

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

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NEW PALTZ, N.Y. (CPX) - This isn't your typical campaign headquarters.

The walls are adorned with old New Yorker magazine covers, impressionist art and posters of Budweiser babes.

There's also a dartboard bearing a photo of Tom Nyquist, mayor of the village of New Paltz, N.Y., and arch-rival of the candidate who's name is plastered all over this joint: Russ Ferdico, a senior at State University of New York at New Paltz who, at the ripe old age of 23, wants to become the village's next head honcho.

The race is shaping up to be

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the hottest one New Paltz has seen in years. While Ferdico's budget prevents him from conducting polls, he promises more voters will show up to vote than in the last six years.

Not that that would be too hard to guarantee. In 1993, voter turnout was just 450 people. That figure dropped to a measly 34 voters in 1997.

As the March 16 election nears, Ferdico, a history major, is confident that the village of about 5,500 will support him and his platform of common sense, communication and consolidation.

He's depending on his buddy and campaign manager, 22-year-old Clark Whitsett, a junior at SUNY-New Paltz, to help him spread his message and convince voters that he's not the clueless kid his opponent is making him out to be.

Ferdico moved from the Bronx to the New Paltz area in 1991 and decided he'd found a place he'd like to call home. He worked on projects concerning the university and got involved with the local government scene.

Most recently, he landed a job as a paid political advisor to state Sen. Emanuel Gold while also taking 16 credit hours.

Ferdico was lobbying in Albany for lower tuition costs when he met Whitsett, who was reporting for the college newspaper.

A year later they bumped into each other again while working as state Senate interns. Ferdico was

waiting for an elevator when Whitsett asked about his future plans.

"I told him I was thinking of running for mayor," Ferdico said. "Clark's eyes got wide, and he said, 'You gotta let me help you!'"

"We met for a beer the next week. He wanted to check out my ideas and make sure it wasn't a joke. And it just escalated."

Escalated into a vigorous and exhausting contest against Nyquist, who criticizes Ferdico's youth and his out-of-town background.

The campaign has spun into the biggest challenge Nyquist has faced in years. Nyquist has held the \$10,000-a-year job for three four-year terms - two of which were unchallenged.

Ferdico, who expects to graduate in May, one month after

the new mayoral term begins, is running a campaign that's focused on marrying town and gown for once and for all. He acknowledges local sentiment that college students cause problems for the village's year-round residents.

He readily admits that some college students bring binge drinking, rowdiness, crime and property destruction to town, but he suspects most of that trouble is actually caused by students living outside of New Paltz. He points to police logs that routinely display many out-of-towners' names after weekend festivities.

Ferdico is also bent on getting the student vote. So far, convincing students that they need to get involved in the political process has been like pulling teeth, Whitsett said.

"I'm like, 'Hey, vote for a student's mayor. The current mayor wants to close bars at 2 instead of 4. That's bad for you. The current mayor wants to bring state cops in so if you get caught with an open container, that's immediately jail and not just a ticket or a nice slap on the wrist,'" he said.

If Ferdico wins, he won't be the only 23-year-old mayor in New York. Marc Molinaro was elected to the top post of Tivoli, N.Y., when he was 19. He's now also 23.

But if Ferdico loses, he says, in mock Swarzenagger, "I'll be back. I'm not giving up; I'll help these people. They're not rid of me."

## Tufts students rally for more tolerant campus

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MEDFORD, Mass. (CPX) - Nearly 200 students at Tufts University rallied for a more accepting and tolerant community after campus police reported that a gay student on his way home from an off-campus party was beaten severely.

Investigators called the Feb. 28 attack, which landed the student in the hospital, a hate crime. Students throughout campus likened it to the savage beating that resulted

in the October death of gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard.

"The alleged perpetrator has been named, identified (and) we can take some feeling of satisfaction, relief at knowing that the person is not associated with the university," Bruce Reitman, associate dean of students, told those who had gathered during the March 3 rally.

Members of gay support groups on campus organized the demonstration. They posted signs

asking "Do you know what happened this weekend?" Speakers included many openly gay students and faculty members.

"The sentiment that it wouldn't happen here, that it happens at other places, is a serious problem," said Carl Sciortino, president of the Tufts Transgendered, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Community. "People consider this campus to be safe, and I think we need to remember not to feel too safe."

## Oregon state capitol building trashed after bash

College Press  
Exchange

SALEM, Ore. (CPX) - It appears folks affiliated with Willamette University know how to party.

An inaugural celebration last month for the school's new president, M. Lee Pelton, attracted about 2,000 people and resulted in the worst damage ever done to the Oregon State Capitol Building, state

officials said.

Clean-up crews found stains on the rotunda wall and on the bronze state seal in the center of the rotunda's floor.

Piles of manure littered the capitol's grounds thanks to horse-drawn carriages the university had used without obtaining the required permits first.

The state has ordered the university, located directly across the street from the capitol building, to

pay to have all floors re-buffed, the seal polished and the marble wall refinished to remove the stains.

The costs will not be substantial, state officials have said.

Despite the damage, state officials have said they would rent the facility to the university again.

Both school and government officials blame the damage on a crowd that was double the number of guests expected.

## 'Journalism' a 'cuss word' to online maven Matt Drudge

College Press  
Exchange

NEW YORK (CPX) - Traditional journalistic rules don't apply to online columnist Matt Drudge's work - or so he says.

"I don't call it journalism," he said Feb. 26 during a 90-minute talk with about 70 students at New York University. "To me, that's a cuss word simply because I think there was a period in the past 20 years when we got away from aggressive reporting."

Drudge, the first to report the relationship between President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, touted the success of his Web site and his lack of journalism experience before he started it. The fedora-clad writer said he reports the stories he finds interesting.

"I like causing mischief," he said. "I like going where the action is. I can't do stories unless they resonate with me."

Drudge was also quick to say that the increase in the level of Accuracy of his daily report "has been

dramatic" in the last year.

Others might disagree. Presidential adviser and former journalist Sidney Blumenthal and his wife are suing Drudge for \$30 million for running with a false story alleging that Blumenthal "has a spousal abuse past that has been effectively covered up."

Drudge quoted an unnamed Republican source as saying there were court records backing up claims of Blumenthal's use of violence against his wife. Drudge later retracted the story.

## Childless couple offers \$50,000 for intelligent egg donor

College Press  
Exchange

CHICAGO (CPX) - The half-page ad started popping up last week in campus newspapers at the nation's top schools - Ivy League colleges, Stanford University and the California and Massachusetts Institutes of Technology.

"Egg donor needed," it said. "Large Financial Incentive."

A childless couple describing themselves as a "loving family" said they're willing to pay \$50,000 to an egg donor.

The donor must be 5'10", able to boast of scoring at least a 1400 on the SAT, athletic and who has "no major family medical issues."

"They just want a child who will be comfortable in their family," Darlene Pinkerton, a represen-

tative for the couple, told the Daily Princetonian, adding that her clients are "extremely tall" and "extremely well educated."

"We have heard that only 1 percent of the college population is over 5 feet 10 inches tall with over 1400 SAT scores."

So far, more than 200 women have responded to the offer. The offer is believed to be the largest amount of money ever offered for a woman's eggs.

The fee, which would just about cover two years of tuition and fees at any of the country's prominent universities, is 10 times the going rate national fertility registries pay egg donors.

Pinkerton said calls are beginning to come in from countries as far away as Finland and New Zealand.

She said women at state schools are calling, too, as are those who are too short or whose SAT scores are too low.

When she ran the same ad on the couple's behalf in October without mentioning the price the couple would pay, only six women responded, Pinkerton told The New York Times.

The couple is offering the amount "because they can," she added.

Some ethicists argue that the sum is indicative that a market stunned only one year ago by offers of \$7,500 for a donor's eggs is spinning out of control.

Others contend there's nothing wrong with looking for specific traits in a donor and paying to get them.