The Phoenix sits down with GSU president Dr. Stuart Fagan to discuss where the university has been...and where it's going. See page 3

King Tut
Is the Field Museum's exhibit worth the riches? story on page 4

Is our Constitution under attack? Three panelists set to discuss Challenges to the Constitution in the Post 9/11 Era. See page 6

The end of the line

Cars wait in line to make it through the intersection of Stuenkel Rd. & Governors Hwy.

The nightmare on Stuenkel Road

By Brian Stanley
Contributing Writer (UNIVERSITY PARK) – It's a four-way stop and it's frequently described with four-letter words.

Even if it's their first day of class, many who arrive here after facing the intersection of Stuenkel Road and Governors Highway feel the same sense of relief and accomplishment some feel graduating college.

The intersection, on the campus' northwest side, frustrates many GSU commuters.

Back-ups are frequent in every direction, especially during the times that see increased activity from drivers using the parking lot of the nearby Metra station.

University Park police will frequently stop traffic in both directions on Stuenkel Rd. to allow drivers to go in and out of the Metra station.

This blocks the movement on the road, which creates a chain reaction that blocks movement at the intersection, which frustrates many waiting to get past it and pull into the campus.

The train tracks, which run across Stuenkel Rd., mark the end of Metra's main line from downtown Chicago. They are located close enough to the intersection that typically only three cars can fit between the tracks and Governors Highway when the gates are down.

"I will not speak for another department, but it would make sense the nearby Metra station is why the intersection remains a four-way stop," said Bruce Gould, Assistant County Engineer with the Will County Highway Department.

Stuenkel Rd. is not a county road, but actually falls under the jurisdiction of the village of University Park.

See INTERSECTION page 2
New greek society moves in at GSU
Mu Beta Alpha, a society geared towards MBA students, starts fresh this fall and seeks new members

By Denise Guzman
Contributing Writer

Governors State University welcomes the new Mu Beta Alpha, a society for students in the College of Business and Public Administration.

William Lawless, president of the society, created it in hopes of bringing students together. The main goal of the society is to network "as people, not just as students," says Lawless.

The society holds fifteen members, and is expecting to have more members join as word of the group is spread.

One of the benefits that members will have in information regarding courses. Scouting reports will be used as a guide for students. The reports will have comments about the course, professors, and an overview of the class. Discussions will emphasize on exchange of best practices and the different techniques that can be used to study.

One of the projects that Lawless plans to established is called Partners Club, where you can come in two's, such as a wife and husband or boyfriend and girlfriend, because many members are married, "They don't want loved ones to feel neglected," stated Lawless.

A key point that Mu Beta Alpha plans to accomplish is to become a national chapter. They have teamed up with the University of Illinois and DePaul University students to recruit more members.

The website is under construction, but will soon be available to students so that they can obtain an overview of Mu Beta Alpha.

Dr. Phyllis Anderson, faculty advisor for Mu Beta Alpha, said MBA students will learn how to become productive in the field, not only in one concentration, but every aspect in general.

Although Mu Beta Alpha emphasis is for MBA students, all students are welcome to join. Mu Beta Alpha will meet the second and fourth Wednesday of the month during the trimester in room A1122. For more information, contact Mu Beta Alpha at MBAProSociety@aol.com.

The gloomy weather is a reflection of drivers' emotions as traffic begins to back up at the intersection of Stuenkel Rd. & Governors Hwy.

"Intersection"

Continued from page 1

Calls to Ben Adcock, the village's public works supervisor, asking for comment on the intersection were not returned.

Governors Highway is a state road managed by the Illinois Department of Transportation. IDOT estimates Governors Hwy. has an average daily traffic count of 7,700 cars on both sides of Stuenkel Rd. Stuenkel Rd. has an average daily traffic count of 8,500.

By comparison, nearby Cicero Ave. has an average daily traffic count of 11,200 cars south of Stuenkel Rd. and 12,800 cars north of it. Interstate 57 sees about 48,000 cars running close to the University Park area.

IDOT statistics estimate 10,000 more cars can be found on Governors Hwy, north of Sauk Trail Rd. each day than on Governors Hwy. at Stuenkel Rd. Sauk Trail Rd. has average daily traffic counts between 21,000 and 29,000 near Governors Hwy.

So while traffic like that has gotten Sauk Trail a stop-light to mark the intersection of Governors Hwy., Stuenkel Rd. remains a four-way stop. And it doesn't look like that will change any time in the near future.

The Will County 2020 Transportation Plan does not indicate any improvements to the intersection, despite an expected population increase that would grow even higher if the proposed South Suburban Airport were constructed in nearby Peotone.

The county's plan does indicate Stuenkel Rd. is expected to be widened to four lanes with turn lanes between Harlem Ave. and Steger-Monee Rd.

The state hasn't ignored the intersection. According to IDOT's 2002 Highway Improvement Plan, $750,000 was spent "to improve the channelization" of Governors Hwy. at the intersection. Channelization shifts traffic movements into definite patterns using islands or pavement markings.

The roadway of Governors Hwy., including the intersection, is scheduled for improvement under IDOT's proposed highway improvement plan from 2008-2012.
Fagan reflects on past, looks towards future

"It's time to move on."

University President heads into final year, but remains determined to conquer challenges, and continue working to improving the quality of education for GSU students

By Robert Wolff

Editor

Dr. Stuart Fagan never imagined he would become a university administrator. While an undergraduate at Boston University, he thought about law school. Then, while getting his PhD. At the University of California, Berkeley, he studied the politics of international economics.

"I looked very different. Not as old...and much more hair," he joked during a recent conversation with The Phoenix.

Now in his seventh and last year as president of Governors State University (set to retire on June 30, 2007), he simply states "It's time to move on."

Fagan got into administration at Fairleigh Dickinson University and later, after working as an administrator for Roosevelt University in Chicago, was contacted by Governors State University about possibly becoming the university president.

Even though he did not originally intend to become an administrator, Fagan claims he is greatly concerned about the future of higher education and what he calls "the contract between the state and the people" for funding higher education.

This concern, along with the unique mission of GSU, is what he says brought him here.

"The mission of Governors State was and is to be an affordable university which draws from all segments of the population... That's what turned me on to this place," he said.

Even before he could begin to work on his vision of a more affordable, more accessible GSU, there were fires to be put out and they changed throughout his administration.

"The challenges have changed over time. They're really very different than they were six and half years ago when I came on board, up to the point of a couple of years ago and we face another challenge now."

To start with, within months of taking office, Fagan learned GSU's Masters of Social Work degree was not accredited when it was required. "We had students in the program... set to graduate and would not be able to sit for licensing and would not be able to practice. It was an unexpected challenge."

Eventually, a new program director and new faculty for social work were hired. This "nuts and bolts" approach to turning around GSU's academic departments, as Fagan describes it, did not stop with GSU's social work program. GSU's academic reputation was in question.

"Every program for which there is a national accrediting agency, and even those that don't need accreditation, we made sure those programs were accredited or they would be done away with."

Fagan added, "What defined those first few years [as president] was making sure every academic program was high quality and if it wasn't, it was going to get there."

A changing political and economic climate, however, would pose a real challenge to that goal.

America's recession around 2002 and the aftermath of September 11, 2001 forced serious hardships on higher education.

"The state revenues declined... for the first time in Illinois' history. The state faced a huge deficit and the response from government officials was, among other things, to cut the higher education budget. And we were cut drastically."

Fagan also states that between FY-2002 and FY-07, although GSU's increase in budget revenues has greatly improved, "GSU's [appropriated] state budget is less now than in FY 02."

GSU had to make cutbacks in admissions and financial aid and the number of classes offered. This begins what the president sees as a "second presidency.""Getting the state legislators to make a stronger contribution to higher education became a priority, visiting legislators in their home districts.

"We visited them, not to ask for any money, but to simply tell them we're different... our average student is the single working mother. We're oriented towards the working adult." With tight state budgets, Fagan feels GSU has been successful in offering a good education at low cost. In his final year as president, Fagan says he wants to expand in improving GSU's academic reputation and will do it using the unique nature of the university.

A few of those plans include helping expand entrepreneurship for small, local businesses, for existing small businesses to expand into the international market, and provide Illinois more teachers certified in the discipline they teach, especially math and science.

Fagan explains by targeting the needs of the community, legislators might be more amenable to funding more of GSU's academic programs. "What we did is...matched the region's needs with what we could do to fulfill those needs and we've had wonderful legislative backing," he stated, adding that at the end of his tenure, there will be a strong focus on "translating to constituents outside the university the vision of Governors State...how our mission is distinctive from other universities, and how investing in us, in our programs will lead to results."

FBI snoops on college student records

Students' names may be in the hands of the FBI

By Katie Reineberg

The Collegiate Times (Virginia Tech)

(U-WIRE) BLACKSBURG, Va. - The federal government has been "striking back" at potential terrorists by looking into student's financial aid records.

Over the last five years, the FBI's Project Strike Back has been giving names to the Federal Department of Education to be searched in Education's database for financial aid, which holds any information provided by any student who has filled out Free Application for Federal Student Aid form.

This data was then used to build data on suspected terrorists. At Virginia Tech, more than 60 percent of students receive some form of financial aid.

Between 2003 and 2004, 76 percent of college undergraduates received some sort of financial aid (loan or grant awards), according to the Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics.

Projections from Science and Engineering Indicators put the total number of undergraduate students in 2006 at just under 18 million nationwide.

While both the federal government and the Department of Education say the program came to a stop in June, both students and education observers were given pause by the program's revelation.

"Why would they have a reason to use my information... I feel like the government should be required to have proof of something before they can take a student's personal records," said Adrienne Lalley, a freshman biology major.

"This [information] is troubling, but not surprising," said Terry Hartle, American Council on Education Senior Vice President for government and public affairs.

"It's hard to be surprised when the federal government is mining every single database, allowing to other government investigations such as the international banking consortium known as Swift. During previous investigations, Education had assisted to requests made by defense officials.

"It's not unusual for the inspector general to cooperate with law enforcement on a number of investigations," said Mary Mitchelson, general counsel to the Education Department's Inspector General, and "most of the program's work occurred in the months after Sept. 11, 2001.

To Hartle, however, the precautions do form part of a larger struggle against terrorism.

"In the war on terror, there are no safe harbors."
Contributing writer, Brian Stanley, takes a look inside the Field Museum’s *King Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of Pharaohs* exhibit to let us know if it’s worth your riches.

It’s hard to think of legends who don’t tour very often. The lucrative box office income. The merchandising opportunities. The ease of presenting material audiences are already familiar with. Most tours make the annual stadium circuit and every few years release an album of forgettable songs, one or two of which are forced upon a live audience before getting to the firework-laden special encore of “Hey Jude.”

So there’s no rush, you’ll see the legends next time. And there’s no need to panic, any special effort to get the tickets (in lieu perhaps, Bill Withers comes out of retirement). King Tutankhamun hasn’t toured in 30 years. But through January 1, 2007, he’s back, at the Field Museum, the site of one of his greatest shows. The Field was one of the stops on his four-year tour in the late ’70s that drew over a million people. Like films coming out then such as *Jaws* and *Star Wars*, the 1977-79 exhibit is considered the first modern blockbuster, influencing every exhibit that has followed.

Tickets are $25 and also include general admission to the museum. Tickets to the exhibition are on a timed entry and sell out several weeks in advance. If you can make it down to the box office at the museum well before you plan to go, do so. If you aren’t able to do that, your other options are ordering online or over the phone. Trying to order online is futile if you’re trying to get more than one ticket and once you’ve been told tickets are unavailable for the date and time you’ve selected, you have to start over at the beginning and re-enter all of the date to look at another entry time. It would be much easier if users were able to pick a date and see if anything was available at any time before trying to get tickets.

So since the web doesn’t work, you can always call and sit through a few commercials before entering the automated ticket system and get the same answers you’d get online with no way to get back. Don’t keep trying, but talk to an operator about ordering tickets. Here, you’ll be able to have some luck, which is only right since you’ll be charged a “convenience fee” of $3 per ticket (fortuitous entries that the website says are unavailable, funny how things open up as the prices increase). However you book the tickets, you’ll be charged $6 for the optional audio tour guide with each ticket unless you specify you don’t want to purchase the audio tour. So you decide beforehand if you want to walk through the exhibit listing to Omar Sharif provide more of a backstory to what you’re looking at.

Because of scheduling conflict, I had to change the dates on my tickets once. I have to admit the staff at tickets.com were great at allowing me to cancel my tickets and reserve the same number for another date. There was no additional charge and the staff checked to make sure the date I wanted was available before canceling my order.

However, the new order is charged immediately, while the refund takes several days to be charged back to your credit card, which creates a lot of chaos for those who have to keep track of their balances.

In terms of arriving, there is one parking lot and one parking garage for the Field Museum, both of which cast a less crowded museum, but allot more effort for a parking space. Entry to the Tut exhibit is around the ticket price, which creates a lot of chaos for those who have to keep track of their balances.

In terms of arriving, there is one parking lot and one parking garage for the Field Museum, both of which cost $15. Soldier field is immediately adjacent to the museum, so anyone visiting on a Sunday afternoon can expect a less crowded museum, but a lot more effort for a parking space. Entry to the Tut exhibit is around the corner from the main museum. When I arrived, the lines moved reasonably well with minimal backup. I got in line 15 minutes before my 11 a.m. admission and was making my way into the exhibition by 10 after.

And as for the actual exhibition itself, the problem with seeing any legend is sitting through the less impressive opening acts. That’s certainly the case here. More than half artifacts are from nonroyals other than Tut. There are 130 items on display in the five rooms of the exhibit. Many visitors will be impressed with the intricacy and durability of the sculptures, chairs, icons and amount of work that must have gone into them. On the other hand, for an exhibition headlined by Tutankhamen, the items that represent him here aren’t only outnumbered, they’re pretty unimpressive. A lot of peripheral and miniature items make up the Tut set list.

Some items are exceptions, like his crook and flail, and a dagger found wrapped in his mummy, but most of the things visitors associate with King Tut just aren’t in his exhibit. Instead of many actual items found in the tomb, visitors see computer simulations of the opening of the tomb on screens inside the main exhibit room. In the next room is one item, a miniature coffin which held Tut’s liver. This item is being used as the main image to advertise this exhibit, seemingly because in a large close-up picture, it has a strong resemblance to his famous death mask, which is not on display here.

Finally, as expected, visitors exit through the gift shop. A surprisingly thin and unimpressive catalogue of the exhibition seems to be the most popular item, even at $50. T-shirts proclaiming the exhibition is at the Field Museum and posters showing the mask that isn’t even a part of the exhibit are also popular items. Hats that resemble a pharaoh’s headress, wine racks and coin banks that look like sarcophagi and inflatable King Tut seemed to be the most fun items in the gift shop. There’s also plenty of jewelry resembling what’s on display or inspired by ancient Egypt.

However, I agree with other visitors who felt misled. There isn’t enough Tut and what is there isn’t very impressive. The pieces would be fine additions to permanent collections, but they aren’t worth the extra expense of seeing them for the special, limited time engagement this has been hyped into.

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**Inlaid Pectoral spelling out the name of the King**

This jewel is a rebus for the throne name of Tutankhamun - “Nebkheprure” - which can be translated as “He is the lord of manifestations.” The beautifully crafted scarab has wings of carnelian, lapis and turquoise, with the inner feathers in gold. The scarab was the symbol of the god Khepri, identified as the sun at dawn.

**Inlaid Pectoral with a Winged Scarab**

Tutankhamun’s heart scarab lies in the center of this stone and glass pectoral. The scarab is made of green feldspar and contains an inscription of the Book of the Dead’s “Heart Spell,” which asserts that the king has done no wrong in his lifetime.

**Coffinette for the Viscera of Tutankhamun**

Tutankhamun’s canopic chest was divided into four hollowed-out sections. Inside each was a small coffinette representing the pharaoh in the form of a mummy and containing his mummified organs.
GSU student honored as McNair Scholar

University Park, July 26, 2006 - Governors State University student Joseph S. Brown Jr. of Glenwood has not let months of service as a Sergeant in the Illinois Army National Guard in Afghanistan follow by a tour in Iraq deter him from his educational goals.

"I was supposed to graduate in 2002, but I was pulled out of school to be deployed. My life was frozen in time so I was eager to get started again when I got returned."

Brown now sees the delay in a beneficial light. Since returning from the service, he has been a scholar in the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement program.

According to Viola Gray, coordinator of the program at GSU, "Students with a 3.0 grade point average and the desire to do research and continue their education join the McNair Scholars program. (currently Brown has a 3.9). It prepares them as undergraduates to pursue advanced degrees through academic advising, faculty mentors, research opportunities, and conference presentations."

The program, funded by the Department of Education, is in its third year at Governors State. Already, one student has entered a doctoral program and four students are studying for their master's degrees. Currently, the program is assisting 32 undergraduates.

As he works toward this goal, Brown has enjoyed success through his participation in the program. At the McNair Scholars Research Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, in June, Brown took third place for his research and presentation on the study of bacteria in local urban and rural waterways.

"This conference was a great opportunity, because our presentations were judged and ranked. I especially thank Viola Gray, Dr. Tim Guell (mentor), fellow McNair scholars, and my family for all the help, love, and support that they have shown me."

The McNair Scholars program at GSU has opened doors and given me experiences that will help me accomplish goal.

For more information about the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement program at GSU, call (708) 235-3967.

20 Questions with...

Professor Larry Levinson

What's your name? Larry Levinson

What do you teach? I'm a professor of Political and Justice Studies.

How many years have you been at GSU? This is my twentieth.

Why did you want to teach political science? I grew up in Chicago and was politicized by that... and I wanted to change the world.

Three words that describe the state of American politics? Of some concern. Lack of engagement.

Courses your teaching right now? I'm teaching a graduate course, Theories and Approached to Political and Justice Studies.

Do you have any special events coming up at GSU? We have for the graduate Political and Justice Studies program an open house that will be in about a month and an half. There's also the forum, Challenges to the Constitution in the Post-9/11 Era.

Any childhood heroes? Saul Alinsky, Martin Buber, Martin Luther King.

If you had to choose one flavor from a Neapolitan carton of ice cream, what would it be? Um... uh, chocolate.

Last good book you read? The biography of God.

Last good movie you've seen? Monsieur Ibrahim

Any nicknames? No. I was born with a nickname.

Complete this sentence. Students usually see Dr. Levinson for...? Advice

Own any pets? No.

Thing you like most about being a professor? Being able to work with students.

Thing you like least about being a professor? I can't think of one.

What do you drive? A car.

Favorite board game? Cranium

If you had to teach another discipline, what would it be? Philosophy.

Three words that describe Larry Levinson? Concerned, passionate, and engaged.
Democrats criticize Bush administration for foregoing tuition costs

By A.N. Hernandez
The University Star
(Texas State U. - San Marcos)

(U-WIRE) SAN MARCOS, Texas - A study released Tuesday assessing the "affordability crisis" of college has Democratic policymakers talking. The study reports that soaring higher education costs coupled with declining household incomes means more students are in debt or unable to attend college.


"This administration has turned its back on middle-income students and on the neediest students who have academic qualifications," Kennedy said.

Campbell, the American's Future, a progressive group, conducted the study "Higher Education: Scouring Out of Reach for Families." It reports the cost of tuition for a four-year college increased $2,786 from 2000 to 2005, while the median household income fell by 2 percent in the same period.

Robert Borosage, the group's co-founder, said public universities must increase their tuition rates to make up for state and federal fiscal problems.

"College assistance has not kept up. The president never fulfilled his promise to raise Pell Grants," Borosage said.

"Now, financial barriers will literally prevent millions of students from attending college and moving over the next decade," Borosage said. Borosage said those who did finish college were left with staggering debt.

The Higher Education of State Public Interest Resource Groups reports that the average student debt burden in 2004 was almost 60 percent higher than it was in the mid-1990s. Moreover, the typical college student graduates with more than $17,000 in student loans.

Kennedy said better education opportunity allows for heightened national security.

"Education is not only an issue for middle-income families, it is a national security issue as well," Kennedy said. "You need to have well-educated, well-trained individuals to have strong national security.

He cited international globalization as another reason to make college affordable.

"How are we going to develop the innovative industries of our time, to be able to develop high paying jobs with good benefits - and how are we going to maintain a world-class economy that is second to none? It is education at its core," he said.

Kennedy said when the Bush administration's 2007 budget cut $12 billion from student loan spending to use for tax reductions for the wealthy, it was clear what the administration's priority is. He said funding student loan programs that work well with students and their families is a "challenge of our time."

"We have a student loan program that works well for the banks and not for the students," he said. "We need to bring competition into this student loan program just like we bring competition with other aspects of federal funding."

Miller, the chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee, was also on the call. Earlier this year Miller and Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., introduced a bill to cut subsidized loan interest rates in half. Subsidized loans go to students with the most financial need. Miller questioned the "merit" of cutting $12 billion dollars from the loan programs.

"It's interesting at a time when everybody acknowledges that college is getting more expensive for families. Republicans' idea was to make it more expensive," Miller said. "They took that increase away, and that's bad."

He urged the reduction of interest rates on loans and the expansion of Pell Grants. The House vote cutting the $12 billion from the Higher Education fund was split on partisan lines, with House Democrats voting against the cut and House Republicans voting for the cut, except Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson, R-Texas and Sen. John Cornyn, D-Texas also voted for the cut.

Is the Constitution Being Challenged?

By Robert Wolff
Editor

On Monday, Sept. 18, OSU will present a forum, Challenges to the Constitution in the Post-9/11 Era. The forum will be held in the Sherman Recital Hall and features three panelists. Deborah Caldwell-Stone, deputy director of the American Library Association, Office for Intellectual Freedom, Mary Dixon, an attorney and legislative director for the American Civil Liberties Union, and Judge Ronald C. Riley, presiding judge of the 6th municipal court of Cook County.

"First you have a U.S. - centric PATRIOT Act, then a class called International Conflict at the University and is well-acquainted with the historical event is taking place in classrooms throughout the country."

In the college classroom, the effects of the terror attacks are ever-present.

"It had to change a class as a result of what happened on 9/11," said Scott Althauser, associate professor in Political Science. "In 'my Politics and the Media' course, I devoted about a third of the class to political communication in times of war. Sept. 11, 2001, provides an important context for understanding this, and the attacks made the topic relevant."

Still, Althauser points out, the impact of the attacks on course material is probably more indirect than direct. "([September 11] isn't really a discrete topic in the classroom)," agreed Dr. Joseph Hinchcliffe, director of Undergraduate Studies in Political Science.

"It's used as an example of one kind of phenomenon or another, but we don't teach a class about it."

In fact, there is no department at the University that offers a class based exclusively around the Sept. 11 attacks, though there are several that focus on the broader background of the different views about 9/11, and we know more about the 9/11 Commission Report, represents a partisan view and should not be treated as historical fact in the classroom."

Scholastic, one of the nation's largest publishers of educational material, has released a "discussion guide" to help high school teachers reference the miniseries as an educational tool.

As of press time, Scholastic has released the discussion guide, according to their Web site, with the hope that "[people] will find it helpful in understanding the relationship between facts and drama and the background of the different views about 9/11 in the U.S. and around the world."

Five years after the terrorist actions, it is difficult to measure the true legacy of the attacks. In the classroom, though, 9/11 has had a pronounced impact and will continue to do so.

"Thirty or 40 years from now, we will have a clearer perspective on how to teach these issues," Dr. Althauser said. "I'm sure the core material will continue to be seen as a landmark for many things."" Dr. Hinchcliffe expressed a similar sentiment.

"It's one of those events you remember where you were when it happened," he said. "It has that kind of importance in people's memories. At the moment, though, its importance is hard to gauge, as a political event or otherwise. It's still too soon to tell."
Our politicians stress arrogance over substance

By Zachary Townsend
Brown Daily Herald (Brown U.)

(U-WIRE) PROVIDENCE, R.I. — I spent a lot of time grumbling this past summer, groaning as I looked on at the time-honored tradition of democracy merging barfing as politicians pageant tell tall tales to prove that their candidate is Captain America / Superwoman incarnate.

Over the last few years, campaign promises relating to character have become especially prominent, almost to the point where character boasting has become a sine qua non of American politics.

At times, I think if I listen to one more candidate sermonad the American public with another self-congratulatory song of self-righteousness, I will be made from gorgonzola.

Campaign talk seems to focus much more on actions that might ensue from the strength a candidate’s character than on predictions of actions that would imply such character. Every year questions of personality have further invaded political talk. The sort of thing that has focused more than ever on who the candidates are and less than ever on what they will do.

In one sense, the trend provides an interesting commentary that theorists of democracy have long noticed, one that dates all the way back to Socrates. In “The Republic,” Socrates describes the “Democratic Man” to his companions as a figure who panders shamelessly to public whim and so wins its approval.

What is distinct about American democracy is not that we have such Democratic Men, for other nations also have legions of them. What makes modern democracy interesting is the thing to which our Democratic Men would ultimately say “no.” It is the great leader.

Raised as we are on the legends of Honest Abe and the implacable T.R., we are taught to revere, above all else, the character of our leaders. Indeed, character is that thing we most desire from our leaders. Our would-be leaders, in turn, do not tend to make promises so much of broad but of brilliance, bravado and daring-do. They, in short, do not promise anything so much as themselves.

I personally expect American politicians to be great leaders. I want men and women whom we not only generally like, but whom we respect and even revere — leaders whose lives seem worthy of emulation and who can serve as examples for our children.

However, it should be we, the people, who praise our leaders for their qualities — not the leaders who preemptive praise themselves.

We know, for a documented fact, just what (and how much) a politician thinks of him or herself. But the type of honesty that leads a politician into self-aggrandizement is undignified; a quality I associate with both President Bill Clinton and President George W. Bush’s obvious musings about the fate that history will assign him.

Certainly, every politician sits contemplating the words historians will use to describe him or her, or at least praying they will be described at all. And as with ambition, when such thoughts are yoked to good intentions and honest desires for the country, we have seen some of the greatest success stories of which history has to speak.

Yet there is an unmistakable crassness to politicians giving a very public voice to such musings. They belie the stated focus of their office. Their concern for the destiny of the Republic or even of their constituents seems only to be of importance to such politicians insofar as it seals their own fate.

Perhaps I should not be so surprised by this type of pandering. We are comfortable with leaders who suggest they are statesmen. Just as advertising panders to consumerism saying product X will fulfill you, so are we attracted to the ideal that leaders might actually lead. Instead they do not lead, just as the product does not likely fulfill you, but they force you to believe that they could. Most Americans are attracted to this because the personal creation is more comfortable than spending the time to discern reality.

The very ambitions that create great leaders would undoubtedly stir such musings in most any person. But those with such lofty aspirations ought to be more careful. Naked ambition is like an untamed horse. Train it well and it will get you to your destination; give it free rein and the horse may buck the rider.

Today is Constitution Day.

Despite being a secular holiday and very new (it was created just two years ago), the basic premise seems honorable enough. Constitution Day replaces what was known as Citizenship Day and is the result of a law requiring any educational institution receiving federal funds to provide some sort of presentation or programming about the American Constitution.

Ironically, the measure that mandates learning about a set of laws safeguarding our freedoms was produced by a U.S. senator (Robert Byrd) who had once been affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan, and you know how the Klan felt about equal rights for all.

However flawed its creator, our own GSU is honoring the noble aims of a law celebrating our political freedoms by discussing... how politicians might be undermining our freedoms. A forum is being presented at 3 p.m. today, in the Sherman Recital Hall (El-530) that asks if our government is starting to take away basic freedoms in the aftermath of 9/11. Probably not the happy, pleasant, comfortable discussion of how-great-America-is because-of-our-Constitution senator Byrd might have intended, but one befitting an institution of higher learning. After all, that’s what we do at universities, right? Challenge and test ideas. Debate. Come to better conclusions by way of reason.

In the current climate of politics in America, however, it is easy to see why people would look at a government-created holiday with distaste.

Pundits comment on the rise of cynicism and apathy like scientists talk about E. coli and West Nile. We don’t have any real leadership in Congress to turn to and be inspired by. American households need two incomes more and more to get by, not to mention the time they won’t have for the family they are trying to raise. Meanwhile, politicians vote for tax cuts where the biggest beneficiaries are corporations and the wealthy, not working class people.

And Four True Things? Why care about another law the government passed, right?

The thing is, the law may very well be another politician’s tame attempt to drum up hollow, meaningless patriotism (remember “Freedom Fries”?), but the idea of celebrating our Constitution is not. You don’t need a cake, or presents, or festive lights. All you need to do is pick up a copy of the Constitution and read it. Know what your rights are. Read how we came to have the freedoms we enjoy today and why we have them.

Not everyone is lucky enough to live in a society where personal freedoms are written into the supreme law we abide by. As the hackneyed says goes, “Freedom isn’t free.”

Even during times of peace, America had to fight and be vigilant against enemies of freedom. The McCarthy trials and civil rights struggles of black Americans are clear examples of this.

In the end, Constitution Day may not be as worthy a holiday as a call to recount our liberties and safeguard them against those who say we need to suspend freedom in order to protect it. In either case, it’s probably far better to celebrate our political freedoms than watch them fall apart and die. Happy Constitution Day.
Challenges to the Constitution in the Post-9/11 Era.
Monday, Sept. 18, from 3 to 4:30 p.m.
Sherman Recital Hall, E1-530
Join Mary Dixon, legislative and chapter director for the American Civil Liberties Union, Judge Ronald C. Riley of the 6th municipal court of Cook County, and Deborah Caldwell-Stone, director of the Office for Intellectual Freedom American Library Association for a discussion about the challenges to constitutional freedoms since 9/11. GSU professor Larry Levinson will moderate. For more information, call 708-534-4578 or 708-235-3956.

Criminal Justice Studies
Fall CJUS Orientation
Tuesday, Sept. 19, 5 to 7 p.m. at Engbretson Hall.
This orientation session will offer CJUS students help with advising, internships, new curriculum, graduation, introduce faculty and provide other resources. Free Food!

Banned Books Week
Banned Books Week is September 23 - 30, 2006. Check out the GSU library display.

Bill Cosby
Saturday, Sept. 30 at 5 & 8:30 p.m., with a Gala at 6 p.m.
Bill Cosby comes to Governors State University for The Center’s opening night. The star of “The Cosby Show” and five-time Grammy award winner will be on hand for his fist ever GSU appearance. Regular tickets are $67, Gala seats are $77 and Gala dinner tickets are $125. To order, go to www.centertickets.net. For more information, contact The Center at 708-235-2222.

Chicago College of Performing Arts
Tuesday, October 3, 2006, 7:30 p.m.
Chamber Orchestra
Stephen Squires, conductor
• Vaught Williams Fantasie on a Theme by Thomas Tallis
• Mozart Adagio and Fugue, K. 546
• R. Strauss Serenade, Op. 7
• Dvorak Symphony No. 8

Tickets are free!

Free, confidential depression screening
October 5 and 11, 7 p.m.
Take 10 minutes for yourself. For more information call the Student Development Center at 235-2228.

Ballet folklorico Quetzalli
Sunday, October 15, 5 p.m.
Center for Performing Arts, GSU
Join one of Veracruz’s great cultural treasures for an afternoon of vibrant dance and entertainment. Tickets range from $19 to $28 for adults, $14 to $23 for those 16 and under.

Fall Recreation / Fitness Center hours
Monday - Friday: 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sunday: Noon - 4 p.m.

Closed Sundays during the Spring/Summer trimester.

Fall library hours at GSU
Monday - Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Friday - Saturday: 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday: 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.