

**IN BRIEF**

**Children and TV viewing**

According to recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics, children under 2 years old should not watch television and older children should not have television sets in their bedroom. The group says television viewing can affect the mental, social and physical health of young people. The academy based its recommendations on knowledge of what babies need for proper brain development. However, many parents who were interviewed agreed that television's influence was a proper concern for pediatricians, but it was unrealistic to set arbitrary limits. The academy has spent over two years developing the latest policy statement. In 1997 it started the "Media Matters" campaign to educate pediatricians and the public on positive, as well as, negative influences the media has on children.

—Tiffanie Hughes

**Orange County blacks rejected for mortgages**

The Community Reinvestment Association of North Carolina and the N.C. Fair Housing Center recently conducted a survey that revealed that minorities have a harder time getting mortgages than whites, especially in Orange County. According to the 1997 Federal mortgage reports, blacks get denied home loans at a rate 3.4 times higher than whites and income does not appear to be the determining factor in who does or does not receive a loan. Black loan applicants in the same income bracket as white applicants get turned down for loans at a rate 5.6 times higher.

—Tiffanie Hughes

**Tuition climb slows**

According to a study done by the College Board, tuition and fees nationwide rose less than 5 percent for the current school year. A thriving economy, brimming state coffers, vigorous stock market boom, and efforts by schools to reign in costs are the economic factors that have contributed for the slow increase. College Board president, Gaston Caperton, states that this is money well spent—a four-year college degree doubles the earnings of a high school graduate. He said, "the average is around \$30,000 a year vs. \$60,000 a year." The \$30,000 difference equals and increased earnings of \$1.2 million in a 40-year career time. "Education is expensive but it's not nearly as expensive as not getting an education," said Caperton.

—Tiffanie Hughes

**Microsoft's Bill Gates gives \$1 billion for minority scholars**

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation scholarship funds are targeted to scholarships in the sciences, mathematics, engineering and education fields. The scholarships awarded through this program will cover tuition and expenses for 1,000 students per year for the next 20 years. The United Negro College Fund will participate in the administration of the minority scholarships. According to UNCF President, William Gray, "the scholarship will lead to increases of 15 to 40 percent in the number of minorities who receive doctorates in mathematics, the sciences, engineering, and education." Bill Gates is the Chairman and CEO of Microsoft Corporation. He has a net worth of over \$90 billion.

—Monique Perry

## College Scholarship Fraud Prevention Act of 1999 introduced in Congress

By RHONDA SCIARRA  
DAILY EGYPTIAN—SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIV.  
(U-WIRE) CARBONDALE, ILL.

A bill currently being presented to Congress aims to prevent incoming college students from losing millions of dollars to fraudulent scholarship scams.

The "College Scholarship Fraud Prevention Act of 1999" adds 10 years to prison sentences of people convicted of fraud if criminal activity involves education. The bill also requires the Federal Trade Commission and Department of Education to maintain a website that contains information about legitimate college scholarships.

Sen. Spencer Abraham (R-Michigan) and Russell D. Feingold (D-

Wisconsin) sponsored the legislation, which went before a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing a week ago.

Monica Brahler, public relations coordinator for the Financial Aid Office at SIUC, said students should be leery of unsolicited scholar-

ship services that provide information through the mail or via e-mail. "A good rule of thumb is that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," she said.

Brahler said the Better Business Bureau and Attorney General's Office are great resources for checking the

validity of a scholarship service's claim.

She said if students are curious about a company or service, they should not hesitate to look into the business' past. "If a business is not willing to give you references or work with you, I think red flags should be going up," she said.

The first legal action against scholarship scams began in fall of 1996 when the FTC launched project Scholar Scam and shut down five fraudulent companies. Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of the FinAid website (www.finaid.org), said scholarship scams have always existed.

"If you have to pay money to get money, it is probably a scam," Kantrowitz said. "A scholarship is about gaining

money - not giving money." The eight organizations that have since been shut down by the FTC defrauded more than 175,000 consumers of \$22 million. Kantrowitz estimates total consumer losses from scholarship scams

to number in the hundreds of millions of dollars. "By the time I could assemble proof that an organization is fraudulent, the organization has already been in existence for well over a year," Kantrowitz said. "By the time fraud is proven, they have changed their name and address."

Along with a crackdown on fraud, the FTC has launched programs to educate students about what types of scams are fraudulent.

"Educating consumers on how to recognize these types of scams will do more to thwart these scams than any law enforcement," Kantrowitz said.

A type of scholarship fraud, known as guaranteed scholarship services, guarantees students will earn a designated amount of money but require students to pay for the services. Kantrowitz said the claims these services make are unreasonable.

Kantrowitz said there are several legitimate services on the Internet where students can benefit from.

Terri Williams, academic scholarship coordinator for New Student Admissions at SIUC, said students can find enough ways to earn scholarships at no cost.

"There are enough scholarship services out there that students can take advantage of without paying someone to do that for them," she said.

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—MONICA BRAHLER  
FINANCIAL AID OFFICER

*If you have to pay money to get money, it is probably a scam.*

—MARK KANTROWITZ  
FINAID WEB SITE PUBLISHER

## Census officials are working to get an accurate account of college students in 2000

(U-WIRE) WASHINGTON — U.S. Census Bureau officials plan to launch a major paid advertising campaign, worth \$167 million, in an effort to ensure a more accurate count of the American population for the 2000 Census.

The move stems from concerns about the handling of the 1990 census, which had a 10 percent decline in the mail response rate to the original questionnaire, said Jennifer Marks, chief of the Census 2000 Publicity Office at the U.S. Census Bureau. And with the dramatic decline in the public's response in 1990, government planners and legislators on Capitol Hill want as clear a picture as possible of the American public — college students included.

"The goal is to reach everyone who lives in the U. S. ages 18 and over and to persuade them to mail back their census," Marks said.

Lessons learned from the 1990 census forced the bureau to pursue a new advertising tactic.

"Evaluations of the advertising and placement in the media in 1990 suggested that a small part of the population received the messages," Marks said. The new campaign will feature print, broadcast, and billboard advertising.

The areas in which college students are counted provides vital services to college towns, said Karen Mills, a demo-

*Getting Census 2000 right will take a heroic effort. And the stakes are high for different sectors of society. Now the Census Bureau has taken to \$167 million advertising campaign. But the process is fraught with possibilities of error, such as when parents count college students who also get counted at the university.*

graphic statistician in the Census Bureau's Population Division.

"If they're in a dorm, they'll be counted at the university," Mills said. "The main concept of 'Residence Rules' is usual place of residence. The students live in the community, rely on the resources and patronize the business establishments. They do this for the greater part of the year."

As a result, double counting often occurs when the students' parents include their children in their census replies and the students return their own copies. This is one of several enumeration errors, according to Ken Wachter, chair of the Department of Demography at the University of California at Berkeley.

"The major problem is the potential over-count which comes from the 'Residence Rules' and parents who double (count for college students),"

Wachter said.

Despite the duplicated enumeration among college students, certain sectors of differing socio-economic backgrounds are traditionally undercounted, Census Bureau Historian Michael Hovland said. "The attitude of wariness tends to be concentrated among minority populations," Hovland said. Past census data indicates that certain sectors of the population prefer confidentiality and are fearful of releasing their data to the government. He said young black males account for the largest undercounts.

Edward Spar, executive director of the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics, said officials are not sure how the undercount is spread out, but he said he hopes the approaching census will give such indications.

"The Bureau is correct in its attempt

to get more people involved. The more they can try to set up an environment where people truly believe it's in their best interest to respond, the more will," he said.

Some analysts believe that changing the wording of the census to reflect social change will ultimately improve results. Though the Census Bureau tries to keep the census questions congruent from decade to decade, changes in wording may create some discrepancies, Spar said.

"The wording has been determined because of historical context and cognitive research," he said.

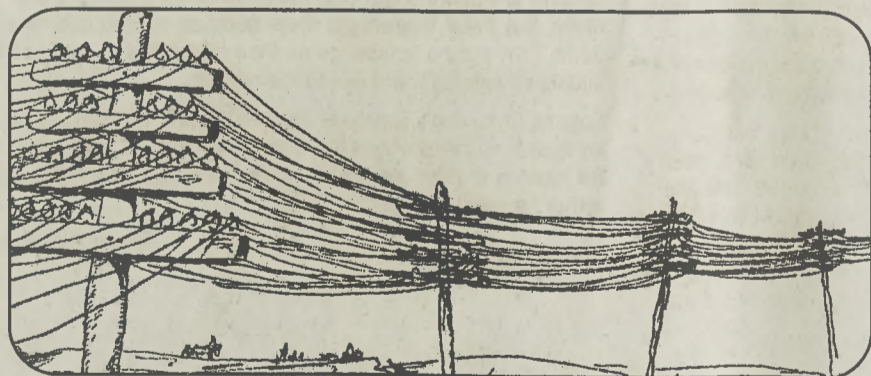
Wachter said some changes the Census Bureau has made could be detrimental.

"I expect Census 2000 to be the most troubled census of the decades," he said. "There were bad decisions to put very high reliance on failure-prone statistical methods."

"I do think the Census Bureau is making heroic efforts," Wachter said, "but in the face of social changes. They're running faster to stay in place."

Spar took a more optimistic view. "You've got to look at the Census as a national ceremony," he said. "It is astoundingly important to understand what we're about and the major implications of where we're going as a society."

### Echo-gram seven:



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- b) "Eagles in Flight" submissions
- c) "In Brief" topics
- d) story ideas
- e) interviews with our reporters?

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