

## College senior wants to be Mayor of New York town

By Ryan Van Winkle  
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NEW PALTZ, N.Y. (CPX) - This isn't your typical campaign headquarters. The walls are adorned with old New Yorker magazine covers, impressionist art and posters of Budweiser babes. There's also a dartboard bearing a photo of Tom Nyquist, mayor of the village of New Paltz, N.Y., and arch-rival of the candidate whose name is plastered all over this joint: Russ Ferdico, a senior at State University of New York at New Paltz who, at the ripe old age of 23, wants to become the village's next head honcho.

The race is shaping up to be the hottest one New Paltz has seen in years. While Ferdico's budget prevents him from conducting polls, he promises more voters will show up to vote than in the last six years. Not that that would be too hard to guarantee. In 1993, voter turnout was just 450 people. That figure dropped to a measly 34 voters in 1997.

As the March 16 election nears, Ferdico, a history major, is confident that the village of about 5,500 will support him and his platform of common sense, communication and consolidation. He's depending on his buddy and campaign manager, 22-year-old Clark Whitsett, a junior at SUNY-New Paltz, to help him spread his message and convince voters that he's not the clueless kid his opponent is making him out to be.

Ferdico moved from the Bronx to the New Paltz area in 1991 and decided he'd found a place he'd like to call home. He worked on projects concerning the university and got involved with the local government scene. Most recently, he landed a job as a paid political advisor to state Sen. Emanuel Gold while also taking 16 credit hours.

Ferdico was lobbying in Albany for lower tuition costs when he met Whitsett, who was reporting for the college newspaper. A year later they bumped into each other again while working as state Senate interns. Ferdico was waiting for an elevator when Whitsett asked about his future plans.

"I told him I was thinking of running for mayor," Ferdico said. "Clark's eyes got wide, and he said, 'You gotta let me help you!'" "We met for a beer the next week. He wanted to check out my ideas and make sure it wasn't a joke. And it just escalated."

Escalated into a vigorous and exhausting contest against Nyquist, who criticizes Ferdico's youth and his out-of-town background. The campaign has spun into the biggest challenge Nyquist has faced in years. Nyquist has held the \$10,000-a-year job for three four-year terms, two of which were unchallenged.

Ferdico, who expects to graduate in May, one month after the new mayoral term begins, is running a campaign that's focused on marrying town and gown for once and for all. He acknowledges local sentiment that college students cause problems for the village's year-round residents. He readily admits that some college students bring binge drinking, rowdiness, crime and property destruction to town, but he suspects most of that trouble is actually caused by students living outside of New Paltz. He points to police logs that routinely display many out-of-towners' names after weekend festivities.

Ferdico is also bent on getting the student vote. So far, convincing students that they need to get involved in the political process has been like pulling teeth, Whitsett said. "I'm like, 'Hey, vote for a student's mayor. The current mayor wants to close bars at 2 instead of 4. That's bad for you. The current mayor wants to bring state cops in so if you get caught with an open container, that's immediately jail and not just a ticket or a nice slap on the wrist,'" he said.

If Ferdico wins, he won't be the only 23-year-old mayor in New York. Marc Molinaro was elected to the top post of Tivoli, N.Y., when he was 19. He's now also 23. But if Ferdico loses, he says, in mock Swarzenegger, "I'll be back. I'm not giving up; I'll help these people. They're not rid of me."

## Professor accused of urging sexual topics for his speech students

By Christine Tatum  
College Press Exchange

SANTA CLARITA, Calif. (CPX) - Efforts by officials of College of the Canyons to resolve allegations of sexual harassment against one of the school's speech professors failed miserably when nationally renowned attorney Gloria Allred showed up at a board of trustees' meeting with a camera crew.

Allred, who focuses on women's rights, announced March 10 that she's representing Kelly Friscia, a sophomore at the college who claims to have been subjected to sexual harassment by a professor who repeatedly encouraged his students to deliver sexually graphic speeches. Allred accused the professor of creating "an offensive and sexually charged hostile environment" as addressed by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Allred outlined her client's complaints at a press conference before taking them to trustees. She said the professor assigned his students to give various speeches. Among them was one demonstrating how to do something. To further explain the assignment, Allred said, the professor told his class that a former student had given a talk on "how to spank your monkey," which is slang for masturbation. Another student delivered a speech on how to use a condom with help from a pressurized can of whipped cream, Allred said, noting that the professor "had remarked on how clever that particular speech and topic were."

Even worse, Allred said, was a graphic talk given by yet another student on Feb. 8 about techniques for oral sex titled "How To Pet Her Cat." The speaker went on to detail various techniques women could use to shave their pubic hair and drew some of his

proposed designs on the blackboard behind him. And as if that weren't enough, Allred said, the student described the benefits of each of the various shaves and explained in graphic detail the best ways to perform cunnilingus.

Allred said Friscia was shocked and disgusted when the professor congratulated the student and said, "I am proud of you." Neither Allred nor the college has publicly identified the professor, but faculty members have reported that he is adjunct professor Fred Martin. School spokeswoman Sue Bozman confirmed that the accused instructor has an adjunct, or temporary, teaching position.

Attorney Jeff Hacker told College Press Exchange that he is representing Martin but would not comment about any accusations against his client while the university investigates the matter. Hacker said Martin has been teaching for about

25 years, three of which have been spent at College of the Canyons.

School policy allows officials to work for up to 30 days to try to resolve a sex-harassment dispute informally, Bozman said. The month-long attempt to reach an informal resolution, which in this case expires March 17, is a prerequisite for bringing a formal complaint, which leads to a process that can last another 90 days, she said. Throughout the process, the instructor often is allowed to continue teaching, Bozman added.

"Remember, there are rights on both sides," she said. "The employee has the rights to due process and to a fair and objective investigation. We are taking the allegations very seriously, but we are going through the process very carefully, following it to the T." Allred dismissed the college's informal 30-day policy and called for the school to begin its formal investigation right away.

## Peace Corps looks to increase diversity of volunteers

By Carol Masciola  
The Orange County Register

LOS ANGELES, Calif. - America, really, is not much like the show "Beverly Hills, 90210." And the Peace Corps is on a mission to show that to the world. This week, Peace Corps recruiters are gathered to discuss ways to attract more minorities into the service, hoping to make the corps reflect the ethnic diversity of America.

"We want to give a correct perception of what Americans are like. We are not a white, middle-class, homogeneous nation," said Charles R. Baquet III, Peace Corps deputy director. "Peace Corps volunteers can counteract the perception of Americans that people develop from watching Arnold Schwarzenegger movies and John Wayne movies."

The corps is striving to have 25-30 percent minorities, compared with about 18 percent now. The recruiters, about 20 of them from Western states, are discussing ways to approach minority students and show them the benefits of joining the corps.

"This could be described as cultural sensitivity training," Baquet said. Some local people who've served in the Peace Corps say minority Americans are sometimes seen as a strange and surprising phenomenon by the people they go abroad to serve.

Monica Oviato, 27, a Hispanic woman who grew up in Santa Ana, Calif., returned last year from Cameroon, where people at first referred to her as "nasara," meaning "white person" in the Fulfulde language. Later, after spending some time under the African sun, her skin turned very brown and the people started calling her a word that meant "white-black person."

"I tried to explain that I wasn't white, that I was Hispanic, but they just said, 'No, you're white,'" Oviato said. "I never thought being Hispanic was important to me until I got there and people were calling me a white person."

A Korean-American colleague of Oviato's had a similar problem. "People would just not accept the fact that he was American," Oviato said. "They're like, 'You can't be American

because you don't look American.' It really bothered him."

Oviato spent almost three years in Koza, a village in Cameroon, and will be talking about her experiences with students at Santa Ana College later this month. She said she hopes to introduce the Peace Corps to other young Hispanics.

"For Hispanics, generally, most people are very family-oriented, and the thought of someone going away is (not acceptable)," she said. "People don't see that there are a lot of different opportunities out there."

Rebecca Otte, 25, of Orange, Calif., returned in October from Niamala, a village in Mali, where she was a water and sanitation volunteer. Otte, who is white, noticed that the villagers were more patient with the white Peace Corps volunteers than with the black ones.

"They (blacks) were expected to fit in quicker, to know the cultural norms better, to learn the language faster," Otte said. On the other hand, the black volunteers were able to blend in better. "Everyone just kind of stares at you," Otte said. "In the

market they'll try to charge you exorbitant prices and they'll be less natural with you."

Baquet, who served in the Peace Corps in the Somali Republic in 1965-67, said black volunteers sometimes hope to find their roots in Africa and are stunned by how foreign it is. "I learned very quickly there's 300 years of history and 10,000 miles between me and Africa," said Baquet, who is black. "I was able to deal with that and get on with what I was supposed to do, the education of Somalis."

The minority recruitment is part of a \$100 million expansion of the Peace Corps approved this month in Congress. By 2003, the corps plans to expand its ranks from 6,700 to 10,000 volunteers. The corps was founded in 1961 and reached its peak of about 15,000 volunteers in 1966-67. Baquet said that corps participation dwindled in the 1980s because of a lack of funding, falling to 4,500 volunteers.

To learn more about the Peace Corps, call (800) 424-8580.

## World and Nation

### Plans to destroy last known samples of Smallpox virus debates

By David Brown  
The Washington Post

A plan to destroy the world's last known samples of smallpox virus later this year is threatened by the growing suspicion that secret caches of the microbe probably exist, increasing the chances it could fall into the hands of a rogue nation or terrorist organization.

If that is the case, some scientists believe stocks of the deadly virus should be kept so they can be used to help develop antiviral drugs and a better vaccine against the disease, which was eradicated from the world in 1978. That view, however, is not universal, with some people saying that destruction of the known viral stocks would actually discourage the use of any pirated ones.

Monday, an expert panel convened by the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine will offer its opinion of the future scientific needs for the virus, which officially exists only at the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and at a laboratory run by the Russian government in Siberia.

The report was requested by the departments of defense and health and human services, and is expected to carry substantial weight in the current debate in the Clinton administration on whether to support the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation to incinerate the smallpox stocks on June 30.

That plan will be reviewed in May, when representatives of WHO's 190 member countries meet in Geneva. The destruction date was set by consensus at a similar meeting in 1996. In the intervening three years,

scientists in the United States and Russia were to clone pieces of the virus' genes into harmless samples suitable for research after the microbe's demise. Although some researchers argued for keeping the virus indefinitely, the general consensus was that this posed risks far outweighing any scientific insights that might be gained.

Events of the past few years, however, have challenged that last assumption. "One would have to be ridiculously optimistic to conclude there are now only two locations in the world where smallpox is stored. And I do mean ridiculously optimistic," Amy E. Smithson, an expert on biological and chemical weapons proliferation at the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington, said last week.

This view is shared, somewhat less emphatically, by advocates for virus destruction, who until recently doubted there were secret stores of smallpox. "I think there's more in Russia than in the one center (designated as a smallpox repository)," said Donald A. Henderson, the American physician who led the global smallpox eradication effort from 1966 to 1977. "There's no question about that."

Recent revelations that the Soviet Union made industrial quantities of smallpox for years after it signed a 1972 treaty prohibiting such work has hugely damaged Russian credibility. "I think the likelihood that the Russians destroyed everything except what they had in the WHO laboratory is very small," said Frank Fenner, an Australian physician, now 84, who chaired the global commission that "certified" the world as smallpox-free in 1980.

"If we are serious about bio-defense, the stocks are necessary for developing an antiviral drug, and possibly necessary for developing a vaccine more suitable for the general population than the current one," said Alan Zelicoff, a scientist at Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico, and a consultant to the Defense Department.

Proponents of destruction argue that the essential scientific work can be done without live samples of the virus, and that destruction will make a moral statement about its use that even terrorists could not ignore.

If smallpox were to reappear, Fenner said, "it couldn't be the result of untoward escape from a laboratory. It would have to be from deliberate use. That could then be condemned as a horrendous crime against humanity, reintroducing a disease that the world with great effort had freed itself from," Fenner said.

Last year, WHO polled its 190 member countries to learn whether there was still consensus for destroying the known stocks of virus. About 70 nations answered. The United States, Britain, France and Italy said they were undecided. Russia said the virus should be retained. All the rest favored destruction.

Variola virus, the formal name for smallpox virus, killed untold millions of people over the centuries. Like chickenpox, it's highly contagious and produces a striking, pustular rash. Unlike that infection, however, it kills about 20 percent of people who contract it. The last naturally occurring case was contracted in Merca, Somalia, in October 1977. The last cases ever were in Birmingham, England, in 1978, when

virus apparently escaped into the duct work of a laboratory. One person died, and the scientist in charge of the laboratory committed suicide.

Smallpox vaccine prevents infection in most cases, even if given within a few days after a person contacts the virus. The protection isn't lifelong, however. Routine vaccination in the United States ended in 1971. Except for some soldiers and laboratory workers, nobody has been vaccinated anywhere since 1983. Today, virtually the entire population of the globe is susceptible to the disease.

In the early 1980s, most samples of smallpox virus in labs around the world were destroyed. Samples of about 400 strains were gathered at the CDC repository, and about 120 strains at a scientific institute in Moscow, then moved to the laboratory called VECTOR.

The idea that smallpox posed a real threat took hold a year ago, when Ken Alibek, a scientist and former high official at VECTOR who'd defected to the United States in 1992, testified to Congress that through the end of the 1980s, the Soviet Union had produced "hundreds of tons of anthrax weapon...along with dozens of tons of smallpox and plague."

There is no hard public evidence that smallpox exists anywhere outside Russia or the United States. At a scientific meeting in Munich last year, Russian researchers reported that in 1991 they tried to extract virus from the body of 19th Century smallpox victim unearthed from a frozen grave in Yakutia. Although they were unsuccessful, antibodies against smallpox reacted with the extracted tissue, suggesting that remnants of the virus remained.

### Bill to curb global sex traffic to be officially announced

By Anthony M. DeStefano  
Newsday

NEW YORK - In an effort to battle the international sex traffic in immigrant women to U.S. cities such as New York and Chicago, legislation will be announced Tuesday in the Senate that is aimed at providing temporary asylum for the migrant victims and stopping federal assistance to foreign governments directly involved in the trade.

The proposal is aimed at protecting the victims, notably from Russia, of the global sex trafficking networks that by some estimates have moved tens of thousands of women and children yearly across international borders for work as prostitutes.

In a letter to his colleagues last week, Sen. Paul D. Wellstone, D-Minn., one of the bill's two co-sponsors, said trafficking into the United States is a rising problem and that the proposal would increase protections and services for women and children who find themselves in this country.

"In particular, it seeks to stop the practice of speedily deporting victims back to uncertain and potentially dangerous situations," and would grant them a limited time to stay in the United States to seek civil and criminal actions against traffickers, Wellstone said in his letter. The bill was introduced late last week but is slated for a formal announcement Tuesday.

Wellstone's staff has said the bill calls for giving the sex worker immigrants three months to decide whether to take legal action against the smugglers involved and to decide

whether to ask for asylum because of the risk they face of reprisals from traffickers if they returned to their countries. The three-month period could be extended.

The proposal would also amend the U.S. law on "involuntary servitude" to include abuses suffered by trafficked immigrants who are forced to work through non-physical coercion such as blackmail, fraud, debt bondage and psychological pressure, tactics commonly used by traffickers against women and children, according to Wellstone's staff.

Wellstone is also calling for penalties against foreign governments whose officials are directly involved or complicit in the sex trade. The sanctions would include the withholding of police assistance to those governments.

The trafficking of women and children in the global sex trade has been documented for decades, particularly in the Far East. But with the economic collapse in the former Soviet Union, the activity is believed by law enforcement officials to have taken on a new dimension as women, desperate for jobs and money, have been smuggled to work abroad as bar waitresses, dancers and prostitutes, sometimes under oppressive conditions.

Major destinations for the Russian and Ukrainian women have been Israel, China, Korea and Japan, according to Russian officials. But human rights officials also say the sex traffic has moved farther west, specifically to the eastern United States.