

Inside:

Student Spotlight.....	5
Political Fisticuffs.....	6
Op/Ed.....	7
Entertainment.....	8

forum

The Vermont Law School Student Newspaper

VLS Professor Wins NWF Award

By Julia Horrocks

Pat Parenteau came full circle in his career last month when he won the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Conservation Achievement Award.

Parenteau's career in environmental law began thirty years ago as counsel for the NWF in Washington. At that time, he recalls, "there weren't too many jobs for environmental lawyers, particularly young lawyers. They just weren't available." He has since worked with the NWF in other capacities, including director of the Resources Defense division, and later Vice President for Conservation.

Steve Wright, NWF Northeast Regional Representative, nominated Parenteau for the NWF award. Wright and Parenteau have known each other for twenty years—since they were Agency of Natural Resources Commissioner colleagues under Madeline Kunin, the first female governor of Vermont.

In his nomination piece, Wright emphasized Parenteau's devotion to teaching. He said Parenteau is a teacher because "he wants people to pay attention to what's actually going on, and to confront whatever challenges they face. He's compelled to be a teacher— he simply can't be anything else."

Wright's nomination recognizes Parenteau's devotion to environmental protection at the national level, but Wright also points out Parenteau's active participation in the local community. "Pat has made huge accomplishments in every area of environmental law,

from the spotted owl to the Platte River settlement...but Pat is also a functional member of society," says Wright. "Pat hunts and fishes. He has a range of interests and experiences that are all too rare these days. Most professional environmentalists would give their teeth to have Pat's experiential background. He may seem larger than life sometimes, but Pat is a real person with strong family and community connections."

Parenteau has been particularly influential in the New England area. Jim Murphy, Wetlands and Water Resources Counsel for the NWF in Montpelier (and recent VLS LLM recipient), said the following about his experiences with Parenteau:

"Over the past generation, Pat has truly stood as a giant among environmental lawyers. It has been a privilege and an honor for me not to mention a lot of fun—to have worked closely with Pat in defending the Clean Water Act from unprecedented attacks over the past few years. Pat has also been instrumental in helping NWF achieve other key legal victories, like the recent Northeast Wolf case under the ESA, which preserves hope that wolves will once again howl in the hills of Vermont and Northern New England."

The NWF award is not a small thing for Professor Parenteau. He said it is truly humbling to receive recognition for accomplishments that are really the product of collective efforts. "The victory in



Professor Parenteau receiving his award. Photo Credit: NWF

the wolf case, for example, wasn't a victory for me; it was a victory for the clinic and for VLS. The lesson is that success in anything depends on working together. The greatest joy in practicing law comes from working with colleagues you respect and with whom you share a common bond. That makes the victories sweeter and the inevitable defeats less lonely."

Parenteau said he is honored to be recognized in the same light as Eliot Spitzer and Senator John McCain, who also won the legislative category in 2004 and 2005, respectively. "It's humbling to be considered part of a group like that."

Parenteau's wife and kids traveled with him to Washington, DC where he received the award. He finds it rewarding as a father for his kids to hear about the work that he does, and to learn that others recognize and appreciate it. "That alone," said Parenteau, "makes up for the lack of financial award as an

environmental lawyer."

To those of us who are currently pursuing our own careers in environmental law, Parenteau said the NWF award demonstrates that "if you work hard— it might take a little while— eventually you will get some recognition."

Professor Parenteau's biography is available at: http://www.vermont-law.edu/academic/index.cfm?doc_id=364

The official Press Release for Parenteau's NWF award can be viewed at: http://www.vermontlaw.edu/media/emp_medpre_template.cfm?doc_id=1281

For more on the other 2006 NWF Nation Conservation Achievement Award winners, please see: <http://www.nationalwildlife.org/about/connieawards2006.cfm>

FORUM

STAFF

Sarah Cogan
Editor-in-Chief

[Kerry Bleskan] [Caitlin Callaghan] [Andrew Clopman]
[Ellen Crivella] [Natalie Karas] [Samantha Balmes]
[Julia Horroks] [Pamela Lundquist] [Justin Mowitz]
[Robert Rachlin(Faculty Advisor)]

SUBMISSION POLICY

The *Forum* is a student publication serving Vermont Law School and its surrounding community. Please contact the *Forum* office for advertising information: forum@vermontlaw.edu or 802-831-2050.

Every effort is made to publish the *Forum* each month during the Fall and Spring semesters. We encourage all articles, comments, and inquiries without prejudice. Submissions may be submitted in MS Word or Wordperfect format on a CD-ROM or emailed to the e-mail address above. Additionally, hard copies of the article may also be submitted. We reserve the right to edit all submissions as necessary, and the editorial staff makes the final printing decisions. Nevertheless, we will do our best to see that submissions are printed.

The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the editorial staff.

The *Forum* is printed on recycled paper with water-based inks since 1975.
©2006 *Forum*.

SCORE-ing Points With High School Students

By Andrew Clopman

An event allowing high school students to learn about some legal issues will return to the law school next semester after a two year absence.

The Youth for Justice Summit at the school last took place in 2005, but with some encouragement from Dean Shirley Jefferson, SCORE, the Students for Community Outreach and Education, recently decided to revive the event.

"It's a day-long conference for high school students from all over the state where they attend workshops about law," explained SCORE president Jill Pfenning. "It will be a lot of work, but Dean Jefferson is fully behind us."

The students that organized the event in 2005 had graduated and nobody picked up coordination of the event last year, so Jefferson approached Pfenning earlier this year to see if SCORE would be willing to take the lead in reviving the event. When Pfenning mentioned the possibility of organizing the event to the group's members, she said they agreed that bringing back the event would be a great benefit to the state's high school students. There has not been a date set for the event yet, but Pfenning said it would likely be toward the end of the semester.

The event will consist of workshops that will serve as an introduction to some aspects of the legal profession to high school students. Although law students in the past have not led the workshops, they nonetheless play an important role in the event.

"In the past it has drawn practitioners and professors," Pfenning explained. "But law students help organize it and make sure it runs smoothly."

The summit is not the only program SCORE is helping to coordinate this year for the first time. Pfenning and fellow law student Amanda Mott joined administrators from the South Royalton School to organize a mentoring program that connects law students with high

school students. There are currently ten law students who are mentoring high school students, and there are eight other students at the law school who are waiting for a match. The mentors plan independent activities to do with their high school students, and they also attend group activities.

"(The high school students) took to it really well considering that we were outsiders and strangers. But it is different for them than spending time with teachers or their friends," Pfenning pointed out. "We are also sort of their peers because we are closer to them in age, but because we are a little older it creates a certain respect."

In addition to the new projects, in the fall semester SCORE continued some of their more traditional projects. In the middle of the semester 13 law students made a series of in-class presentations at the South Royalton Elementary School. The presentations focused on diversity, and law students discussed such topics as martial arts, Hanukkah, Myanmar and languages like Mandarin, Spanish, German and Swahili.

A small group of law students also spoke to seventh grade students about diversity in response to a report of intolerance at the school. The law students talked about prejudice and led a discussion about a video on tolerance from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

SCORE also held their annual college fair last month. Law students represented their undergraduate institutions at the fair, which attracted students from South Royalton High School and Randolph Union School. Pfenning said there were about 50 or 60 law students present at the fair.

"(The high school guidance counselor) said her students always give her feedback that the college fair here is more meaningful than the bigger college fairs because they can meet students, not recruiters," Pfenning explained.

Making Giving Fashionable: Vermont Lawyers Lending a Hand

By Kate Kennedy

Have Justice Will Travel Hosted One Pearl Fundraiser on December 10, 2006 3-5pm at Three Bean Café Randolph VT

for every style and budget. 100% of all profits from the sales will benefit Have Justice Will Travel and other non-profits dedicated to helping children.

One Pearl's mission is to support organizations dedicated to the health and educational needs of children. This is accomplished through the sale of pearl and semi-precious stone jewelry and handmade, imported silk products. Have Justice Will Travel is a non-profit family law and social service organization working to end the generational cycle of violence in Vermont. One Pearl has something

Consider buying a Holiday gift for someone you love, or maybe even one for yourself!

Please visit www.onepearl.net. Please contact HJWT at (802) 685-7809 for more information.



Sherri's Headquarters Ltd
South Royalton, VT
802-763-7759
For all your hair-styling needs.

Study Abroad Next Year: VLS International and Comparative Law Programs

Current Programs

Dual Degree Program: J.D. and French Masters II
Vermont Law School developed a dual degree program with the University of Cergy-Pontoise in France to provide graduates with the knowledge of multiple legal systems and a mastery of at least one foreign language. This comprehensive training benefits students seeking employment in areas of law and policy with international dimensions. VLS is one of only a few American law schools to offer such an opportunity, which establishes a solid foundation in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the common law and civil law legal systems.

The four-year program combines two years of study at Vermont Law School with two years at two leading French universities: three semesters as degree students at the University of Cergy-Pontoise, just outside of Paris, and one semester as visiting students at the University of Montpellier, in the south of France. Students also complete two internships at French law firms.

Students who complete the program earn a J.D. from Vermont Law School and an advanced level master's degree in business organization from the University of Cergy-Pontoise. Graduates are eligible to sit for the bar examinations in the U.S. and France, according to the requirements of each country. Successful bar candidates in France can practice in any European Union member state, due to the EU's reciprocity rules.

LL.M. in American Legal Studies

Vermont Law School offers a one-year LL.M. in American Legal Studies. This degree program, which has earned the acquiescence of the American Bar Association, is open to international students. Students may currently complete the one-year program as part of the

dual degree program with the University of Cergy-Pontoise. In the future, the program may be open to other international students as well.

Certificate Program in International and Comparative Law

Vermont Law School has recently announced a new certificate program in international and comparative law. The program responds to the increased demands that globalization has imposed on law professionals and the increasing importance of transnational practice. The new certificate program is designed to provide VLS students with the opportunity to pursue a curricular concentration while in law school and to develop the skills and substantive knowledge needed for professional careers involving international and transnational law. In order to receive a certificate, participants must earn 18 credits in international and comparative law, including required courses in public international law and comparative law, and must satisfy a study abroad requirement. Certificate recipients must also earn a grade of B or above in designated required courses and graduate with a minimum of an overall B average. Students interested in earning a certificate must ordinarily declare their intent to participate in the program during spring semester of their first year.

International Semester Study Abroad Programs

Vermont Law School students wishing to explore both the law and the culture of another country may study abroad for one semester at universities in Canada, France, and Italy.

• McGill University Faculty of Law, Montreal, Canada

Montreal is a culturally diverse city — the largest French-speaking community outside of Paris — combining 18th and 19th century

architecture with a contemporary metropolitan setting. The McGill law faculty is known for international and comparative law and aviation law. Its course offerings on Canadian law include both the civil law and common law legal systems. Students may attend McGill during fall or spring semester, and courses are taught in English and in French. Some French language training is available.

• **University of Trento, Trento, Italy**
Located in the northern alpine region, Trento represents a crossroads for the contrasting cultures of Italy and northern Europe. Here, in this city of art and history, students study international law and comparative law, as well as Italian law (civil law system) at the University of Trento, widely recognized as one of Europe's leading schools in the areas of European and comparative law. Students may attend Trento during fall or spring semester, although most attend in the spring. Courses are chiefly taught in Italian, with some taught in English and others in German. Some Italian language training is available.

• **University of Paris 13, Villetaneuse, France**
The university is located on the northwestern edge of Paris, and the capital's extraordinary cultural offerings are easily accessed. Participating students primarily study courses on French Law (civil law legal system), but some courses on international and comparative law and the European Union are available. Students may attend Paris 13 during fall or spring semester, although most attend in the spring. Courses are taught in French only. Some French language training is available.

International Semester in Practice

Experiential learning is an important component of a comprehensive legal education, and VLS's Semester in Practice (SiP) program offers numerous international opportunities. Vermont Law School students have recently spent semesters at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, with United Nations volunteers in Ger-

many, a UN agency in Kenya, The Hague in the Netherlands, environmental agencies in Costa Rica and India, a consulting practice in Chile, a solicitor's office in London, and a private law firm in Italy. A few students have combined an international semester in practice with a semester of study abroad.

Comparative Law Seminars Including Foreign Study

Comparative Law Seminars including foreign study are taught in English by international faculty. For the first half of each seminar, students attend classes at Vermont Law School. During the second half of the course, students attend intensive classes held at a foreign university during fall or spring break. Students enrolled in "Emerging Constitutional Law of the European Union" attend the University of Trento in Italy; students taking "Modern Spanish Constitutional Law" attend the University of Seville in Spain. Environmental Columnist, the Japan Times International Programs Involving Special Projects

Vermont Law School has partnerships with Petrozavodsk State University in Karelia, Russia, and with Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou (formerly Canton), China. These connections have primarily involved faculty exchanges, with occasional special projects involving study abroad opportunities for students. During the summer of 2004, for example, Vermont Law School sponsored a second Comparative Law Study Abroad Conservation Field Study course, which was co-taught in Russia by faculty from VLS and Petrozavodsk State University. In addition, a Vermont Law School student was teamed with a student from Sun Yat-Sen University to work on a special environmental project, which was supervised jointly by VLS and Sun Yat-Sen faculty.

• **Russia**
Vermont Law School has a long-standing relationship with Petrozavodsk State University in Karelia,

Continued on pg 4

Study Abroad (Continued from pg 3)

Russia. Our faculty have taught at PSU and played important roles in developing the Russian law school's legal clinic and library. In addition, in 2004, Vermont Law School sponsored a summer Comparative Law Study Abroad Conservation Field Study course, which was co-taught in Russia by faculty from VLS and PSU.

• China

Our partnerships also include an association with Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, China. VLS students are teamed with students from Sun Yat-Sen University to work on special projects, often with an environmental focus, jointly supervised by VLS and Sun Yat-Sen faculty. These projects usually involve student travel to China.

International and Comparative Law Programs Information Session

Friday, January 26, 2006
12:45 - 2:00 pm

Hoff Lounge (Oakes Hall)

Open to all students who want to find out about international and comparative law programs and study-abroad opportunities available at VLS, including the new Certificate Program in International and Comparative Law. Come find out what's available and how to apply.

Sweet Melissa Moves On...

By Sharon Levasseur

Yep, it's official - Melissa Kalinen is finally leaving VLS. There were some of us who doubted it would ever happen. She has been so ensconced in the local goings-on for so long, we truly wondered if she could ever leave. But the good news is she will still be living in South Royalton and you'll undoubtedly see her out on the town on a Friday or Saturday night (maybe both!).

Melissa has been walking around Vermont Law School for many years. Since 2000, Melissa has been employed at the Cornell Library and the Environmental Law Center. And she worked at the South Royalton Legal Clinic for longer than any other VLS student in its history - approximately three years! She also received her MSEL degree and then continued on to receive her Juris Doctor. Certainly every building on campus has felt her footstep. And not only has she

been a staff member, and a student but she has brewed delicious coffee at Grounds for Appeal; starred in the Vagina Monologues for four years running and then ran around town for the Chase Race!

Assuredly everyone who has known Melissa will miss her presence at VLS. We will miss her hopes for a brighter future; her work for the less privileged in our society; her ideas about the direction our nation should take. We will miss her laugh. We will miss the popcorn and chips that seem to be ever abundant on her desk. We will miss the organic dark chocolate she loves to share. We will miss her questions about what is happening in all of our lives - whether mundane or important . . .

But we fully realize that Melissa is moving on to bigger and better things. As the newly hired Legislative Aide for Downs, Rachlin and Martin in Montpelier, her

amazing collection of shoes will now be climbing the Statehouse steps. But those same stairs have felt her footfall many times. Last year Melissa interned with Senator John Campbell, Vice-Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee. She worked hard to get an immigration bill passed by both the House and Senate requiring judges to ensure that criminal defendants are informed of the potential immigration consequences of entering guilty or nolo pleas. Melissa also worked as a legislative volunteer with the Vermont Commission on Women attending Congressional meetings and preparing reports. She pre-

sented supporting testimony on the Commission's behalf regarding a bill to increase Vermont's minimum wage. She participated with a women's coalition that met with Governor Douglas regarding an Equal Pay Day resolution. And over the past year she has served as the Vice-Chair for the Royalton Democratic Committee.

Yes, being in Montpelier every day to talk about policy and changes in the law should be a natural fit for Melissa. And we wish her well as she embarks on this journey that is hopefully only the beginning of her aspiration to make a difference in this world.

Tips for Winter Running

By Natalie Karas

Did you eat one too many Christmas cookies over break? Are your jeans a little too snug for your liking? I know the thought of exercising in bone-chilling temperatures during a winter of gloomy, sunless days is far from appealing, but perhaps a new workout routine is in order. Here are 10 tips that may help you get out the front door:

1. Plan Ahead. Check your schedule for the next day to see when you have a block of free time. Since the sun sets earlier these days, maybe a morning workout would be your best bet. Setting your workout clothes out the night before can also be a helpful reminder to go on that run.

2. Fuel Up. You know what works best for your own body, but a general rule is to eat something at least two hours before you go for a run. Peanut butter on a bagel, a banana (chock-full of Vitamin B6), or a Cliff Bar (the new Mojo is quite tasty) will keep you energized no matter how much snow is outside.

3. Dress Properly. Dressing in layers is probably your best bet. A base layer should be lightweight and fit snugly against your skin. Try something made of high-tech polyester or lycra. Use a middle layer on those unbearably cold days. This layer, usually made of fleece, helps insulate the body by trapping heat close

to it. An outer layer protects your body against the elements—rain, wind, and snow. Look for one with some reflective striping.

4. Keep a log. If you are serious about developing a running habit, a log can be a helpful tool. Amazon.com has some good ones, but if you are low on cash just use an old notebook. Include the date, how many miles you ran, how you felt (on a scale of 1 to 10), and any other comments you wish. Look back at the days when you felt extremely good and try to repeat what you did (a certain stretch, something you ate beforehand, etc.)

5. Run to the Beat. Some find running boring. If you fall in this category, try running to music. Make a playlist that lasts for 30, 45, or 60 minutes and run until the last song finishes. A little Bruce Springsteen will surely get those legs moving!

6. Have fun. Exercising should be something that you enjoy. Running can provide a welcomed break from studying (as if you needed another reason to procrastinate, right?). Your body will thank you for making a positive choice!

7. Set realistic goals. Be ambitious—just not too ambitious. If you have never run before, expecting to run the Boston Marathon in under 3 hours is probably not some-

Continued on pg 8

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Helping HANDS By Samantha Balmes

Thanksgiving is the time for giving and the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) certainly did its share. At a time when students are giving to each other and providing support to those who could not go home for the Thanksgiving holiday, BLSA was also thinking about the community outside the school and beyond fellow students. Each year BLSA dedicates about a month to a fundraiser which supports the Helping to Advance the Needs of the Disadvantage in our Society (HANDS). To find out more I went to Ryan Reid who provided some enlightening information about their helpful hand-me-down fundraiser.

The most vital question was “Why?” Why Vermont and not Boston or New York City? The answer to this question rested with Vermont Law School. Ryan nicely stated a very simple answer, “Vermont Law School brings people from all over the country and we have the duty to help any way we can.” He further went on to say BLSA wanted to donate locally so people in this area could benefit. In fact, the donations are being given to the Upper Valley Haven which will distribute the donations to towns in the Upper Valley. This area includes South Royalton, so students can see the direct impact they have made on their community. In times, when many people believe they cannot make a difference, being able to see the results of your efforts is very important.

Next on the plate was the process behind the fundraiser. I was interested in whether BLSA had considered other types of fundraisers before deciding on HANDS. Quite honestly Ryan confessed that BLSA has not considered other drives. He agreed that “toys are much needed in any community so that all children can have a nice

holiday season, [but] the reason that we have clothing and food drives is because law students usually have canned goods or clothes they don’t wear anymore and need to get rid of. Toys would require more money or time.” Money and time, two resources many law students do not possess enough of to donate. As a result, BLSA decided on something practical and simple: clothes and food. The result: abundant success.

30 large Rubbermaid bins of clothes and 3 bins of food were the outcome. A large Rubbermaid bin is approximately 30 gallons. That’s 900 gallons of clothes and 90 gallons of food! A little surprising? Ryan thought so: “It was more than we expected. I was sure that we would collect a lot of clothes but was surprised at the quantity and quality of clothes that people donated.” A huge donation from BLSA and VLS students with an infinitesimal donation of time. The effort for students was simply dropping clothes and food in a bin when passing through the Chase Breezeway. BLSA members volunteered to pick up the bins twice a day. This was a “low time commitment” so there was a wealth of volunteers.

Congratulations BLSA, who would also like to send out a special thank you to “the VLS community for their generous donations to our cause. Helping others is something VLS prides itself of and the community really showed their dedication to that.” Also, thank you to the “professors [who] emailed me to say what a great idea or [provided] words of support for what we were doing. Finally, an extra thank you to Shari Robinson, Ryan Reid, Torend Collins, Florence Cornish.”



Ryan sitting amongst the piles of clothing collected during the drive.

Acting Up With Becky Turner By Sarah Cogan

So...word has it you're kind of a big deal. Is that true?

Ha! I'll let people decide that one for themselves. Do I think so? Emphatically no. Do I have a t-shirt stating otherwise? Oh, yeah – as does Jami Westerhold!

You were awesome in the Specific Performance show. Have you always been interested in acting?

Hey, thanks. It is so much fun to act opposite Ryan Petersen, he makes my job very easy. Everyone was fantastic; I was impressed with all the hidden talents of our fellow classmates (including my interviewer.) I am looking forward to next semester's show.

I've been acting my entire life. When I was little, I would charge my parents a nickel to come to my shows. These were the shows I put on in the living room where they were the only audience members. I couldn't get my older brother to even watch, and I made my little brother be my supporting cast, so who else was I performing for, but them? My first starring role was in 3rd grade – I was Mama Bear in “Is Spring Here?”

I continued to act throughout my academic career, and even found time to act with the Drama School while getting my master's. I participated in a number of community theater productions while I was living in CO (Summit County).

The Denver Post reviewed one of my shows written by a local playwright. The critic said I had “acrobatic charm”. I'm not really sure what that means... I'm taking it as a compliment. He also said my gestures seemed over-rehearsed, but I chose to overlook that comment.

Aside from Specific Performance, what other groups are you involved in on campus?

In addition to directing and performing in Specific Performance, I am co-chair of WLG with Jami and a 2L SBA senator. I will be directing the Vagina Monologues in February and I try to make as many Alliance meetings as I can. I also am a mentor for two great 1Ls, Torend Collins and Peter Gill. As a research assistant for Prof. Dycus, I edit articles for the National Security Law Journal.

I know – seems like a crazy list. I swear I am getting help – I was thinking of starting a support group but then realized that would mean yet another meeting and seemed counter-productive.

Do you have any plans/goals for post-law school life?

I came to VLS as a kind of career change (I was a mediator for environmental policy conflicts). My master's is in environmental management and my internship this summer is with the Conservation

Continued on pg 8

POLITICAL FISTICUFFS: POLITICAL INTEGRITY

Swinging From the Left

By Pamela Lundquist

From Infallible to Accountable

On November 30th, the NALS sponsored Keith Harper, who spoke in Chase Center for ninety minutes. Since inception of the case more than ten years ago, Mr. Harper has (and continues to) represented the plaintiff class of 500,000 individual Indians in the landmark Indian trust funds lawsuit, *Cobell v. Kempthorne*. The case is a trust action brought against the United States for gross mismanagement of Native American lands. For more than 100 years, the federal government has defrauded the American Indians of hundreds of billions of dollars. It's an outrageous and incredibly sad story that shamefully continues right through to the present. Apparently, no politician or administration (of either party) will stand up and take responsibility for what has happened and continues to happen.

I suppose that's not too unusual considering that we live in an age of infallibility. It started long ago, perhaps with the idea that monarchs and emperors were descended from the gods and therefore could do no wrong. Religions like Christianity perfected the concept and concentrated the power of speaking for God in one figure, the Pope. (I'm not picking on Christianity here, it's just the religion with which I am most familiar.) A person who claims to speak or act for God cannot be wrong, the logic goes, because God is never wrong. Therefore, that person never need apologize or be held accountable by mere mortals. Apparently, the federal government is the modern, secular version of the "God-speaker" (embodied in our fearless leader, Mr. Bush).

Many more people and entities seem to have adopted the posture of infallibility. Corporations fight environmental pollution cases for years, denying any wrong-do-

ing, and then finally settle with the government. In fact, many settle with the provision that the defendants will admit no guilt. Politicians deny, deny, deny, until the evidence against them is overwhelming. Then they slip away in ignominy, except when they don't.

Now, imagine a world in which someone (a president, an Interior Secretary) finally said enough and sat down with the tribes and began a dialogue about paying Indians their due and cleaning up this disastrous mess. There's a moral imperative to do so, but that's rarely enough motivation for a politician. But consider also the political capital that action would create: the United States' international reputation might be repaired, to a degree, if the world saw that we were finally taking care of our own. It might also repair some of the domestic distrust that has been building over the years. Mr. Harper thought that with the new Democratic majority in Congress, there is some hope of resolving the Indian trust case through legislation.

I have some hope that Democratic Congressional leaders might institute an era of accountability. Since the "war on terrorism" began, we know mistakes were made, at the very least, and at worst, the American people have been lied to repeatedly. Among other things, I would like to see a truly independent inquiry into the intelligence assessments that led us to war, what the president and his advisors knew, and when they knew it. If politicians were so eager to hold accountable a president who lied about his sexual relations, it is only fair and logical that they do the same for a president whose lies have had far more serious consequences.

Thankfully, Donald Rumsfeld has finally resigned, though it came several years too late in my opinion. I doubt we will ever hear

Jabbing From the Right

By Justin Mowitz

I'm getting sick and tired of the Washington blame game! After a victorious election season for the Democratic Party, and the promises of "a new direction" in which the soon-to-be-majority party proposes to take the country, rhetoric and blame still appear to be the crux of the Democratic Platform. I, for one, believe we should be able to expect the Democratic Party to step up with concrete plans to "fix" what's "wrong" in Washington. Better yet, maybe we could even see a bipartisan effort to affect those changes. Unfortunately, we've yet to see an idea more earth shattering than the played out statement "our troops need to come home;" (we all want that, so do they) or the ever-popular, "Republicans are corrupt."

Since I've yet to hear any real plan attached to the Democrats' "new direction," I decided to check out the website of the Democratic Party, www.democrats.org to see what I could find there. Unfortunately, (but not the least bit surprising) it is no more enlightening than the Democratic talking heads. At first, eye-grabbers like THE 6 POINT PLAN FOR 2006 and, point one of the six point plan: HONEST AND OPEN GOVERNMENT, make it appear as though the "new direction" offered by the Dems might actually be a real one. A closer look reveals the true meaning of phrases like these: greater, or at least continued, partisanship in Washington. There are a lot of other wonderfully worded rhetorical statements on the DNC website, but let's just focus on the first point (since this format doesn't allow space for more than that).

Under the headline HONEST AND OPEN GOVERNMENT, the Democratic Party boasts: "[w]e will end the Republican culture of corruption and restore a government as good as the people it serves, starting with real ethics re-

form." Ooooh, say it again. That's a great headline guys. No really, it is. And it's followed up by an even better exercise in totally meaningless rhetoric; honestly, a culture of corruption???. That's heaping it on a bit thick, isn't it? Where are the meat and potatoes here? How will the Democrats accomplish all they claim? I don't see those plans in print anywhere, nor can they be found on the party website. In fact, on the website, what follows this empty rhetoric is a long list of stories about corrupt politicians and lobbyists (lots about a certain new federal inmate named Abramoff), and individual "scandals," like the Mark Foley issue; and yet, no real plans to make any changes. Certainly not any "new direction" I can follow. But I digress, if only to ask: What party hasn't had its bad apples? Have we already forgotten about Paula Jones, Monica Lewinski, CHAPPAQUIDDICK? (I bet Mary Jo Kopechne's family hasn't forgotten about that one!) What about Barney Frank (D-Mass.), and his male prostitute? Federal Election Commission fines in excess of \$700,000.00 for the 1996 Democratic Party fundraising scandals involving certain contributions from China, Korea and other foreign sources? Look, I know the list is long but be not dismayed; it isn't, by any stretch, exhaustive. All I'm doing is demonstrating by example that famous old saying, you know, the one that begins: "those who live in glass houses."

Where the problem really gets out of control, is when statements like this show up: "Mark Foley scandal has revealed the Republican Party's claim on being the party of moral values for what it really is - a politically calculated illusion to accumulate power from social and religious conservatives." Aren't we giving a disturbed individual a little too much clout here folks?

Continued on pg 7

Continued on pg 7

OPINION/EDITORIAL

Vermont Has a Law School?

By Sarah Cogan

That is the exact reaction I got from many of my friends two years ago when I told them I was going to VLS. Some of these people even grew up in Vermont. I don't know about you, but I find that a little sad. We have a great school here filled with amazing students, and yet people don't even know we exist. Why? Simple, we aren't a top 100 school according to US News and World Report, and we aren't affiliated with an undergraduate institution.

But you know what? I honestly believe VLS has the potential to be a Top 100 school. Really. I challenge anyone to find a more passionate, dedicated, enthusiastic, and caring group of wannabe lawyers anywhere. We've got small town charm coupled with big city know how. Our professors are just as knowledgeable and our students just hard working as those higher ranked schools. So just what is keeping us in US News's third tier? Well for starters selectivity is fairly non-existent. According to the Princeton Review, 51% of all VLS applicants are accepted each year. (By comparison, the top 3 ranked schools; Yale, Stanford, and Harvard, accept 6, 8, and 12 percent of applicants respectively.) Now I'm not saying that we should start rejecting people just for the sake of rejection. But I think we all should decide just what sort of reputation we want for ourselves. Do we want to be the school people go to just because it's easy to get into, or do we want to be the type of school people apply to because its respected and they have worked hard to get there? Personally I'll take the latter.

Another reason our ranking is so low is because of our bar passage rates. The first time bar passage rate for VLS grads is only 63% (according to the Princeton Review). I really doubt that this is in anyway a reflection of our intelligence. It's much more a reflection of our lack of access to bar courses. It's wonderful that VLS offers so many courses in environmental, in-

ternational, and public interest law, in fact it's the whole reason I came here. But these subjects aren't on the bar exam. Things like estates, evidence, are on the bar. With only one or two overfilled sections of these courses each semester, students simply aren't getting the information they need.

A third reason for our lower ranking is our equally low prospective starting salary. On average the starting salary for VLS alumni is about \$44,000. (Made even less appealing by the nearly \$100,000 average debt after graduation.) Part of this may be because of the types of jobs VLS students are drawn to. (I guess it doesn't pay, monetarily speaking, to save the planet and fight injustice...it should, but it doesn't.) But part of it also has to do with the fact that VLS is virtually unknown outside of Vermont, and high paying firms want students from big name schools. The more we can do to get the name "Vermont Law School" out there in a positive light, the better our chances for higher paying jobs.

Not an easy task I know. But I still have hope for VLS in the long run, and so do the Deans and the Trustees. In fact the whole reason I started to write this article was because of a conversation I had with a fellow student about the new plan for increasing tuition. I learned that the goal of the plan is to raise our ranking scores by recruiting students with the credentials US News looks at (high test scores, high GPA, etc). The extra tuition money will allow VLS to offer more competitive aid packages to prospective students, given them more incentive to attend. Plus, a higher price tag on the school changes how people perceive the school. More expensive translates to higher quality. We think that way about everything, even if you don't all admit it.

Now I don't claim to be an expert on the new tuition plan (not even close), and I don't know all the details. For that you will have to speak with the Deans (which I en-

courage, I am sure they would appreciate student in put). But from what I do know, it has serious potential for increasing our school's standing nation wide, and that in my

opinion is a good thing. It's about time VLS gets the recognition it deserves for being such a unique and remarkable school.

Swinging from the Left (Continued from pg 6)

Rumsfeld apologize, though, or even admit to any misjudgment. (Clinton did—and that may be why he's still around today.) Rumsfeld's departure makes up, in small part, for the fact that no one significant has been, or likely will be, held accountable for the stunning security failures of September 11th or the torture at Abu Graib prison in Iraq. Apparently, he was the fall guy for the fall elections more than anything else.

Jabbing from the Right (Continued from pg 6)

Seriously, Mark Foley no more represents true Republican Party morality than Barney Frank represents the ideals of the Democratic Party. Really, it's a pretty simple concept, the old phrase about "one bad apple" is just not applicable to a political party, and to believe so is utterly irresponsible. Sure it's easy and probably even convenient to blame the Republicans, but here's "an inconvenient truth:" people, like Mark Foley, sometimes make bad decisions. Deal with it! That the Party didn't pounce on him (like the media hoped they would), simply shows respect for a long held tradition in this country, that one is innocent until proven guilty. Besides, personally, I think groups should always circle the wagons around a troubled member. Rally 'round the family! I'm defending him or saying what he did was right. I'm just saying that it certainly wasn't representative of "collective" Republican morality.

Regardless of how easy it

Of course, Democrats are nervous about doing this because some of them will not survive an accounting of this sort, on the scale I am suggesting. In light of the significant political capital to be gained, however, I think it's a gamble worth taking. Americans don't expect their political leaders to be perfect, or even right most of the time, but I think that we should expect them to be honest, have integrity, and answer our questions.

is to blame one person or a whole group of people, the fact is, it starts out badly when blame enters the picture at all. What the incoming congressional leadership needs to focus on is this: what's done is done. Let them come up with a plan to change the things they don't agree with. But whatever they do, it needs to start with a concrete plan that represents the wishes of the people who put them in office. I can't argue with the American public, we (collectively) have made our choice. What I can do now is demand that the people in office do their jobs and represent me and the rest of their constituents, and not the retaliatory interests that reside in the atmosphere of partisanship. Despite claims of a new direction, I've yet to see evidence that anything other than partisan politics as usual is to come out of Washington over the next two years. Democrats, show me the money! So far, I'm not that hopeful.

**Got something to say?
Send it in!
forum@vermontlaw.edu**

ENTERTAINMENT

Becky Turner Interview (continued from pg 5)

Law Foundation, so it would seem logical that I would stay with the original plan. But for the first time in my life, I don't have a hard-fast plan. It's taken a year and a half, but I am now comfortable with not having answers to this question. I'll see how I like CLF and the "other side" of resolving environmental conflicts. I am very interested in civil rights and human rights and could pursuing that career path as well.

What in your opinion are the best and worst things about VLS?

The answer is the same for both – the small community. It is the best part of VLS because we are a tight knit group that cares about each other and are there to lend a helping hand. In no other law school in the country would people feel comfortable leaving their laptops in the library while they leave to eat lunch.

Running Tips (Continued from pg 4)

thing to shoot for at first. Set simple goals at the onset (3 days of running per week) and build from there. If you are a more advanced runner, try finding a nearby race to give you an incentive to train.

8. Be safe. Avoid running at night if you can. Speaking from personal experience, running on Highway 14 can be quite dangerous after 5:00. If this is absolutely impossible, run with a reflective vest or head light.

9. Motivation! Find creative ways to stay motivated. Rent "Without Limits" or "Chariots of Fire" (great running movies!). Write an inspirational quote on your wall. My per-

sonal favorite is from Juma Ikangaa, the 1989 NYC Marathon winner: "the will to win means nothing if you haven't the will to prepare".

10. Run with others. Running with others is a good way to stay motivated. According to Runner's World Magazine, Vermont has the most runners per capita—29.1%—so finding a partner should not be too difficult. I also would like to start up an informal running group that meets for long runs once a week. If interested, please email me at nkaras@vermontlaw.edu.

And finally, if someone sees you out at Crossroads and wants to buy you a drink, what should they order?

If they are buying, I'll drink almost anything. But if they want suggestions I like UFO, Black and Tans, and Captain and Coke.

Good luck!

Human Rights and Cake, a Winning Combination



Students kicked off VLS's new human rights program with cake and smiles. Photos courtesy of Mark Seltzer and Dean Jefferson.

Entertainment Quick Picks

Books:

- (Fiction) *You Suck*, by Christopher Moore
- (Nonfiction) *The Audacity of Hope*, by Barak Obama

Movies:

- (In Theater) "The Pursuit of Happyness"
- (On DVD) "The Gaurdian" [available January 23].

Music:

- (On CD) "Black Parade" by My Chemical Romance
- (Live) *Larson*, at the Pickle Barrel Night Club in Killington, January 25 at 8PM

Television:

- "Shark" Thursdays at 10 PM on CBS

Theater:

- *Hurricane*, Feb. 6 and 7 at 7 PM at Dartmouth's Hopkins Center

YOUR AD HERE

Advertise with us! Call 802-831-1299 for more information.

CHELSEA ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Offering Integrative Small Animal Medicine

Anne M. Carroll, DVM

- Medicine • Surgery • Dentistry •
- After-Hour Emergency Service •
- Selection of Innova, California Natural, Eagle Pack & Raw Diets •
- Traditional Chinese Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine •

Monday 8-5 Tuesday 8-6 Wednesday 8-5
Thursday 8-12 Friday 8-5 Saturday 8-12

For an appointment, call 685-3232

