Keeping Pace
In the CyberWorld

Like many of you, I spend most of my workday hunkered down front of a computer. It’s where I write, edit, research, exchange e-mail, and inevitably get tired of staring at the screen. Online, I read newspapers, scout for books at the SU Library, and scan assorted web sites for information.

This is quite a departure from my days banging out stories on a manual type writer and sorting through yellowed newspaper clippings for background material. Admittedly, being connected to the digital world is a blessing. And life only seems to get better as the Information Age enhances more and more facets of our daily routines.

On the SU campus, it’s a topic explored endlessly. Course catalogs are loaded with computer-connected classes, whether they involve web design, computer architecture, or information technology. And that’s not even considering the online courses that have become so common. In this issue of SU Magazine, for instance, there’s a story about a group of Newhouse professors who are examining the impact of the Internet on the 2000 elections; and another story on the School of Information Studies joining forces with Alcatel Internetworking to establish a center devoted to broadband applications.

The world, no doubt, has put the pedal to the metal with the emergence of the Internet. There’s no looking back and everything, it seems, is in hyperdrive. Information, whether totally trivial or absolutely essential, has best appeared post-haste. If it doesn’t download fast, its time is past. People now swap e-mail jokes more readily than hallway pleasantries and loiter in virtual communities more frequently than in their own neighborhoods.

But amid this CyberWorld revolution, where seemingly everyone has a dot-com address, a collection of listserves a country-mile long, and a day-trading account, I sometimes feel disconnected. It’s a strange time, after all, when you know more about a Norwegian music promoter than you do about your own neighbor, who, in fact, may know more about an obscure Oaxacan wood-carver than he does about you. It’s like a fast car ride—you’re revved up to reach an inviting destination, but who knows what’s being missed along the roadside as you fly by?

That’s why every once in a while, I’m relieved to find not everyone is bogged down in this expanse of ever-available, instant information. On a recent stroll across the Quad, I nearly tripped over a student crouched down chalk ing a meeting announcement on the sidewalk. Primitive, I thought, yet I was curious enough to wander by later and read the dispatch.

It wasn’t the only message decorating the Quad sidewalks that day. There were plenty of others, both chalk scrubbings and fliers taped to the concrete. Simple, yet effective, these communiques had sidestepped the CyberWorld. One announced roller hockey tryouts, another a fraternity’s ice-cream social. Surprisingly, only one included a web site address—and it was an invitation to download five new songs off a music site. There was also one that gave a Latin American history lesson. “Simon Bolivar,” it said, “is known as the ‘George Washington of Latin America.’” I’m not sure what this statement’s intent was, but it reassured me that there’s still much more to communication than a computer monitor and an Internet feed.
ORANGE PRIDE

Thanks so much for the terrific article on the Syracuse University Marching Band ("Strike Up The Band," Fall 2000 issue). Many of us have a special place in our hearts for this outstanding organization. Hats off to the current musicians, directors, and support personnel for keeping the traditions alive.

BILL FREDICKSON G'84
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

I read with interest your article "Staging a Comeback" (sidebar to "Strike Up The Band," Fall 2000). I must, however, disabuse you of the notion that my father, George Wainwright '28, played tuba at any Homecoming game or at any other time during his illustrious music career.

He worked his way through college and law school at Syracuse playing the banjo and was University song leader at Archbold Stadium. For away games he joined the marching band playing the soprano saxophone. It was this rare, tiny, curved instrument that he faithfully brought back each year to the Dome until he was in his nineties. I had the honor and pleasure of accompanying him for his last performances there with the SU Alumni Band.

WILLIAM M. WAINWRIGHT '65
BROCKTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ENJOYABLE READ

This publication is wonderful. Everyone involved in its production should be proud of such an interesting, informative, quality publication. As a staff member and parent of an SU freshman, I find it especially enjoyable.

CINDY PURTELL
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

PROPER CREDIT

In reading through the Fall 2000 issue, I came across an error that really bothered me on a personal level. In the article "University R.A.P.E. Center Reaches Out to Combat Sexual Violence," I was pleased to see mention of the theater group Every Five Minutes, of which I was a founding member in fall 1992. What bothered me was the mention that the group was named in 1995. I know that such co-founding members as Karen Siger (VPA '93) and Rebecca Levin (VPA '94) would join me in my concern that the hard work and trailblazing we faced that fall semester were overlooked.

Every Five Minutes was formed in 1992 by the mutual efforts of VPA graduate and undergraduate drama students, as well as a liaison from the SU Peer Sex Education Committee. Every Five Minutes is one of the projects that I look back on most fondly from my college years. As theater majors, it was an amazing experience to use our art form in a productive way to positively benefit the student body at SU. Our performances at fraternity houses and residence halls were the first of their kind on campus. I'm happy the group we worked so hard to establish continues to thrive.

REAY KAPLAN SCHLOSS '93
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

ICE DREAMS

I am thrilled to see that an ice rink is finally a part of the Syracuse campus. To me this has been a long time coming. I have never understood why winter sports do not play a larger part in campus life. Having a rink on campus presents terrific opportunities.

I hope that hockey players who were in school when I was will take some interest in this development. I know you're out there, so why not get in touch about what this means for SU. I can be reached at 81 Cole Ave., Pittsfield, MA 01201; 413-499-2112; edwilderpittsfield@hotmail.com.

I'd love to hear from other skaters who follow winter sports. Many, many thanks to the Tennitys for their marvelous gift.

EDWARD WILDER '72
PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

FIGHTING HATRED

I am concerned that you decided that—of all the hate groups Mr. Pallissino refers to in his article ("Harbingers of Hate," Summer 2000 issue)—you would publish the actual URL for only the homophobic page attacking my late cousin, Matthew Shepard.

Although I am certain none of you share such Neanderthal views, providing free advertisement for these cretins was a poor decision.

WILL SHEPARD G'95
EVANSTON, WYOMING

CONSPIRACY THEORY

When bemoaning conspiracy theorists (Opening Remarks, Summer 20000), don't forget the "vast right-wing conspiracy" suggested by Hillary Clinton and James Carville, politically expedient labels but reflective of the views of a certain slice of the electorate, nonetheless.

VINCE PHILLIPS C'81
MECHANICSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

QUALITY KILN

Great book. Fabulous art direction. Your "Earth, Fire, Art" article (Spring 2000) could stand up to anything, anytime, on any newsstand.

CHET HANSEN '39
NEW CANAAN, CONNECTICUT

CORRECTION

In the Campaign Update article "Student Athlete Fund Grows" (Summer 2000), a donor was misidentified. A. Mark Winter is a member of the Class of 1973.

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