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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings fellow space monkeys and future cadets!

Have we got an exciting year lined up for you? You lucky, lucky buggers!

Owe-Week signals the commencement of your journey through life with the noose of debt hanging around your neck. Don't worry – you're not alone, everyone's doing it. So many in fact, that it begs the question why we're not doing anything to fight against the imposition of such nasty amounts of money being chalked up against our right honourable names. Did you know that the very people who impose this burden on us didn't have to pay for their education? Some people call this intergenerational theft. Perhaps you've also noticed how certain members of society love to point the finger at the beneficiaries they call scroungers and the freeloaders, quipping about how their hard-earned taxes are being wasted on looking after those who need help. All this whingeing is a fairly misguided exercise, when we consider the fact that a truly successful parasite gorges itself on its host without the host noticing: a metaphor surely more applicable to those who gorge themselves on free education and then remove this right for others, than those working their arses off to earn a subsistence holding down three part time jobs and caring for families and who OH NOES might need a wee hand.

These bastards (our parents) were lucky enough to be born into a world with its belly still full of the fruits of colonial oppression, something they could casually and conveniently ignore because of not having played a *direct* part in this colonisation. And most of them were lucky enough to be born after the horrors of war. They went to school to learn. When they left they walked into jobs that they could keep until they no longer had any use for them. They bought houses that cost less money than the cars they drove. They bought lots of houses. There aren't any houses left anymore, and do you think they pay tax on that passive income? No. They worked hard for their piece of pie and anybody incapable of achieving the same as them is obviously lazy and inept. When they retire they will receive huge pensions that will amount to approximately half the tax they have paid over their working life. This isn't to mention the education they received, the roads they've travelled or the hospitals they've visited. And we're the scroungers? When we retire – if we are ever even allowed to by then, after a life spent struggling, working as a taxi driver in the day, because there are no jobs for doctors, and then working in a pizzeria by night, to try and make ends meet, due to the excessive rent on your one bedroom studio flat, in which you live alone due to work commitments sabotaging any chance you might have had to establish and maintain a serious relationship with a person you love, let alone the feasibility of raising children of your own, living off tinned mackerel and

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EDITOR IN CHIEF:

THOMAS DYKES

PSYCHO-EDITOR:

ALEX PORT

COVER DESIGN:

REGANDO

MAGAZINE DESIGN:

NICK WITHERS

ADVERTISING:

AARON HAUGH

CONTRIBUTORS:

ROBIN MURPHY, HALA NSR, MIRI DAVIDSON, ELI BUCHANAN, AINDRIU MACPHEIN, STEPHEN BIER, LUCY BUCHANAN, BILLY AIKIN, JAMES BROWN, SHANE MALVA, IGORITA ANGELA PROCTOR, LOLA THOMPSON, JENNIFER CHOAT, SHANTI DAELLENBACH, HUGH

EDITORIAL OFFICE:

4 ALFRED ST, PRIVATE BAG 92019, AUCKLAND. PHONE 309 0939 X232

ADVERTISING:

AARON HAUGH, PHONE (09) 306 6581 OR 021 CRACUM. EMAIL ADVERTISING@CRACUM.CO.NZ.

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baked beans – we will not have any pensions waiting for us. By then, like with our education now, the perceived “necessity” of economic conditions that prevent us from having a pension will be swallowed wholesale.

What does this mean? Enjoy yourself now. Question the economic necessity of things. Don't accept the views of a generation whose warped principles are based on living in a completely different world from our own. It's often not their fault, they're just ignorant. Poor people aren't lazy, there are just fewer opportunities these days, next time you get a taxi or a pizza ask how many degrees were needed to get the job. When you grasp the shite state of affairs in which you find yourself embroiled don't sit around moaning, do something about it. Over the course of the year we hope to show you how.

On a brighter note, welcome to the university. This will be a time that you will never forget. Don't be afraid of your lack of knowledge, embrace it. Enjoy university for what it is, a massive privilege. Ask questions, seek answers and participate. You'll meet some amazing people here, and some total muppets, all that glitters is not gold. Welcome all you first years to the obscurity of massive lecture halls so over-populated that your absence or attendance will not be noticed. You have never been so insignificant. Cherish this: by the third year people will know who you are and be disappointed in you for not fulfilling your potential, just like your parents. The first year is guilt-free. The uni management are content as long as you have paid your fees; this transaction signals the end of their relationship with you. As long as a small sliver of you pass the myriad of multiple-choice exams throughout the year (meaning you will be paying again next year), the management will indeed be over the moon. If you're all too perplexed by the A, B, C, or D answer format, the pass grade will be lowered in order to allow the required number through the gates. Have fun; wear sunscreen and join AUSA, it costs nothing, in fact you've already paid for it in your fees. We'll get to the serious bits later down the track...

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FIRST UP

How to be Cool 101

1. Don't follow the pack, most people aren't cool.
2. Don't pretend not to follow the pack, there's nothing wrong with being vaguely similar to other members of the human race, it's better to admit your faults rather than to pretend you have none.
3. It's also actually much cooler if you're honest about your collection of dolls, the ones that you tuck into bed at night after reading short stories to them that you have co-authored with your imaginary friends.
4. Watch 'The Harder They Come', memorize every scene, recite the scenes incessantly until nobody talks to you anymore, then if somebody knows what you're going on about, greet your new best friend with a warm embrace, here is a person you can trust.
5. Keep your mouth shut from time to time, not everybody wants to hear your inane thoughts, the silence will give you a mystique; don't ever shatter the illusion of your genius by speaking your brains.
6. Always speak your brains if your brain isn't good enough at flying solo, if you need help ask, somebody is probably dying to tell you how to improve your life so you can be just like them.
7. Listen to music that was recorded before you were born, it was better then.
8. The lack of food and sleep are more powerful than any drug known to humankind, when you're tired and hungry you're a hideous creature to be around, don't inflict yourself upon others when in such a condition.
9. Stop, collaborate and listen.
10. Believe in mystery, but don't regard that as a satisfactory answer.



Porto

Oh Porto, how I miss you!
That smell of blue,
Soaked in salty raindrops.
Upon river,
port,
grey,
and a lighter grey.
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Oh Porto, how I miss you!
I am wearing you tonight.
Dragging your silent colors
behind each tick-tack of my aimless footsteps.
And Porto, how I miss you tonight!

News from CPAGBUDGET POLICY STATEMENT FEBRUARY 2012

Child Poverty Action Group calls for an urgent rethink of fiscal policy. CPAG agrees with the CTU that the tax switch policy has been an abject failure. The tax cuts have hugely increased income inequality, with higher GST impacting harshly on low income families. The changes have been far from fiscally and distributionally neutral as was claimed by National. "Worse still, since 1996 successive governments have withheld a significant part of the child-based family assistance from very low income families that could help with the costs of their children" says CPAG spokesperson Susan St John. First the Child Tax Credit (from 1996) and then its replacement, the In Work Tax Credit (from 2006) have been denied to those on benefits. Since 1996 this discrimination has saved the government around 5 billion dollars. Denying these child-based payments to those who needed them most helped to create the surpluses of the 2000s which in turn funded the tax cuts to the rich. Christchurch has since raised new needs and the recession has deepened. Now the coffers are bare and there are deficits with calls for cuts to welfare and public services. This is just not fair to our poorest children. In the current environment many more families find they don't qualify for the In Work Tax Credit worth at least \$60 a week, while others find it far too difficult to access. "CPAG says the only fair fiscal policy is one that raises taxes on the top income earners and wealth holders and redistributes this money back to the families in poverty." This would be beneficial not only for children but also economic activity and help to support struggling low income neighbourhoods.

Contacts Associate-Professor Susan St John;
T: (09) 923 7432 | M: 027 536 4536

MERVIN MATTERS ~IMAGE



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- Paul Arden -

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LETTERS

HAVE YOU GOT AN OPINION?
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Hey Craccum

So you've gone all political and shit on us, have ya? Bloody good to be reading some decent dosh, particularly the lack of penis-related jokes. They were getting a bit old, something racist Paul Holmes would know all about. Poor Holmsey boy, irrelevance and old age mustn't sit well with haters like him!
FROM A CHUFFED STUDENT (WHO SHOULD REALLY BE APPLYING FOR STUDYLINK IN ORDER FOR THAT REALLY TO BE TRUE.)

Craccum,
I have a bit of an issue with Albert Park. The incline caused my attendance levels to classes and tuts to decline last year. And now that the free bus has been stolen away from us – this SuperCity crap has done nothing but screw over our services and their management, which used to be pretty legit – I SERIOUSLY worry about this year's grades. Suggestions as to the solving of my problem? Transport machines for all students. Oh, and maybe, free education? Perhaps?
A DISGRUNTLED FATTY.

Dear Editor,
I was bemused to read Fran O'Sullivan's flurry of articles on the Crafer Farms sale published in the Herald recently in which she attempted to paint opposition to it as a xenophobic backlash in the wider populace. Indeed there probably are some members of the public who, after voting in Mr. Key, have changed their tune on asset sales because the massive corporation wanting to buy the land is called Shanghai Pengxin. But judging from the polarising 'with us or against us' nature of National's asset sales campaign I'd say we can also safely assume that anyone who didn't vote National in the last election was probably against asset sales well before they knew the ethnicity of the potential buyer.

I agree with you Fran, there is xenophobia in this country. But not wanting to see this nation's only assets in the hands of self interested corporate elites for a bit of quick cash isn't it. Nor is standing up for indigenous rights to address a history of colonial oppression. To answer your question Fran on what has caused the divisions of wealth within Maoridom that you so strongly feel they should be concerning themselves with, it is very simple; the imposition of western neoliberal capitalism (that thing you hold so dear) on a colonised people and

on their only means of seeking reparation. If Maori had had any determination over the form the Waitangi Tribunal process would take, and not solely the Crown, I am sure it would look rather less like a corporate business scheme.

'But wait', you might say, 'the market doesn't care about race, national histories, or cultural prejudices so lets not bother with all that, when it comes to the circulation of capital the market doesn't discriminate against Maori or Chinese.' Well Fran, in a sad way you are right, 'the market' doesn't care about people, the environment, or their future. 'The market' doesn't discriminate... as long as you have the capital to survive it.

HISTORY LESSON

Dear Craccum,
What is up with the prices at the university bookshop!? I think that a 10% discount for students is only worth it if they don't double the price of the book in the first place. For one of my courses this year I am expected to pay \$100 for 2 books that were first published in the beginning of the 19th century! There are no intellectual property rights to speak of and I can get them online for \$40 with free shipping so they really have no excuse for this obscene pricing.

I remember when a lot of course readers were included in the cost of the course and now the university bookshop intentionally under orders for course enrolment numbers to make sure they don't lose any money through printing of extra copies. This means that you can wait for up to 3 weeks to get a course reader that you should have been given on the first day of lectures.

Maybe the prices are so high because students have the common sense to go to an alternative source of books which isn't outrageously overpriced. I can't help but think that if they priced things more reasonably books would have a much shorter shelf life. Buying books from the university bookshop is the equivalent of buying your weekly groceries from the petrol station – an extreme measure only used in moments of insanity, desperation or if mummy and daddy have bottomless pockets. I think we need to start demanding a more affordable service from our campus monopoly holder and stop being ripped-off and debt-riddled.

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PART 2 BY BILLY AIKEN

As 2011 continued, the pace of events rarely let up as News headlines bombarded my Facebook page. The word *occupy* took on new meaning; across Europe austerity measures took effect, stabilising the Eurozone (and in no way marginalised the already vulnerable, contributing to the growing threat of social unrest lurking like a spectre). And amidst this mighty fuss, voters from the small but affluent suburb of Epsom contributed to a growing sense of misanthropy, as they elected John Banks, a man who doesn't even have the decency to use the phrase: I'm not Racist. But ...

It's a despicable phrase. Normally used in such situations as: 'I'm not racist.... But [insert relevant ethnic group] are just... they should go back where they come from/stop expecting compensation for the stealing of their land...' or some other phrase that guarantees my utter hatred for the person speaking. However on TV3's the Nation, in the run up to the New Zealand election, John Banks made me mourn the absence of the phrase, as he was not, not racist but ..., He was just racist. And....

Just Racist. And ... explained that "if we continue the bankrupt response of just paying young Polynesian, young Maori men in South Auckland the dole, to sit in front of TVs, smoke marijuana, watch pornography and plan more drug offending and more burglaries then we're going to



have them coming through our windows regardless of whether we live in Epsom or anywhere else in the greater Auckland. We have to deal with the root cause of Law and Order."

Just Racist. And ... initially I thought, Epsom what the fuck have you done? But then, after careful consideration, I realised that I just hate New Zealand. In contrast, in the UK, even the far-right fascist leader and MEP

Nick Griffin has the decency to cloak his disgusting and abusive comments about Immigrants/Pakis/Muslims in some sort of qualifying phrase such as: 'We (the BNP) are not a racist party. But' Though incidentally, it took a court order in the far distant past, back in 2010, before the BNP would allow non-white people to join.

While the phrase 'I'm not racist, but...' doesn't detract from the disgusting foul comments that it often prefaces, or in any sense amends a 'casually racist' comment into something that is in any sense acceptable, what it does do is make a gesture towards political correctness. An acknowledgement that the person making the comment knows that

Though perhaps I've missed a qualifying phrase. It may be that it wasn't racism that National voters endorsed. It isn't that they dislike Maoris and Polynesians. No, patriotic National/Act voting New Zealand only hates the poor benefit bludgeoning underclass of Maori and Polynesians. Middle Class Maori are okay, they don't dress in hoodies and say bro, and [insert prejudiced stereotype here].

racism isn't accepted by society. A poor and sad gesture, but one that can potentially lead into clever and more sophisticated ways of hiding the inherent racism of say, the Conservative Party in the UK. For while the use of increasingly sophisticated ways to hide racism may sound awful, it is at least better than when the Tory Party Candidate for the Smethwick Seat, in 1964, achieved a shock victory largely due to the lovely slogan "if you want a Nigger for a neighbour vote Liberal or Labour", or indeed better than John Banks', 'Just Racist and... porn watching, pot smoking, masturbating (probably) Maori and Polynesian (from South Auckland) are plotting to rob Epsom voters, and the rest of (affluent?) Auckland'.

Though on a positive note, at least John Banks challenges unhelpful stereotypes. His attack is actually a savage indictment against those, like Paula Bennet, who think that the unemployed are unemployed because they're lazy. An attack against gender stereotypes,



as the male unemployed population of South Auckland is capable of multi-tasking, as they can simultaneously watch porn, smoke marijuana, play computer games, and plot crimes. A level of industriousness that I feel I'd be hard pressed to match. Though obviously such a statement didn't disturb John 'T hoe would serve me up for dinner' Key, the leader of the respected right wing party of bigots (or National Party), whose endorsement of Banks essentially secured him his seat.

Though perhaps I've missed a qualifying phrase. It may be that it wasn't racism that National voters endorsed. It isn't that they dislike Maoris and Polynesians. No, patriotic National/Act voting New Zealand only hates the poor benefit bludgeoning underclass of Maori and Polynesians. Middle Class Maori are okay, they don't dress in hoodies and say bro, and [insert prejudiced stereotype

here].

While England has the Chav. The lazy poor (who's ability to find work in most areas was destroyed by the Thatcher government), those dirty Chavs. It was Chavs and Chav culture that apparently caused the rioting. Chavs, whose culture, according to the populist historian David Starkey, is a result of the 'Blacking' of white culture. Chavs who are as Starkey explains, the realisation of Enoch Powell's infamous (and hateful) 'River of Blood Speech', made in 1968, in which he warned that, in 15-20 years time, 'the black man would hold the whip hand over the white man'. Chavs, as defined in the 7th most popular entry in the Urban Dictionary, are:

A human sub-species also known as homo-inferior. They plan to conquer the world by lowering the nations IQ to single digit numbers, like themselves. They do this by subjecting those around them to monotonous rap music and brandnames. They are braindead,

NEWS REVIEW CONT.

almost zombie like. They are currently hatching a co-plot to ruin the English language through Abreaveation and talking like they havn't got a tongue.

(phonetics) "welw den mush, init dat way den bruv! CHIKEN LAY AN EETEG BOI!"

Noté: The 7th Definition was chosen for its brevity, rather than anything unusual in its tone. All errors of grammar consistent with original urban dictionary 'definitons'.

In contrast non-racist egalitarian New Zealand has Maori, who according to the first, and thus most popular entry of the Urban Dictionary, are:

New Zealanders who have found a new way to exploit anyone with money. Generally anyone who lives in New Zealand is a New Zealander, however some of the population of "Aoetaroa" have decided they're different from the rest of us. They don't even need

to have a different skin colour, just some sort of very weak and diluted claim to a relative who didnt even originate from this country. Unfortunately the weak polititions of New Zealand have given them almost anything they want to avoid an "Uprising" or to put anyones nose out of joint. It is really sad what has become of this country, and its people, maori is way of spelling uncontrollable ridiculously ignorant seperatism of a once fine nation. It is also a way of spelling "we will lie about anything" including the fact that our ancestors were fooled, destroyed and educated by the English settlers who were years ahead of them.

'New Zealand's not racist. But... poor, uneducated Maori, poor uneducated Polynesians... are just... well...'

Egalitarian New Zealand can rest easy in comparison to the overt fascism of the European Right. And as the media coverage in the



run up to the election helpfully demonstrated, socio-economic inequalities, sexism, and racism isn't too much of a problem. No, the main issue is New Zealand's answer to the News of the World phone-hacking scandal, the Teapot tapes. As clearly recording a dubious conversation between two politicians at a staged media event in a public space is exactly like hacking into the voice-mail of a murder woman.

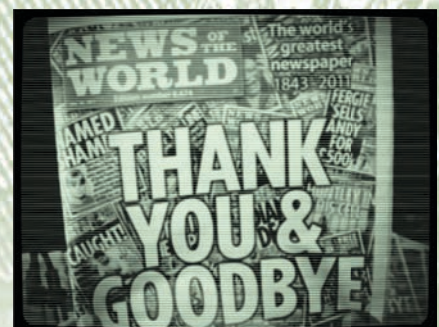
While less dramatic than many of the events of 2011, the demise of The News of the World had a huge effect on the media across the world. The paper itself was a vile rag perhaps best summed up by Charlie Brooker's confession that he used to ironically buy the paper in the nineties, like an arsehole. However in an attempt to avoid social stigma he would normally slip the paper in-between zoophilic and necrophilic porn magazines. As the scandal unfolded Newscorp was badly shaken, thankfully destroying Rupert Murdoch aim to control both the Sun and the Sky.

As the Teapot scandal in New Zealand unfolded the parallels were uncanny. Parallels that enraged Michael Laws' sense of justice and fair play that he was clearly justified in telling his listeners of Radio Live, that "If I had a gun I'd shoot them - put them out of their misery - because they have gone rabid and they may infect others." Though I would also like to point out that if anyone can be bothered I'm sure that any attempt to hunt down and shoot Michael Laws before he infects others would be a both useful and entertaining past-time. Though possibly it would be too little too late, as already such infections appear to have spread to other media hacks such as Paul Holmes, Paul Henry and Garth George.

The Teapot scandal itself ended up with a peculiar feel to it. While providing much needed

ammunition to Winston Peters, the media and the main opposition seemed strangely uncritical, accepting John Key's terms, as set by the question: "Are we going to talk about politics, or a private talk between individuals?" Two options that are 'obviously' mutually exclusive. Instead of victimising the two Johns, we should focus on the real issues. The real issues presumably being those that John Key wanted to discuss. Then again, the media had broken the law, thus John Key could remain defiantly self-righteous throughout, despite ill judged comparisons. Its not as if he would ever be involved in any legally and morally dubious media activities. Though it should be stressed that hosting a Radio Live program and breaching electoral guidelines in the run up to the elections, as he did on the 30th of September, probably is apolitical. Unless of course you actually think about it.

Thankfully such petty issues had no bearing on the election. We can now all rest easy as the dismantling of the public sector begins, and as similar austerity measures to those that have clearly been so helpful to many European countries are implemented. Egalitarian, non-racist New Zealand can rest easy in the good hands of that good bloke John 'T hoe would have eaten me' Key, Paula Bennet, and John 'Just Racist, And...' Banks. Though thankfully the media in 2012 is already shaping the issues facing New Zealand differently, as instead of failing to chastise John Banks over his overt racism, the NZ Herald has decided to print and disseminate the racist, sexist and classist ramblings of Paul Holmes. Because clearly an editorial decision not to provide a platform for such vitriolic bile would be a curtailing of Holmes' freedom of speech, another example of the 'politically correct brigade' trying to impose fascism.



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The Anti-Architects of Debt

By AINDRIU MACFETHIN

I begin with the figure of the architect. I do so in part because that figure (and it is the figure rather than the professional person of whom I speak) has a certain centrality and positionality in all discussions of the processes of constructing and organizing spaces. The architect has been most deeply enmeshed throughout history in the production and pursuit of utopian ideals (particularly though not solely those of spatial form). The architect shapes spaces so as to give them social utility as well as human and aesthetic/symbolic meanings. The architect shapes and preserves long-term social memories and strives to give material form to the longings and desires of individuals and collectivities. The architect struggles to open spaces for new possibilities, for future forms of social life. (Harvey Spaces of Hope pg210)

It is the figure of the neoliberal operating from their think tank that I wish to talk about here. Roger Kerr is used to demonstrate the ilk of person involved with the Business Round Table, because he was the leader from 1986 until his death in 2011. Early on in Kerr's career in foreign affairs he questioned the conventional wisdom of the day. Kerr bristled at the foreign exchange control that insulated N.Z. from the world economy, but made life inconvenient for the rich. As an example, to buy a new car it was necessary to put your name on a list and wait for up to a year before delivery. In 1976 Kerr transferred from Foreign Affairs to the Treasury where economic policy was turning away from the post-war Keynesian consensus that had been in place since 1945. Kerr has said that he found the treasury to be backward at this time. He went in search of the "best and the brightest" from universities around the country to enlist them to his cause, with help from his friend Rod Deane. They filled treasury with neoliberal neophytes, just as Reagan and Thatcher it had done in the USA and Britain.

Roger Kerr was eventually head hunted from treasury to form the Business Round Table in 1986. "The New Zealand Business Round-table" is New Zealand's leading public policy think tank. Founded in 1985 by a group of New Zealand business leaders, the organisation's mission is to research and promote

policies for achieving a better standard of living and quality of life for all New Zealanders" (Table). The Round Table was founded one year after the 1984 Labour government introduced neoliberalism into New Zealand, but its key members had been playing an influential role for some time before 1984. Ron Trotter and Douglas Myers had set up in 1984. Trotter had been the chair of the steering committee for the Labour government's economic summit of October 1984, which had advised on the implementation of neoliberal policies at the time.

When asked what the reforms of the 80s and 90s had delivered, on Radio New Zealand, just before he died, Kerr replied that they had not gone far enough. He felt that the

the corporations that now control our lives should not have to pay for the production of wealth and infrastructure, that banks should be allowed to speculate in anything they choose, and that more people should be unemployed without benefits and made to feel like social pariahs so that they will take any job for any pay

minimum youth rate held young people back from getting jobs and should be abolished. Kerr saw the resource management act as a big handicap to productivity; he felt that the corporate tax rate was still too high. Kerr felt that the deregulation of markets needed to go further and the softening of the labour market had a long way to go. In real people terms, this translates as no protection if a mining company from Australia wants to mine the national park near where you live. The corporations that control our lives should not have to pay for the production of wealth and infrastructure, that banks should be allowed to speculate on anything they choose, and that more people should be unemployed without benefits and made to feel like social pariahs so that they will take any job for any pay. (Zealand) Although I am sure in their own minds Roger Kerr and his round table confederates believe they are working for the good of society, the fact is their ideol-

ogy has produced the opposite effect. It is anti-social, anti-democratic, anti-freedom and economically unproductive. Neoliberalism is the economic system that has made the world what it is today. During its introduction by the Labour government in 1984 we called it "Rogernomics".

In a recent article in the Guardian, Stuart Hall succinctly described the heart of neoliberalism and its antipathy to the social contract,

Neoliberalism is grounded in the "free, possessive individual", with the state cast as tyrannical and oppressive. The welfare state, in particular, is the archenemy of freedom. The state must never govern society, dictate to free individuals how to dispose of their private property, regulate a free-market economy or interfere with the God-given right to make profits and amass personal wealth. State-led "social engineering" must never prevail over corporate and private interests. It must not intervene in the "natural" mechanisms of the free market, or take as its objective the amelioration of free-market capitalism's propensity to create inequality.

According to the neoliberal narrative, the welfare state mistakenly saw its task as intervening in the economy, redistributing wealth, universalising life-chances, attacking unemployment, protecting the socially vulnerable, ameliorating the condition of oppressed or marginalised groups and addressing social injustice. Its do-gooding, utopian sentimentality enervated the nation's moral fibre, and eroded personal responsibility and the overriding duty of the poor to work. State intervention must never compromise the right of private capital to grow the business, improve share value, pay dividends and reward its agents with enormous salaries, benefits and bonuses. (Hall)

For a clear breakdown of the key elements to neoliberalism, you can't go past the work of Elizabeth Martinez and Arnoldo Garcia from the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights in the United States. They provide the following list on www.corpwatch.org:

1. THE RULE OF THE MARKET. Liberating "free" enterprise or private enterprise from any bonds imposed by the government (the state) no matter how much social

FEATURE CONT.

damage this causes. Greater openness to international trade and investment, as in NAFTA (or the trans-pacific free trade zone). Reduce wages by de-unionizing workers and eliminating workers' rights that had been won over many years of struggle. No more price controls. All in all, total freedom of movement for capital, goods and services. To convince us this is good for us, they say, "An unregulated market is the best way to increase economic growth, which will ultimately benefit everyone." It's like Reagan's "supply-side" and "trickle-down" economics - but somehow the wealth didn't trickle down very much.

2. CUTTING PUBLIC EXPENDITURE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES like education and health care. REDUCING THE SAFETY NET FOR THE POOR, and even maintenance of roads, bridges, water supply - again in the name of reducing government's role. Of course, they don't oppose government subsi-

dies and tax benefits for business.

3. DEREGULATION. Reduce government regulation of everything that could diminish profits, including protecting the environment and safety on the job.
4. PRIVATIZATION. Sell state-owned enterprises, goods and services to private investors. This includes banks, key industries, railroads, toll highways, electricity, schools, hospitals and even fresh water. Although usually done in the name of greater efficiency, which is often needed, privatization has mainly had the effect of concentrating wealth even more in a few hands and making the public pay even more for its needs.
5. ELIMINATING THE CONCEPT OF 'THE PUBLIC GOOD' or 'COMMUNITY' and replacing it with 'individual responsibility'. Pressuring the poorest people in a society to find solutions to their lack of

health care, education and social security all by themselves - then blaming them, if they fail, as "lazy". (Corpwatch)

Does any of this sound familiar? David Harvey describes how this class of people, the CEOs that comprise right wing think tanks such as the business round table, are one of the core aspects of the rise of neoliberalism,

One substantial core of rising class power under neoliberalism lies, therefore, with the CEOs, the key operators on corporate boards, and the leaders in the financial, legal, and technical apparatuses that surround this inner sanctum of capitalist activity. The power of the actual owners of capital, the stockholders, has, however, been somewhat diminished unless they can gain a sufficiently large voting interest to affect corporate policy. Shareholders have on occasion been bilked of millions by the operations of the CEOs and their

President's Column - Uni-broke

I have to enrol in one paper this semester. AUSA is a full time job for me, but I need to take one paper so that I can Represent The Student Body (eg. log in to K computers, use the library and the gym etc). I'm avoiding it like Albert Park at night, though - I haven't applied for Studylink, and I'm going to have to pay for said paper with real life money.

I opened my Kiwibank statements today. It was a horrible experience. My eyes shoot straight to the withdrawals for the month and the muscles in my neck tense. I try to go through expenses methodically; tally up the rent auto payment, the petrol bills, the internet and food bills, the human existence bills etc. Plodding through it doesn't make it any better. I'm povo as.

So my reaction to the prospect of actually paying Uni fees is sheer panic. It doesn't help that every law paper requires a massive leather textbook, often written by your lecturer who won't set readings from it because, you know, the whole damn thing is highly relevant, and oh yeah, it costs \$500 and the 2012 edition is ever more highly relevant than last year's. And thus begins a financial panic extravaganza: I could catch the bus to Uni and only pay one fair, aha! I'll nick the toilet paper from the library basement loos! Eating is cheating, and maybe glue sniffing would be a reasonable substitute for alcohol. Too bad I can't make money selling organs in this country.

Back to earth now. The reality is that I'm not really broke. Not broke like mums working the night shift at a factory in Penrose get broke. I'm earning enough to pay for a place to live, even if it's damp and the neighbours have gang parties every now and then. I can pay for internet and gym membership. Same deal when I was dependent on a student loan and scholarship money.

That makes it hard to explain to the Minister of Tertiary Education or the Vice Chancellor or any other human why students need more living support. I've been told my various people in positions of authority that students aren't really poor. "Look at them all, buying coffees and \$10 lunch deals," they'll say, gesturing to the Quad, "students these days aren't poor like they used to be." My left wing comrades will freak out when I say that there is absolutely truth in that. Truth: people who can't afford to live like the students lining up for double shot mochas just aren't coming to Uni.

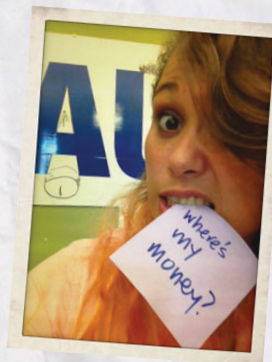
The interest free student loan scheme is alright. Dear Minister, please don't take it away (I don't trust you to reinvest the savings into other parts of the tertiary education budget). The student loan scheme is far from perfect, though. The biggest problem is that it keeps risk averse high-school students out of tertiary. Who's scared of getting into debt? Kids from poor families, and Maori and Pacific Islanders. Giving allowances to the most disadvantaged students doesn't work particularly well either. It costs loads to administer the system and test of parental income that allows bankers' and farmers' kids to claim

it isn't fair at all.

I think everyone panics about being a bit broke, all the time. We settle in to a pattern of living, then freak out when things change. Students get broke and have to borrow from friends and parents or sell their shit on Trademe. At least everyone around us has sympathy, because lots of them have been through it all before. What happens when the wharfies caught up in the Ports of Auckland dispute get broke? There's government support, but unlike student life there's no end point to being an underpaid working class hero.

One day, I want to wake up and realise that I haven't checked my Kiwibank statements for months, and it doesn't matter. It'd be like being on holiday all the time. However, I've got to admit that always being on the edge of the red keeps us students sharp. A softened version of the harsh reality of being poor, dished out to 40,000 students at this University, has to be a good thing for Auckland twenty years down the track.

If you're actually actually broke, let us help you. The Welfare Officer has a stash of emergency hardship grants of up to \$200 which you can apply for at AUSA reception. If you're Uni-broke, good luck with making ends meet this semester - you'll make it work.



financial advisers. Speculative gains have also made it possible to amass enormous fortunes within a very short period of time (examples are Warren Buffett and George Soros). (Harvey A Brief History of Neoliberalism)

This is the ideology that led to the introduction of student fees in 1990 by Phil Goff and the fourth Labour government. A very good history of student fees can be found on the New Zealand Union of Students site. (Students) There are numerous arguments for and against the idea of students paying for their own tertiary education, but it must be remembered

that from the free market point of view, you are already a punter. As you enter university, you are already being bled of some of your labour power. You are already a producer of profit for those that own the mechanism of your education and you are not even employed yet. Moreover, this debt will help keep you enslaved to the banks and those that wish to use your labour power after you leave university. Unlike architects who struggle to open spaces for new possibilities, for future forms of social life, these anti architects have made the university a beginning of life long slavery and confinement to the dictates of their neoliberal agenda.

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A brief history of student debt

Student debt is a normal part of studying right? Wrong! Until 1989 not only were there no university fees, but most students were given a living grant - they were *paid* to study. That means that of the generation that is in power now, the politicians and the university Vice Chancellors of New Zealand, virtually all of them got to study without the burden of a snowballing loan and got to start their careers with *zero debt*. Makes you wonder where the fuck the Minister for Tertiary Education, Steven Joyce, gets off saying that students should stop complaining, "keep your heads down," and take \$30,000+ of debt on the chin.

Student debt in NZ is currently around \$12 billion, so how did things get so bad in just over 20 years? Here's the gist:¹

1989 The Labour Government introduces fees for the first time (around \$129) which for the majority of students is covered by their grant, plus there's a virtually universal student allowance scheme - not so bad right?

1990 Getting cheeky, the Labour Government introduces a flat tuition rate of \$1250 per year. That's a raise of 969% in one year.

1991 Despite election promises to abolish tuition fees, the new National Government instead scraps the flat rate and allows universities to set their own fees, while simultaneously reducing their funding to universities. This is where the shit hits the fan, for the next 10 years fees rise on average 13% per year. Fees setting across the country becomes a tug-of-war between students and uni management, with management proposing fee rises of as much as 45% at a time, often met by student protests and occupations.

1992 The Student Loan Scheme is introduced so that students can cope with their massive fees, but don't

get too excited - they're accruing interest at 7% even while studying.

1999 Eight years after the flat rate was lifted and fees have increased 142% on average, compared with 13% inflation.

2000 The newly elected Labour Government commits to deal with the problem of student debt, first introducing interest-free loans while studying.

2001 Following this the Labour Government places a freeze on tuition fees until 2003.

2003 Counter to their claim of being committed to "first stabilising and then lowering tertiary fees," the Labour Government allows universities to keep increasing fees, but now at a maximum of 5% per year.

2004 The percentage of students receiving an allowance is now 29%, compared to 36.4% in 1991.

2006 Following through with their 2005 election promise, Labour introduces interest-free student loans (provided the recipient doesn't leave NZ).

2008 The Labour Government increases access to allowances and promises to phase in a universal allowance if re-elected, National has no specific policy but promises to be more generous.

2009 The newly elected National government cuts the Training Incentive Allowance for sole parents.

2010 National limits student loans to a maximum of 7 years of study in one student's lifetime - meaning that students cannot self-fund a PhD so more will have to look for corporate scholarships and tailor their research to external demands.

2011 Access to living allowances and course related costs cut to part-time students and over 55s. Loan repayment threshold frozen at just under \$20,000 and repayment holiday

cut from 3 years to 1.

Where are we now?

New Zealand has the 7th highest fees in the OECD and a combined student debt-load of \$12 billion. The National Party has no desire to reduce student debt but has promised to maintain interest-free loans. This is no guarantee however, given the flippant nature of party promises and, most troubling, the fact that their coalition partner, Act, wants to reinstate interest. Why should this worry you when Act is just a minor party? Because last year Act managed to pass through the 'Voluntary Student Membership Bill' which will see Students' Associations receiving dramatically less funding this year, effectively immobilising them from significantly resisting any major policy changes, say like taking away interest-free loans... Add to this the fact that Act's leader, John Banks, is currently the Associate Minister for Education and has already pushed through charter schools (a scheme that were never mentioned before the election), and that the Minister for Tertiary Education, Steven Joyce, drops veiled threats when students protest significant policy changes, and you get a climate where our futures become ever more precarious.

Without allowances and interest-free loans the last of the doors will be closed to students from middle to low-income backgrounds and education will finally become the user-pays factory that it has been morphing into over the last 20 years. As students, the only way to stop this is to put our collective foot down, and declare education to be a public good that should be open to all, not just to those who can already afford it. We need to do this, not just for ourselves, but for the generations that will follow us, if we want to stop the escalating income-inequality and if we want to live in a country where people are not crushed by debt before they even get into the workforce.

¹ NZUSA has done up a comprehensive timeline which this is shamelessly pilfered from, you can view it at www.demandabetterfuture.org.nz



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Disabled Students at Uni

By IGORINA

If you are a normal confronting the disability issue:

Yes, we're everywhere; on the street, in cafes, and sometimes in your class or faculty. Now I know some of you more normal students may not be used to conversing with the disabled, so think of it like this. We are just like you except we are in a moving chair, or walk around in crutches all the time and not just because we have broken a leg; or we can't see in the daytime as well as having poor night vision; or in my case, don't ask me to turn around, because I can't turn my head. Also, some of us may be hard of hearing, so I might as well point this out now. Don't shout. Instead, announce. In other words, speak clearly. Also, it is not smart or cool to pick on disabled students because they seem a bit slow, stressed or look weird. This is called harassment, is not condoned on campus, and makes you look like a complete idiot.

If you are a student with a disability on campus:

STUDYING ON CAMPUS: If you need extra help with your lectures or tutorials you can ask at the Disabilities office, which is located at the Clock Tower, for a note taker or access to a disability lab on campus. Some of these labs have specific programs for the deaf or the blind. You can also apply for extra time for exams, tests and assignments. Some lecturers will accommodate for students with learning disabilities by allowing us to tape lectures, or extra time for assignments, tests and exams, as long as we can prove a need. However, others feel that taping can be a distraction, or can be a hindrance to learning, so it always pays to ask beforehand. Also, some lecturers are more strict with deadlines and some

tutorials are not very disability friendly. For example, in one, we spent the whole tutorial looking for one phrase in an eight-page reading. This is an idiotic way of revising on any level, but even more frustrating if you are a slow reader.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: The best way to handle group work in class is to stick to the readings you are supposed to be doing for that week for each paper. Keep to the same level as everyone else. Don't decide to go ahead, as you may get out of kilter. This can be a problem if you are hard of hearing. Also, in some tutorials you will be doing group work in rooms that are not fit for purpose, or where the groups are working in long lines where you can't hear what the other group members are saying on the other side of the line, or where there are small pieces of paper where answers are written, but you can't see if you have them right or not. This is where it pays to have done your readings before hand, so you are not assuming you are right. However, if the tutorial is ridiculously unhelpful, you can always email the tutor or lecturer.

ESSAYS AND ASSIGNMENTS: It pays to be organised. Research for essays as soon as possible. Also, attend the library workshops, as you always learn something new. If you need help with your essay writing you can email or see your tutor during visiting hours with your first draft or make an appointment to see someone at the Student Learning Centre for extra help. The SLC runs workshops on essay writing and also can provide one on one consultation. If you really have an issue with the way the course is running you can take it further to the AUSA Advocacy Service.

SOCIALISING ON CAMPUS: If you are a student with a physical disability you may find it difficult to access the lift to the Shadows Bar. However, if you are a

female with a disability, you may find this problem with access to be an unexpected positive aspect, as some of the attitudes of the staff and the punters towards women and the disabled tend to be draconian and medieval, so you may find it easier to make friends on campus through study groups or one of the many clubs or groups on campus instead, and socialise with them as a group.

DEALING WITH ABELISM: University life can be stressful. A good way to avoid this is to be involved with a group on campus, or have some other outlet apart from the TV. However, some disabled students may receive adverse reactions to their disability, which may cause them to feel alienated or isolated. There are counsellors you can see at the Student Health Centre, which you can talk to about this. Some students with disabilities may also experience harassment and discrimination on campus. If this occurs, there are places you can go to such as the AUSA Advocacy Service, which is a student's advocacy group, or the Mediations Office, which is located in the Vice Chancellor's Building on Symonds Street. During student elections don't forget to vote for representatives that want to bring back the Training Incentive Allowance, increase access ramps and better paths for wheelchairs, as well as accessible software for disabled on campus, and extra staff at the SLC and the Disabilities Office.

Link for the Mediations Office:
[HTTP://WWW.CCE.AUCKLAND.AC.NZ/UA/HOME/ABOUT/OUR-SERVICES/INTERNATIONAL-SHORT-COURSES-1/INFORMATION-FOR-STUDENTS](http://www.cce.auckland.ac.nz/uo/home/about/our-services/international-short-courses-1/information-for-students)

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Link for the Student Learning Centre:
[HTTP://WWW.CAD.AUCKLAND.AC.NZ/INDEX.PHP?P=SLC](http://www.cad.auckland.ac.nz/index.php?p=slc)

Have fun, learn stuff, and participate.

The AVP's Column

Kind Students,

Welcome to what for many of you is your first taste of university life. For those who are returning, be brave it only gets easier. Be thankful that you are no longer first year and reflect on how much easier things are now that you are no longer the new kid.

During my first week I rejected the university guides and walked around on my own exploring the intricate maze that is the university. Knowing no one in my classes during the first few weeks I spent a long while just figuring out things for myself. It was a strange and wonderful experience. I quickly fell in love with the sixth floor of the library and there was this moment in my first week where I was going up there to do some readings (heaven knows

why) and someone identified me as first year. This was something that startled me, I obviously thought that I was level headed and cool but instead I had been caught out as a fraud who thought he had things figured out. It wasn't until the following year that it dawned on me how bright eyed and bushy tailed I must have been. There is an uncontained excitement that first years espouse. Sure they wander in packs, loiter in the quad for no reason, and walk around with their heads in the sky, but there is something so striking about their naivety. It's amazing and it only happens once so embrace it.

For many of those who are returning - this is a fresh start. You are now top of the food chain; don't miss out on the same opportunities you did

the year before. If you tried a club and it didn't work out for you. Try again. Put your hand up for a class rep even if it scares the bejeebers out of you. Challenge the boundaries of your comfort zone because the fastest ways to grow are to plunge head first into the deep end.

Also this year we are looking for student volunteers to help out with loads of goodness at AUSA, so if you want to get involved with things please pop in to the house even just to say hi and introduce yourself.

Dan Haines
Admin-Vice President
09 309 0789 ext 281 | 021567696 | avp@ausa.org.nz | 4 Alfred Street



COMMUNITY

Housing

By ROSIE WINDER

Aotearoa-New Zealand was once a country where families could own their own home. Today we see families overloaded with debt, the lucky being those with mortgages that will take them decades to pay off, and students (the 'relatively' privileged class) with debt averaging between \$20,000-60,000. Nearly our entire generation faces what the bottom half of the last generation faces. Most of us face lifelong debt or an inability to ever earn over the cost of living. This continual indebtedness amounts to slavery to Studylink or to a bank. We can see our fate, students and non-students alike, in what is happening to Housing New Zealand tenants in Glen Innes currently.

In September 2011 families in 156 state homes in GI received letters ordering their eviction. Down in Pomare, Wellington residents face a similar fate. These houses are under HNZ control, but they belong to the public. Now the government's tentacle, HNZ, wants to take them out of the public sphere and sell them off to property developers. The profit from these will be used to make high-density apartment blocks or 'meshblocks'. The simultaneous sale of state-owned assets (SOEs) demonstrates the National government's enthusiasm to privatize the entire country.

Anything classed as a public asset, including state housing and SOEs, is required under legislation to be operated in a socially responsible way. The current campaign of privatization HNZ is unleashing is socially irresponsible and destroying the community. As a government department HNZ has a responsibility to these tenants to act in their best interests. GI is a strong community with many of its families living in the area for generations. Moepai and Michael Temata have lived there for 47 years and have made numerous renovations including building a garage. Their house is where their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren gather together.

HNZ is behaving as if it has the authority

to decide who gets to live in GI. Working-class families are not on the list. Last year Pat Snedden from HNZ told tenants "no-one will be forced to leave if they don't want to". HNZ is trying to force families to leave their homes and their community so the land their homes stand on, prime land overlooking the bay, can be sold to property developers and the wealthy.

The intimidation HNZ is using to get tenants to sign over their rights to live in their house has so far manifested in their smooth-talking suited-up agents coercing tenants into giving up their homes to be re-homed in apartment blocks. HNZ targets individual tenants by themselves, a dishonorable way to interact with tenants: aside from being a huge institution that a single person cannot hope to deal with on an equal footing, tenants are also at the mercy of HNZ's decisions on whether they have a home or not. Furthermore, tenants at such meetings do not have fair access to information regarding their rights – they have to represent themselves without any help whilst HNZ has resources and experts to help them in their agenda. Some have already been bullied into leaving.

Where tenants have not yet signed over their homes there come threats from HNZ. They are told that if they don't move out by May 2012, they will be issued eviction notices giving them 90 days to leave their homes. They are also told that if this happens they may not get another house.

The actions and policies of HNZ and the Auckland City Council and the effects these have on GI families amounts to a terror campaign to keep poor families in their place – a place of insecurity and disempowerment. Since September hundreds of GI residents face constant uncertainty about where they will live once they are evicted. HNZ remains vague on where other state homes are in the city (HNZ has admitted it cannot guarantee GI families houses in GI). This is bureaucratic violence inflicted by HNZ

agents in suits. Silence from our politicians amidst such threats is also an aggression against families that already have to struggle against sickness, poverty and benefit cuts.

Structural violence, the violent consequences from the systems by which institutions and the government organize our society, are not inevitable. The mentality HNZ is operating within is that of profit for the privileged and privatization. Such a mentality permeates through our society, but increasingly it is being deconstructed by the public. The global Occupy movement of 2011, present in Auckland and other cities in Aotearoa, drew attention to the inequity that a capitalist mentality produces. At the public meeting called by the Tamaki Housing Action Group on Monday February 13th we saw a similar questioning of the system as seven working-class women spoke to seven MPs and councilmen about the stress and sicknesses caused from aggressive policies enforced by HNZ and the council. At this meeting we saw strong resistance directed against HNZ, an institution with policies that are destroying families and the GI community for an agenda of profit-making and privatization of state houses belonging to the public.

A growing number of New Zealanders are unable to afford exorbitant market rent rates. Its commitment to families ends at any recognition that state houses are homes, not interim dwellings or shoeboxes. Similarly the Council's urban planning schemes talk about building a "compact city" with "mixed-use or intensive residential" dwellings and about "high-density" living as if it is "inevitable", necessary and humane. There is nothing inevitable about evicting families from their homes and moving them into tiny rooms in high-rise apartment blocks. It is a tradeoff this coalition of the privileged, HNZ and the council included, is choosing to make at the cost of our quality of living conditions.

The struggle that the Tamaki Housing Action Group is fighting is the same struggle a variety of groups from the left are fighting, including Socialist Aotearoa, a group that reclaimed an empty house last weekend to draw attention to the campaign against evictions. The recent emergence of the "Aotearoa is not for sale" campaign is a coming together of the broader left to combat the Nat's attack on the entire working-class. Such attacks are clear in their attempts at selling our SOEs and the ongoing Port of Auckland aggression aimed at unionized waterfront workers. The GI residents' resistance to the thieving of their homes for the benefit of wealthy property developers is an important resistance all New Zealanders have a vested interest in. If the port strikers and GI tenants fail, it is yet another blow to our nation being privatized and sold off to the loaded 1%. If they win, as they will with the support of activist networks, we continue the struggle to reclaim our sovereignty and assert our collective control over our nation, our assets and our future.

The Tamaki Rep's Column

Hi kids!

To all of you who are returning, welcome back, and to those of you who are new to this place of ours, welcome – I'm Antonia and I am your Tamaki representative for 2012.

If you're wondering what/how/who/when/where Tamaki is, it's a huge satellite campus in Glen Innes with a tiny (yet amazingly cool) student population, and last year you elected me to represent Tamaki students on the AUSA exec. I'm also the president of the Tamaki Student's Association (TSA), and make all the cool stuff that goes on out there happen. For those newbies out there the TSA is AUSA, but at

Tamaki.

2012 will be an interesting year for your students' association, and at the TSA we have a few big plans up our sleeves. What we do want is to hear from you! Any comments, event ideas, suggestions, worries – get in touch! The TSA meets regularly, we are open and around 10 till 2 Monday to Friday, or you can email us at tiger@ausa.org.nz. Alternatively look out for the Tamaki student survey, which will be popping into your inbox shortly (you could even win a prize!).

Antonia



Nga Tauira Maori - Maori Students Association at Uni

Come on in and chillax with NTM, the University of Auckland's Maori Students Association. We provide Maori students with a warm, whanau environment in our common room where you can go from a loner to the most popular member in the room in minutes! We all know us Maori have two degrees of separation so no doubt if you haven't been up into our common room before, your bound to find one of your cuzzies up there. We have cooking facilities so you can chuck on your boil up whenever you want, wireless internet when you need to facebook stalk, state of the art couches and study desks, and a deck with a view to die for! Come on up and meet the crew, we'll help you out with whatever you want whether you need help with your studies, mates to go to town with, whether you're a starving student (we have free food!) or whether you just want to get back in touch with your Maori roots. We have heaps of events throughout the year such as socials, sporting, recruitment drives, Kapa Haka and many others so look out for them.

Where is the Maori common room? (Most FAQ of all time)

If you're in the Quad by the food stores look for New Zealand Nature Ice cream shop and the MAXX shop. You see a set of steps, go right to the top (Level 4) and you see our common room.

Upcoming Events

Katchamaori (March 9th-11th) - Come sign up for Katchamaori, our Maori Orientation that us students co-ordinate ourselves. It's a awesome 3 day orientation where you can meet new and current Maori students. We are going paintballing and ice skating and also having the meke socials. It's cheaper than a movie ticket and it covers your accommodation, travel, kai, paintballing and ice skating. We also have a very special guest that your definitely know coming to speak. Come up to Hineahuone to sign up or look at for our stall in O-Week! If your still too shy email us at mso@auckland.ac.nz and we will sort you out.

Mauri Ora!
Nga Tauira Maori



Dear Paul Holmes

It's all right for you to have your misinformed opinion about Waitangi Day. It's one thing to be ignorant but did you really have to be so blatantly racist? Is it not all right for Maori to stand up for what we believe, to honor a treaty that many of our ancestors believed in, to talk about what was taken from our iwi? Do you want us to kneel down to you, Mr Holmes and simply erase all the past and forget about all the values we were taught and not visualize a better future for ourselves and our country?

You say the treaty has no defined principles. I thought you were a journalist and would have done your homework. This is basic stuff. Your mates from the Court of Appeal made life even easier for numbskulls like yourself by defining a set of principles that are a watered down version of the actual articles of the Treaty. Let's be clear - the Maori text of the treaty (which is the one our lot all signed) is absolutely unambiguous. I'm guessing you never bothered to read that - or any of the well-written books on the subject. Are you somehow smarter than all the judges on the tribunal and academics who clearly define the principles of the treaty? Here's a suggestion for your next book - check out how many claims have been laid at the Waitangi Tribunal and how many have been settled and how many people have died along the way waiting.

You also take a swipe at all Maori being useless parents, dumb and child bashers. I could be mean-spirited and personal about your own track record, especially as many Maori took your insults personally. Instead I'd suggest you find out how many pakeha children suffer abuse and cruelty each year and then tell us how you pakeha are going to fix your problem.

It's funny too see how you all of a sudden hate Waitangi Day? I bet years ago when you were in the prime of your journalism career you couldn't wait for Waitangi Day. You couldn't wait for the drama, you couldn't wait to take the day out of context on your show, showing only the so called 'ghastly affairs' and 'loony Maori' that you speak of and forget to talk about 99% of the day with what you probably call the civilized Maori. Hey, you know best. Civilized Maori don't quite turn heads on the news, so why bother?

I have a recommendation for you. Go be a principal at a school and make the Treaty of Waitangi a compulsory subject so you and the rest of the kids in New Zealand can be properly educated about it. Read more. Go to a tribunal hearing. Once you get armed with some basic information, you might lose the time warp you're in. You might contribute to a debate instead of take it backwards.

Yours truly,

Ga Cheekie Darkie (Hikurangi Jackson)



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**GET IT
ON!** 

Beneficiary Bashing and the National Party

By HALA NASR

When it comes to National Party policy, don't let John Key's smarmy smile or Paula Bennett's 'scientific evidence' fool you. A flick through their cryptically proposed welfare reforms and it is quite clear what they are implying without explicitly saying it. Tricky! Although this mightn't come as much of a surprise considering our PM has never been one for transparency or honesty – refer to the Tea party tape and the backdoor meetings with Petrobas, despite the very recent and very poorly-managed RENA disaster. Bennett claims the Welfare reforms are “resetting expectations,” so let's take a look at what that really means.

Firstly who are these elusive beneficiaries that National love to hate? Recent figures suggest there are currently 328,000 beneficiaries, which is approximately 12% of the working-age population. Of that group, 26% are on the invalids benefit, 18% are on the sickness benefit and 2% are carers for the sick and infirm, 33% are parents supporting children and 17% are on the unemployment benefit. However National party rhetoric consistently dumps all beneficiaries into one homogenous group of lazy, unmotivated and undeserving, which is misleading at the very least, and absolutely disgusting at its most reasonable. It creates a culture of disdain for all beneficiaries, while carefully ignoring any distinctions or reasons as to their inability to work. Little to no attempts are made to correct these popular misconceptions, and understandably so, because they carve the way for their proposed welfare reforms.

“The expectation is for the majority of beneficiaries to be available and looking for work”, exhorts Bennett.

Hold on Bennett, this 'majority of beneficiaries' you speak of are on the invalid and sick benefits, sitting at around 46% of the total beneficiary population. So what you are really saying here is that you expect the sick and the invalid, which includes individuals with mental health problems, disabilities and impairments, to enter or re-enter the workforce (i.e. for their labour to be exploited and the like). Ask yourself if this is the type of society you wish to be a part of, one starved of empathy that has no respect for the sick.

There are a number of draconian proposals

to ensure that those who are weaselling out of work are made to get off their asses. One recommendation will see to it that medical certificates go 'transformers' on us, and become 'fit notes.' Instead of describing the length of time an individual is unable to work, the health professional will describe what the individual is capable of doing in paid work. The last say then goes to “work professionals” who will gauge the validity of said 'fit note'. This means that your job description and work expected of you will be tweaked to allow you to be as productive as possible during this time. (Apparently, health professionals cannot be trusted to put the economy before their patients. Go figure.)

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wages have gone down, which
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which in a nutshell and
without sounding too much like
an activist on a megaphone,
means 'the rich get richer,
and the poor get poorer'**

National party policy then goes on to state: *“There are clear links between welfare, poverty and poor health. Evidence shows children are better off when their parents are in work, not on welfare.”* This simply is not true; one trip down to the Auckland City Mission will make anyone a believer. Under John Key's watch, we now have a new class of people – the working class poor. These are individuals with fulltime jobs, who aren't leeching or being lazy, who are now unable to support their families and feed their children. Why is this? Well again under National's watch, wages have gone down, which apparently is meant to lead to long-term economic growth, which in a nutshell and without sounding too much like an activist on a megaphone, means 'the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer'. The trickledown theory has yet to ever trickle down genuinely, I'm afraid. So where's the incentive to work? Well, in my opinion, there are none. Alongside the inability to support yourself and your family, working conditions are, to put it bluntly, shit (refer to, for example, the 90-day work trial

bill and plans to introduce an un-liveable youth minimum wage). So perhaps instead of pointing the finger at individuals for not working, the government could seek to better working conditions and treatment of workers (that's assuming of course there are jobs to begin with...)

The punishment for those seen to be 'leeching' off the system? Benefit-cutting. For example if offered a night shift, the individual must accept irrespective of their ability to find childcare (childcare, which by the way, is on its way to not being subsidised if National has its way! Wool!) This treatment is also known as leaving people out in the cold. For what, you may ask? Well, for daring to be sick and

invalid, for daring to be marginalised, for daring to become parents (if poor people can't afford children, why are they continuing to breed?!) and most importantly, for having the audacity to not have a job despite there being none to speak of (job creation hasn't been one of National's strong points, you see).

Claims by John Key that there will be an emphasis on child wellbeing are empty, as they are the unquestionable victims of these reforms. [Note: we have 200,000 children living in poverty, right here in Aotearoa.] National party

recommendations include parents being coerced into 'work-preparation schemes' if their child is under 3, working part-time when their youngest child is 3 and must work full time once their child is 5. If they have more children while on the benefit, the recommendations state that they should return to work when their baby is 14 weeks. While some of these recommendations are not yet concrete (they have to be elected first!), there is a clear message being sent to NZers. Being a parent is not considered valuable or worthy of an individual's time. The repercussions for children in welfare homes are bleak, whose parents face benefit cuts should they decline work, regardless of the circumstances. The current benefit sits at \$322p/w, so any further cuts could see families turned out onto the streets, or lead to neglect when parents have to work and cannot arrange/afford adequate childcare.

Not to mention that these reforms stink of hypocrisy, especially considering Bennett herself reaped the benefits of a positive welfare system having been a solo mother at 17 and

a recipient of the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB) and the Training Incentive Allowance (TIA), which allowed her to obtain her degree from Massey University.

With all these considerations, you can bet your bottom dollar that National's forecasts for reducing those on welfare by 100,000 won't be making Aotearoa a healthier, richer place to live in (perhaps only for the 1%). Increased rejection of claims and coercion into work where it is inappropriate to do so mean poverty rates will go up. Repeat after me: Poverty rates will go up. Poverty rates will go up. Poverty rates will go up. This negates any rationale behind having a welfare system at all, as it is meant to support and empower individuals during their times of need. National's reforms do the opposite. They worsen socioeconomic conditions, hinder attempts to enter workforce in a positive manner, which will inevitably widen the gap between the rich and the poor and strengthen intergenerational welfare dependency. Say goodbye

to social mobility, folks!

The discourse needs to be shifted away from victim-blaming towards more effective, problem-solving. This would involve contextualising welfare dependency, by disaggregating data, correcting popular misconceptions, and understanding the reasons behind high levels of dependency to begin with. For example, instead of punishing and driving individuals further into poverty through benefit cutting, how about focusing on creating jobs for the 17% currently on the unemployment benefit, who have no chance of finding a job when there are no jobs to speak of! This I'm sorry to say John Key (actually, no I'm not) is the responsibility of the government (yes, he had the audacity to say it wasn't). So do your job and do it properly.

CONTRIBUTE

CONTACT: EDITOR@CRACCUM.CO.NZ



DEBATE

WHO ARE THE "GLOBAL ELITE"? The "global elite" refers to people who have enough influence, money or brains to effect the lives of thousands of people. They may be bankers, businesspeople, politicians or public figures.

AFFIRMATIVE 1: The global elite help the masses. Businesspeople are incredibly rich because millions of people want to buy their products – in order to become successful, businesspeople have to sell things that improve the masses' lives. Likewise, powerful politicians are only elected if they serve the needs of the masses. If they didn't help the masses, they would be unelected and therefore powerless. The global elite are chosen by the masses so they must help them also.

NEGATIVE 1: The truth is far more complicated than that. Often, the elite can sell more by cutting prices – and that means mass lay-offs or sending jobs offshore. It is untrue to say that the elite produce only what the masses want. Bankers and share traders make millions by buying stocks or commodities at low prices, only to resell them at higher prices soon after. These people don't actually produce anything – but they make millions of dollars and shape the lives of millions of people.

AFFIRMATIVE 2: You need to consider that

Do the global elite help or hurt the masses?

the elite are role models and inspirational figures. Many of the global elite came from very little wealth and have succeeded despite all odds. Consider the plight of Richard Branson or Michael Hill. They are people who dropped out of school at an early age, but have become incredibly successful through their own luck, brains, and cunning. The global elite play a role in proving to the masses that anyone can succeed through their own hard work, despite their social background.

NEGATIVE 2: The majority of the global elite are not unlikely success stories. The rich list is dominated by monied families that have maintained their wealth over generations. In many ways, this only proves to the masses that if those who are born poor will stay poor. The statistics prove this – between 1979 and 2007, incomes of the top 1% of all Americans increased by 275%. The global elite perpetuate the inequality because they can afford first-rate education, healthcare and childcare, quite unlike ordinary people.

AFFIRMATIVE 3: One has to consider that the wealthy pay their fair share. Their taxes are used to staff our schools and hospitals. They provide the tax money used to build roads and pay benefits to the unemployed. The democratic system ensures that the global elite put back into communities through taxes – this helps to eliminate the inequalities identified by the Occupy Movement and simi-

lar groups.

NEGATIVE 3: The global elite manipulate the legal and political system in their favour. Large banks Goldman Sachs and Bank of America donate thousands to the Republican Party. Google and Microsoft are both Democratic Party donors. The global elite have the money and lobbying power to alter laws in their favour, quite unlike the masses. Tax rates have fallen for the rich worldwide. Even Warren Buffet, one of the wealthiest people in the world, has called for tax rates to rise and admitted that he pays a smaller portion of his income in tax than does his secretary.

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HIKOIKOI (11:30-12:15)
TIKI TAANE
(12:30-1:30)
TAHUNA BREAKS
(2PM-3PM)

TUESDAY 28TH
COMEDY DAY
RHYS MATHEWSON
(11:30-12:15)
LAUGHING SAMOANS'
(12:-1PM)
CHOPPER
(1M-2PM)

WEDNESDAY 29TH
BBOY DAY
LIVE GRAFFITI ART
(FROM 10AM)
BEAT BOXING COMP
(11:30-12:15PM)
REQUEST DANCE CREW
(FROM 12:15PM)
BBOY BATTLE
(12:30-2PM)
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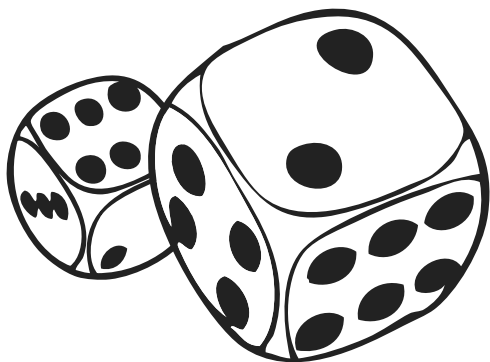
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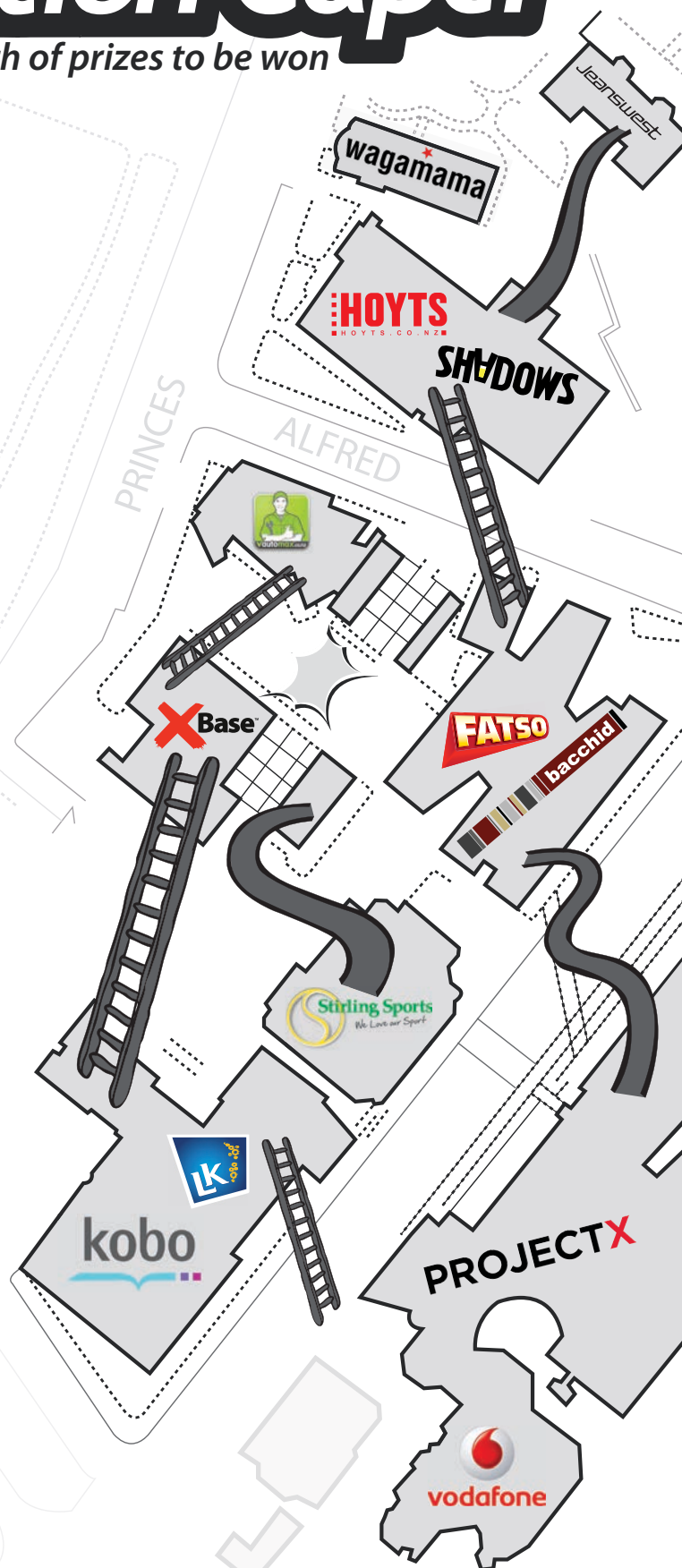


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THE UNSANE MUSINGS OF AN AUTISTIC MIND

A WEEKLY COLUMN FOR ASPIES, AUTIES AND ANYONE IN BETWEEN. By JAMES L. BROWN

Welcome one and all to 2012 at Auckland University, except for those of you who have already done Summer Semester, in which case welcome back. You didn't get much of a holiday; I think you're all Masochists for doing summer semester, why spend your holidays at Uni instead of having a bit of fun?

For those of you starting University for the first time, it must be a very daunting experience, getting used to the massive step up that is higher education. For those of us who are grizzled old veterans, O week is a headache with the halls choked with first years and Shadows overrun like a plague of rats. We've stomachached it before, and we'll do so again, so stop complaining.

Yes first years, that is how we older students see you. Before you start sending me any hate mail, remember that in a year or so if you survive and carry on that is how you will see the next lot of first years, and so the cycle continues. (Profound eh?)

This column will be a chance for me to present a point of view most people wouldn't think of or bother with, the 'autistic' point of view, for some of us autistic people do actually have a point of view, mostly the aspies (the ones who have a monopoly of internet forums and chatrooms). Yes, I am that most rare of breeds, an autistic writer who is willing to present his warped views to the mainstream world (with the help of copious amounts of drugs). What will follow for the next twenty-three issues or so will be my personal musings and rants about whatever I think is important each week, from

foreign politics to campus matters and almost anything in between that I can bother writing about. Some of these may be informative, others entertaining or educational. And others will have people wanting to have me dragged into the street and shot, for which I apologise now, so I don't have to bother later in the year. Haters gonna hate, as the internet so wisely says. I could be the autistic Bill O'Reilly of Craccum (not that I'm suggesting I support any of his political or social views, just that I will be (probably) controversial and (hopefully) popular).

The textbook definition of Autism is 'a disorder of neural development characterized by impaired social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behaviour.' What this means in layman's terms is people who are antisocial, anal retentive, and just plain weird. My own personal definition that I have developed after much musing is that Autism, like Homosexuality, is a closet. However that closet is like the one from Narnia, an entire world unto itself. Most of us never leave the closet, a few of us occasionally peek out, see how utterly horrible and fucked up the real world is and retreat straight back to the closet, and then a few of us (including myself) alternate between time in the closet, and time in the real world. We can't stay in the real world permanently, but neither can we stay in the closet, for being honest it is lonely in there for despite the popular misconception autistic people do like to be around other (read: normal) people. Note that this anecdote is not meant to offend gays,



though I suspect that I will offend *someone* before the year is out. It's just my personal observation. Note that most of what you have read is my personal observations, and should not be taken as fact.

As it so happens, this Friday (April 2) is world Autism Awareness day. I'm not going to bother telling you what you should do on this day, just bear in mind that there are some of you out there who through no fault of your own, are sane, while we who are out of our tiny little minds, are certainly not.

By now you should be sick and tired of my ramblings, so I will end this here and let you carry on with the other quality(?) articles in this magazine.

A Response to Paul Holmes

By JORDAN

Although Holmes' attempts at stirring up racial tensions is undoubtedly the most concerning aspect of the article, the secondary topics of his piece are troubling too, and also contain some interesting insight into the character of the man, and by extension the type of thinking that seems all too common in our society.

The idea that "breast feeding fascists" are the most loony, irrational group in the country is obviously a little perplexing, considering the current occupants of the Beehive. The idea that these lactation-obsessed maniacs are also the nation's biggest bullies is an indicator that Holmes suffers from some sort of paranoia-inducing mental illness. According to him, the mere sight of a man near a baby is enough to put a lot of women into misandry overdrive, and their senseless vendettas leave many men with some seriously hurt feelings. Personally, I've yet to be harassed by Donna Corleone's thugs,

but perhaps that's just because I'm not as vulnerable a target as one of the country's most famous and respected athletes. While it would be silly to deny the existence of sexist women, it is a bit odd that there seem to be so many politically conservative, personally repugnant, men that are convinced that an international feminist conspiracy is out to oppress the male population and establish a fascist gynocracy.

Because Holmes has a short attention span, or was perhaps just feeling lazy, he also pads out his article with some comments about the recent Russia-China veto of a Security Council resolution regarding Syria. Unsurprisingly, the veto has provoked bitter condemnation and much pious moralizing by Western journalists, very few of whom were audibly outraged while atrocities were being committed by the pet-regimes of Britain or the United States. One gets the impression that Holmes' anger is not derived from moral outrage so much as

indignation at Asiatic disobedience.

Of course, Holmes is not merely a hypocrite (if only that were the sole horrible thing about him!) His impressive list of character flaws also seems to include sadism, if his comments about Assad and his wife are anything to go by. There is some gleeful sneering at the potential fate of "rat-face Bashir" (a "bullet in the head, [before] being towed backwards through the streets," apparently). There is also some oddly-framed concern for the despot's wife, whom Holmes tells us is a "real English rose". It is unclear whether his concern for her is because she is English (rather than one of the desert-born *unpeople*), or due to her "pretty face". Either way, the concluding comments seem to be more about perverse fantasising than just unsavoury morbid speculation – perhaps the thought of Mrs Assad being raped and mutilated is exactly what a cruel, disgusting little man like Holmes gets off on.

State of the University

By HENRI CARLOS

In 1914 Walter Benjamin wrote a shrewd little treatise on the poverty of student life under capitalism. He argued that the university was nothing more than a factory of future workers, that student life is a frigid and soulless production line of dutiful young subjects eager to fit themselves into some idle part of the world and start making a dime for the man. He wrote 'uncritical and spineless acquiescence... is an essential feature of student life' and that 'the perversion of the creative spirit into the vocational spirit, which we see at work everywhere, has taken possession of the universities as a whole and has isolated them from the nonofficial, creative life of the mind'.

And what the fuck does that have to do with the life of students at the University of Auckland in 2012 you ask? Well, I'm about to tell you. Benjamin was not only a genius, but he could have been a time lord. It's as if he was able to stare into the future and describe the precise conditions we find right here and now. Although you would have to think that it is worse now, and if not worse then we have surely reached into the offal pit of stupid to smear our tiny minds with idiocy, because it sure as fuck isn't any better. And who are we to go ignoring the warnings of a Nazi fighting time lord for generation after generation, only to end up with this cluster fuck we call an education? Whether it is worse or it is just as bad, the real tragedy is that most of you don't have a clue what kind of emptiness you are buying into. Your experience here will naturalise all

manner of mindless garbage. No doubt you already buy the nonsense about austerity or so-called 'economic reality', perhaps you think free education is 'unrealistic'. After all you have already spent your entire life being shaped into good little consumers. You have your loyalty cards and frequent flyer miles, your favourite soft drink and your T-shirt with the ironic anti-consumer logo. You probably buy fair trade and feel a warm glow when you put your rubbish in the recycling. Or perhaps you are dosed to the eyeballs with unbridled cynicism, your life is too busy to worry about anything, you hardly have time to eat, and if it wasn't for the convenience of drive through fast food you probably wouldn't.

Benjamin was not only a genius, but he could have been a time lord. It's as if he was able to stare into the future and describe the precise conditions we find right here and now.

Well then, you will fit right in, as what you will get here is a fast food education. Processed mystery meat for the mind. You might think that sounds like hyperbole, but I'm not just talking figuratively. McDonald's actually sponsors some of the courses here, so your happy meal education comes replete with golden arches note pads and helpful burger

related examples. And guess what, that is just how our current government and the university administration want it to be. They think in numbers, just like a production line. They count you up like bags of frozen chicken wings, ready dusted for the deep fryer. The National government's ideas (or rather lack of ideas) about education are abhorrent. They shamelessly fuse a program of simpleton economics and output to the insipid notion that the only education worth a jot is the kind that brings in loads of cash. A civic education, the humanities, the development of politics and a critical conscience, or for that matter anything that doesn't deaden your senses to the banality of your world, is a waste of money, it's not an 'investment' you see. If you can't be an entrepreneur, then you are cannon fodder. If you can't perform like a monkey for the market then you are probably one of those mindless arts students who thinks about crazy things like gender equality or social justice, or worse... you could be a fucking communist.

The biggest propaganda success of our time is the idea of austerity. All around the world the crimes of finance capital were investigated by putting the murderer in charge of the crime scene, and it is no different here. Forget the fact that 151 New Zealanders earned an extra \$7 Billion last year while the rest of us saw the price of living rise and real wages stagnate, making us, guess what, that's right... quantifiably poorer. Never mind that the average student debt is now around \$30,000, or that you fees will rise around 20% in the time

A Response to Paul Holmes

I always knew that New Zealand was a pretty racist country, but I never expected one of its national papers to publish something on par with a KKK press release. Paul Holmes is not unknown for his racist sentiments and yet the Herald opts to keep him on staff as an opinion piece columnist. Though... with the likes of Garth George and Paul Henry fuelling our media what more can we expect? Perhaps our national media is just a cesspit for racism and bigotry. It isn't outside the realm of possibility that the Herald sets a certain level of misanthropy as a prerequisite for employment.

The opening to paragraph to this vomit-
CRACCUM 01, 2012

inducing hate speech (in blatant violation of the section 61 of the Human Rights Act 1993) Holmes characterises the Maori as 'a group of hateful, hate-fuelled weirdos who seem to exist in a perfect world of benefit provision.' Let's just pause for some self-reflection on behalf of the Reich Minister of Propaganda Holmes. The first and most obvious response is that the crowd he ham-fistedly refers to was actually an ethnically diverse body of protesters ranging across various gender, ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is a pity that selective viewing is a foundation stone for journalism these days. In addition, could anyone live up to the archetypal role of a 'hateful, hate-fuelled weirdo' more than prejudiced

Paulie? If the life of luxury enjoyed by Maori, and by extension Polynesians, that Mr Holmes indicts is so enviable it is a wonder he doesn't step out of his middle-class bubble to join them in their free ride on the back of the long suffering middle-classes. It would seem that my conception of what constitutes as existing in a perfect world of benefit provision is diametrically opposed to that of our propaganda pioneer. Certainly being white, male and self-entitled eases access to the social ladder allowing those who get to the top to kick it away from the ledge and spit on those remaining on the ground.

- Nathalie Jaques

Notice is hereby given for the **AUSA AUTUMN GENERAL MEETING** to be held
WEDNESDAY 21 MARCH 2012 & WEDNESDAY 28
MARCH 2012 (if quorum is not achieved on the 21st) at 1.00 pm,
Student Union Quad. Deadline for constitutional changes is 12pm, Tuesday, 6 March 2012. Deadline
for other agenda items is 12pm, Tuesday, 13 March 2012.

- Tom O'Connor, Association Secretary

AUSA
SERVING STUDENTS

you are here. Who cares about the 250,000 children living in poverty, or the hundreds of families being evicted from their homes because the market says so? What does it matter that we have one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world, or that we have disgraceful rates of preventable diseases. We know what to do about that, let's started shredding education funding and give the top 10% of earners in our country a tax cut of \$2 Billion dollars. Seriously, what the fuck? Financialisation has poisoned our world with a dehumanising logic that has colonised the minds of people making decisions. It is not that free education is impossible, or that there is some kind of esoteric economic reality that ordinary people cannot grasp, the truth is this logic says education is a commodity and a source of profit. This is about the priorities of people that have a hand in guiding the structure of our world, not about some invisible hand that is linked to the almighty god of the market. All of these symptoms are a failure of the same reasoning that is increasingly dominant in our education system. We are not about solving anything through education; we are about making it impossible to think anything that cannot be measured by a balance sheet.

So where exactly do the ideas come from that get us into this mess? Who is it that thinks up all the plans? Well, let me give you a clue. A lot of them come from that eyesore over on Grafton road. The monolith of steel and glass that is so full of those neatly built pedagogues that dictate how you learn. The one with the exciting names like the Fisher and Paykel Auditorium and the ASB Careers centre. Hell, the place itself is named after a tax-dodging ex-pat who 'donated' money to buy a degree and some political influence. And what is it that goes on over at the business school? The valorisation of failure, that's what. Stunted ideologues frothing up at empty signifiers like 'growth', 'performance' and 'flexibility'. Contemporary commerce calls you a human resource without a hint of irony. From the bottom up you are considered to be a compartmentalised vessel, a portable plastic convenience for reading, writing and maths. You are a sequenced map of a person ready to be made into a paint-by-numbers individual, a walking resume with added value, or as you are known on paper, a unit of human capital. And if you don't subscribe to that worldview then you are either unrealistic or stupid. The knowledge produced in that place is what legitimates the ideology of the market that has our leaders so transfixed in a mental haze.

I was over there last year for a prize giving when a man in a navy blue suit accosted me. You know the guy, he's everywhere, he has that kind of fashion mullet haircut that was

popular in the nineties, and he wears a baby blue gingham shirt and those chunky shoes that scream 'I might be wearing a suit, but I could break into fun mode at any moment!'. Anyway, this guy sits next to me and introduces himself. He then tells me that he works in the 'school', and as if he is about to pull a card trick from his pocket, he produces a book with the title *Postgraduate Prospectus*, and then he says 'these are some of our products'. 'No shit? And I here I was thinking they were called courses and degrees, or were you referring to the pictures of the students on the cover?' You see that is what they think education is. They have catchall monikers like entrepreneurial ecosystem and technology incubator, and they run crack institutes

**The biggest propaganda success
of our time is the idea of
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putting the murderer in charge
of the crime scene, and it is
no different here.**

with names like Excelerator. They use words like 'flexible' and 'dynamic' and 'adaptable' to obscure the truth that you are nothing but disposable units, fragments of capital to keep grinding through the numbers. They have think tanks, as if a war on ideas is needed to compliment all the other wars against abstractions, and they have outreach programs to 'cross-fertilise' the work of engineering, science and medicine with 'business concepts'. Make no mistake; these are the dominant ideas of our world. The economy, economic reality, consumer confidence, budgets, forecasts, and the white noise of the stock ticking fictions that solidify the tyranny of a marketplace worldview that has proven time and again to be a failure.

If we are to be honest then real ideas are not actually born in that place. An idea is that intersection between a fucked up piece of the world and the ability to change it. It is a truth that breaks down the oscillating logic of circulation and pointlessness. Ideas are not widgets and commodities, they are not for trade and they are certainly not property. Universities used to have real ideas, now they just have the market. If anything, business schools are where ideas go to die. They take what start out as ideas in other parts of the university and they emulsify them. Look at the university itself. Look around you; the public space is festooned with hoardings of advertising and inane branding. The common areas are infected with a common malaise. Students

are atomised units of accumulation, knocking around in sense-deprived worlds of their own, anaesthetised by the very education that is supposed to open their eyes. You all have to work shitty jobs to afford to live, you drink way too much because if you don't you will be faced with the pervading sense that you are wasting your time. How ironic. The university is the point of exchange for inter-generational theft and the legitimating of a particular kind of cultural logic that has spectacularly failed. Here you may comment on anything you like, but you cannot change a thing.

And make no mistake, it is always getting worse. Funding is being well and truly cut here, but we are all frogs in a pot. The gas

is lit, the water temperature is rising, and the gleeful little tory boys are giddy with anticipation. Look Bill, look Steve, look Johnny, the students have no idea... you see, if you put them straight in the boiling water, they will just jump out and make a mess. But if we boil them slowly they won't notice, we can reduce their education to a watery mess and they will just swim around in it until they are truly fucked, boiled in their own stupidity like mindless little frogs. This is what Stephen Joyce means when he says 'keep your heads down', he means

'get back in the water little froggie and take what's coming to you quietly'.

Last year students protested all over the world. Thousands took to the streets in the UK and Ireland, even more protested in Spain and in Chile. Students were instrumental in the Middle East and they played an important part in the global Occupy movement. History has repeatedly shown us that students can drive social change. From Vienna in 1848, to May 68' in Paris, from the People's Park and Civil Rights to the Vietnam War protests, from Tahrir to Santiago, London and right here in Auckland. Students have stood up time and again to the inadequacy of an unimaginative status quo. And as our leaders set about selling our future to line their own pockets, and our own University continues to model itself as the soulless vehicle for the financialisation of everything, it is time we stood up and changed things before it is too late. Students in Aotearoa have been crucial to the success of social movements. Without student activism the anti-nuclear movement would have struggled, the Halt All Racist Tours campaign would not have happened and countless other movements would have fizzled. A radical student body can make things happen that otherwise would not.

The University is a symptom. It is a place where knowledge is considered to be property and ideas are kept locked up for when they can be rented out. Stephen Joyce, John

Key, Stewart McCutcheon are silly old white men that know fuck all about your world. They come from a place that has failed you. They all had free education and a world of opportunity that they squandered and now they want you to pay to keep them in the manner they are accustomed to. There will be people in this University imagining all sorts of incredible things, but nothing sees the light of day unless it is worth money to the greedy trolls that run this racket. Education is not for betterment, it is not for public good or for the 'unrealistic' utopian fantasies of children, it is for profit, it is for cold hard cash. How else can you explain a world in which we can send people to the moon and make human organs out of plastic, but we can't provide free education to everyone? How else can you explain a world in which Invercargill is a stand-alone model for everyone else?

The truth is you will spend the next few years here doing a half-arsed job regurgitating some half-baked ideas that you will soon

forget, your education will turn you into a commodity so you can live out your alienated days in an office cubicle, gold-bricking 'lolz' on Facebook and paying back the 'market' rate on your disproportionate debt. While you are here you will totally overlook the fact that the university is a workplace with hundreds of underpaid and casual workers that clean the bins, tend the gardens and pick up the shit that you leave lying around. The academics that are teaching you will continue to turn out mediocrity in their peer reviewed journals and teach you dumbed down versions of worn out theories, or write books that nobody will ever read, especially not you. The accounting logic of targets and objectives, categorisations and compartmentalisation will fix you into a pattern that convinces you that reality might suck but there is nothing you can do about it. Even those of you who manage to get a 'good job' will mostly lead an empty existence. You might go on an OE to the UK where you won't be able to get a job that pays more than 150

quid a week because the situation over there is worse. And while you are there you will be hunted relentlessly for your loan arrears until you have no choice but to pay back five times what you borrowed in order to complete a shitty degree that is all but worthless.

Or, perhaps you will finally wake up to the warnings of the doctor. Benjamin argues that the first step in overturning this situation is to understand what we are dealing with. He said, 'Through understanding, everyone will succeed in liberating the future from its deformed existence in the womb of the present'. If we want to escape the world of perpetual crisis we live in then we need to wake the fuck up and do something about this place right here. As Sir Ken Robinson puts it 'The fact is that given the challenges we face, education doesn't need to be reformed -- it needs to be transformed'.

IAO's Column - Global Problems, Our Problems

I have always respected garbage men for the quaint reason that they shift through and clear away the refuse of yesterday. And much like a new year, we are can only appreciate 2011 only after we can mentally sort through political and social cataclysms that have begun to define this decade. So firstly, a message of thanks to you for electing me to guide, inform, to enrage and to encourage your tentative ascendance into the global order.

2011 set the agenda for 2012 and we as its participants must be active in realizing the dream of yesteryear. No more passivity, no more 'just accepting', don't let the world happen to you, get motivated and get involved. There are over 30 cultural and political clubs that deal with foreign affairs and international issues, so no excuses, start participating because aint no point getting a world class education when you know nothing about the "actual world". So for starters every fortnight I hold the International Affairs Committee up in Clubspace at 6pm, where we run campaign workshops and teach-ins about pressing global issues.

So what is IAO? Basically, you can break my role down into three parts. Organize, coordinate, educate. (And maybe agitate)

Firstly, I am first and foremost an organizer. I am the first to the scene to clubs/events, and to encourage all political and cultural activities to the first degree and to bring in first rate speakers and dignitaries. To build and enhance your political and global experi-

ence here at UOA. Secondly, I am second to none in coordination and networking amongst clubs. That's a silver plated guarantee that dualistically boosts profile and membership. Thirdly, educate tertiary students by delivering insightful analysis rather than the usual third rate rag-tag nonsense, that allows for three tier level of understanding of economic, political and social issues

Many of your fellow students are taking their battle to streets, so why not join them and make some new friends, (You never know, you could change the world), so every week I post relevant notices here (blue box below) and on the IAO Blog (yes I have a blog, and yes it is awesome) for upcoming events/updates/campaigns for you to support.

So if you would like your event promoted, need help with organizing an event, want to rant about the Occupy or you just want to say hi, get in touch. Details below and remember there is no such thing as a one man revolution, so come along and get involved.

Martin Graham
International Affairs Officer Email: exec.iao@ausa.org.nz
ausa.org.nz Cell: 022 653 1583

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Free Somyot Campaign

Thai labour activist charged with 'lese majeste' for speaking out against the monarchy. Somyot Prueksakasemsuk is committed workers advocate and union official amongst Thailand numerous sweatshops, faces 30 years imprisonment for trying to bring attention to the appalling conditions of these workers. There is more information on this website and also on the other sites listed below. <http://www.cleanclothes.org/urgent->

actions/somyot-trial

Global environmental trends and New Zealand's future (Fabian Society) -

Rick Boven, Director of the New Zealand Institute will discuss how global environmental trends will affect New Zealand's future. Tuesday, February 28, 6pm, Owen Glenn Business School OGBB 5 Level 0

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

International Affairs Quiz

Send your answers to exec.iao@ausa.org.nz to go into weekly draw to win 2x Fair-trade Coffee. Winners will be published in next week.

1. Full name of Syrian President
2. Leading candidate/s for US Republican nomination
3. Greece is being bailed out to the tune of \$ _____ approx.
4. Location of 2012 Summer Olympics
5. Name of Chinese company set to buy Crafar farms
6. Which controversial person guest stars on Simpsons 500th episode?
7. What is he famous for?
8. Number of jobs expected to be cut from MFAT?
9. Name of NZ Foreign Affairs Minister
10. List of Arab nations that underwent revolutions last year.

FROM PRODUCER TODD PHILLIPS THE DIRECTOR OF
THE HANGOVER

THE PARTY YOU'VE ONLY
DREAMED ABOUT

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WIN! PROJECT X IS COMING TO CINEMAS MARCH 1, AND WARNER BROS. PICTURES AND AUSA ARE GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO WIN 1 OF 10 IN-SEASON DOUBLE PASSES TO THE FILM. EMAIL COMP@CRACCUM.CO.NZ WITH YOUR DETAILS AND PROJECT X AS THE SUBJECT AND YOU'RE IN THE DRAW. RATING: TBC

Should we be paying to be taught climate denial?

By LOLA THOMPSON

Chris De Freitas is an Associate Professor at the University of Auckland employed by the School of Environment as a lecturer in Climatology.

I encountered De Freitas during the first semester last year when I took Geography of the Natural Environment (101), a compulsory course for all geography majors.

After the first few lectures taught by De Freitas I became increasingly concerned about what I was being taught. Prior to attending the class I was under the impression that the debate around climate change was no longer in questioned and anthropogenic climate change is now a scientific fact.

However, De Freitas presented the changing climate as a natural cycle, to which fossil fuels were not a contributor.

I found what I was learning incredibly alarming, as it went against all the information I had ever read about climate change. I began expressing my concerns to other students, who had previously taken courses taught by De Freitas and found I was not alone in my concerns.

I began asking questions to people I knew with knowledge in climate science and discovered De Freitas was a known public figure as a climate skeptic – or denier.

The more I learnt about De Freitas the more frustrated I became, but as his classes were optional I could not simply 'drop it.' As I looked around the lecture theater of at least 150 fellow students I started to think about how much students were paying to learn this sketchy science.

Geography 101 costs \$717, with approximately 150 students enrolled but the course is taught with four components, climate being only one of these students are collectively paying \$26,887.50 per semester to learn what has been proven to be cherry-picked science.

The last lecture of the series for me was the most concerning. I left almost convinced by De Freitas' argument that climate change was a natural cycle.

Wanting to let other students know about my experience I passed my workbook on to the people I had spoken to earlier about De Freitas, and, with my permission, they passed this on to the New Zealand Herald's Chris Baron, a senior feature writer with years of experience.

He wrote a story on De Freitas at the University of Auckland using my work book and interviews with students from the School of Public Health who were also outraged about the advice De Freitas had given them for an assignment – also along similar lines.

Victoria University's Dr Martin Manning told the NZ Herald "I think Auckland Uni-

versity does have a bit of a problem with a course looking like it is taking one side of the story and a minority view of that. The right to have individual views is something that's preserved because it is important - but there does become a point when you have to ask should you be teaching that?"

Hot-Topic.co.nz, a climate science blog, also looked closely at the de Freitas workbook. Editor Gareth Renowden went through the graphics and lectures in great detail and published a blog about them. He said:

"He uses old, out-dated resources, as well as misleading stuff concocted by Monckton and Spencer. As Barton's *Herald* article confirms, at no point does he bring the IPCC or current climate information into his lectures."

"[the workbook] includes material from sceptic blogs and US think tanks".

It included a misleading graph prepared by Lord Christopher Monckton who is a mouthpiece for the climate denial industry. Monckton doesn't have a single climate science qualification and, in 2010, stood for the right wing UK Independence Party.

Renowden wrote: "This is not a matter of 'academic freedom' — de Freitas is perfectly entitled to believe what he wants — but he should not be teaching foundation courses in climate that depend on the output of US lobby groups and far-right British politicians or are so far out of touch with the mainstream of the science he is purporting to present."

"His students deserve to learn the subject as we best understand it, not just the painted pig that de Freitas dangles in front of them. In the meantime, the University of

Auckland has a problem. What price academic excellence, when you have an associate professor determined to ignore that fine idea?"

I looked further into de Freitas and the more I found the more I became worried – and angry – about how my money (and that of other students) – was being spent.

De Freitas, Climate Research and the Hockey Stick

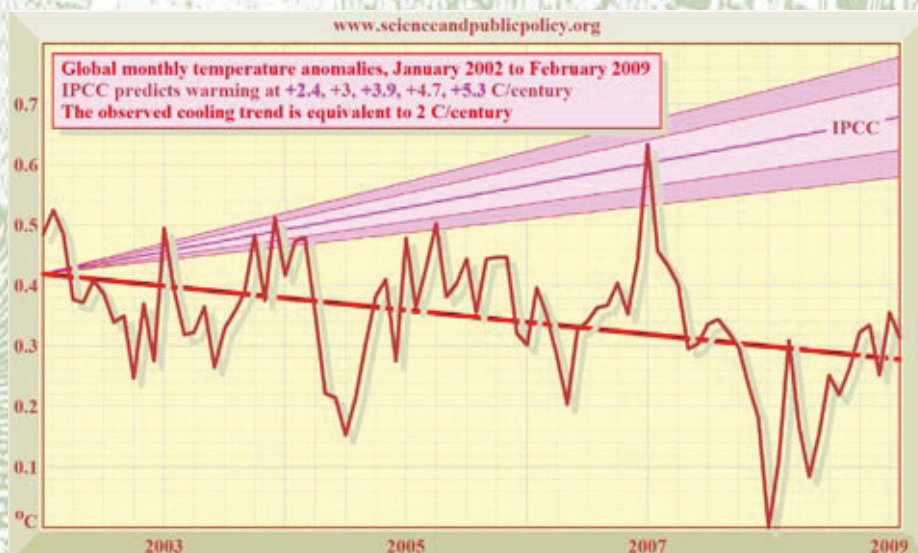
From 1997 to 2003, de Freitas was an editor at a climate journal called "Climate Research". John Mashey, who blogs at "deepclimate", last year conducted a very thorough investigation into our lecturer's behaviour when he was there.

During de Freitas' time as an editor at "Climate Research," half of his editorial workload involved publishing papers written by 14 different, well-known climate deniers with whom he had close ties.

One of those deniers was prominent climate sceptic Patrick Michaels. De Freitas published no less than seven papers by Michaels in this six-year period, accounting for half of Michaels' peer reviewed papers.

Michaels is one of the more high profile of the world's climate denier scientists, and is closely associated with a number of think tanks who have been running campaigns on climate denial, funded by the fossil fuel industry.

One of them is the Heartland Institute, a



THIS GRAPHIC, MADE BY CLIMATE DENIER MOUTHPIECE AND POLITICIAN LORD CHRISTOPHER MONCKTON, TAKES A TINY 7-YEAR PERIOD AND TRIES TO SHOW THAT GLOBAL WARMING ISN'T HAPPENING. NO CLIMATE SCIENTIST USES SUCH A TINY PERIOD TO SHOW A TREND.

US think tank that runs annual climate denial conferences. A recent leak of internal Heartland Institute documents show that it has been planning to try to get the teaching of climate science out of primary schools in the US.

The most interesting thing about Mashey's research is that none of de Freitas's sceptic friends had been published in Climate Research before – or after – his tenure as an editor there.

The most famous piece he published was a study by Drs Willie Soon and Sallie Baliunas that supposedly challenged the “hockey stick” temperature record of Penn State University's Dr Michael Mann. This has been a central focus of climate skeptics and US Republicans who deny the climate science.

As a result of de Freitas publishing the Soon/Baliunas study, other editors at Climate Research protested – about the peer review process he'd conducted, and resigned at the way the situation was handled by the journal. De Freitas left Climate Research soon after.

It's important to note here that since Mann's original study, his “hockey stick” has been reconfirmed by at least 12 subsequent scientific papers, using a variety of statistical methods and combinations of proxy records, produced reconstructions broadly similar to that of Mann. Almost all of them supported the IPCC conclusion that the warmest decade in the 1000 year temperature was probably that at the end of the 20th Century. Indeed, that hottest decade is now 2000-2010. Yet none of this absolutely key data appears anywhere in de Freitas lectures.

More research has emerged showing that since 2002, Willie Soon, one of the authors of this disputed Climate Research study, has been funded only by fossil fuel companies and interests. The Hockey Stick study was funded, in part, by the American Petroleum Institute. Other funders include ExxonMobil, oil billionaires and funders of the Tea Party, the Koch brothers, and the US coal corporate, the Southern Company. He is also very closely associated

with a number of think tanks running the anti-climate science campaign in the US.

Other work with think tanks

So I go on looking at de Freitas's history. Next thing I find that in 2007 his name was on an “Amicus Brief” – a legal document submitted by yet another right wing US think tank, the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

The CEI submitted the scientist brief to the huge court case in the US Supreme Court where coal states and think tanks were suing the US Environmental Protection Agency to try to stop it listing the major greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, as a pollutant.

The CEI paper quoted De Freitas along with a bunch of other climate skeptics, including Patrick Michaels, Willie Soon, Sallie Baliunas and Roy Spencer (whose graph appears in the workbook). What did it say? Climate change isn't happening, it isn't a threat to public health... all the stuff that the deniers have been saying for years (and which have all been proven wrong).

The CEI has received more than \$2 million from oil giant ExxonMobil.

Auckland University's Environment Department underwent a review late last year. The results were due out last November, but appear to have been delayed. If you want a copy, email g.mcgregor@auckland.ac.nz

This department prides itself on the quality of its teaching, ranking 34th in the world in environmental sciences, and 30th in geography. I'm not sure that teaching climate skepticism is something that will keep it there.

Further reading and references:
[HTTP://HOT-TOPIK.CO.NZ/TAG/CHRIS-DE-FREITAS/](http://HOT-TOPIK.CO.NZ/TAG/CHRIS-DE-FREITAS/)

[HTTP://WWW.NZHERALD.CO.NZ/NZ/NEWS/ARTICLE.CFM?C_ID=1&OBJECTID=10738739](http://WWW.NZHERALD.CO.NZ/NZ/NEWS/ARTICLE.CFM?C_ID=1&OBJECTID=10738739)
[HTTP://DEEPCIMATE.ORG/TS=DE+FREITAS](http://DEEPCIMATE.ORG/TS=DE+FREITAS)

WE ARE THE UNIVERSITY

TEACH IN

**THURSDAY 1ST MARCH
LIBRARY BASEMENT
5PM**

DEBT TURNS STUDENTS INTO CONSUMERS.

The fee structure is based on the concept of the university as a business, where students are consumers and education is a private investment. This structures our basic perceptions of education, what we expect to learn, and what we are willing to contribute, around a profit imperative. It alters relations between students and teachers, and erodes the foundations of trust that have supported the university for centuries.

DEBT TURNS CITIZENS INTO EMPLOYEES.

The average tertiary graduate enters their working life with \$30,000 of debt. This severely limits their options to have experiences of unquantifiable value, such as low-paid internships, volunteer work, and further learning, by making them dependent on salaried positions within businesses. This converts citizens into indentured employees and discredits the value of non-commercial experience and critical thought.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IS A PUBLIC GOOD, NOT A PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

Just as universal healthcare benefits the entire country, university education guarantees the political and social health of a population. It produces critical thinkers and future political leaders from all backgrounds, ensuring that our democracy works. As fees increase every year, the current government is cutting university funding and manoeuvring to bring in interest on loan repayments.

HIGH FEES PERPETUATE INEQUALITIES.

When fees rise, the worst affected are the worst-off. The user-pays scheme further discourages those from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds who already face large obstacles to entering university.

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ECO-MATTERS

In our current state of continual environmental degradation, it is important for people to reconnect with the natural world so that our interest in protecting vital resources becomes an essential part of our lives.

By SHANE M., SA

I had never taken much interest in growing vegetables, fruit and herbs, worm farming or bee keeping and certainly not creating compost. Having grown up in the concrete jungles of our planet's major cities, my infinity with nature was never firmly cemented until I went travelling in my late teens. I'm not alone in this; I have met many people who fit the same trend. It is a simple fact of industrialised society that most people buy their food from a company; usually a supermarket chain. But why? Why do we not encourage our city dwelling youngsters an appreciation of the natural world? And perhaps more importantly; Why do we not teach them how to cultivate food?

I recently took a keen interest in my local community garden. It was set up three years ago as part of a global movement of people who want to grow organic food within their communities around the world. Its main purpose is that of a showcase garden. Where people can come to learn the skills they need to grow food on their own land. There is a large communal planting area, worm farms, beehives, a chicken coup, a communal kitchen, a woodfire pizza oven, a green house, a rotating compost system and various other ventures. The rule of thumb is that whoever is working at the time can take ripe produce home. So you do a couple hours gardening and leave with a basket of food. A few cucumbers, a lettuce, a punnet of strawberries, some honey and half a dozen eggs would be about the amount of food one could expect to take home after a summer Sunday in a flourishing garden.

I've found one of the most incredible facets of community gardens is the way that they generate cooperation. By their very nature, community gardens foster a sense of empowerment within a community. People are obliged to share basic common resources, specifically land, water, tools, plants, food, meals, knowledge etc. Community gardens save families money on food and for the majority of people who do not own property, or have access to gardening space, it makes a significant financial difference not to mention it provides a healthy and safe environment for recreation, exercise, social engagement and community spirit.

In our current state of continual environmental degradation, it is important for people to reconnect with the natural world so that

our interest in protecting vital resources becomes an essential part of our lives. Community gardens cannot solve all of these problems, but they can certainly increase our awareness of the natural environment around us.

Community gardens also reduce council spending. Public spaces owned by the city must be paid for and maintained by the city. Whereas community gardens are maintained by volunteers and therefore cost very little in upkeep. Gardens naturally absorb rainwater, a function that pavement is rapidly destroying. Gardens help clean our air, something especially necessary in the city. They bring people together by providing a space to share culture, knowledge, food and art. Gardens have been proven time and time again to significantly reduce crime, violent and anti-social behaviour within communities.

I took this excerpt from - A Handbook of Community Gardening p. 10, it is a good summary of how community gardens fit into the human struggle for freedom and prosperity,

"Community gardening is a part of a serious struggle, the struggle to redistribute basic resources to people who will use them wisely and with respect for the general good. Community gardening is a small but serious challenge to many current policies and practices. It challenges the economically and ecologically destructive policies of agribusiness and local politics, which put profit before human needs—greenery, open space, fresh food. Community gardening challenges the social and economic structures that keep a vast number of urban and rural people from owning land and from gaining a small measure of control over their lives."

Organic food grown in a community garden is also much higher quality than you can buy at a supermarket. Farmers today can grow two to three times as much grain, fruit, and vegetables on a plot of land as they could 50 years ago, but the nutritional quality of many crops has declined. Author and food expert Brian Halweil states: "Less nutrition per calorie consumed affects consumers in much in the same way as monetary inflation; that is, we have more food, but it's worth less in terms of nutritional value."

According to the report, Still No Free Lunch, food scientists have compared the nutritional

levels of modern crops with historic, and generally lower-yielding, ones. Today's food produces 10 to 25 percent less iron, zinc, protein, calcium, vitamin C, and other nutrients. Researchers from Washington State University who analyzed 63 spring wheat cultivars grown between 1842 and 2003 found an 11 percent decline in iron content, a 16 percent decline in copper, a 25 percent decline in zinc, and a 50 percent decline in selenium.

Improving the nutritional quality of food on a per-serving basis is an important step in addressing worldwide health problems, the report notes. "Less nutrient-dense foods, coupled with poor food choices, go a long way toward explaining today's epidemics of obesity and diabetes," says The Organic Center's chief scientist, Charles Benbrook.

Plants cultivated to produce higher yields tend to have less energy for other activities like growing deep roots, generating phytochemicals - health-promoting compounds like antioxidants - the report explains. Conventional farming methods, such as close plant spacing and the application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, often cause crops to absorb fewer nutrients and have unhealthy root systems and less flavour, and sometimes make them more vulnerable to pests.

Organic farming methods, on the other hand, use manure or cover crops to provide nutrition to crops, have more balanced mixtures of nutrients, and tend to release the nutrients more slowly, the report explains. This means plants develop more robust root systems that more aggressively absorb nutrients from the soil profile, and produce crops with higher concentrations of valuable nutrients and phytochemicals. Organic food may have as much as 20 percent higher nutritional content for some minerals, and 30 percent more antioxidants on average.

Now that sounds like value for money! Or more accurately value for time. Anyone who wants to create a better world (a world where your kids won't have to worry about the extinction of their species) needs to get involved in their local community garden. All revolutionaries should grow and teach others to grow food. It will increase the striking power of our poorest workers and unify our communities.

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DRINK



KROMBACHER

At long last, it seems that the summer sun has decided to make an appearance. Just as undergrads are getting ready to hit the books for another (or their first) year, the sun has come to tempt us, to make us yearn to eschew our study for a cold beer while we soak up some UV radiation. If you do take that approach, I'm not judging. Life is short, and beer is tasty and delicious – well, good beer is at least. And when it comes to choosing a good beer

to drink in the sun, it's hard to go past a good German lager.

Lately, my favourite German lager to enjoy has been Krombacher Pils. The brewery was founded back in the early 1800's, and over the last couple of centuries it has become fairly popular. I gather that it's one of the most commonly consumed pilsners in Germany, and given how picky Germans are with their beer, that should be a good sign. As it happens, it usually seems to be reasonably priced here in New Zealand. I've managed to get 6-packs for \$10 on special, and you can also get 660 ml bottles for three or four dollars from some countdowns. It's amusing seeing people express wonder when you bring out the larger bottle, although drink-

ing one large bottle is really just equivalent to drinking two smaller bottles.

So how does it taste? Well, to me it's quite characteristic of a good German Pilsner. With a bit more malt and a bit less hops than craft pilsners brewed in New Zealand, the Krombacher pils has quite a smooth flavour while still being crisp and refreshing. There's nothing too floral on the aroma for those who are less adventurous with their beer tastes, so it should be a satisfying drop for anyone who considers themselves to enjoy beer. As such, I think it's a solid beer to start a year of Bier Essentials on (although, as readers from previous years might be aware, I shall be encouraging you all to expand your taste horizons to all the won-

ders that beer has to offer).

If you need a snack while you're drinking beer in the sun, a good Pilsner like the Krombacher is bound to go well with a decent cheese, perhaps a nice Edam or Gouda. Over the weekend I personally enjoyed the Krombacher with a grilled cheese sandwich made with edam, freshly made beer bread and caramelised onions. It made for a simple yet enjoyable meal.



Subject: Wine

Wine has long been recognised as being wonderfully subjective and open to the influence of mood and situation, the company and food, even the weather. Matching wine to the occasion is nothing new, and is something that people do almost without thinking of the individual components at play- the scent of a roast wafts through the room while the stereo adds ambience as someone stands in front of a wine rack and thinks, "Hmm, now, what do I feel like?" It is a natural assumption that whatever's for dinner will influence whatever bottle ends up in their hand, but if there were a different CD on, would a different wine hold more appeal?

Wine writer Jo Burzynska's tasting-slash-presentation, *Wine & Sound*, billed as 'a multi-sensory tasting experience' seeks to

explore the influence that listening to different musical styles has upon the way that a wine tastes. Picture this: A group sits around a table, each with three glasses of wine in front of them. They smell and then taste these, after which Jo plays carefully selected passages of music, first from an experimental track which is comprised of a short spectrum of rather high pitched tones, then some classic American folk, and finally a richly textural piece from a contemporary German composer. With each, the wines are again sampled and everyone agrees that, while they are clearly still the same wines, there are some remarkable differences, wholly dependent on simply what we are hearing! With the first, rather jarring track, the acidity of all of the wines is amplified- in the case of a simple \$9 cleanskin pinot gris from Countdown, this means something of an improvement. However the classy Hawke's Bay chardonnay made by Sacred

Hill is all of a sudden sharp and out of balance, almost to the point of being no fun to drink, yet the brooding timbre of the final piece of music gives it great balance and definition, while the random French white (a Chasselas from Chateau de Ripaille, if you're at all interested) comes across best when tasted alone beforehand, and doesn't respond kindly to any of the musical pairings.

What is happening here? Anatomically, the senses of sight, hearing, taste and smell are hard-wired into the cortex of our brains, unlike touch which feeds through the spinal cord and cerebellum. While neuroanatomy is well understood in science, the processes that occur within these physical structures are harder to examine and the physiological influences and interdependence of our senses remains largely a mystery. Sure, we can tell what areas of the brain are firing with ECG and MRI, but rather like sonar, it's just an indication something's

there- quantitative rather than qualitative. Life and its complexity is a wondrous thing, and the human mind is a frontier that's still beyond our knowledge.

Most wine professionals, particularly those that taste wines with the purpose of communicating their thoughts on flavours and overall quality and feel these to the general public, would like to think that with a good deal of experience under their belts there is a high level of consistency and reliability to their evaluative skills. But while they may try to limit the influences due to expectation by tasting blind, and avoid obliterating their taste buds beforehand with (for example) chilli prawns for lunch or mint chocolate icecream, do they always try all their wines in complete silence? Jo's tasting suggests that even that Bob Dylan album or Beethoven symphony will alter their perception. I'm fascinated, and am off to do some more practical research!

The WROs' Column

Kia Ora,

Welcome back to another year of study, or just plain old welcome to you newbies. By the time you read this O-week will be over, so we hope you had an awesome time, met some new people and joined a club or two.

If you don't know already, AUSA has some great services available for students, such as Parentspace and Womenspace. Parentspace can be found in the AUSA house just across the road from the general library, and Womenspace is just above the new juice bar (old bus ticket place) in the quad. Incidentally, you can find us Women's Rights Officers in Womenspace as well, as our office is just off the main corridor. We represent all

women on campus, so come and talk to us anytime you need. Feel free to just stop in to say hi whenever though, as we have an open door policy and love meeting new people (especially those we can rope into helping us with events, or groom to be our successors!)

If you can't find us in our office, good chances are it's a Thursday and we are down in the quad looking after the Thursdays h Black stall. With cupcakes and Muffins! If that doesn't lure you in we also have free pads, condoms, and pamphlets on STIs! Who doesn't like reading about STIs? In all seriousness though, you can also find lots of booklets with important info in the corridor to Womenspace if you don't want to see us. The corridor up to the big black curtain is also open to men as

well, so dudes, don't be afraid of coming in and taking some pamphlets too.

Some things to watch out for later this semester are Womensfest and the annual Kate magazine. If you want to contribute to either of these, with a great event for Womensfest, or an important article for Kate, then email us at Women@ausa.org.nz. We appreciate any and all contributions, and want to make them even better than last year.

Your friendly neighbourhood WROs

Jia and Angela

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THE PROSPECTUS

A BULLSHIT FREE GUIDE TO COURSE SELECTION

Law121G: Law and Society

I'm convinced that Part I law courses are used to subsidize the rest of the law school, (or perhaps just McCutcheon's latest pay rise), considering that of the 1,200 to 1,500 students who will enrol in them each year, a mere 300 are permitted to continue to Part II. This is due to the course being marked on a bell-curve, which means that your grade will be scaled to make sure there are a certain number of As to Ds (20% of students are required to fail). Under this system, it is possible to pass your exam, but have your mark downgraded to a fail in order to adhere to the predetermined marking schedule. To the bell-curve your future prospects as a student don't matter. You can't contest your grade because your GPA has now plummeted and prospects for post-graduate study have slipped out of your reach or because Studylink might not agree to give you funding for your next year of study until you can get your grades up with your own finances.

You would think that in the law school there would be a professor willing to stand up for the rights of students not to have their legitimately earned grades taken away from them in the name of an arbitrary and unjust mode of marking. Maybe principles of justice are just too inconvenient or complicated to be present in the lecture theatre.

You can do something about this! Challenge your lecturers and demand the grades you deserve!

The fact that this course is optional as a general education course has a positive and negative aspect. If you fall prey to the injustices of the marking criteria, you will have to do another general education course to finish your degree requirements and law students will be competing for grades with a larger pool of students. On the flipside the course content is interesting and it is definitely one of the better general education courses on offer so I would encourage non-law students to opt for it.

The course covers five general themes but using them interrelationally will help you get the most out of it and exam questions

can often be vague curveballs which will require you to draw on all aspects of course content in one essay response. The Treaty of Waitangi is a central component of the course and allows you to gain insight into both the legal and social implications of the Treaty.

When I arrived at university, I believed much of the racist misinformation that is drilled into so many New Zealanders about the alleged special treatment of Maori. I'm grateful to this course for helping to correct my misconceptions. Unlike high school history classes, this course does a good job of covering the history of British colonialism, atrocities committed against Maori and how our 'freely elected' government officials circumvent democratic and legal institutions to further their own agendas, while incorporating broad theories of law with the topics of rights and property.

Although I fully endorse the content of this course I feel that it is more of a fluke on the part of our law school and not a genuine representation of the general mentality and ethos that is encouraged as you progress in your

degree. Critical thinking is promoted subject to clearly defined boundaries, such as Law121G serving as one of the allocated forums for critique which does not extend to other law courses. While it is okay to denounce the acts of British imperialists in the nineteenth century, it becomes less appropriate to criticise or dissent from current government policies which marginalise minority interests or use legislation as an oppressive tool to control society. The logic of the law becomes about how best to interpret and apply legislation or judgements rather than questioning the legitimacy of institutions themselves. The university should supply students with the tools to engage in critical, independent thought – something which the law school is lacking while an image of superiority endemic to law students is perpetuated on campus. Students who do not receive an offer should bear in mind the whispers that are circulated around which courses are the easiest to get an A or have no exams and question the validity of such an instrumental approach to education and a superficial GPA boost.

My choice to reject a position in the law school can be summed up in a quote from Herbert Marcuse which all prospective law students should consider – "Law and order are always and everywhere the law and order which protect the established hierarchy."

HELP!

We need proof readers, contributors, film reviewers and anybody interested with free stuff in return for a small amount of words each week. Want a column of your own? Got a nice picture? Cartoon perhaps? Get in touch.

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MUSIC

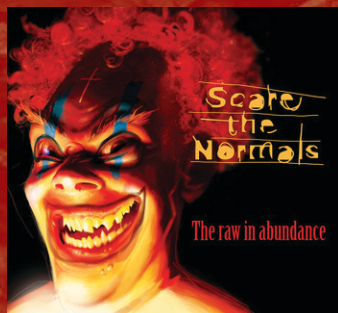


Who:
alizarinlizard

What:
the weekend without you

Where From:
Dunedin

Whatever you kids are into these days you can find worse music than this. Sounds like The Kooks have been listening to the Clean but heh, that kinda works. I'm sure it's somebody's cup of tea so give it a go, it's more than likely better than the shite you've currently got on your nasty little ipod. Seen as the band were kind enough to send a copy up to Auckland, to a city they undoubtedly despise, consider this a tipping of the cap back down south. I love you Dunedin.



Who:
Scare The Normals

What:
The raw in abundance

Where From:
UK

"Scared to the point that they shit" take off your clown shoes and put on your makeup. Suffolk's finest. Expand your mind; you can't train a wasp. Love is often little more than fishaffection. YOU, haven't heard anything like this before. If enough of you head to their website and start

downloading for free we may be able to plant the seed for their first international tour, to our distant southern hemisphere. Write to the editor for you chance to win a free CD, just tell us your favourite track of the debut album and why you fuckin' loves it.

Rumour has it that the bassist used to be a Shetland pony. One day several years ago Victor Wooten, Cliff Burton, Jack Bruce and Jaco Pastorius were driving through the Shetland Isles, the haze was heavy and they failed to see John Paul Jones, Flea and John Entwistle travelling towards them at great speed from across the paddock. When the combined talents collided in a shit storm of twisted metal and broken glass all seemed to be lost. It was the Munich disaster of the bass playing world, and that cunt McCartney had escaped unscathed! If it wasn't for a passing Shetland pony none would of survived. Then nameless, the pony struck a bargain with the mangled corpses of the heavily wounded. The pony would drag them back to a cottage for treatment and ensure their survival on the premise that in exchange for the magical healing powers of a rare Shetland mushroom the bass players would pass their combined skills on to the pony and allow him human form for 6 months of the year. They all agreed. Welcome to the stage, Voltron.



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ADVOCACY

How to read Catch-22

"There was only one catch and that was *Catch-22*, which specified that a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane, he had to fly them. If he flew them, he was crazy and didn't have to; but if he didn't want to, he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of *Catch-22* and let out a respectful whistle.

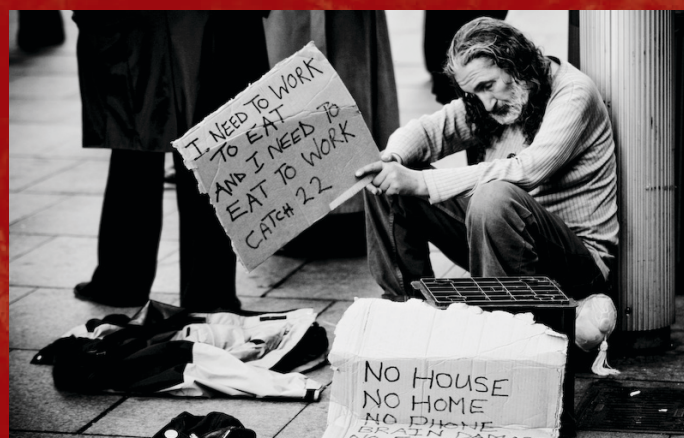
"That's some catch, that *Catch-22*," he observed.

"It's the best there is," Doc Daneeka agreed."

I was first introduced to *Catch-22* years ago and it has remained one of my favourites. When first I read it, I had never heard of it and had no clue what to expect, except what the cover told me about the content: set in Europe in WWII, wickedly humorous, a hands-down classic of the twentieth century. The book on the whole orbits ideas of the madness of sanity and

vice versa, the (il)logic of war and authority and the boundaries of courage. Plus it includes a character called Major Major Major, which is good news in any language.

It starts strangely, and continues so, and I will warn you reader, as I do for all to whom I recommend this book, that it is quite likely that for most of the first reading, you will be wondering if there's something you're not getting. It is such a uniquely black and sideways book that the humour is quite obscure to begin with, seeming almost a bit staid tending towards stupid when you're new to it. When I first read it, it took me about three months to get through it because I'd feel as though there was something I was not getting, lose interest for a while and go and read something else. But good things come to those with persistence. By about two thirds of the way through, I was sold. When I finished the book, I was so taken with it that I immediately turned back and started reading again from the beginning. In the meantime, all of the things I'd not been getting on the first go had become dangerously hilarious,



the content flowed, the story gelled and the genius became apparent. I now have it on the authority of others who've read the thing that this is the standard process for reading *Catch-22*.

Much like my introduction to the book, I'm not going to go into specific detail about content here. Spoilers. Read it on my recommendation and I promise you won't be disappointed. This is not some easy pulpy Dan Brown sort of a novel. *Catch-22* is a slow burner, a piece of truly magnificent comic nuance and narrative skill. I've read it four or five times since, and every time it gets bet-

ter as I notice more and more of what it has to offer.

★★★★★

- ANGELA PROCTOR

How many errors did you spot?

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REVIEW FATE OF THE WORLD (PC) ★★★★☆

I have a severe love-hate relationship with this title. I *always* lose this game, and I end every session saying to myself "man, fuck this game. I'm never playing it again". I usually uphold this promise to myself for a couple of days, and then I start it up again. It's a very vicious cycle. I believe the reason I am faced with such overwhelming cognitive dissonance is that this is an incredibly ambitious and innovative game, yet because it is exploring such new territory, it has many design flaws that can send the calmest of videogame players into a rage. So basically, I think the game is incredibly awesome yet also terrible at the same time.

The reasons I love this game are mostly to do with its design concept, which I find to be incredibly cerebral and challenging - the year is 2020, and people are beginning to realise that the issue of global warming is not going to be solved by the short-sighted policies of individual nation-states. So a new global supra-government called the 'Global Environmental Organisation' is formed to implement far-sighted and long-term policies to ensure humanity's survival. So basically, the playable character you control is effectively the dictator of this newly established environmentalist reich. You can name your character anything you want, and can even choose the title that your underlings

address you as - this ranges from 'Sir' to 'Your Worship' to even 'Dude'. You can then pick a whole range of scenarios with various objectives - such as expanding oil extraction and using the funds to combat global warming, to ensuring that global temperature rates haven't increased beyond 3 degrees by the year 2100, and even an unlockable mission for all the sociopaths out there entitled 'Dr. Apocalypse' in which the goal is to increase the global temperature to the point of worldwide human extinction (one of the lose conditions for this mission is literally "getting lynched"). The gameplay is turn-based, with each turn representing five years, and you allocate government agents in particular regions (North America, Japan, Europe, Oceania, etc). Each agent represents one playable card for the region, and you choose cards representing the particular policies you want to implement in the region - from improving the infrastructure, welfare programmes, investing in technological innovation, manned missions to Mars and even mass genocide.

This is a great idea for an educational strategy game, and to top it all off, it is based off actual academic research by the Oxford climate scientist Dr. Myles Allen and this adds to its sense of realism. However, the game undermines its own educational goals by its high level of difficulty and a ridiculously steep learning curve. Now, I'm no idiot when it comes to complex strategy titles - but even the most ball-bustingly difficult strategy titles I've played I haven't found as difficult as this game. Even on easy mode, I still felt that I had very little money to fund my grandiose world-saving schemes, and one feature of the game in particular was constantly sabotaging my progress - in which



governmental agents that I had stationed in politically turbulent regions would constantly go missing, and then I'd have to divert funds to recruit new ones, sapping my low funds even further. Often regions would become hostile to the GEO and I increasingly began to feel that the populace will hate me no matter how much I attempted to appease them.

The user interface also is not particularly self-explanatory in regards to the consequences of your actions, the only way to really become "good" at this game is to read strategy guides for hours. This is no problem for the really hardcore strategy gamers that



make up a segment of this game's market, but the game's primary market - that is, the average layperson that this game wants to raise awareness about climate change to. However, if you are the aforementioned hardcore strategy gamer who is willing to put in the effort to learn the ins-and-outs of the game's mechanics, the outcomes can be very rewarding and insightful - it's too bad it takes so much work to get there.

To find out more, you can purchase this game at <http://fateoftheworld.net> or alternatively from Steam for only US\$20.

- ELI BOULTON

The Welfare Officer's Column

A survey has found that our British student counterparts' main goal whilst at university isn't to get a degree, but to get over 500 Facebook friends & to be photographed with a Z List Celebrity. So in the interest of your welfare I have compiled a list to help you find friends and Z list celebrities, as well as amuse you & help you procrastinate.

Ultimate List of Uni Students Facebook Likes:

Auckland University Students Association (AUSA): For the coolest events & information. Do student politicians count as Z List Celebs?

AUSA Advocacy: Information about class reps & how to get out of tricky situations

Craccum: The student magazine written by the people you elected last year, look out for the craccum boxes around campus for your free copy

Shadows: After a few jugs here you will make friends guaranteed.

Student Job Search: For when all your \$ starts to run out & you need a job

The University of Auckland: For serious updates about important university things

Campus Recreation: Coz you have to look good in that photo with the Z list Celeb. University, its like being on the dole but your parents are proud of you. Pretty self explanatory, you decide if it's true

University of Auckland Society for people who like free shit: Find out where all the free stuff on campus is!!

Student Card: Discounts for students!

Meat Club: All the meat you can eat at the fortnightly barbeque all for \$15 a year.

University of Auckland Sport: Might find a A list celebs here & make hot new friends

95bFM: Here it blasting in the quad

Overheard @ University of Auckland: Post all those funny things you overhear people saying, and have a laugh

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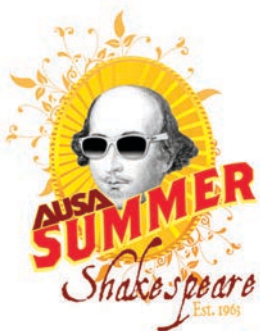
LAST WORDS



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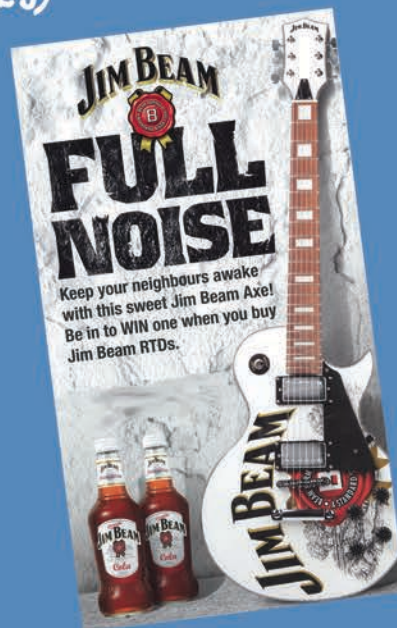
A "WELCOME BACK" GOES OUT
TO SOME OLD TAP FAVOURITES
MACS HOP ROCKER, MACS GREAT WHITE
AND ORANJEBOOM.

WIN WITH WINE!

STAMP 4 OF ANYTHING OFF
OUR WINE LIST AND GO INTO
THE DRAW TO WIN \$500
WORTH OF JB HI-FI VOUCHERS!



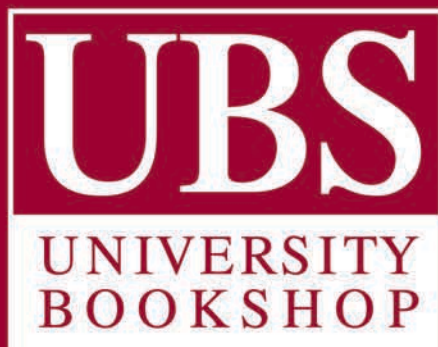
BUY JAGERMEISTER
AS YOU LIKE IT
AND GO INTO THE DRAW
TO WIN A
JAGER STEREOBAG
AND JAGER COOLER



STAMP 4 OF ANY
JIM BEAM PRODUCT
(JIM BEAM WHITE/DRY/BLACK RTDS,
JIM BEAM WHITE/BONDED/RYE/BLACK
AND JIM BEAM RED STAG)
AND GO INTO THE
DRAW TO WIN
A JIM BEAM AXE

YOUR ORIENTATION WEEK BURGER IS
THE CHEESE BURGER!
@ \$4.00





Why waste money renting textbooks?

Example:
Chance Encounters by Wild & Seber

UBS

Used Price: \$ 104.29
We pay you to buy it back: \$ -73.75

Total Cost For The Year: **\$30.54**

Other Advantages:

- Get your book instantly
- No risk of losing money due to minor damage to book
- No time frames to return it by
- No additional cost to highlight
- No penalty for writing in book
- If you choose to keep it, still cheaper overall
- Be sure you are getting the correct edition
- Support your Students Association

Over
\$40 cheaper!

WINNER!



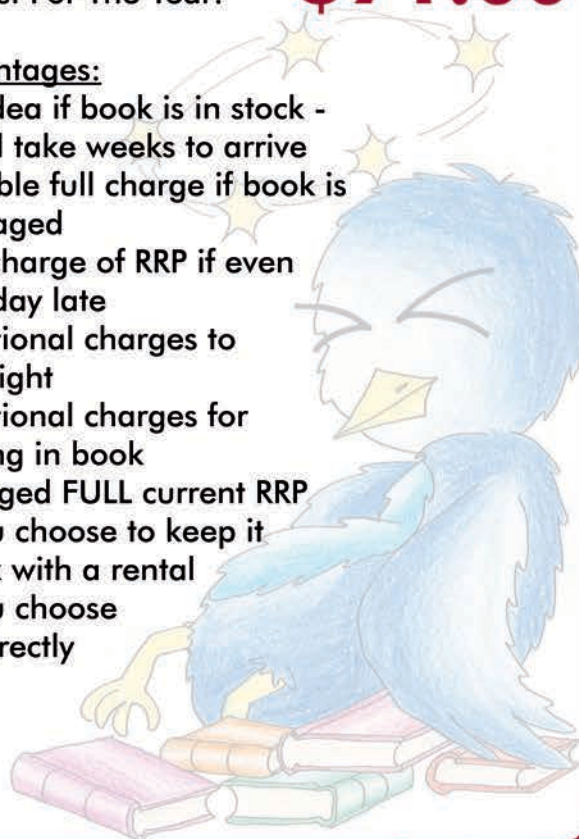
Rental site

Basic Rental Price: \$ 71.00

Total Cost For The Year: **\$71.00**

Disadvantages:

- No idea if book is in stock - could take weeks to arrive
- Possible full charge if book is damaged
- Full charge of RRP if even one day late
- Additional charges to highlight
- Additional charges for writing in book
- Charged FULL current RRP if you choose to keep it
- Stuck with a rental if you choose incorrectly



Example only. Information taken from website 23/2/12. Buybacks must meet UBS's criteria - see in store for details.

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