

The Dean's Almanac

Hot Fun in the Summertime

June 12, 2006

Good times abound here in Storrs. The fun folks in the Student Union have a great lineup of music, ice cream and other important food groups during the day. The Dairy Bar stays open till 8 pm in case you need even more ice cream, and Chuck and Augie's is serving all the turkey panini sandwiches you can eat, without a long line to get a table.



Roving packs of wild freshmen are roaming the campus just about every day, each led by a fearless orientation leader attempting to domesticate them. I've been at some of the evening programs, and I have to say that I am continually astounded by what the O-leaders are able to get their freshmen to do-sing, dance, chant and cheer. Now that's leadership. Or bribery...I'm not sure.

I also have a chance to meet the parents of incoming students and answer their important questions (e.g. "Where's the ladies' room?" and "Is Financial Aid on this floor?"). Seriously, though, parents do have a lot of questions about navigating the bureaucracy of UCONN, and I always tell them the Dean of Students Office is a good place to start. We excel at transferring calls. Sometimes, they ask tough questions. One mother asked me about the number of incidents of sexual assault on campus this past year. I told her that we had a few that we knew of, all of which resulted in arrests and/or serious judicial action. I told her also that we are even more concerned about the number of sexual assaults that go unreported by both women and men. There are a lot of us here on campus who want to provide a safe place for students to get the information and assistance they need when this happens, but many choose not to take advantage of this help. So I have a request: please do at least one thing this summer to prevent a sexual assault from happening in the first place. Keep yourself safe and in control of yourself at parties. Keep an eye on each other. Stop thinking it's cool to have sex (in any fashion) with someone who's been drinking. Tell your friends what they are risking by doing so (arrest, suspension, expulsion).

Thanks, as usual, for all you do to keep your friends safe. I appreciate it.

So what's in the mailbag this week? **Emily** and others have been wondering why they're getting so much spam in their HuskyMail accounts. You're not alone. I've been getting about eight offers a day for Viagra, hot stock tips, and millions of dollars from deposed Nigerian dictators. Here's some useful info from Sue Lipsky over in UITS:

The SPAM appliances that we are buying to handle SPAM will filter the SPAM for both the Exchange (employee) and the HuskyMail (student) email systems. We are looking at putting these into production about the middle of July. Initially we will just tag SPAM like we are

already doing (but better) and then when users have confidence that real mail is not being tagged, we will actually block SPAM at the appliance. We expect that the vast majority of SPAM will be identified with such assurance that it will just be blocked, but some items may still arrive in your mailbox marked as SPAM because the system was not sure. It will be a major improvement in any case, not only with respect to the annoyance factor, but also from a University resource perspective. We currently backup tons of SPAM that people leave in their mailboxes to tape every night!

Erica and others have wondered why we hold commencement ceremonies inside at Gampel, instead of an outside venue like Rentschler Field or Memorial Stadium. I hope that those of you who have lived through the monsoons of the past few weeks know what I'm talking about when I say that outdoor activities are fraught with peril. The unpredictability of New England weather in early May makes an outdoor commencement a logistical nightmare. You don't know what the day will be like till the day before or even morning of, and then you can't accommodate all the grandparents and siblings who plan on attending and come to campus that day despite the forecast. So it's safer to assume bad weather and plan for an inside event. Yes, it means fewer people can attend, but that doesn't mean they can't come to your party and give you gifts.

That being said, I do want to tell you that conversations continue about smaller school- and college-based ceremonies that might allow for more family attendance. Stay tuned on that one.

Aschlee and the O-leader gang have been wondering what UCONN's most popular majors are. Dr. Steve Jarvi, Assistant Vice Provost and Director of ACES, reports that among declared majors, Biology, Psychology, and Political Science are the three most popular. "Biology" includes Physiology and Neurobiology, Molecular and Cell Biology, and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. "Undecided," however, still reigns as the number one choice of UCONN students.

And more on the CT state motto (you'll remember this from a recent Almanac as being "He who transplanted, sustaineth") from Linda Riter:

I think that a better translation of "transtulit" than the one you used is "brought across." The motto refers to the early colonies, and the crossing of the Atlantic that so many early CT residents made. A better translation therefore is "he who brought us across, sustains us." Meaning that God protected them on the Atlantic in their nightmarish journey, and he won't abandon them now. This is merely an opinion, as a 7-year Latin student; take it for what it is worth.

Melissa, like many of you, wonders about parking: "Why can't UConn expand parking to make it easier and more safe for residential students to find legal spots closer to where they live?"

Ahh. Yes. Parking. Back in the early 1960s, a sage man of higher education, Clark Kerr (President of the University of California) predicted that parking would be the most vexing problem faced by higher education, and he has proven to be right. Why can't we expand parking so people can park closer to where they live?

Basically, we've got a space problem. We could pave the whole campus, but some people seem to like this whole "green space" idea. They believe that the pastoral setting of UCONN is, I don't know, quaint and historic or something. Cows need grass, after all. But there are other issues that come with paving, like the loss of permeable area, which is necessary when it rains. You might know we have water issues here, so preserving the integrity of the water table by not paving over everything is pretty important.

A friend of mine in the campus parking business on another campus once said, "We don't have a parking shortage. We have a parking-space-less-than-100-feet-from-the-door-of-the-building-I-want-to-go-in shortage." In other words, just walk. And while you're walking, be thankful for your ability to walk. Or, better yet, ponder the "nightmarish journey" of the early colonists. They had NO PARKING AT ALL, and they didn't complain.

Yes, I know. I have a pretty good parking space here on campus. But as far as I can tell, it's the one perk of my job (well, that and the Frisbee from my Eco-Husky friends), so I don't feel too bad about it. I walked many cumulative miles as a student and staff member at various institutions (don't get me started about the infamous Lot 1 at the University of Maryland-bigger than most counties), so I think I've earned this by now.

That's it for this week. Hope you're all having some fun these days, and, of course, using SPF 30 (at least). A healthy student body is a happy student body, and God knows, I want you all to be happy.

Have a comment or question? Email Lee at Lee.Williams@uconn.edu.

More dangerous than an unanswered question is an unquestioned answer. - unknown