

Scammers utilize Facebook to entrap unsuspecting prospective college students

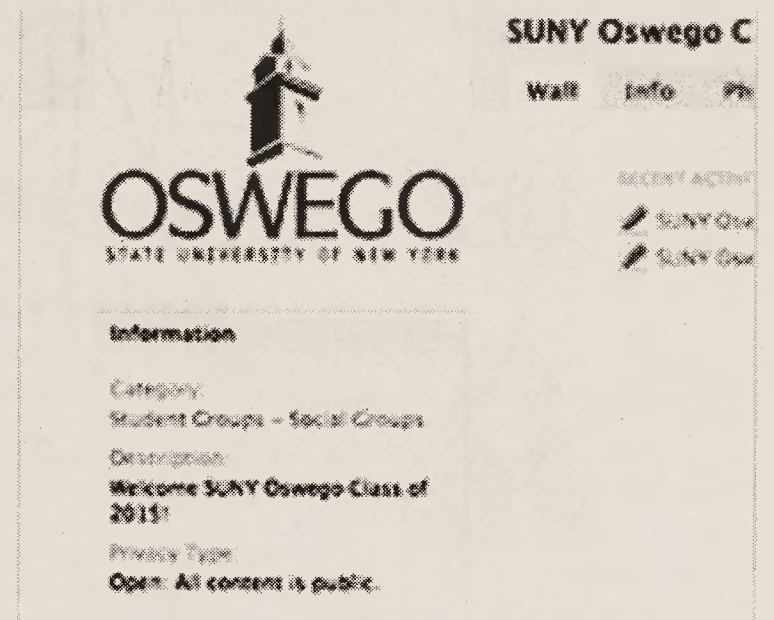
BY MALIKA MARTIN
Reporter

Facebook has turned to scamming teens with their fake college welcome groups. According to Switched.com and CollegeNews.com, certain Facebook pages advertise themselves as online forums for rising freshman classes in over 150 schools, including New York University, Pepperdine University, Middlebury University, Wesleyan University and the University of Texas. Each page features the school logo with descriptions, such as "Welcome SUNY Oswego Class of 2015" or "Welcome to Tufts University Class of 2015," and there is no mention of receiving any updates from the sites via the group.

Such unofficial welcome groups, according to "The New York Times," are part of a clever marketing campaign by a company called Roomsurf.com, whose site helps incoming freshmen find potential roommates for a fee, ranging from \$4.95 to \$9.95; none of these Facebook welcome groups mention Roomsurf nor indicate that users joining the pages receive promotions from the company. Comprised as a "deceptive marketing tactic," J.D. Ross, a media director at Hamilton College, helped to identify Roomsurf as the engine behind the fraudulent welcome groups. He also added that welcome groups created by colleges typically offer valuable mentoring and guidance that those of Roomsurf do not.

Founder and CEO of Roomsurf, Justin Gaither, vehemently opposed Ross's claims, and in response as to why the company's name does not appear anywhere on its pages, Gaither claimed that users could easily click on the name of the group's creator, Justin Blackwell. As it turns out, Justin Blackwell is just a pseudonym he uses for "business-related stuff" and Blackwell is his middle name. He later admitted to "The New York Times" that the name does not appear anywhere on his official documents.

Simon Axten, Facebook spokesman, reminded "The New York Times" that the site "prohibits the use of fake names and false identities." Facebook is also investigating Justin Gaither's online activities.



Roomsurf creates false Facebook pages like this one to trick prospective college students. Some students lost money when they thought they sent it to the college but it really went to Roomsurf. *Internet graphic*

Flavorful Four Loko concoction taken off market due to health hazards

BY LINDSEY STADLER
Sports Editor

Four Loko, the caffeinated, alcoholic, energy drink, was recently banned because of health related issues attributed to its consumers. The beverage takes its name from the original ingredients: alcohol, caffeine, taurine, and guarana. High alcohol content, fruity taste, and an inexpensive price (ranging from \$2.50 to \$3.00) all lend to its popularity among college students because it is affordable and provides a quick buzz.

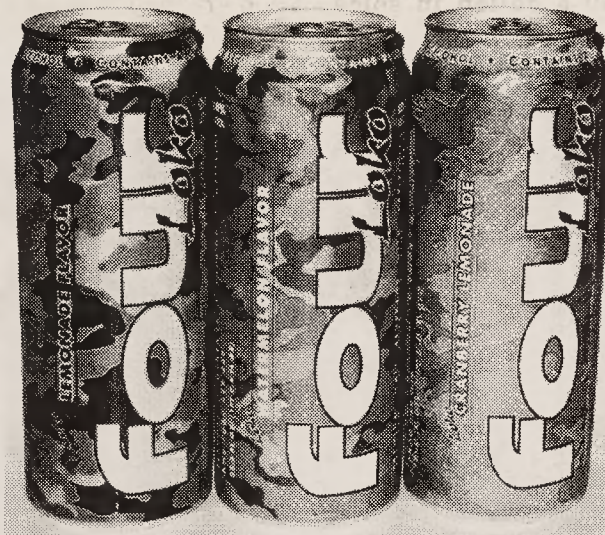
Three students from The Ohio State University, Chris Hunter, Jeff Wright, and Jaisen Freeman, created the drink in 2005, which quickly gained attention across

the nation and Europe. Equivalent to five or six beers, Four Loko boasts a 12% alcohol content. As a result, it has earned the nicknames "black-out in a can" and "liquid cocaine" because of its similar effects.

Lokos come in a variety of flavors including orange, grape, blue-raspberry, lemonade, lemon lime, cranberry lemonade, watermelon, and fruit punch. Although Four Loko is not the only drink of its kind, it is the most popular. Drinks similar include Joose, Sparks, and Tilt. While Four Lokos produce 23-ounce cans with 12% alcohol, drinks like Sparks are packaged in smaller cans with only 6-8% alcohol. Under-aged drinkers enjoy these caffeinated, adult

beverages because they experience the jolt of caffeine while growing drunk faster than they would from other types of alcohol.

After being on the market for almost five years, Four Loko faced ridicule and was banned in several states and on college campuses. This



FourLoko's colorful packaging disguises a dangerous product when misused. The harmful ingredients hospitalized several college students who mixed the drink with other dangerous substances. *Internet graphic*

past December, the product was permanently banned everywhere because of the potential health risks. A group of students from Central Washington University were hospitalized after partying one night with Four Loko. Doctors first suspected a date-rape drug to be the cause but then reconsidered the alcoholic caffeine drink, Four Loko. Its mix of alcohol, a depressant, and caffeine, a stimulant, can be very dangerous since the caffeine masks the effects of the alcohol, which leads people to drink more than they normally would.

Phusion Projects, the company behind Four Loko, quickly began defending their product,

claiming that the drink is not dangerous if consumers pay attention to the warning labels. The college students who were hospitalized not only consumed Four Loko drinks, but they also mixed them with a variety of other forms of alcohol. Four Loko has been taken off shelves and replaced with the same drink without the harmful ingredients. Even so, the old and unsafe version of Four Loko is still being sold illegally in some stores. People have even designed ways to create their own Four Loko beverages. Some chose to stock up when they first heard it was coming off the market. Others began selling cans and such on sites like Ebay and Craigslist.

Second semester brings on new challenges as EOC, AP/IB testing dates grow nearer

BY ANNA KANODE
News Editor

After two snow days in December, four snow days and a delay in January, teachers and students were forced to do a great deal of juggling to accommodate effective instruction before semester exams occurred. Schedules shifted with midterms moving a week later. Many teachers relied on email to communicate with their students and send review sheets to them. Students also depended upon emails to con-

tact their teachers regarding questions on course material and makeup time required.

Students enrolled in International Baccalaureate courses were grateful for the snow days that allowed them extra time to finish their extended essays, but Advanced Placement and IB teachers were not so pleased since the end-of-year exam dates are never postponed; therefore, teachers must cover a great deal of material by the end of April. Instructors fear that many students will not attend school on the spring

break makeup days since they have already paid deposits for their beach rental houses and parents have already reserved plane tickets and hotel rooms for family trips.

"For my IB Oral Commentary, I studied for four days straight, but then with the snow days, my exam was postponed. After enjoying time off, I felt like I had to start all over again to refresh my memory," said senior Megan Goble.

AP and IB English teacher Karyn Collie also made adjustments in her course plans.

"My IB 11 students were supposed to begin their unit on Pablo Neruda poetry two weeks ago, and now they won't begin until January 27. As for my AP students, they had more time to edit their 'Hamlet' video projects, so they were happy," said Collie.

Students generally look forward to seeing the message "Guilford County: closed on..." on days when meteorologists predict snow precipitation since it means they have more time to study or do homework they had procrastinated for

days before starting. However, some have become nervous about not having enough time to learn all the material they need to for the exams in May and June.

As the weeks fly by and testing dates approach, students and teachers stress over possible snow days and makeup time. Unfortunately everyone is at the weather's mercy, which means no one's plans will go forward exactly as scheduled. The best everyone can do is try to reajust and cope with the extra stress.