spending a lot of time in Paris for my research." Vincent published several of his works on Jean De La Fontaine, and he received his doctorate in French literature from the University of Wisconsin.

In 1995, he became dean of the graduate school in Wichita, Kansas. Five years later, "a number of friends saw an ad from the American University of Paris, which was looking for a vice president for academic affairs," says Vincent. He applied and was hired in 2000.

Marc Montheard

Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

Marc Montheard graduated from the Sorbonne with a doctorate in language, literature and culture. He first arrived at AUP in 1987 as a part-time professor in the French department. "I was teaching two courses," he says. In the early nineties, he became a full time professor, and was the co-chair of the French department for six years. In 1997, he was promoted to associate dean of academic affairs, a position he still holds today.

How is a new professor chosen?

For a full-time job opening, a search committee is created. Among this committee, the chair of the department who is looking for a new professor is present, as well as other professors, the dean of the university or the associate dean of academic affairs Marc Montheard. Profiles of all candidates are compiled, and the best one is chosen by the committee. A trial class and/or lecture are also organized to evaluate the work of a professor. "We also look at the research potential," said Vincent, "we want professors that are constantly developing their skills and enriching their knowledge."

To be a professor at AUP, the candidate needs to have a doctorate. "It is a requirement," adds Vincent. "A doctorate is not always necessary when the candidate has an area of expertise on the subject."

For a part-time professor, the process is simpler. "The chair of the department hires someone, and we just make sure that he or she is what the university wants," said Vincent.

Traffic Light Party Revenues

For improved transparency, the SGA will publish the total revenue and cost of each party organized at the American University of Paris (AUP). Due to space constraints, THE PLANET is not able to publish the full breakdown of the budget allocated to

the *Traffic Light Party*. However, we have made available the document to all students on our website www.ac.aup.fr/planetaup. The breakdown can also be obtained by contacting SGA treasurer, Ashlee June-Wells.

Traffic Light Party	Sum
TOTAL REVENUE	13801.37
TOTAL COST OF PARTY	16434.86
Gain/Loss	-2633.49

Being Steven Ekovich

Starting in this issue, THE PLANET will regularly interview a distinguished professor of the American University of Paris. Professor Steven Ekovich inaugurates this new section of THE PLANET.

By Kim Chakanetsa

The War Veteran

If it had not been for a 13-month stint in Vietnam, the paths of AUP and Steven Ekovich would perhaps never have crossed. Before Vietnam, Professor Ekovich was studying engineering at the University of California. When the war began, he was sent to Vietnam to work in military intelligence, which involved intercepting communications, decoding, and translating by using his multi-lingual skills in Spanish, French, Italian, German, Vietnamese, Russian and Thai. "I have spent 30 years trying to understand the 13 months I spent there. The experience of being a soldier helped me to decide that I no longer wanted to be an engineer," says Ekovich.

Ekovich took up history and international affairs on his return to university. After completing his masters in history in 1979, he began to work on his doctoral studies, part of which involved studying at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales with some of the most famous French historians. "The University of California had a special arrangement where they sent one graduate student, it was really great," says Ekovich. It was during this same time that he met his French wife-to-be Francine, a researcher in political science and a teacher of constitutional law, with whom he now has a son and daughter.

The Professor

After twenty-five years in Paris and a decade at AUP, Ekovich remains the university's self-declared "Americanist." The classes he teaches include American Foreign Policy and American History. Former pupils have commented on what they see as his increasingly pro-American stance. "I try not to sell my interpretation; my role is to give students more sophisticated tools to make their own,"



"This is the worst crisis in Franco-American relations I have seen in 25 years," says Professor Steven Ekovich

Prof. Ekovich tells THE PLANET.

The common consensus among former and current pupils is that there is a lack of structure in his classes. This could perhaps be attributed to what he terms *the socialization of democracy*. "When I come in I know the main points I want to cover, and what I want to do with the students is to channel and direct our collective work; it is not a 'salon' or a free-wheeling discussion."

Ekovich also has a reputation among the student body for being a hard grader, to which he responds, "There are no easy A's, but if you make an effort and try you will pass the class." This type of open classroom debate does not always work, as noted by a current pupil who complains, "The problem is that there are always certain students who end up hogging the discussion, and it excludes certain pupils who are not naturally outspoken."

His lectures, although hardly dull, tend to take on various forms and are often peppered with phrases such as, "let's think about that for a moment," and "let's come back to that." Having lectured at the Sorbonne and École Nationale d'Administration, among others, it is interesting to find out how AUP compares. Ekovich believes that "the advantage of AUP is the multi-cultural classroom, to sit in the same room with students from other countries. The best students at AUP are on par with the best students at any school." He regards AUP's reputation as being a playground to be "increasingly improving."

The Moderate Democrat

On the first day of his International Institutions class, during a get-to-know-everyone session, Ekovich was asked about his political views. He refused to give a def-

inite answer, save for that he had worked at the 1992 National Democrat Convention, where his role was that of organising visits of French advisors to meet with Clinton's Staff. He is in fact a democrat, "a moderate democrat," he is quick to add. He also played an instrumental role in helping the late French Ambassador Pamela Harriman, prepare for her Senate confirmation.

Outside of AUP, Ekovich has filled numerous other roles, such as traveling extensively throughout Francophone Africa and meeting with diplomats at foreign ministries to give lectures on American Policy. Recently *The New York Times* opinion-editorial columnist Thomas Friedman declared that France and America were at war. As a self-described "Americanist" living in "enemy territory," THE PLANET asked Ekovich for his perspective on the current dire state of Franco-American relations. "This is the worst I have seen it in 25 years. I am not sure French leaders realize to what extent they have degraded relations with the U.S. I think that the French president and foreign minister thought that they could actively oppose the United States without undermining relations. It is a really low point," he says.

Having spent the summer in the United States, he says of the current climate, "There is no hostility, but a deep disappointment and disenchantment." But after many years abroad the great French-divide is limited to diplomatic circles. As Ekovich points out, "Although I disagree in many ways with French diplomacy, it hasn't affected the good relations that I have built up." □

Hollywood Conservatives Clash with Political Liberals

By Kirstin Mende

After a few years out of the spotlight and more than a few failed movies, actor Arnold Schwarzenegger is out to rule Hollywood again. But this time, the man dubbed the Terminator is not out to conquer the silver screen, but rather the entire state. That's right - the actor playing the evil machine of destruction in the renowned Terminator movies may soon be the governor of a state.

Only in California could there be an election in which candidates include: an Austrian Hollywood actor/former body builder, a Greek socialite, the publisher of a pornographic magazine, and a former baseball commissioner. Larry Flynn, publisher of *Hustler* magazine suggested that his slogan be "Vote for a Smut-Peddler Who Cares." Where some California officials got the idea that this recall may turn into "a farce" or a "carnival," I have no idea. But President George W. Bush seems to be enjoying it, calling the entire process "an interesting bit of political drama." After all, the editor and publisher of *California Political Week*, Dick Rosengarten, likened the entire political arena to the entertainment industry. "You know what they say about politics. It's show business for ugly people."

While this entire process may be amusing on

the surface, it is rooted in some very serious issues. On October 7, 2003, California voters will decide whether to recall current Democratic Governor Gray Davis or replace him. Davis is the first US Governor in more than 80 years to face a recall. Supporters of the recall - largely Republicans - handed in a petition of 1.64 million signatures, of which, according to the Secretary of State's office, 80% were found valid.

In an interview with CNN, Davis said the Republicans are not looking to oust him, but rather the "progressive agenda" the Californian Democratic Party has implemented on education, gun control, health care and support of abortion.

Schwarzenegger, in the recent debate, accused the Davis administration of pulling wool over the people's eyes and taking millions of dollars in Indian Casino money. The state has a deficit of \$37 billion, and Davis stands accused of hiding California's fiscal crisis during his campaign for re-election.

But that does not mean Schwarzenegger is getting by without criticism - just criticism of a different kind. While some seem skeptical of his lack of political experience, the public seems most interested in an article published in *W* magazine, in which the star admits to having participated in group sex in the 1970s. After all,

would this be politics or Hollywood without a good sex scandal?

While Schwarzenegger does not have much political experience, the public seems to be putting faith in his wife, Maria Shriver. She is a niece of assassinated US President John F. Kennedy. A good looking politician, accused by Hollywood circles of being a womanizer, and a Kennedy by marriage? This is starting to sound very familiar.

But the fact that Schwarzenegger has proven very popular in Californian polls could be a very interesting point. The population might be willing to put more faith in a non-American Hollywood star with practically zero political experience than they would in the elected officials. That either says something about the overwhelming influence of Hollywood on American and Californian, or it says something about how disillusioned they are by the corruption of the political system.

At this point, polls were divided on projections as to who will win. But there were no runoff in the election, so whoever won the popular vote will finish the last year of the elected term.

Did Hollywood beat politics?

- Sources: many thanks to CNN.com, Foxnews, ABCnews, and MSNBC for background information

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SATISFIED OR CASH BACK

Aboriginal Tent Embassy: Still Ablaze with Controversy

By Esther Etkin

The lawns in front of the Old Parliament House, Canberra, lie cold and silent. The only movement comes from a young Aborigine and a collection of flags flapping in the biting winter winds. But hand-painted posters express a resounding message to the still heated issue of the rights of Aborigines in Australia. Since the 1970s, this has been the site of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, which has been described as the country's longest running protest.

On Australia Day 1972, a group of Aboriginal leaders erected a tent and umbrella in front of the Parliament House, in response to former Prime Minister McMahon's announcement that his coalition government would not recognize Aboriginal land rights or grant compensation for land lost. Thousands joined the protest and it took the police months to drive away the crowd.

But the Tent Embassy would not go away, and has come to symbolize more than the struggle for land rights. Over the decades, the issue of self-determination has also become central to the campaign. According to the *Australians for Reconciliation Study Circle*, the embassy said to white Australia: "You've kicked us down for the last time [in all areas, from education to health, to police victimization.]"

Although the Tent Embassy has existed permanently on the Old Parliament lawns since 1992, many attempts have been made to remove it, both legal and illegal. Australian Territories Minister Wilson Tuckey called for a review to ban camping on the lawns in July of this year. This followed an arson attack on the embassy, which destroyed a shed containing valuable photographs and information about Aboriginal heritage.

One poster erected on the lawn reads: "Aboriginal Embassy = Unfinished Business!" Yet it seems the Aboriginal community is not in full agreement with this

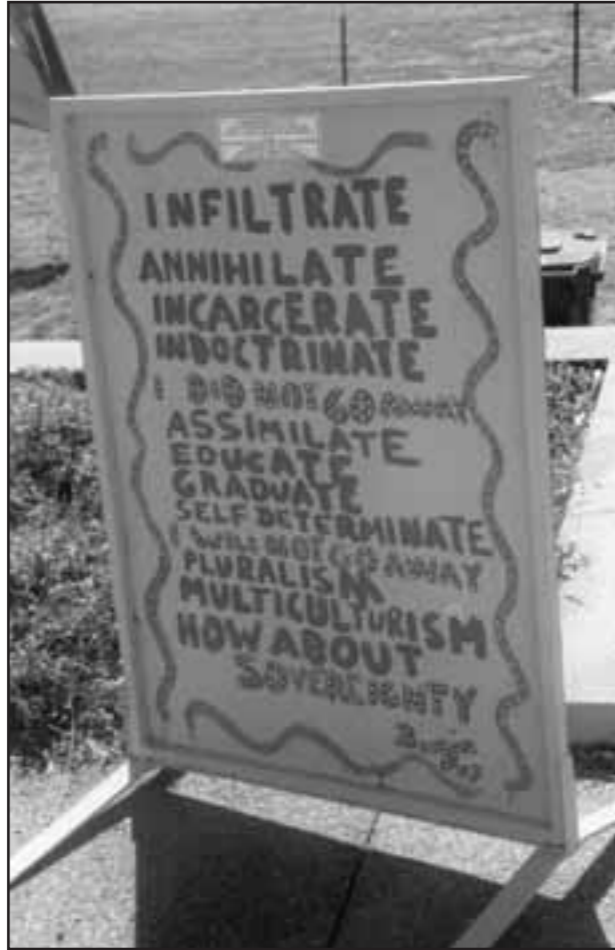


Photo: John Robert

statement. Over the years, some agree that the protest has lost direction, and has become an eyesore rather than the powerful symbol it once was. However, the community remains united over another poster: "Stop the Holocaust in Australia." Embassy residents told Canberra's *City Chronicle* that the site is "a living reminder that its original people have never surrendered their spiritual or custodial sovereignty of Australia. The Aboriginal Embassy is the front line of this 215-year struggle." - Sources: *The City Chronicle*, July 29, 2003 and *Australians for Reconciliation Study Circle Kit*

THE PLANET is Looking for Writers and Contributors

We are holding weekly editorial meetings on Wednesdays at 18h30 in B-14 (next to the student lounge on the ground floor of Bosquet). Please feel free to come and share with us your ideas and articles. We cannot promise that they will get published, but we will do our best to do so. THE PLANET is not the publication of a small group of writers, it is the publication of the entire university, it is your newspaper. You can send us articles, idea or comments at planetaup@ac.aup.fr.

Afghanistan: Education for a Better Future.

By Mandi Kogosowski

Under the Taliban regime, Afghan women were denied almost every human right. They existed simply to be wives and mothers, to obey their chosen-for husbands, and not to possess minds of their own. To ensure they did not develop any 'radical' ideas about a different lifestyle, post-elementary education for women was strictly prohibited. Some girls and women managed to receive tutoring in secret. But, if caught by the Taliban, they were arrested and punished.

The US State Department Bureau of South Asian Affairs and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural affairs, along with universities, NGOs and charities, are involved in several projects to help Afghan women build better lives. These projects include oral history projects, refugee trauma training, refurbishing the female dormitories at Kabul University, leadership management, computer education and more. These programs take place in the US as well as in Afghanistan.

One noteworthy project is the National Scholarship Program for Afghan Women, established by Paula Nirschel in January 2001. Nirschel's husband, Roy, is the president of Roger Williams University, located in Bristol, Rhode Island. In September 2002, five young Afghan women began studying at Roger Williams, after having won full four-year scholarships, including room and board. Nirschel also managed to persuade other universities, such as Notre Dame, Lyndon State College and the University of Montana, to offer \$100 000 scholarships. This coming fall semester, seven Afghan girls will begin their studies in the United States.

Scholarship recipients are obligated to return home to Afghanistan each summer, so they can put their knowledge into action and help rebuild the country. At the end of their degree, they must return to Afghanistan permanently. They now have the possibility of a better future, and so does their country. □

The Importance of Inner Vogue

By Kara King

This summer I strung on some ghetto gold jewelry, wore my fake diamond earrings, and styled my hair with a slight quiff. My money spent the night between the pages of Webster's Dictionary. I brushed up on my French conjunctions. 'Et' I made sure my white cotton Hanes Her Way underwear was without a wrinkle. Prepped properly and feeling quite vogue, I had lunch at Vogue on July 31.

It all happened by a stroke of luck, really. My internship supervisor at Liz Claiborne happened to be friends with Sally Singer, the fashion news and features editor at Vogue. When I mentioned I wanted to get into fashion journalism, she emailed Sally right away to set up a lunch appointment.

When Sally's willing reply came back suggesting a time and date, I was giddier than a little girl on Christmas morning. Visions of carrot sticks and celery stalks danced in my head.

I immediately planned the poignant questions I would ask Sally about her job and her writing. I carefully drew out the purse puns that I would brilliantly make and at what point in the conversation I would say them. I researched past articles, prepared some of my own stuff (just in case they were hiring), and at last came to plan the most crucial part of having lunch at Vogue: my outfit.

It is an indescribable amount of pressure to dress for lunch at Vogue. You want to be hip and up-to-date without looking like you made an effort. You want to show creativity in your outfit but you don't want to overdo it. You want to splash yourself with designer duds but don't want to reek of them. You want to look perfect, you want to look vogue.

Armed with this demanding checklist of do's and don'ts, I ran to Madison Avenue to begin my search for the perfect Vogue outfit.

After three grueling hours of non-stop shopping, I returned home defeated and pooped. The only thing I had successfully accomplished was all the don'ts on my list.

I ended up with an outfit that really did look like I didn't make any effort. It wasn't overdone; in fact, in the world of being done, it leaned more towards a rare steak. And I didn't reek of any designer...at all.

\$200 later I looked like the regular old me, not the vogue me I was hoping to release. And then I realized, \$200 is just a down payment for the liberation of your inner vogue. It doesn't emerge for another two easy installments of \$500 each and at least one thing you have on that says "Dior."

I didn't look perfect, I didn't look vogue, and I didn't have \$1000. Things were looking glum for my inner vogue. So I turned to my fashion friends, those people I have always admired for their innate sense of style, for help.

I once read that Diana Vreeland had her dollar bills pressed before she slipped them into her evening clutch. Audrey Hepburn spoke 'le toujours chic Franglais.' My own mother ironed her underwear.

Their small acts may seem insignificant, obsessive, perhaps. But in the end, this added to the overall air of fabulousness these women possessed.

These acts were very vogue.

And the more I thought about it, the more I came to fully understand the meaning and importance of being vogue. Call it an epiphany of extravagance because I now know why Carrie Bradshaw wears those fun and flashy necklaces, why André Leon Talley always dons diamonds, and why Suzy Menkes' hairstyle resembles that of a Samurai. These are their own endeavors to release their inner vogues.

It isn't the clothes that make the man. It's the fine-tuning. Anyone can slap on a Valentino dress and look great, but those who add the extravagance, that extra little touch, are the ones who stand out and look extra-ordinary.

And with that I tweaked and tuned and somehow made a \$200 outfit feel like it was \$1000.

Looking fresh and fabulous, I stood in Times Square just outside the pristine glass doors of the Condé Nast building. Somewhere inside was Anna Wintour and I was about to go through the same door she goes through everyday, walk the same steps, perhaps ride in the same elevator. I was about to enter the land of all things fabulous: Planet Vogue.

Just as the invisible choir of angels began to sing and the tears began to well up in my eyes (and my fear of smudged mascara grew), a public transport bus buzzed by behind me, and my fabulous skirt was up around my waist. New York City got a brief peek at my very vogue, very naked bottom. Giuliani would not have approved.

"I didn't look perfect, I didn't look vogue, and I didn't have \$1000. Things were looking glum for my inner vogue"

The only redeeming part of an otherwise mortifying and very un-vogue experience was that the whole situation was almost a complete replay of the opening sequence for "Sex and the City" (Carrie gets splashed when a bus drives through a puddle). Yet, in the show, Carrie's picture is on the bus and she looks unbelievably sexy. I think my bus had an advertisement for the new sizzlin' summer grill at T.G.I.Friday's.

But the bus drove by and with it went some debris from the street, lots of exhaust fumes, a piece of my dignity, and all of my inner vogue. I was back to zero.

I needed either an emergency pair of Manolo Blahniks or a good pep talk. The latter being cheaper, I started thinking positive thoughts. "Why am I standing outside Vogue in the first place?" I asked myself. "Self," I replied, "You worked hard and you met the right people who thought enough of you to send you here. You don't need other people's insane gimmicks to make you feel like you belong. So what if you're more like Bridget Jones than Carrie Bradshaw!? You're fabulous in your own special way. So get in there and show them what you've got!"

And with that, I took off my jewelry, combed my hair, and dropped the French accent, and the regular old me burst through the revolving doors of

It Happened Around the World and You Should Know About It!

Netherlands - The war crimes trial against former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was postponed again this month. Milosevic complained of exhaustion and high blood pressure. The trial had already been postponed in September for the same reasons, and Milosevic, who decided to represent himself, was unable to come to court. Milosevic is charged with genocide and crimes against the humanity in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. He is being tried at The Hague, in one of the most important international war crimes cases since World War II.

South Africa - In May of this year, a teenager of light brown complexion entered a police station just outside of Pretoria, South Africa, claiming he had been kidnapped from his Afrikaans parents when he was about two. He said that he was known as Happy Sindane, guessed he was sixteen, and said he had been kept isolated in a township where he was under the control of his supposed grandparents. Many white families came forward over the past few months, hoping that Happy was the child they had once lost. However, after DNA tests and investigation, Happy's identity has finally been revealed. The Bronkhorstspuit Children's Court announced this month that he is actually the 19-year-old son of a black woman, but his father was probably a white man for whom she worked. The court said his real name is Abbey Mzayiya. After months of waiting, Mzayiya is now able to start his life again, with a true identity.

Condé Nast.

I felt even better as I got into the elevator with the editors and writers from magazines of such caliber as *Architectural Digest*, *Vanity Fair*, *Gourmet Magazine*, and *House & Garden*. Together, the affluent crowd and I literally rubbed elbows as they routinely pressed their floor's corresponding buttons and I reached out to hit mine. The door closed and we rode in silence. But just before we hit the third floor, the smartly dressed woman standing next to me leaned in and said, "Great outfit! Going to Vogue?"

All I could do at that moment was grin. But when "Vogue" illuminated on the level counter and the elevator doors opened, I sucked in my cheeks, arched my eyebrow, and my inner vogue and I strutted like we were Heidi Klum all the way to the receptionist's desk. □

59 Rivoli: The Museum that Lives

Where: 59, rue de Rivoli (impossible not to notice a building with a face!)

When: All year round, closed on Sundays

What to take: No need for money (it's free!), a smiling face and readiness for adventure.

What it is: Unsure about how exactly to define it, THE PLANET asked Gaspard, one of the founding members of 59, rue de Rivoli, to explain what this place is really all about. But even he was not too sure how to define this Alice-in-Wonderland-type building.

Essentially, it is an old Parisian building on the rue de Rivoli that is filled with contemporary art exhibitions in different rooms.

The aim of Gaspard and the other two founders was to create a place where "art could be democratized and not simply locked away in an expensive and serious museum," as he explains. This "Squart" (as the Parisians call it - a mixture of the word *squat* and *art*) attempts to provide its visitors a space where they can appreciate and connect with the works that surround them.

Gaspard gives two reasons why the "Squart" is an alternative to traditional museums where,



Three artists transformed an abandoned building on rue de Rivolie into a "squat." Photo: Hugo Reichenberger.

according to him, art is "intellectualized" as it requires a previous study of the work or style in order to fully recognize its value. Also, in traditional museums, the visitor is partly cut off from the artworks, unlike the experience at 59, rue de Rivoli where one can meet with the artist whilst contemplating the works.

This six-floor building used to belong to the

French government and a bank but was abandoned in 1997. In 1999, three artists, including Gaspard began to occupy the building and transformed it into the present-day "Squart," hosting artists of diverse personalities, who offer to the public a wide range of genres not found in the traditional museum. □

What's Showing at the Movies?

Underworld

The delightful Kate Beckinsdale has shed her prissy "Pearl Harbour" wardrobe and swapped it for some seriously tight S&M-influenced gear in this "Buffy-meets-the-Matrix" blood fest. The plot starts off promisingly enough: a 1000-year battle has been raging between the Lycans (Werewolves) and the Death-dealers (Vampires), all set against a moody backdrop of a gothic London. Within the first twenty minutes one is hard-pressed to shake off the suspicion that the director, Len Wiseman, has either been hugely influenced by the "Matrix" or, at worse, used it as a template. The plot quickly descends into the farcical with too many unnecessary subplots topped off with some seriously cringe-inducing dialogue. The end product is an over-styled production, all dressed up in leather but with nowhere to go. Toward the end, after one Vampire/Werewolf clash too many, I was beginning to nod off, but the saving grace was the rather thumping soundtrack. **Bottom Line: Style over substance.**

The Italian Job

At first glance it would appear that "The Italian Job" is desperately trying to be a continental

"Oceans' Eleven." The same drill: a multitallented/ethnic gang of thieves gets together for one final caper, but it sadly lacks the slickness and subtlety of its predecessor. Having said that, it is funnier in parts. Mark Wahlberg heads a cast that includes Edward Norton, Donald Sutherland, Mos Def and Jason Statham, with Charlize Theron thrown in as their token female counterpart. The problem with remakes is that they are rarely ever better than the original and this is no exception. "The Italian Job" offers nothing new to an already exhausted genre. If one overlooks some of the acting, which is dodgy at times, the film makes for pleasant but brainless entertainment, although it is also a bit like watching an 90-minute-long advert for Mini-Cooper. **Bottom Line: Worth watching if deeply bored or someone else is paying...**

Dirty Pretty Things

Few films have ever truly captured the essence of the faceless and nameless community that makes up London's illegal immigrants. In this dark thriller

Stephen Frears is able to bring to life the chaos and colour that is the life of these "fringedwellers." Newcomer Chiwetel Ejifor plays a receptionist at the Baltic Hotel who discovers a rather dirty scheme and, together with a surprisingly convincing Audrey Tatou, attempts to make sense of the visible while keeping invisible. The plot never veers to the over-sentimental thanks to Frears' deft direction and a competent cast. The film not only succeeds as a thriller, but also as a love story, comedy and more importantly as a documentation of the lives of those "outsiders." **Bottom Line: Well-worth seeing** □

Photographers and Artists Wanted

THE PLANET needs photographers and artists. We want to add more pictures and original works to the newspaper and would love to get more artists involved. Please contact us at planetaup@ac.aup.fr.

The next issue of THE PLANET will come out on October 23rd!