

Living in London, Matt goes on Fall Break

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Staff Writer



We in London have been on our fall break this past week, and for me it seemed to be an appropriate time to take stock of how people were feeling about being in London at our official halfway point, by issuing an informal survey. I want to make it clear that there were no deep psycho-analytical questions or Guantanamo Bay-like lock-

ups until I got the answers I wanted. No, these questions were purely superficial – I asked people what they missed the most about America, and if they had any interesting facts to share. These facts did not necessarily have to be about London, but most seemed to pertain to experiences people have had in London.

I want to preface the rest of this column by saying that I have had the pleasure of being in London this semester with an absolutely wonderful bunch of people and the only reason I have left anybody out of this column is because there was not just enough space to include everybody.

So like the good little researcher that I am, I gathered all the information and read it all. As I began reading the information, several things struck me, but perhaps the factoid that struck me the most was that people missed

the same things or same type of things. For the record, no one completed the sentence "What I miss about America the most is ..." with "family" or "friends," but the question was presented as being more geared to superficial answers.

For example, seniors Doug Robertson and Christina Middleton and junior Mackenzie Parsio all wrote that they miss Chick-Fil-A the most of anything in America. In fact, out of 23 different answers, 15 of them related to food somehow, with Chick-Fil-A and peanut butter and jelly as the most popular answers. Sesame chicken got one vote from senior Spencer Witherspoon. We are expecting the chicken's concession speech shortly.

But what about the other eight people? Some people put certain television shows that they missed, but the two that were the most interesting were junior Ned Arenberg's

answer, "the concept of affordability," and junior Jarred Knight's response, "alone time."

What I take from all of this information is that the people on this trip are expressing something that is natural when one moves out of the places and is away from the effects he or she is used to. Leaving peanut butter may not be that hard, but leaving one's personal comfort zone is.

I am not trying to make this into a free plug for the Semester Abroad program, but it is really true that a person cannot appreciate another country without living there for a certain period of time. I learn things all the time that I would never know if I just read about London in books. Do you know what junior Rosamund Elizabeth Combs-Bachmann misses most about living in America? Not having black snot. That's

right: living in London gives you black snot; thank you, pollution!

Also, people tell you living in any city is expensive, but London is in a class of its own. Every British pound is equivalent to anywhere from \$1.60 to \$1.78, so an average pint of beer will run you £3 (\$5.30), a meal will run you about £9 (\$16.50) and a T-shirt at French Connection United Kingdom (FCUK) will run £20 (\$35.50). At least in New York a person can get a slice of pizza and a drink for about three dollars; here in London, the best one could hope for is not to get ripped off too badly.

So that is just a little sampling of being in London from everyone else on this trip and me. What I have taken away from this trip is that no matter how different I expect things to be, it is often more different than I expected. Oh, and finally, to watch out for the cars – they drive on the left here.

Voice your vote, consider Democrat Howard Dean

Dylan Grayson

Staff Writer

Civil rights, justice, the economy – which presidential candidate has the best policy on these issues? I think it's Democratic candidate Howard Dean.

Dean became the governor of Vermont in 1991. He added sexual orientation and gender identity to Vermont's hate crimes statute, and in 2000 he made Vermont the first state to recognize same-sex unions, giving gays and lesbians legal rights like rights of inheritance, child custody, and decision-making power (giving couples access to hospital visits and health insurance).

"I signed a civil unions bill ... when only 35 percent of the people in my state supported

it," said Dean at a Sept. 25 debate at Pace University in New York.

If elected, Dean plans to expand same-sex couples' rights nationally. For example, he will allow federal employees to list same-sex partners as beneficiaries, and he will work to ban workplace discrimination of gays and lesbians.

Dean also says he will repeal parts of the Patriot Act that undermine our constitutional rights. The Patriot Act allows the government to conduct surveillance and gather intelligence to fight terrorism, but many feel this needlessly attacks civil liberties.

Dean proposes to create one million jobs through a \$100 billion Fund to Restore America. He says this will aid state and local governments in creating jobs in the fields of

health, homeland security, and education, and by building and restoring schools and roads. He also says he will balance the budget, even if that is unpopular. "It's not an accident that in 1993 when the House and Senate supported balancing the budget, that that kicked off this tremendous time of prosperity," he said May 17 at an American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees debate in Iowa.

Dean's economic record in Vermont is a strong one – he created 56,000 new jobs and decreased the unemployment rate from 6.9 percent to 3.7 percent. When he came into office, Vermont had a \$70 million deficit, but in 2001, Vermont had a \$10 million surplus.

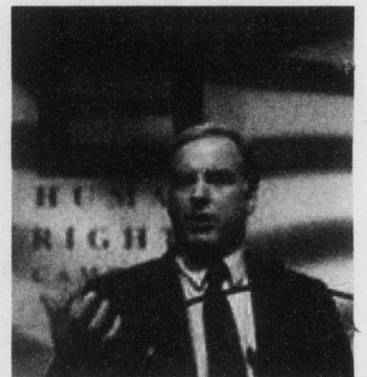
Other students at the college favor Dean as well.

"Howard Dean is the only candidate with the experience, integrity, and vision to be President," first-year Adam Waxman said. "His campaign will go down in history as one that changed American politics forever. Dean's campaign is eclectic – I think young people have a real opportunity to become leaders and help to really shape the future of the country."

However, why should you care at all? Why should you vote? To quote the song "Freewill" by Canadian progressive rock trio Rush, "If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice." Too few people aged 18 to 25 vote. According to the Center for Information and Research

on Civic Learning and Engagement, 42.4 percent of 18-to-25-year-olds vote, but a whopping 70.3 percent of people over age 25 vote – and theirs are the voices that will be heard if you don't cast your ballot.

Dylan Grayson is a first-year.



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Dean delivers keynote address