

Bin Basket

TEACHING TEACHERS

I thoroughly enjoyed the article by Natalie Valentine titled "Teaching Excellence" in the Winter 1997/98 issue of *Syracuse University Magazine*. I attended SU in the seventies, majoring in chemistry. I am currently an associate professor of surgery at St. Louis University School of Medicine. Although the clinical practice of surgery occupies 80 percent of my time, as an academic surgeon I also teach medical students and surgical residents.

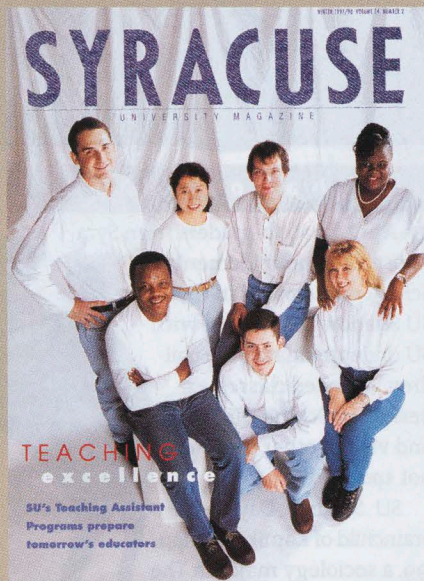
I had two wonderful experiences during my education at SU. First was my teaching assistant experience. Although at the time I thought the only real advantage of this was to add a few extra lines on my medical school application and have an extra \$36 every two weeks to spend at the Orange, there is no doubt in my mind that this experience was invaluable in helping me achieve professional success. Second was my research experience in bioinorganic chemistry under Professor James Dabrowiak. Learning the discipline and patience of bench research from a great guy led to a regional podium presentation and co-authorship in a peer review journal.

Now, 20 years later, I realize these SU experiences have indeed helped me as a physician and surgeon. Students who participate in the TA program will one day realize that it provides the utmost in confidence, so one day they too can work with their own students and create yet another "priceless" generation.

WALTER E. LONGO '78
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

As a former teaching assistant at Syracuse, I very much enjoyed your article "Teaching Excellence." But I wonder why no mention was made of another early TA training program, that of Professor Randall Brune, director of freshman English.

Teaching assistants in English arrived on campus a day before the rest of the students and enrolled in a special program designed to familiarize TAs with the department's curriculum. Further sessions were scheduled to give TAs instruction in how to teach forthcoming units and grade papers according to a department standard. These sessions were invaluable.



The social and intellectual needs of the TAs were satisfied by the English Graduate Group with a rich program of activities ranging from a Christmas party to poetry readings at a professor's home. The grad students had a lounge where they could socialize and mark papers, and they even had individual offices where they could meet students in conference.

My year as a TA at SU was invaluable, and my 20 years since working part-time as an evening school instructor have made me realize just how good things were at Syracuse.

RICK ROFMAN G'67, G'69
VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

SPORTING CHANCE

On the back cover of the Winter 1997/98 issue is the SU lacrosse schedule. It would be nice to know which are home games and which are away. Are we to assume orange means home?

BOB SCHNEIDER '62
WOLFEBORO, NEW HAMPSHIRE

We received a number of letters from readers who found the lacrosse schedule difficult to follow. You are correct; the games appearing in orange type were for home games. In the future we will be sure to identify away games with the word "at" (at Virginia, at Pennsylvania, at Johns Hopkins, etc.) to avoid confusion.

STRIKING IMAGE

How did you happen to pick Mount Hood for the opening illustration of your feature "Global Warming" (Winter 1997/98)? Not many Syracusans know anything about Oregon or the Cascades, let alone Mount Marcy, Whiteface, or Little Tuck.

BOB COOK '55
TIGARD, OREGON

Clearly you are proud of your mountains. Designer Amy McVey selected the photo because it so strongly represented Earth's grandeur while serving as a striking contrast to the accompanying desert photo.

TAs MAKE THE GRADE

It was amusing to read Jeffrey Charboneau's description of a vividly remembered teaching experience ("Opening Remarks," Winter 1997/98). As one of the "winded profs" in charge of the course, I was easily as thankful as the 62 students for these four TAs who brought so much energy, insight, and humor to a chaotic situation. It was a pleasure doing business with them, and I was thrilled to see this printed appreciation of their presence.

MARTY BLAKE '79
JAMESVILLE, NEW YORK

OPPOSING VIEW

It was very disturbing to read in the Winter 1997/98 "Quad Angles" Jack Kemp's observation that "Wherever free trade is unleashed, progress, prosperity, and, ultimately, democracy grows." I assure you that many people, like myself, do not agree with Mr. Kemp's philosophies on free trade. I might also mention that it is disturbing to me to realize that SU is more and more becoming a celebrity university. The views of thousands of ordinary alumni are never heard in your magazine.

CYNTHIA BANAS '69
VERNON, NEW YORK

Syracuse University Magazine welcomes letters from readers. Address letters to: *Syracuse University Magazine*, 820 Comstock Avenue, Room 308, Syracuse, New York 13244-5040. Letters are subject to editing for style and space limitations.