

COMMUNIQUE

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Robots Take Child Abuse Out of Camel Racing

By Yoyce Jones



AP Photo/Gustavo Ferrari

Robot jockeys are seen on Kuwait's camel race track in Kabad, 80 km northwest of Kuwait City on Feb. 5. Kuwait banned the use of children as jockeys in camel races and this is the first time robot jockeys have been used in Kuwait.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has begun replacing child jockeys with robots in the lucrative, traditional sport of camel racing.

This year, the UAE began enforcing a law passed in 1993 to ban the enslavement of people under 18 years. This comes after international condemnation, led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) of the UAE, a country that has been seeking to bolster its prestige as a major tourist destination for Westerners.

The UAE now employs robots, developed by Swiss high technology firm K-Team, to continue its racing tradition. These robots, made from sacks of rice equipped with a motor, can be controlled remotely from vehicles following the racing camels.

The Gulf News, a Dubai-based media agency, reported in August that the UAE Interior Ministry

had announced the repatriation of more than 1,000 children.

But human rights advocate Ansar Burney, chair of Pakistani human rights organization Ansar Burney Trust, countered such reports. According to Burney, concerns remain that 5,000 to 7,000 children between 5 and 7 years old are missing or have been incarcerated in an effort to remove them from public sight.

A 2006 U.S. State Department human trafficking report documented how lucrative camel races foster an international slave trade that paves the way for human rights abuses.

Scores of racing camel owners prefer small children as jockeys due to their light weight. Some of these children are as young as 4 years old. Many are starved to prevent weight gain. They are

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Oil Ransoms: Danger in the Nigerian Delta

By Julie Payne

Kidnappings are a profitable business for armed militias in the Niger Delta. The Delta region—a tangled web of creeks and swamps the size of Scotland—is home to Nigeria's most abundant oil reserves.

The former British colony is the eighth-biggest oil exporter in the world and the largest in Africa. In 2005, crude oil exports averaged 2.6 million barrels per day.

Nigeria's lucrative oil production, however, is not without severe consequences. Despite the nation's growing wealth, the Niger Delta region remains undeveloped, saturated in poverty and rife with conflict and growing resentment.

For years, armed youth gangs have hidden in the Delta's swamps and creeks in order to attack oil pipelines and kidnap foreign oil workers for ransom. Recently, these armed groups have begun operating under an umbrella organization called the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

Composed primarily of Nigeria's fourth-largest ethnic group, the Ijaws, MEND mem-

bers live in the Delta region and claim their actions are in support of destitute local communities shortchanged by the oil companies. MEND engages in violent action, claiming that the oil belongs to the Delta people and that these residents have not benefited from the generation of wealth.

The hefty sums of ransom money awarded to militia groups in exchange for hostages, MEND claims, are intended to aid the impoverished Delta community.

However, the line between the militias' criminal and political activity is blurry.

According to the BBC, militia groups use the ransom proceeds to purchase weapons while the oil they steal from pipelines is either sold for enormous sums on the black market or to Eastern European countries in exchange for firearms.

Often, militia groups receive under-the-table payments from Nigerian politicians in exchange for rigging local and even national elections.

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Sidewalk Entrepreneurs

By Jayshree Bajoria

As the days become warmer in New York, the line by Sam's cart grows longer.

"Do you want your regular, John?" he asks, smiling at the familiar face. As John nods, the vendor reaches out for the chicken, puts it on the hot plate and soon it is sizzling, filling the air with its mouth-watering aroma.

Not many know that this vendor's real name is Ahmed Sadat, and that before he began flipping falafels and heating pita bread, he was a refugee from the Soviet invasion of his native Afghanistan, a journalist, a humanitarian aid worker and a war-time government official.

For the last three years his food cart has been a fixture on the corner of 120th Street and Broadway. He has become almost as popular among Columbia University students as his chicken rice that sells for \$4 a plate and is sold out by mid-afternoon.

Sadat is just one of several thousand vendors selling food on New York city sidewalks, a cut-throat business dominated by immigrants, dictated by fickle weather conditions and frequently targeted by law enforcement authorities. There is a thin line



AP Photo/Ernst

Ahmed Sadat, AKA Sam Ali, prepares his famous chicken rice at 120th Street and Broadway. Sadat left Afghanistan for the United States nine years ago.

dividing legal and illegal, law enforcement and exploitation, competition and harassment. Yet as the long waiting list for permits suggests, the business is a favorite with immigrants.

Before he came to America nine years ago to participate in a conference in Washington, D.C., Sadat's life was full of upheavals. Born in Kabul, he took refuge in neighboring Pakistan after the former Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. There, he was a freelance journalist and a training manager for a non-profit

organization. It was when Sadat was participating in the Washington conference that the Taliban assumed control of Afghanistan and Sadat decided to stay in the United States. And Ahmed Sadat became Sam Ali.

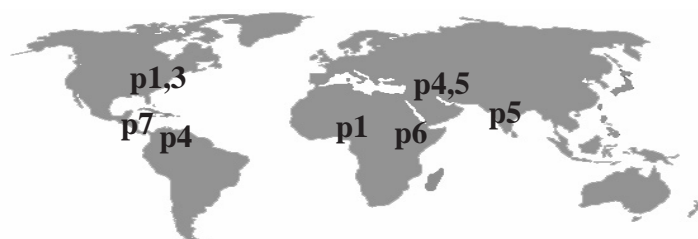
"Whenever a new immigrant arrives in New York, it depends on who he knows, and what business others from his country are engaged in," Sam says. "Then he does the same thing."

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AP Photo/Channi Anand

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News, Views & FAQs
From the People in Power
Thank You MPASA, SIPASA 2006

As the new SIPASA board prepares to take office, the administration would like to express its gratitude to the outgoing MPASA and SIPASA boards. The 2006 student leadership was exemplary in its commitment to working with the administration. Along with the many socials they organized, MPASA and SIPASA outdid themselves in SIPA’s 60th anniversary year with their efforts to improve student life at the school. These are a few highlights of their accomplishments.

The assistance they provided at the MPA and MIA Open Houses for admitted students in April 2006 was invaluable in introducing the school to candidates making their admissions decisions. Throughout the summer of 2006, SIPASA and MPASA members assisted the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) in planning and staffing new student orientation in August. Building on initiatives from the 2005 MPASA board, they published the second student “Survival Guide” to help new students make the adjustment to life at SIPA. Volunteers staffed an information table for Orientation week to help new students find their way around the school. Both groups partnered with OSA to plan an improved Orientation reception, featuring a class photo in front of Low Library and the presence of student group leaders to provide advice and informa-

tion about their activities.

Town Halls for 2006, held each semester, showed the determination of student representatives to focus and professionalize these events. From doing student opinion surveys, to collecting questions in advance and organizing them in a PowerPoint presentation, to soliciting data from the administration, the Committee on Instruction (the representatives who planned these events) vastly improved the quality of interaction between students and the administration.

A particularly significant development for this year was the decision to merge the SIPASA and MPASA boards to simplify student governance at the school and ensure equal representation for the various degree programs. Student leaders can be proud of their efforts to review the existing organizations, identify redundancies and propose a new structure to facilitate governance and clear communication with students. The administration looks forward to working with the newly structured SIPASA to continue the many initiatives put in motion during 2006.

Thanks to all the members of student government, particularly the outgoing MPASA president and vice-president, Jaime Koppel and Sherr Lo, and the SIPASA co-presidents, Mario Chamorro and Ben Madgett.

MPASA Board 2006

Jaime Koppel.....	President
Sherr Lo.....	Vice-President
Sange Lama.....	Secretary
April Tubbs.....	Treasurer
Cesar Osorio.....	Communications Chair
Christoph Barchewitz.....	Curriculum Chair
Marisa Buchanan.....	Orientation Chair
Winnie Chen.....	Alumni Chair
Brooke Cutler.....	Social Chair

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Mario Chamorro.....	MIA Co-President
Ben Madgett.....	MPA Co-President
Steven Kim.....	Treasurer
Steve A. Pérez.....	Secretary
Chris Shaw.....	Communications Chair
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Vincent Morgan.....	EMPA Rep.
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Attention SIPA Students, Faculty and Staff:

Have something you wanna get off your chest?
An interesting perspective on a local or global issue?
Post on www.themorningsidepost.com,
SIPA's official online policy forum. We now have video!

For information, e-mail Jeca (jct2118) or Dan (djm2121).

The Morningside Post: It's YOUR blog!

SIPASA Speaks

By Ben Madgett, SIPASA
Co-President

SIPASA: New and Improved in 2007

Until this year, SIPA student interests were represented by various student organizations: While SIPASA represented all students, MPASA, ESPSA, PEPMSA and the EMPA Forum also existed as student organizations for their respective programs. (Although MIA students make up approximately 70 percent of the school’s population, there was no separate MIA board.)

As a result, student initiatives were not as coordinated as they could have been and student events overlapped in both their intent and timing. Even when coordination did take place between SIPASA and MPASA, it was very informal. Furthermore, the MIA program was underrepresented in student initiatives such as orientation and alumni affairs, and the ESP and PEPM students were often not aware of SIPASA or MPASA activities.

Over the past few months, a group of representatives from SIPASA and MPASA, along with ESP, PEPM and EMPA students, have worked to create a new student government structure which reflects the growing academic diversity at SIPA, as well as the common interests shared by students in all programs. The final product allows SIPASA to focus both on specific issues affecting each academic program, while allowing for formal collaboration between students working in various functional areas, such as Student Life or Alumni Affairs. While there were four separate groups with 34 members between them prior to the restructuring, now there is one umbrella organization, with 31 members and a more efficient structure for communication and initiatives. Each board will work on issues specific to its academic program, while each committee will work on its functional responsibilities.

With a new executive board made up of the presidents of all

programs set to take over for a one-year term in January 2007, we are confident that this is an incredibly positive development for SIPA: It will facilitate a stronger community environment, from which stronger alumni relationships can be built, leading to a stronger program and a stronger school.

The executive board will be elected by students in their programs, plus a Treasurer and Communications Chair to be elected by the school at large. This arrangement will allow each program to be represented at a high level on the SIPASA board. The Ph.D. and EMPA programs will also have representatives on the executive board.

The executive board will be responsible for creating SIPASA’s budget, including student events and initiatives, and funding student groups. Due to the unique funding structure of the ESP program, the students will have their own treasurer to oversee ESP-specific funds. Working closely with the executive is the SIPA senator, also elected by all students, who represents our school on the Columbia University Senate.

Under the executive board are the regular governing members, which sit on SIPASA’s six formal committees and are elected by their respective programs. We have established MPA, MIA, ESP and PEPM boards with positions including Academics, Student Life, Orientation and Student Outreach, Career Services and Alumni Affairs. The Internal Affairs Chairs will oversee the workings of both SIPASA and their respective program boards. First-year MIA and MPA students will be represented in the fall semester by first-year representatives, who will be elected to serve a half-term, and will be eligible to run for regular board positions in the November elections.

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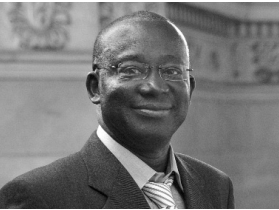
CONTRIBUTORS
SHIPETIM GASHI
RACHEL MAKABI
HANI MANSOURIAN
DAN MCSWEENEY
ROB SHOLARS

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communiqué@columbia.edu

Director of the Fortnight: Mamadou Diouf

Communiqué caught up with Prof. Mamadou Diouf, the next director of the Institute of African Studies, which has been suspended since the summer. A young-looking 55, the Senegalese Diouf has big plans for the institute when he gets to Columbia next July.



Q: What is your vision for the institute?
A: It’s a collective vision, of people inside and outside Columbia. The intellectual agenda will be a collective agenda. I will make an effort to bring together people who are interested in Africa, and interest students in discussion outside their fields.

Q: What about the funding?
A: When I was approached in May, I said, “If there’s funding, I’ll do it.” The president and vice-president of Columbia have committed resources and committed to recruiting people. Finding funding for Africa is difficult. But I have been promised resources for the next three years. If the university has a capital campaign, Africa needs to be a part of it. What the institute really needs is an endowment.

Q. How will you resolve the IAS’s problems?
A. I will learn about what went right and wrong. I don’t want to waste a lot of time on a blame game.

Q. What will your priorities be?
A. Next year will be a year of transition. We’ll brainstorm and come up with a three-year plan. The first important element is research and training. The second is to have a policy forum, which will be part of the outreach program. How do you make Columbia a central space to organize debate about Africa? At all times, yes, but also at key moments such as Darfur. The third is the aspect of culture and arts. Harlem has played an important role in the discussion of African modernity and art; how do we get African-Americans interested in the Africa debate? Everyone who’s interested in Africa should be a stakeholder. I’d like intellectual activity to become central, not always searching for resources.

Q. Will the institute remain within SIPA?
A. I’m not the one to decide structural arrangements, but I don’t think the issue is as important as it’s made out to be. SIPA has an institutional role that the institute cannot play. Some of the demands students are making have to be made to the school.

Q. Are you familiar with New York?
A. Yes. I like Harlem, and downtown Manhattan and the Village . I like cosmopolitan things.

photo: eileen barrosa

EDITORIAL

Six Muslim religious leaders were escorted off a U.S. Airways plane on November 20 because a fellow passenger—who saw three of them conducting their daily evening prayer—thought they looked “suspicious.” So suspicious, in fact, that after having been removed from their plane to Phoenix, and returning to the airport the next day to catch another flight, the airline ticket agent told them their money had been refunded and that the airline would not sell them any more tickets.

Last July in London, police officers shot a Brazilian in the head six times, and once in the shoulder, suspecting him of being a suicide bomber. They were in the Stockwell Tube Station—a place where immigration checks had been stepped up—and when the police challenged him, he jumped over the turnstiles and ran. His visa status was uncertain, home ministry officials said at the time, and he was apparently afraid of being deported.

More recently, an American citizen of Iranian descent, 23-year-old college senior Mostafa Tabatabaiejad, was tasered repeatedly in a UCLA library computer lab by campus police. Asked to show ID, he refused, believing he had been singled out because of his Middle Eastern appearance. He finally agreed to leave, but was nonetheless tasered five times. The campus police continued delivering the nerve-stunning electric shocks, even after putting Tabatabaiejad in handcuffs.

There are several issues at play in these incidents: police brutality, the legitimization of force, an atmosphere of fear, racial profiling and, most importantly, the “war on terror.”

Many of these issues have existed since before Bush’s Orwellian-named war. But this war has also bred a culture of fear in which those in authority feel

justified in singling out people who look or act differently than them, especially Muslims; shooting first and thinking later; and continuing their behavior, partly because they are not punished for their actions.

Anti-Muslim racism—which goes beyond racial profiling but includes it—is not limited to immigrants and ordinary people. Keith Ellison, the Minneapolis congressman and the first Muslim ever elected to Congress, was interviewed by the notoriously inflammatory CNN host Glenn Beck, who asked his guest to “prove to me that you are not working with our enemies.”

On previous shows, Beck distinguished between “good” and “bad” Muslims, calling for good Muslims to shoot bad Muslims in the head, and warning that “Muslims will see the West through razor wire [referring to concentration camps] if things don’t change.”

The war on terror has become an excuse for the Bush administration and its partners to bomb populations and illegally invade countries. Like a schoolyard bully, the United States refuses to abide by world rules and rewrites history when convenient.

No wonder, then, that authorities (such as the police) in the countries conducting the war on terror follow their leaders’ example in declaring their own form of war against anyone who looks or acts “suspicious,” especially anyone who might be Muslim.

The world needs to show trigger-happy police officers and war-waging presidents that their actions have consequences, and that they will have to face them. And the media—instead of printing police press releases and ignoring student eye-witness statements; instead of questioning the loyalty of democratically-elected leaders just because they’re Muslims—need to be at the frontline of this fight.

A Robust, Earthy Class

By Rob Sholars



AP Photo/françois mori

“Each class has a focus, such as Burgundy whites or New World reds. It begins with a short lecture connecting the characteristics of that day’s wine with the geology, history and culture of the region. Then the wine is served alongside plates of hors d’oeuvres. The atmosphere is relaxed, with little of the pretentiousness often associated with wine tasting.”

Let’s face it: SIPA students have lots of reasons to drink. Many of our concentrations, while inspirational, are not exactly uplifting. Our building resembles a Soviet bunker more than a top-tier international relations school. And most students have had a class whose poor teaching, dry material or sheer difficulty has driven them to commiserate with their classmates over a round of beer at Radio Perfecto.

But for a class that really drives students to drink, look no further than SIP Wine, an eight-week seminar on the world’s classic wine regions. For two hours each week, students swirl, smell, sip and occasionally chug complex Burgundies, sweet German Rieslings and robust California Cabernets while enjoying an expansive view of the New York skyline afforded by the class’s 15th-floor location.

Philippe Newlin, a gregarious SIPA alumnus, teaches SIP Wine. Newlin has a Master of Wine certification, the highest accreditation in the notoriously selective wine industry.

After graduating from SIPA in 1992, Newlin worked for a number of banks, including UBS and Bank of America, while cultivating his appreciation for wine. As his interest in wine grew he began to shift careers, working the trading floor by day and teaching wine classes at night.

“As I watched the wine market grow in the U.S., and saw the opportunities in this market reach critical mass, I decided to make the switch,” said Newlin. He has since contributed to several wine-related media projects. Most recently, he has become *Wine & Spirits Magazine’s* Associate Editor and Tasting Director.

Each class has a particular focus, such as Burgundy whites or New World reds. It begins with a short lecture connecting the characteristics of that day’s wine with the geology, history and culture of the region it comes from. Then the wine is served alongside plates of hors d’oeuvres, usually goat cheese and crackers. The atmosphere is relaxed, with little of the pretentiousness often associated with wine tasting.

Ian Wilson (MIA2) is one of about 25 students in the class. Wilson was raised in a family of wine drinkers and has always enjoyed wine. But he has never been sure what wine to get at a store or restaurant. Wilson hoped SIP Wine would remedy this.

“The class provided an opportunity to learn about what I like and don’t like, so that when I do get a wine, I have a better sense of what to pay and whether or not I am going to enjoy it,” he said.

Newlin’s class, which began at the Business School in 2002, has been offered at SIPA since last year. It’s been a success “because students are looking to add another tool to their portfolio of skills for their professional lives,” said Newlin. And despite his new position at *Wine & Spirits*, Newlin says he would like to continue to teach.

“Bringing new people into the fold,” he said, is “one of the best parts of being in an emerging market.”

Rob Sholars (MIA1) is an IEP concentrator.

Town Hall: The State of SIPA Address

By Dan McSweeney

Students and administrators gathered to listen to Dean Lisa Anderson’s “State of the School” address on November 16 at the biannual SIPA Town Hall meeting, held on the 15th floor of the International Affairs Building.

After setting the stage for the meeting, MPASA President Jaime Koppel and SIPASA Co-Presidents Mario Chamorro and Ben Madgett yielded the floor to Anderson, who said that while SIPA is “in pretty good shape,” there remains a lot of “unfinished business” as she completes her 10th and last year as dean.

“This place is never, never finished,” said Anderson. “SIPA lives in the world and we respond to changes in the world.” Commenting on an upcoming review of the SIPA curriculum by the Committee on Instruction, she added, “The curriculum should never be finished.”

Anderson said that during the final months of her tenure and beyond, student voices will continue to play a role in school governance and in the search for her replacement.

“This is a great way to share views about SIPA,” said outgoing MPASA president Jaime Koppel (MPA2). “Maintaining a successful community is a lot of hard work and it’s good to see that other people here at SIPA understand that and are willing to play a role in the process.”

Anderson also described the upcoming formation of an alumni council and fundraising efforts aimed at increasing fellowships for students. Anderson told those in attendance that the problems surrounding the Africa Institute, which has been suspended since last summer due to the lack of a director, would likely be resolved this year.

Other members of the administration discussed issues related to the faculty and curriculum, the fellowship process and SIPA’s facilities.

Dean Anderson said that though SIPA is “in pretty good shape,” there remains a lot of “unfinished business” as she completes her 10th and last academic year as dean.

Explaining SIPA’s role in the larger university structure, Associate Dean Patrick Bohan corrected the “popular misconception” that SIPA is a part of the Graduate School of Arts and

Sciences. “We are actually part of the University’s Arts and Sciences construct,” he said.

Dan McIntyre, the newly appointed Associate Dean for Faculty and Curriculum Affairs, also addressed students’ questions regarding faculty appointments, the course evaluation system and other curriculum-related concerns.

During the question-and-answer session that followed, topics previously submitted to student government representatives were presented in categories that included Conceptual Foundations reform, SIPA marketing and branding, and school facilities.

One student asked why students didn’t play a larger role in the recent SIPA 60th Anniversary events. Anderson replied that all enrolled students were invited to volunteer for events and that

many also attended portions of the weekend as guests. McIntyre added that roughly 120 students had participated in the various events.

The meeting lasted for more than two hours. The general mood was positive, especially compared to previous Town Halls at which questions and comments aimed at the administration were decidedly more combative.

The event was organized and moderated by MPASA and SIPASA.

“This was good to take part in, though I wish more students would have attended,” said a second-year MIA student, who declined to be named. “There’s lots yet to improve here, but this is a good way to clarify perspectives and priorities.”

Dan McSweeney (MIA) is concentrating in ISP.

U.S. Media: Deliberately Misunderstanding Chávez

By Joshua Berger

The United States does not understand Hugo Chávez. It's not just that the Bush administration doesn't see eye to eye with Venezuela's pointedly anti-Bush president, whom voters re-elected to a new six-year term by a 61 percent to 38 percent margin on December 3. It's the fact that Americans literally do not understand the words coming out of Chávez's mouth. Thanks to a national press that garbles Chávez's words, quotes him out of context and mistranslates his statements, the American public has been stripped of its right to form its own opinion of the man President Bush has accused of seeking to "roll back the democratic progress" in the Americas. Many important U.S. newspapers have recently portrayed Chávez as unpopular, ignorant, reckless and full of hate, thus aiding the Bush administration's ongoing campaign to delegitimize the man Venezuelans have chosen as their leader. With eight weeks to go in Venezuela's presidential cam-

paign, *The New York Times* quoted Chávez as saying, at a United Nations press conference where he was discussing his favorite American thinkers, that he regretted not having met the linguist and social critic Noam Chomsky while he was still alive. In its initial article on September 21, and again the next day in a feature piece based on an interview with Chomsky, the *Times* barely disguised its ridicule of Chávez's supposed blunder: for Chomsky is of course alive and well. As it turned out, though, the *Times* had used a faulty translation of Chávez's remarks. An examination of the original Spanish recording revealed that he neither said nor implied that Chomsky was dead. Chávez had in fact been referring to the economist John Kenneth Galbraith, who died in April. But even though readers pointed out the error the day after the initial story appeared, it took the *Times* until October 6—two full weeks later—to acknowledge its mistake.



Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez displays a copy of Venezuela's constitution during a Dec. 5 news conference, two days after winning re-election.

Nor has the *Times* been alone in its unfairness to Chávez. Nine days before the Venezuelan election, *The Washington Post's* editorial pages slammed Chávez with charges of anti-Semitism. "Hugo Chavez says that the 'descendants of the same ones that crucified Christ' have 'taken possession of all the wealth in the world,'" wrote veteran *Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer on November 24. That sentence employs one of the oldest yellow journalism tricks in the book by cutting down Chávez's original quotation to misconstrue its meaning. In reality, Chávez's speech referred to "the descendents of those who crucified Christ, the descendents of those who expelled [Simón] Bolívar [leader of Venezuela's independence movement]"—in other words, wealthy and powerful oppressors throughout history.

As New York media watchdog Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting pointed out five days after the *Post* column appeared, Krauthammer's creative interpretation actually reshapes the meaning of Chávez's words, turning his criticism of oppression into hate speech. FAIR also found the *Post* had misrepresented Chávez's popularity among Venezuelans, describing his approval ratings—generally around 68 percent or higher—as being "a few points above and below 50 percent." As American journalists report Chávez's landslide victory, the press would do well to consider its own role in the "democratic progress" of which Bush is so proud—as well as its own democratic responsibility to respond to the government's campaign against Chávez with fair and accurate journalism instead of misinformation and slander. *Joshua Berger (MIA2) is an IMC concentrator. He was a Spanish major in college.*

Running Afoul of the Iranian Regime

By Hani Mansourian

"This is our new volunteer," my boss said, introducing her. "She wants to change the world." She was just 17 and had one of those faces you never forget. The last time I saw her—in a photo posted on news agency websites, blogs and mass e-mails—she was being beaten and dragged on the asphalt by female anti-riot forces during a women's rights demonstration on June 12 in Tehran. They dragged her to a parked car, beating her and breaking her arm along the way. From there they took her to prison. Delaram's story shows how an oppressive regime could turn any young, enthusiastic social activist into a target of the brutal intelligence service of the government. Her journey from the office of a local non-profit organization to the damp and dark corner of a cell in Iran's infamous Evin prison is shocking but illuminating. Many Iranian activists have ended up in Evin. Several have endured brutal interrogation processes. Some have given in and cooperated;

others have died, unable to bear the physical or psychological burden of torture. Thousands have spent their last moments there before being executed. Delaram's driving forces have always been small. "The simple happiness of a child or the satisfaction of a woman earning her first income, but my goal is to make a real change in their situation," she says. For her, improving a society with structural inequality and discriminatory policies is an inherently political activity. "There are so many things that need to be changed in [Iran]," she says with regret, "before you get equal rights for women and necessary protection for children." At 17, Delaram was an active member of the electoral campaign for President Khatami's second term. In college, she majored in social work and was admitted to Allameh University in Tehran. In 2002, Hashem Aghajari, a professor of history at

Tehran Teacher Training University, was charged with blasphemy and sentenced to death after urging people to question religious teachings. Students rallied to his support and put the judiciary under such pressure that the sentence was overturned. The experience was pivotal for her. "This was the first time I started believing that it is possible to pressure the government for change," she told me. "I decided that I should get more involved in serious political activities." The starting point was a student periodical which garnered attention from the national media and which was replicated in three different universities. At this point, the judiciary began to keep an eye on Delaram and her friends. On March 8, 2006, hundreds of women came together in Daneshjoo Park, in the center of Tehran, to celebrate International Women's Day. Delaram was nominated by the organizers to read out the statement of the day.

They knew she was courageous enough to stand in front of large numbers of anti-riot police and Basij paramilitary forces. After Delaram's arrest in June she was kept incommunicado in a small cell for two days. She did not receive any medical care for her arm. She did not experience any physical torture, but the interrogators repeatedly told her that the next step would be severe torture unless she told them what they wanted to hear. Delaram does not remember many of their questions. "They were not that important," she explains, "the same routine questions that you would expect." What she recalls vividly, though, is her concern about the information they were trying to make her believe. Her interrogators told her that her friends had betrayed her and that her family was in serious trouble. "The more time passed," Delaram says, "the less confident I was about the flawed nature of that information."

She describes how humiliated she felt, being forced to wear a black chador and a blindfold whenever she left her cell. Of the 70 detained demonstrators, all but five have been cleared of the charges. Delaram was charged with an "attempt against national security." Shirin Ebadi, the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner, is Delaram's lawyer. But with the arbitrary nature of the Iranian judicial system, even she might not be able to help much. "Now I feel an extra burden of responsibility to continue with my activities," Delaram says. "Although I do not want to experience detention again...things must change. There is no way around it. Besides, I am not alone. I am just one of many who care about Iran and are fighting for improvement." In the end, Delaram concludes, "I cannot complain much." *Hani Mansourian (MIA1) is an HR concentrator.*



Indian Children Will Not Benefit From New Law

By Leela Parker



AP Photo/charni anand

Movin, 10, works on a wayside juice cart in Jammu, India, Oct. 9. A new Indian federal law that came into effect on Oct. 10 bans children under the age of 14 from working in homes, restaurants, hotels or roadside eateries. The law would cover about 185,000 children working as domestic help and 71,000 of them working in restaurants, teashops, hotels, resorts and spas.

India's new law banning the employment of children under 14 in homes, food stalls, and hotels is ambitious in its goals but inadequate in scope and practice. Instead of offering effective solutions for protecting children from labor exploitation, the new child labor law highlights the glaring lack of legal, social and economic frameworks necessary to sustain real and comprehensive change.

There are three fundamental considerations that the new legislation fails to address. First, the government has not adequately outlined plans to rehabilitate, educate or support the children who, without alternatives to earn money, could be forced onto the streets or into prostitution.

Second, without providing any legal protection for children between the ages of 14 and 18, this law leaves out a significant and vulnerable portion of the population. Finally, India's track record points to its inability to effectively implement and enforce child labor laws effectively.

India has more working children than any other country in the world. Labor and human rights activists report that an estimated 13 million children are employed throughout the country.

Ironically, a ban intended to uphold the rights of children, if enforced without appropriate plans to provide access to education and alternative economic support, will actually serve to compound the condi-

tions of poverty by taking away their livelihoods.

If in fact banned from their jobs, many of these children may wind up on the streets, making them more vulnerable to child trafficking and forced labor. The government's failure to provide a definitive framework for the implementation of this law is disappointing, as the law does not address the very changes that it demands.

Hidden from the public realm, teenage girls make up a large but invisible portion of the workforce. Many teenage girls employed in private homes as domestic servants are at the mercy of their employers. Abusive and exploitative working conditions are generally unreported and ignored. Therefore, this law must be expanded to grant legal protection for girls between the ages of 14 and 18.

India is also a source, transit and destination country for the trafficking of women and children. Banning domestic labor for children under the age of 14 is insufficient and of particular concern for adolescent girls. Poor, seeking a better life, and with limited opportunities to earn income, young women are lured by false promises of lucrative employment. In reality, they are trapped into forced prostitution or domestic servitude. The lack of legal protection for girls aged 14 to 18 employed in the domestic sector increases the risk of debt bondage or forced labor.

Despite passing the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act in 1986, which bans the employment of all children under the age of 14 in 57 different jobs characterized as being hazardous, India has been too soft in its prohibition of child labor.

Countless children still work in dangerous industries such as carpet-weaving, glass-making and matchstick-making, where child labor has long been banned. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the Ministry of Labor both insist that the new law will be strictly enforced. Employers who violate it will be penalized and subject to fines and possible imprisonment of up to two years.

The record of enforcement of already existing laws, however, is weak at best. Current laws against the exploitation of working children have proven overwhelmingly ineffective. This law is likely to be even more difficult to enforce, given the informal nature of domestic, hotel and restaurant jobs.

Though well-intentioned, India's new child labor law actually risks further marginalizing the millions of children and their families whose survival depends on the ability of these children to earn money. Without a comprehensive approach to ending child labor, the problem will persist. In order to achieve significant progress, it is essential to confront the country's abject poverty, which is the underlying cause of child labor.

Simply banning the practice is not enough. As long as poverty persists, so will unjust and exploitative labor conditions.

With so much positive attention given to India's unprecedented economic growth and tremendous progress in the technology and manufacturing sectors, it is in India's best interest to make more substantive reforms in labor policy.

Leela Parker (MIA1), an IMC concentrator, worked in publishing prior to SIPA.

Iran Couldn't Wipe Israel Off the Map If It Tried

By Rachel Makabi

On November 1, the Iranian government awarded a Moroccan the top honor in Iran's Holocaust cartoon contest, an action that added to the Islamic regime's long history of anti-Semitism. The sponsorship of the contest—a reaction to a series of controversial Danish (not Jewish) cartoons featuring images of the Islamic prophet Muhammad—is not surprising for a government that has always been quick to scapegoat Jews and Israel.

While the majority of Iranians did not bother to view the contest—according to the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* coverage of the cartoon exhibit last summer, few Iranians actually attended—Iran is not a democratic country whose people can legitimately choose their governments. Though Iran has elections, the mullahs have to approve the candidates, rendering the elections a political farce that maintains the status quo. Iran is a country that is ruled by its government, one that is hostile to Jews and poses a threat to Israel.

Iranian defenders like to point to a list of facts that they think precludes Iran from the label of anti-Semitism, but in context, none of them really hold up. First, there is the fact that Iran has a position reserved for one Jew in its parliament. But like most Members of Parliament, the Jewish MP doesn't have much power. If he did, he would be able to reverse discriminatory laws toward Jews in education, housing and employment. For example, Jews can't serve in the judiciary or security services, hold any other high posts in the government, or become the heads of public schools.

The second defense is the fact that Jews fare much better in Iran than they did in



AP Photo/hasan sarbakhshian

Mohammad Reza Zaeir is the Iranian cleric editor-in-chief of the Iranian newspaper *Hamshahri*, which announced an international competition seeking cartoons about the Holocaust. It said the contest was a test of whether the West would be as supportive of freedom of expression over the Nazi genocide as it was with the caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammed first published in Denmark and later replicated in other countries.

pre-Holocaust Europe. But a lesser wrong—the fact that Jews don't suffer as much in Iran as they did in Europe in the 1930s—is still a wrong. Iran can't commend itself on its human rights record toward its Jews simply because it hasn't been as harsh as the Europeans were in the

early 20th century. On a related note, there is Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's constant refrain that the Palestinians are not responsible for the Holocaust, and so the Jews of Israel should return to Europe.

Aside from Israel's legal right to exist—which is unrelated to anti-Semitism—many of the Jews currently living in Israel are there because they fled anti-Semitism in Iran. At the time of Israel's creation in 1948, there were 150,000 Jews in Iran. This number dwindled to 80,000 at the time of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution and stands at less than 40,000 today. Because many Jews were denied passports in the post-Revolution era, they had to sneak out of the country illegally, meaning they can never legally return to Iran. Does President Ahmadinejad really want the Iranian Jews who fled to Israel, New York and Los Angeles to return to Iran? If so, he should make that case instead of asking the Jews to "return to Europe" and asking for Israel to "be wiped off the map."

There is some good news for the United States and its Israeli ally. In spite of the Iranian government's grotesque anti-Semitism and blatant calls to destroy Israel, Iran's economy is weak and its military is no match for the United States or Israel. In addition, even the most conservative estimates say Iran is at least five years away from developing nuclear weapons.

In the meantime, Iran is a rational entity that can be contained. We should not forget that in the past, the United States also thought it would be impossible to contain China and the Soviet Union; but the thought of engaging in a nuclear war with either one of these countries in today's world is ludicrous.

Finally, though Iran makes threats, it would never follow up on them through a blatant military attack. Instead, Iran uses weaker organizations to fight proxy wars on its behalf, as it did last summer by engaging Hezbollah in Lebanon to fight Israel. Unprovoked attacks, like Hezbollah's attack against Israel last summer, in which Israel understandably and justifiably defended itself, resulted in a meaningless loss of life on both sides.

Iran is a rational entity that can be contained. And though Iran makes threats, it would never follow up on them through a blatant military attack.

While the attacks were a threat against Israel's existence, they weren't a serious threat: Israel is economically and militarily too strong for that. In reality, Iran's use of Hezbollah against Israel is comparable to the Holocaust cartoons: Both are unprovoked acts, meant to instigate a response. In this case, Iran is like a little child, throwing matches in gasoline, waiting for the explosion.

The ingenuity of dealing with Iran will lie in quelling that fire without harming the child.

Rachel Makabi (MIA2), an IEP concentrator, is an Iranian immigrant who loves Iranian films, music and food. She hopes like-minded Iranians will work with her in solving the crisis with Iran peacefully.

Java Fight: Starbucks and Ethiopia Slug It Out

By Leela Parker

Few Americans stop to think about what really goes into their morning cup of gourmet coffee. Whether drinking coffee for its smooth taste and aroma or simply to get the day going, a lot more goes into that cup than cream and sugar or non-fat versus soy milk.

The recent battle between Ethiopia and Starbucks, over Ethiopia's application to trademark three specialty coffee varieties, illustrates the complexities of economics and international trade brewing in each cup of java.

Last year, the Ethiopian government filed applications in U.S. courts to register trademarks for three of its coffee beans—Harar, Sidamo and Yirgacheffe—in an attempt to gain more control over the coffee trade, an industry on which millions of Ethiopians depend. Oxfam International, a global anti-poverty organization, is now claiming that Starbucks played a role in blocking Ethiopia's application to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). Oxfam asserts that Starbucks urged the National Coffee Association (NCA), of which Starbucks is a leading member, to file an opposition to the application.

Coffee is a staple in Ethiopian culture. It accounts for close to 60 percent of all of Ethiopia's exports. However, most of Ethiopia's coffee producers are living in poverty, unable to benefit financially from the high prices paid for Ethiopian coffee varieties in cafés worldwide.

Driving the trademark initiative is the goal of enabling Ethiopian farmers and coffee sector workers to share in a larger portion of the revenues and profits that fine Ethiopian coffees earn in foreign markets. Owning trademark rights to its most famous coffee beans could result in an extraordinary increase in coffee revenues, bringing in an additional \$88 million per year to the Ethiopian economy.

"Coffee shops can sell Sidamo and Harar coffees for up to \$26 a

pound because of the beans' specialty status," explains Tadesse Meskela, head of the Oromia Coffee Farmer's Cooperative Union in Ethiopia.

"But Ethiopian coffee farmers only earn between 60 cents to \$1.10 for their crop, barely enough to cover the cost of production," Meskela adds. "I think most people would see that as an injustice."

The USPTO denied trademarks for Sidamo and Harar, citing the names as being generic, but granted a trademark to Yirgacheffe. Meanwhile, trademarks have been granted for these varieties in other countries.

Starbucks has denied any involvement in alerting the NCA to Ethiopia's application. However, the Seattle-based company is against the trademark initiative, arguing that this would actually hurt Ethiopian coffee producers more than it would help them.

Taking a similar position, the NCA issued a formal statement in response to the trademark controversy, saying, "The National Coffee Association opposed Ethiopia's attempt to trademark the geographical indicators Sidamo and Harrar (Harar) because such action would jeopardize the supply of these high quality beans and economically harm producers." For Starbucks, a \$6 billion global coffee giant, the accusations from Oxfam and Ethiopia contrast with the image the company has successfully promoted of a corporation that invests in social development initiatives and that is committed to the welfare of its suppliers.

Seth Patches, Oxfam International's "Make Trade Fair" campaign coffee leader, said, "Starbucks' behavior is indefensible. The company must change tactics and set an example for others by supporting Ethiopia's plan to help millions of struggling farmers earn a greater share of the profits."

Central to this debate is the issue of brand development and brand management. Economic value is derived from brand ownership and the ability to develop premium coffee brands for which one can demand premium prices.

Light Years IP, a Washington, D.C.-based intellectual property rights organization, is working with the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office to develop a licensing program under which individual coffee companies around the world will be issued licenses to use the registered trademark coffee names. The goal is to build value in the Ethiopian brand and allow Ethiopian suppliers to benefit from this value.

Ron Layton, chief executive of Light Years IP, said, "Intellectual property ownership now makes up a huge proportion of the total value of world trade but rich countries and businesses capture most of this. Ethiopia, the birthplace of coffee, and one of the poorest countries in the world, is trying to assert its rights and capture more value from its product. It should be helped, not hindered."

Some argue, however, that registering trademarks for Ethiopia's most famous coffee beans will actually hurt the Ethiopian coffee farmers, effectively pricing them out of the market, while also reducing demand. Other critics have suggested that geographic certification of the beans would be more beneficial to the Ethiopian coffee industry.

For example, geographic certification has been used to build brand recognition and value for Florida orange juice, Idaho potatoes and French champagne.

While Starbucks doesn't support the trademark initiative, the company has said it would support a certification program for Ethiopian coffee.

Leela Parker (MIA1) is an IMC concentrator. She worked in publishing prior to SIPA.



Women select coffee for export in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Although Ethiopia is where coffee was first discovered, farmers are getting only 60 U.S. cents a pound for some of the best organically grown coffee in the world. Oxfam International has launched a global campaign to force big roasters to pay a fair price to growers.



A Nigerian youth looks at smoke from gas flare belonging to Italy's Agip oil company in Ebocha, Nigeria, Oct. 27.

Dangerous Delta

Continued from Page 1

In recent events detailed by the BBC, nine Nigerian oil workers escaped from the Agip pumping station, an Italian-owned oil company, after an attack by a local militia group in the Niger Delta.

The BBC reports that before their escape, the workers were severely beaten and held hostage by armed men after a large ransom was issued for their release.

"We were all asked to lie on the floor, face down," an unidentified escaped worker explained to *The Guardian*, Nigeria's independent newspaper. "We were battered, bullied and harassed mercilessly until the next morning. They never ceased firing their guns, it was a horrifying experience."

After a 12-hour hike through creeks harboring snakes and crocodiles, the escaped workers found safety upon reaching the southern Nigerian town of Port Harcourt.

At the time this article went to press, at least 30 oil workers were still being detained.

In November, two U.K. and U.S. oil workers employed by Norway-based Petroleum Geo-Services were captured from an oil ship off the Nigerian coast. They were safely released five days later.

The BBC reported in October that seven foreign oil workers employed by Scotland's Sparrow Offshore and Texas-based Oceaneering International were freed after being held hostage for two weeks. The hostages included four Britons, one Malaysian,

one Romanian and one Indonesian.

The ransom amounts demanded by militant groups are often met by foreign oil companies at a hefty undisclosed sum. The payment of large ransoms encourages militant groups to continue their kidnapping streak.

The kidnappings and attacks have cut the national oil output by 25 percent.

In September 2006, in response to growing international concern over the rising frequency of the kidnappings, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo promised a significant military effort to thwart armed group violence.

Despite his promises, however, the kidnappings persist. Nigerian troops were deployed to the Delta to restore order, but were frequently outgunned and killed by the armed militias.

The local militants are intimately familiar with the Delta's maze of creeks and swamps and hold a significant advantage over national troops.

Nigeria's upcoming 2007 presidential elections are a source of worry among civilians.

Many anticipate the escalation of violence in the Niger Delta as contending presidential hopefuls begin employing armed militias to stir up violence in the area with the hope of defeating their opponents and winning the elections.

Julie Payne (MIA1) is an IMC concentrator and the World Affairs section co-editor.

Nigeria's upcoming elections are a source of worry. Many anticipate the escalation of violence.

Vending Woes

For Sam, this link was provided by John, another Afghan who had been selling coffee, doughnuts and sandwiches at the Columbia University intersection. Two years later, they expanded the business. John sold coffee and doughnuts while Sam sold lunch on another cart next to it.

Sam has been lucky. He works in a hassle-free neighborhood with regular clients. With daily sales of roughly \$500, he makes a profit of about \$200, five days a week. After paying for a garage for his cart, his rent and education for his three children, he and his family manage to scrape by.

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) allows only 3,000 vendors to set up food carts in the city. At present there are about 9,000 mobile food vendors with operating licenses, but only 3,000 get permits for their carts.

"[A] mobile food vending operator's license is similar to the concept of a driver's license, while a permit is similar to a motor vehicle registration," says the DOHMH's Eric Riley. "One is for the person and the other is for the cart or truck."

Riley says the restriction on permits means there is a long waiting list. This list has been closed since January last year.

So vendors go through the black market.

Sara Sluszk, a volunteer with the Urban Justice Center, has been working on the Street Vendor Project, a program offering legal assistance to vendors.

"Media reports have highlight-

ed how some people profit from running a black market in these permits," she says. "Last year, an office in Queens had been found to run a scam and charge an exorbitant fee of \$3,000 to procure a vendor permit."

Sidewalk real estate is a hot market, and vendors manage to ruffle the feathers of powerful groups. Store owners and business improvement districts—organizations that represent business owners in specific neighborhoods—have managed to drive out the vendors from many areas.

"It's all about power," says Sean Basinski, head of the Street Vendor Project. "People who have land...have meetings with the mayor, they pay money to city councils. Vendors are poor, some of them don't even speak good English. They are trying to stay on the streets and work and all they have is the goodwill of the people."

According to Basinski, in New York there are almost as many unlicensed as licensed vendors. These vendors are often jailed. After they get out, they return to business.

For most of them, vending is their only livelihood, and arrests are a weak deterrent.

Despite the hardships, sidewalk vending remains a lucrative and popular business.

Sam loves it. "I make a lot of friends," he says with a smile.

Jayshree Bajoria (MIA2) is an EPD concentrator. Prior to SIPA, she worked for the BBC in India.

Kids Off Camels in UAE

Continued from page 1

often crushed to death or suffer debilitating injuries from falls while riding their camels.

According to the State Department report, "Those who survive the harsh conditions are disposed of once they reach their teenage years."

The UNICEF report, "Camel Jockeys Coming Home," details the repatriation program in Bangladesh for former child jockeys and their families. The report indicates that even children who leave often return home to poverty, thus exposing them again to local and international exploitation.

The report also emphasizes the dangers children face. A UNICEF press release describes the experiences of Rubel, a 12-year-old Bangladeshi and former camel jockey: "[He] has a distinct stitch mark on his forehead... He said that he left Bangladesh when he was four, and worked for several years as a camel jockey. He only recently 'retired'...and was given the task of caring for the camels. The scar on his forehead is the

result [of one of his] many falls while racing camels."

Children used in camel races were formerly smuggled into the UAE after being bought from impoverished families or kidnapped from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Eritrea, Sudan and Mauritania. They were often housed in squalid camps near the racing arenas. Several mothers of repatriated children cited poverty in their homelands as the main reason for sending their children to foreign countries.

One worrying mother stated, "The money [they] earned was our main income. My husband is still in Abu Dhabi with two of our older children."

A 2003 Human Rights Watch report says that many laborers working in foreign countries are from poor nations; the money they send home is often the only source of income for their families. The report notes, "In 2001, these payments were worth \$10 billion to India, \$6 billion to the Philippines and more than \$2 billion to Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco."

A lawsuit filed in Miami, Florida on behalf of six unnamed parents alleges the abduction, trafficking and injection of hormones to prevent the growth of thousands of boys. The suit, filed by Motley Rice, LLC, a South Carolina-based law firm and one of the country's largest litigation firms, seeks unspecified damages for the plaintiffs.

The suit was filed in Florida because members of the Dubai royal family own racing horses in the state.

It is well-known in American racing circles that Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum is the owner of Bernardini, the racehorse that won the prestigious Preakness Stakes in May 2006.

Jane Kunigi, the UNICEF representative for the Persian Gulf region, says the UAE "has been successful in implementing most of the measures in preventing those under 18 years of age from being misused for camel racing."

Yoyce Jones (MIA1) is an IMC concentrator.



A caravan of racing camels returns from a morning training session at the Nad Al Sheba Camel Race Track in Dubai.

AP Photo/kamran jebrelli

Another Side of Eden: Esteli, Nicaragua

By Rebecca Leicht

Tomasita Moreno was broke. One year ago, she had no job prospects. At 25, Moreno was a single mother of two children, and could only scrape by on the little money she made from odd tasks at odd times. And then Stephen Goodman came to live in the outskirts of Esteli, Nicaragua, just down the dusty dirt road from her home. He opened an Internet café in the central bus depot in town, and gave Moreno a crash course in computer skills, as well as a stable livelihood.

Unemployment in Nicaragua is widespread. With a per capita income of \$2,300, Nicaragua's living standard is ranked 171st out of the 232 countries listed in the CIA's world rankings. The country is one of the poorest in the western hemisphere.

Moreno's town of about 300 residents has no name—it is simply on Esteli's periphery. Living in small wood houses surrounded by dirt scattered with unkempt green and yellow grass, men in the community sit on large rocks outside their homes in the midday sun. They scrape games into the dirt, writing their boredom on the earth and waiting for the Latin heat to settle into evening. They have no work.

But if Stephen Goodman has his way, that will soon change. Goodman is a former member of the Peace Corps who recently moved back from his native Oklahoma to Esteli, two hours north of Managua, Nicaragua's capital. He has returned to do what he could not as a volunteer. During his two years as a Peace Corps member in Nicaragua, he was unable to begin investing personal funds—it is against the Peace Corps rules—in what he sees as its future.

Within months of his tour's completion, he opened The Apple Garden. Named for its use of Macintosh computers, The Apple Garden is not Esteli's first Internet café. But according to Goodman, 24, it is the first to have a business plan which includes a chain of cafés, and the first to be solely managed and owned by residents. Though investments for the venture come from the United States, it is seed money for the initial costs of opening. Once the first location makes a profit, revenue from further ventures will be owned by locals from Moreno's town.

The Apple Garden is an example of a 'micro-enterprise,' the provision of small loans and

other financial services in order to start or expand self-employment ventures and pull people out of poverty. Micro-enterprise aims to reduce unemployment in the poorest parts of the world, enabling local populations to help themselves and obtain credit.

Estimates suggest that the number of poor people who depend on income from micro-enterprises reaches well into the hundreds

Nicaragua's living standard is ranked 171st of the 232 countries listed in the CIA's world rankings.

of millions worldwide. In Nicaragua, as of 2005, interest earned from micro-enterprise programs covered 126 percent of the lender's operating costs. Micro-enterprise is working, and working well.

With only 125,000 of Nicaragua's 550 million residents currently using the Internet on a regular basis, Goodman sees an opportunity for business growth. Preparations for a second loca-

tion for The Apple Garden are in the works, and Moreno, along with others from her town, plans to manage the chain.

The distribution of income in Nicaragua is one of the most unequal in the world. And while the economy has progressed toward macroeconomic stability in the last few years, mostly due to international loans, annual organic growth has been far too low to meet the country's needs.

Goodman believes that the answer to such bleak conditions lies in people like Moreno, the small towns and villages in which they live, and their ability to navigate the new world of Internet technology. He sees an approaching Internet boom in Esteli as an opportunity to create major local enterprise.

"The existing Internet cafés are located in major cities and central market areas," he said, "and those lands are owned by the wealthy few. We are beginning to look toward using wireless radio technology to deliver Internet capabilities to the smaller towns and villages nestled in the mountains."

Tomasita Moreno isn't as hopeful. "The jobs we are able to give to the people in the town are

helpful," she said. "But," she continued with a tinge of disbelief, "I know the difference between one or two store locations and a network of towers throughout my country."

Even today, more than a quarter of Latin America's residents live on less than one dollar a day.

And while Tomasita Moreno no longer counts herself as one of them, she walks among them each day.

"I was lucky," she said. But with a little more planning, and a little less dependence on luck, she will now be able to give her community what Goodman and her own work have given her—the calm that stems from knowing she can feed her children.

As she prepared to leave The Apple Garden for the day, Moreno said she used to walk the eight miles along the Pan-American highway, from home to work and back each day. "And now, I take the bus," she said.

But sometimes, Moreno added, she wonders, "Should I keep walking? Maybe I'll meet someone who needs a job."

Rebecca Leicht (MIA2), an IMC concentrator, spent time in Nicaragua prior to starting SIPA.

Additional Lactation Rooms? Let the Good Times Roll

By Jimmy Finan

In case you somehow missed it, last week SIPA Announcements sent an e-mail to let us know they are providing an “appropriate space in which to breastfeed or to pump breast milk.” I hope everyone is as excited about this as me. While our faculty was working diligently to provide us with an appropriate place in which to pump our breasts, I was plowing ahead with my schoolwork completely oblivious to the crisis swirling around me. I don’t even own a pump, but all that is about to change.



We all learned in middle school sex education classes that lactation is a process that occurs in women once a month, or when they consume too many fluids. Using a formula they call the Lactation Potentiality Variable, the Columbia Housing and Dining office, which maintains the room, explained to me that SIPA is about 60 percent women. Nearby Barnard and the School of Social Work, both havens of rampant lesbianism, have an even greater female to male ratio. The Housing and Dining Office said, “Although not all of these women are lactating now, we wouldn’t want to get stuck in a situation where they were and be unprepared. It would be like Katrina all over again.”

Dean Mason added that the new rooms offered fringe benefits beyond just the feeding of infants, as two new fellowships have been awarded to SIPA in connection with them. “One is for an assistant pumper with a steady hand, preferably free from the types of calluses and blisters commonly found on farmers,” she said, “and the other is a technical position to keep the real-time webcam running and glitch-free. It should be a real boost to our endowment.” I agree that it could certainly “boost” a few endowments...but I digress.

As if New York City wasn’t exciting enough

with the Statue of Liberty, Coney Island, and that giant testicle statue outside the law school, now we have the Lactation Room, “open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day,” so you can “balance the requirements of work and study with those of parenthood.” The round-the-clock schedule is necessary to accommodate those ladies who feel the urge to “pump it up” at 3 a.m. after a night at Casbah Rouge with friends. For those of us who like to watch, “The room contains a comfortable chair...and special lighting.” MIA candidate Shpetim

Gashi said the chair was particularly comfortable, but suggested that they add another one, because, “it made me feel a little bad that she had to stand the entire time.” He added that booths with one-way mirrors might be advantageous, a proposal flatly rejected by the Ad Hoc Committee for Lactation Room Ambience.

Now that the pump is out of the bag, so to speak, President Bollinger admitted to a packed audience at Riverside Church that the expansion of the University into Manhattanville was not to acquire classroom space, but to build a state-of-the-art Lactation Entertainment Center. “I can think of no more commendable application of eminent domain than this center. Although we will have to bulldoze your homes this winter, we will replace them with roller-coasters, giant pumping machines with buzzers and lights, and those games where you whack the mole with a rubber mallet when it comes out of its hole.”

I am proud that we have been able to come together as a university and address this issue that weighed so heavily on our minds. While some fret over creeping tuition fees and a lack of federal funding, the war in Iraq or foot binding, we can rest easy in our achievement of taking a completely natural process and making it unbearably awkward.

The Husker and the Hustler

Steve and Lindsay have earned the right to be trusted implicitly. Write to communique@columbia.edu.

By Lindsay Hamilton and Steve Pérez



Dear S&L,

I do not think you guys give very good advice, but am not sure where else to turn. I am afraid you are just going to tell me to “get jiggy with it” or to “go tip a cow” or some other odd American thing. But here is my problem. At the beginning of term, my parents sent to me a bank draft for a portion of my expenses for the year. I put half toward tuition in August and meant to do the same with the other half in January. Instead, friends brought me down to Atlantic City last week, and I lost it all rolling with dice. What can one do under such direful circumstances?

-Down & Out

Hey there, Down.

Ever tried stuffing half a pound of shrimp in your mouth from an \$8 buffet, followed by a few slices of what’s advertised as “roast beef”? Not a pretty sight, but it beats paying \$6 for a sandwich on the 6th floor.

Having access to that buffet, as well as a chance (admittedly very low) that you may make your money back, is why you should go back to AC, check into the cheapest hotel you can find, and gamble whatever’s left in your account.

If after this last-ditch attempt you find yourself even more broke than before, hitchhike back to the City, come to SIPA first thing in the morning, and do what the rest us repeated-

Dating Study Sheds Light

By Shpetim Gashi

A survey conducted by the EPD program found that dating is the favorite activity of SIPA students. By the time the two-year program ends, everyone has actually dated everyone. The figures are drawn from enrollment data covering 743 students from 234 countries, not including Kosovo i Metohija, Nagorno Karabakh, and Eastern Sahara.

Asked to comment on the findings, Dean Anderson said, “SIPA is certainly the place where civilizations clash on a nightly basis, but, contrary to Huntington’s theory, in a bloodless way.” (Actually blood has been reported in some cases.)

Happily, some students agreed to speak out about their relationships to *Communique* on condition of confidentiality. To protect their identities, this article contains no real names. Yet any names suggesting real students are not coincidental.

Recently returned from his successful freedom-spreading mission in Iraq, Joe Finland is enjoying every hour of his life at SIPA. “I can’t find adequate words to describe how excited I am to again have the opportunity to date civilians.” His inability to adequately express himself obviously explains why he was stuck in Iraq for two years. Finland admits that they had a woman in their military barrack, but that the line to her “office” was longer than the line for Joe Stiglitz’s book promotion event.

His former army friend, Dug McDonalds, however, says that it was worth waiting. “We didn’t have to use any protection,” McDonalds explains. “Why bother? Natalie was pregnant all the time.”

Finland’s girlfriend Aisha—from a

ly do in similar circumstances: Plead your case with Claudio Vargas, and dig yourself a bit deeper into debt. Declaring your computer “old,” “stolen,” or just “unfashionable” are some of the top excuses.

- Steve

PS: What’s wrong with getting jiggy with it?

Dear Dumbass,

Normally I’d come up with a more clever name to call you, but this one was just too appropriate. First, you insult an advice column. Then, you write to the same column for advice. And finally, you admit you gambled away all of your money. Well Dumbass, the solution to your problem is simple: Go tip a cow.

Actually, don’t. It’s very dangerous and might kill the cow, and—let’s be honest—she’s going to do something better for her owner than you are going to do for your parents now that you’ve squandered their cash.

So, my advice to you is this: Don’t tip a cow, but do go work at Wal-Mart. I assume you probably aren’t legal to work in this country, but rumor has it WalMart won’t mind.

Best of luck to you, sucker.

Love, Lindsay

The Optimist

By Vernon Harding

After my last article, the powers that be at *Communique* (Thank you very much, Mr. Deckoff) have asked me to place the following warning at the beginning of this piece:

The following article may contain harsh language, adult situations, partial nudity and trace elements of rat feces. Women who are pregnant or considering becoming so may want to consult a physician before reading this article. If erection lasts more than four hours, good for you.

Well, the NYC 2006 Marathon has come and gone and I cannot help but think back to the time that I trained for and ran the Philadelphia Marathon back in 2003. I decided to train for a marathon for two reasons: (1) I was interested in the girl I was running with, and I thought that being with her virtually every day to train would get her to like me (it didn’t), and (2) I hate myself. Before the day of the race, I decided it would be a good idea to make a diary of my observations and feelings while I was running the race. Although some may have questioned the wisdom of running with a laptop, I just thought of it as one more obstacle to overcome on my path to victory. Here is the transcript:

Mile 1: We’re off! It is a clear, crisp day here in the City of Brotherly Love, and the spectators have more than lived up to the reputation of Philadelphia fans. Armed to the gills with snowballs and socks filled with D batteries, they have been here tailgating since 5 a.m., and have been jeering at us ever since. I don’t know whether it was just the moment or the tear gas, but I became misty as I began the race I trained so hard for.

Mile 5: I consume my first gel-pack, which is basically concentrated Gatorade. This will provide me with the energy to continue, although I am now wondering whether going with the mesquite flavor was a good move.

Mile 10: I consume another gel-pack. Drunken

frat guys mockingly shove bottles of beer into the faces of runners. One especially inebriated fellow hurls a half-empty bottle at the head of yours truly. I am consoled by the fact that it was a bottle of Bass Ale. He thought that highly of my running abilities!

Mile 13: My nipples are beginning to chafe. With each passing footstep it feels like I’m nursing two rabid badgers.

Mile 15: We come across a gaggle of people holding up signs with pictures on them that I cannot make out. At first, I thought they were advertising for a new barbecue place in town. Upon further inspection, however, I realize that they were abortion protestors, and the pictures they were showing were of dead fetuses. Still, I could really go for a pulled-pork sandwich right about now.

Mile 17: Lose control of my bowels—fantastic!

Mile 18: One especially drunken priest hurls a half-empty golden chalice at my head. I stumble, and lose a vry impnt ltr on my kybord. Still, I had no ida that th blood of Christ tastd so good! Mmmm...that’s good J-sus!

Mile 21: A young doe-eyed child found my missing “e” and gave it back to me. He then immediately cracked me over the head with a sock full of D batteries. I plough on.

Mile 23: I spot my parents. My father decides it would be a good idea to run across the field of runners to cheer me on. He ends up accidentally knocking down three participants. I do not believe they will finish the race. I plough on.

Mile 26.2: Nike! I did it. I finished the race! Suck on that! I receive a medal, which I immediately use to smack passersby over the head on the way to my car. There is truly no feeling quite like this.

Vernon Harding (MIA2) would like you to believe that he actually ran a marathon.