Statler & Waldorf is published fortnightly while classes are in session by the students of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute under the authority of the Rensselaer Union. It is provided to the community at no charge. Opinions expressed within this publication are not necessarily those of the Statler & Waldorf staff or Editorial Board of Statler & Waldorf, the Rensselaer Student Union or Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

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Memo from the Editor: Roll Over
by Dan Scheffler

8:30 am, 8:35 am, 8:47 am, 9 am, 11 am, 2 pm: these are the times I sometimes see whenever I roll over to a different side of the pillow. I feel sluggish, I feel lethargic, I feel hatred for not being able to suck it up and walk away. But, nonetheless, it’s interesting how every time you open your eyes, it’s a different time.

I feel the same way about the semester. I feel like every week that goes by is like another “five more minutes.” We go about it in a way where every day is a set of things to accomplish or die. I wake up Sunday afternoon and I look back and I see what I did. I don’t even remember just everything that I did, just that I did it. It’s much the same with an issue of S&W. Every two weeks it’s like we never stepped away from the magazine. And as such, we write for you, gentle reader. This issue we look at religion on campus. I hope you enjoy it.

With that said, I sincerely wish all of you to do your best slugging through the end of this semester. Good luck on your last assignments. I’ll be trudging through with you. See you in two weeks.

Look guys! I found the IOP!

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Statler & Waldorf

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What Lies Beneath

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE AND WHY IT MAY BE TOO LATE TO STOP IT

by John Wallace

Earth Day and the week around it is very much a time when the environmentalists amongst us are most active. Here at RPI a few weeks ago, lights were turned off in several buildings as part of Earth Hour. When the lights are on, they are usually of the compact fluorescent variety. People are aware in town, and with good reason, that more commercial lightbulbs; and deal with the blisters, of no return will have been reached. And then . . . well, what then? resolve the climate change problem have also resolved themselves.

Amidst all of these great strides, though, humanity as a whole lies largely ignorant of the critical role of ocean currents in regulating the earth’s temperature. Most important to Americans and Europeans is the Gulf Stream; it is what brings warm water north and east, and effectively prevents Europe from becoming an ice cap. Ocean currents are not typically stable: up until the end of the last ice age, they fluctuated regularly, leading to sudden temperature drops or spikes. If the warming causes these oceanic currents to weaken, the western U.S. could experience an implosion of raindrops in a great ocean. Great societal change will not be brought about until a catastrophe forces the public to self-adjust. By the time that happens, though, the odds are overwhelmingly good that the point of no return will have been reached.

Emissions in developing countries are perhaps the most to blame. China and India produce around three times the amount of carbon that the United States does, although American per capita emissions are higher. Chaotic, disconnected decisions in other countries, combined with excessive reliance on coal-fired power plants with inadequate treatment devices, has led to heavy pollution of the atmosphere. In the United States, meanwhile, where lobbying in the right places can overturn just about any regulation and strong—if myopic—resistance to centralized governmental reforms is the norm, massive culture of consumption has been bred over the generations.

A variety of solutions—some odd (painting the roofs of buildings metallic silver to reflect more heat back onshore, causing it to refreeze), and some seemingly suicidal (releasing plumes of gas into the atmosphere. In the United States does, although this self-denial, though it may have personal advantages, is, from a societal angle, little more than the fall of raindrops in a great ocean. Great societal change will not be brought about until a catastrophe forces the public to self-adjust. By the time that happens, though, the odds are overwhelmingly good that the point of no return will have been reached. And then . . . well, what then?

Sources:
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• [http://www.greenparty.ca/files/images/web_national_co2_emissions_per_capita_655.jpg](http://www.greenparty.ca/files/images/web_national_co2_emissions_per_capita_655.jpg)
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But, in the end, what good is all of this doing? Since the 1960s, humanity’s knowledge of the world and the systems governing it has increased a hundredfold. Likewise, to be sure, humanity’s treatment of the Earth and its resources has generally improved, even if its population is now nearly double what it was 40 years ago. Over the decades, arguments on ways to

anything that do occur will have to come at the societal level. They will not come easily; the capitalists will be furious at the loss of profit and the anarchists will resent it on principle. Indeed, snowmen can be expected to colonize the Sahara Desert before the American government successfully legislated sweeping changes and shouts down those bleating about “socialism.”

In the meantime, those who do so already can continue to wear their Birkenstocks, drive their Priuses, use their compact fluorescent lightbulbs; and deal with the blisters, of no return will have been reached. And then . . . well, what then?
I'm on a Boat
by Bailey Ritchey

Forty-two days ago I began a semester-long adventure that I've had the amazing opportunity to take on a ship. This spring I have been literally living my geography course in a converted cruise ship—what you've never taken a MV Explorer, was once a cruise ship? You've never taken a semester-long study abroad program called Semester at Sea. The only program of its kind, SAS allows students to experience over eleven different countries and continents, including Japan, China, India, Vietnam, South Africa, and Brazil, in a short, four-month voyage.

Still, there is something theatrical about this adventure I have experienced by which I was completely caught off guard: life at sea. With some positive and some equally positive experiences, living on the open ocean has been an adventure in its own right.

There are oracles of ship life that can be extremely annoying at times. Satellite internet is extremely slow or non-existent, and it costs forty cents a minute. You cannot bring bottles, fresh food, or plants on the ship due to strict protocols. There is no real drainage system, and knock-knocks on shelves are to be secured with duct tape. Falling out of the shower becomes a daily occurrence. Mechanic's have extensive knowledge over such small tasks as procuring fresh beer is stopping at the brewery, securing a few samples, then filling up a growler with delicious Otter Creek beer jugs that allow you to transport delicious brewery, savoring a few samples, and filling of procuring fresh beer is stopping at the brewery, securing a few samples, then filling up a growler with delicious brewery, savoring a few samples, and filling.

Beer Review: Solstice – $6 Growler Fill
Otter Creek Brewing Co.
by Darcie Cook

One of the most satisfying methods of procuring fresh beer is stopping at the brewery, securing a few samples, and filling up a growler. Grocery store beer jugs just don’t allow you to transport delicious local beer straight from the tap to your home. I always go for a fresh taste on my way between home and school, so I decided to grab a growler of Solstice, a brand new, all-beer from Otter Creek Brewing. Solstice is a session ale that fits the flavorful American Pale Ale category really well. Since sessioning night has still not left me in the drinkability. Poured from the brown Otter Creek growler, Solstice is a translucent golden beer with minimal head. The head dissipates quickly and leaves little lacing, a result of the light body. The aroma is simply lovely, featuring spicy, sugary, esters, and slight lemon hops. A fresh ensemble that reflects the budding spring season.

While the body and alcohol content are light (toipping the drinking experience), the flavor is pleasantly present. The wide variety of hops and malts used in the brewing process. Each sip starts off with with a slight hoppy notes that carry through to a long finish. The hops are light, very flavorful, yielding earthy tones that are balanced by the fruit notes of the hops. The body is light and refreshing, perfect for an after-skiing pub compliment the sweet fruit notes on the tongue. This beer's finale is my academic year. Only once you have completed this ceremony can you proclaim yourself to be a "pollywog" into a "shellback."

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Engineering Faith

faith. It’s a tough word to define. For many, faith is more of a feeling than a definition. I have faith that my TA will know the answer to the homework questions. I have faith that my parents love me. I have faith that the pilot of the plane I’m on won’t crash the plane. Webster’s defines faith (noun) as: (1) Allegiance to duty or a person; loyalty; fidelity to one’s promises. (2) Sinctency of intentions; belief and trust in. I have faith in the traditional doctrines of religion, a firm belief in something for which there is no proof. Complete trust. (3) Something that is believed especially with strong conviction, especially a belief in God or the role of religion in society. But by fundamental definition, that simply isn’t true. Everyone who ever lived has placed their faith, their trust, in something—whether it be money, power, success, other people, science, themselves, organized religion, or a greater power. We all have faith in something. A faith in the context of organized religion takes on an interesting shape at RPI—a science and technology-obsessed community full of individuals born to doubt and question. The logic of the scientific mind does not call for blind belief in anything. The community of RPI is comprised of intelligent people who take great pride in their own powers of deduction. As a result, within the scientific community, there is often disenchantment or even a disdain for organized religion, as it is seen as illogical. The battle between science and religion has been fought for hundreds of years, with both scientists and religious leaders at fault for the casualties. It seems like science and religion are natural enemies. But what does that mean for students who are studying science?

So what is it like to be religious at RPI? We definitely are not an overly-religious campus, and it seems that most of the students and faculty aren’t outspoken about their religion. Is it not part of their identity? Is it something that doesn’t mean there aren’t students at RPI who are religious and spiritual?

Out of curiosity and a desire to expose an underrepresented viewpoint and unique experience of religious students at RPI, we interviewed the presidents, vice presidents, and student leaders of Rensselaer Catholic Students Association, Rensselaer Muslim Students Association, and Hillel. And not to leave anyone out, we also caught up with the Secular Students Alliance, the RPI chapter of a national organization for agnostics and atheists.

RPI-Sage Hillel

RPI-Sage Hillel is an organization born from the two colleges that provides a social and cultural environment for Jewish people to come together and explore their Jewish identity. It has many active members, including Rensselaer students Paula Yablon and Haley Danovich. As President and Co-Founder of Hillel & Membership Vice President, respectively, both help to coordinate a group of Hyper-religious students imbedded in culture and family, so much in that it is almost a race. When asked to describe her religion in one sentence, Paula responded “The fact that my grandparents are survivors of the Holocaust is a deeply rooted faith that is “built into the community.” When asked how their religion would be different if they didn’t have a religion, neither had a response to the hypothetical scenario: “We’ve been with it forever.” Growing up Jewish, Paula and Haley acknowledge and take pride in some of the stereotypes associated with Judaism. Along with joking about “Jewish noses” and “Jews being good with money,” the two continue on their previous point of their religious upbringing in their family. “The best part of being Jewish is a Jewish mom,” Haley remarked, as “Jews being good with money” stemming from the political situation in Israel, “Judaism can sometimes be difficult at RPI. Aside from the various food restrictions, they remarked that not doing work from Sunday sunset till Saturday night is a hard college student with lots of homework. And even though neither have gotten into serious allegations, it is definitely frowned upon to defend their religion, both are distressed that “there has to be so many conflicts with Arabs” stemming from the political situation in Israel, according to Paula.

One important thing that I learned from the interview is that Judaism is a very culture-oriented Judaism can be separated into religion and culture, said Haley. Because of the varying religious levels of Judaism, people vary in how much of the religion they practice and how important they feel. However, it is the cultural aspect that brings Jews together into a community. As Haley put it, to be Jewish is “to keep up the traditions and culture we were brought up with.” But more than that, she emphasizes, “I’m Jewish for me.” As many religious groups would note, engineering and science don’t mix well with religion. This is no different for Hillel. “It’s difficult to stand by the religious side,” said Haley, “When someone says the religious aspect upon entering college, they begin to lose the cultural aspect.” And while they don’t feel that Judaism is a minority religion at RPI, both Paula and Haley feel that it is difficult to get enough Jews who care about the religion or the culture to attend the events.

Nevertheless, one doesn’t have to be Jewish to go to the organization’s various happenings. Hillel has weekly meetings at 8 pm on Wednesdays in Union Room 2424 and a Shabbat dinner every Friday evening in the Shenkunft Gallery (Union Room: 3606) open to everyone, especially for those who’d like to learn more about Judaism.
Newman Catholic Fellowship
by Dance Cook

Nich Wengrenovich is a senior in the Materials Engineering program. As a Catholic, he says, “There is always an equation that we can’t solve. That mystery gets to you. It doesn’t fit, but we put God into the picture, it fits. It’s a leap of faith. If we knew God existed, there would be no incentive for faith, it would just be an accepted fact. That doubt makes the faith stronger, makes it meaningful.”

But at the end of the day neither of the boys is “spiritually satisfied.” Spirituality is a journey. Being content with where you are means you have to re-evaluate,” explains Nick. “It’s a very subjective thing. The only time I can be satisfied is when I’m with God again. That is the time when nothing else matters, my ultimate goal,” adds Matt.

As we wrapped up the interview, the boys invited me and everyone else to enjoy a nice home-cooked meal every Sunday at 6:15 at the Hospitality House to meet new people, eat good food, and be inspired by the faith around you.

Rensselaer Christian Association
by Kat Foley

Mike Stark is just like any other college student. While he was doing homework to do, classes to go to, tests to study for, he likes to game and is secretly an introvert. Outwardly, Mike seems more or less like any other computer science student. He just happens to believe in God. Mike is the current president of the Rensselaer Christian Association (RCA), a praise and worship group that RCA—going to church with the same people I go with regularly. We can be friends, hang out, and study together. I would still have found that fellowship in different clubs. When I was a freshman, I was involved in Players, Rensselyrics, places I might have also found friends. Being a Protestant Christian has had on my social life: “It’s been a way for me to have a certain set of friends—who are atheist or agnostic; who believe—just the hostility.” In general, though, RCA represents a significant number of the practicing undergraduate theists at RPI. While their relationship with the rest of campus is delicate, and they are often misunderstood as judgmental or ridiculous, the members of RCA live a life according to their beliefs, even at a technical college.
Muslim Students Association

by Nikhil Deshpande

Ahmed Nazem, President of the Muslim Students Association, is soft-spoken yet very friendly and very intellectual. He takes his time to ensure that his responses are clear and he addresses questions head-on, aiming to give answers that are concise yet clear to not only him but others as well. This06100,06200 of understanding of his faith—Islam—and himself.

I was rather intrigued to interview Mr. Nazem, as many people I know have very little, if any, exposure to Islam, and even more have been misled by media exposure and misinformation. The core of Islam according to Mr. Nazem is “a belief in one God, and to follow the prophet Muhammad.” But to Ahmed, it is much more complex than that: “It’s to better yourself, inside your heart; to clean; it’s like a lightening of the heart.”

Being a Muslim at RPI presents both rewards and drawbacks. “It’s similar to a double-edged sword; on one hand, there is the opportunity to interact with other Muslims, because we have to pray five times a day, so it’s nice to have that support group, but on the other hand there aren’t a lot of Muslims on campus, so it’s hard to pray those five times, or to try to become a better Muslim. Also, you have to interact with other Muslims, because there aren’t a lot of nice to have that support group, but we have to pray five times a day, so it’s hard to organize, and it’s hard to interact with other Muslims. On the other hand, there aren’t a lot of Muslims on campus, so it’s hard to pray those five times, or to try to become a better Muslim.”

Ahmed feels that Islam differs on a personal level. He observes that “in the US, it’s a heavily belief thing. But there are some instances where the belief is there, but it comes after the culture. Some people grow up in a household where they were brought up believing that there’s this heavy sense of culture, and the belief is kind of a necessary tie-in. But I personally feel that they are heavily intertwined, and that it’s heavily a personal thing as well.”

There are negative aspects to the exposure of Islam through popular culture and media. “There are people who have kind of a tainted view of the Muslim faith because of the way the media portrays Islam and anti-Muslim sentiments because of terrorism. If you’re shown that view from the media, and you don’t have a friend whose Muslim, you don’t really have anything to contradict that with. Sometimes it’s an expectation thing, like I’ll do something nice for someone and they won’t expect it, because I’m Muslim, but it’s interesting to see them realize that, hey, there is some good in this person.”

Overall, I got the sense that Islam is a heavily personal faith that requires a lot from its followers; however, its focus is clearly towards moving in a positive direction, and although it’s often misinterpreted or misunderstood, I have a great respect for those who follow it. And that’s what makes you a stronger person, which is Islam for many.

The MSA meets on Tuesdays at 4:30, contact msa@rpi.edu or stop by the Chaplain’s Office on the third floor of the Union to find out more.

Secular Student Alliance

by Darce Cook

There are many religious groups on campus, but there is also a group for everyone else who hasn’t quite figured out what to believe. The Secular Student Alliance is “to provide community, support, and advocacy to RPI students who are atheists, agnostics, humanists, otherwise non-religious,” and it is a secular organization.

The SSA meets every Monday at 8 pm in the Union Room 315 to have discussions on a variety of topics including separation of church and state, humanism, war ethics, Bible stories, and pretty much anything related to philosophy and religion. A small group of members—President Frank Belamy, Vice President Peter Sumberac, President Elect Karina Miller, Vice President Elect Tom Anesta, and member Samantha Allen—sat down with me and explained what they were all about. “We are a social group with common interests. We organize events that we have a passion about, like RPI sports.”

Karina Miller describes her belief—or lack thereof—as “critically examining anything, not accepting supernatural claims.” She asked what the best part of being secular was, and “I was met with a chorus of ‘no’ answers. ‘It’s just being busy, going on in Sundays!’ But everyone agrees that being secular doesn’t change the way they think. ‘It’s just so you can do whatever you want.’”

As a science and technology school like Rensselaer, you would think that most students don’t live by any religion. When asked if they felt like a minority on campus, Peter responded, “Most people live secularly, but no one pays attention to it. If you ask them they’ll say ‘I don’t know’ or ‘Yes, I believe, but I don’t have a religion.’” Peter Sumberac explains his thoughts on atheism as “an absence of dogma. Once you get past the fact that people have their own ideas, it’s just abandoning a bad hypothesis; focus on philosophy and ethics.”

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The members are always up for a heated debate, so even if you have a very strong faith, drop in on a meeting and make your Monday night a little more exciting.
INCIDENT MAD LIB: Recreate any incident off campus!

**Attention Students**

**Off-Campus Incident**

At approximately __________ on ________ /____ /____ ______, a Rensselaer student was walking at the intersection of ______ and ______ when he was approached from behind and struck in the ______ with an unknown object.

Suspect(s) then held the victim down and stole his ______ and ______.

**Suspect(s)**

__ male(s) between 5’5” and 5’10” with hooded sweatshirt(s), no further information available.

Tips or information relating to this incident should be directed to the Troy Police Department at 270-4426 or the Department of Public Safety 276-66.

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**Hail, Dear Old Rensselaer**

by Nikhil Deshpande

It could be that our Alma Mater just attending a hockey game? Which led me to wonder, what are RPI students doing at 7 o’clock on a Saturday night had barely broken 1,000, the announcer stated that attendance my backyard, at that. But then the announcer stated that attendance that night had barely broken 1,000, not even a full house. I looked around the Field House … to see too many empty seats. Which led me to wonder, what are RPI students doing at 7 o’clock on a Friday night that prevents them from attending a hockey game? Sure, we may be a tech school. It could be that our Alma Mater just grinds us down day-in and day-out with a combination of tough class work, crappy weather, and the stunningly beautiful surrounding neighborhood of Troy. But that shouldn’t stop us from being proud (if not a touch arrogant) about our school. Seriously, be proud to be an Engineer and wear the cherry and white with pride!

Today, it’s GM Week! A time for the entire student body to come together and rally around the voting procedure that will determine the next voice of the student body. It’s a time of fun activities (set up for us by the awesome GM Week Committee) that everyone comes out to participate in. A time where … Okay, wait. What the hell, guys? As my first GM Week commenced, I was rather surprised to see the lack of enthusiasm of the student body. But then I realized, it’s not just GM Week. There’s just no school spirit around here. I was dragged to the first hockey game of the season (reluctantly shelling $5 for my wallet), only to discover how much fun they are. The ups, the downs, the excitement of real live college sports—all in what is practically my backyard, at that. But then the announcer stated that attendance that night had barely broken 1,000, not even a full house. I looked around the Field House … to see too many empty seats. Which led me to wonder, what are RPI students doing at 7 o’clock on a Friday night that prevents them from attending a hockey game? Sure, we may be a tech school. It could be that our Alma Mater just grinds us down day-in and day-out with a combination of tough class work, crappy weather, and the stunningly beautiful surrounding neighborhood of Troy. But that shouldn’t stop us from being proud (if not a touch arrogant) about our school. Seriously, be proud to be an Engineer and wear the cherry and white with pride!

Heading into GM Week, I’ll admit there was a lot of buildup for me. The van in the CI plaza blasting music actually got me pumped in preparation for the flood of awesomeness that I expected. And then GM Week arrived, and … well, nothing happened. There was no outpouring of school spirit. Everyone seemed as dreadful as ever, and things seemed to just keep on dragging. To be honest, I’m not too sure what I was expecting. Maybe I thought there would be a ticker tape parade, with people cheering and everyone having a grand old time. Maybe I thought the entire campus would come together in a wave of pride and glory, that I would be part of something that showcased what it means to be an RPI student.

In any case, I think I did become part of something that shows what it means to be an RPI student in the end. It didn’t happen in the way I expected it, nor did it happen in the manner I wanted it to. But to be an RPI student means I’ll be unhappy for the next few years of my life while dragging my legs through classes, well, then I’m not going to let that happen. Instead I’m going to make a point to try—nay, I’m making it a priority—to show pride in my status as an RPI student.

We, the student body, really are responsible for making our experience here what it should and will be. So show some school spirit. Go to sporting events. Let your school spirit consist of more than wearing a sweatshirt that reads “Rensselaer” or slapping a bumper sticker on the back of your car. Take part in GM Week activities. Get involved in the Union. Really don’t care what you do, just be passionate about it, and be damn proud to say the words, “I go to RPI.”
Your Running and My Love

by Kethia Mathieu

You start off feeling like crap,
It's just you and the pavement,
All other things blur away and become insignificant,
But then your adrenaline starts flowing,
Your heart starts racing,
That's when you start to feel good,
And you feel complete.

I used to always feel like crap,
But then I met you,
And when it's just you and me,
Everything else blurs away and becomes insignificant,
My adrenaline starts flowing,
My heart starts racing,
And I start to feel so good,
That I feel complete.
Eulogy for My Uncle

by Kelly Lottman

"Do you have any snakes here?" I asked, knowing full well what the answer would be. We'd just toured my uncle Phil's new house, seen the gleaming kitchen and high-tech light switches, discussed what pictures to hang on the wall, but we hadn't glimpsed a single reptile yet. As crazy as this building was becoming, with books migrating to their shelves and a fire in the fireplace, we all knew Phil would never call a snake-free space "home." He led us to a small cage stored inconspicuously under a table in the foyer and gently lifted out a king snake. As the creature coiled itself around his tanned forearm, Phil spoke of the snake's defense mechanism. "That's the force of legend. I grew up regaled by my mother's stories of her brother's successful encounter with a rattlesnake bite in some deserted area. I could use this as a cliché teaching moment and tell you to eat your vegetables and not take risks so that you live to a ripe old age and not put your family through this trauma, but I think Phil would vehemently oppose that. He was, as previously mentioned, very much in support of risk-taking; there are stories of him sliding through holes in caves the size of his head or driving to Oklahoma in an ice storm just to get the photographs. And he was hardly an avid vegetable fan. When told as a child to eat his beets before he left the table, my uncle stared at them, without a word, for hours, outlasting even his mother's stubbornness. "Oh, just go to bed, Philip," she'd say, rolling her eyes. "When the train arrives, I'll be up there long before everyone else—as soon as I enter, I'll know the last one to jump. Always." She'd shake her head and sigh. "When the train would get pretty close, the conductor would honk his horn, the trestle standing in a churning lake, the sheets of tin he put over his head—my uncle again. I went through similar scenarios when I visited places in Texas. In Phil's house or my grandmother's, at Half-Price Books, or the Cactus Patch, I kept expecting Keith put it, a mythical figure. The Brazos River or a cup of coffee around a campfire—was quaint and inspiring. I doubt that my uncle would change his attitude toward life is immortalized in the fables my family will continue to tell for years, passed down as our modern myths.

Through the door or an adult taking off for Mexico with no warning, Phil seemed to go about doing whatever the hell he wanted with as little fuss as possible. His ability to experience such delight from the simplest things in life—from an eagle flying over the Brazos River or a cup of coffee around a campfire—was quaint and inspiring. I doubt that my uncle would change a thing about the way he lived. His attitude toward life is immortalized in the fables my family will continue to tell for years, passed down as our modern myths.

*Photos courtesy of the Priddy family.*