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A ‘semi-charmed’ concert

By Catie Watt &
Alyssa Hoffman
Fact Checkers

On April 16, Third Eye Blind and opening act Alpha Rev were greeted by a crowd of St. Michael's students and fans from the surrounding Vermont area. The rock band played its successful 90's hits such as "Jumper" and "Graduate" while also performing new songs from their recently released album, Ursula Major.

"It's a band that's been around for a long time," junior J.P. McCormick said. "They've proven they can stick around and I just love them."

Despite a small crowd of 1,000 pre-show tickets sold at \$20 for St. Michael's students and \$30 for the general public, concert-goers still enjoyed the band's hour and a half long set. Without the costs of set up, maintenance, and specific band requests, the price of the band totaled to \$59,000, said Meghan Cary, Student Association's Secretary of Finance.

The SA collected tickets and roamed the lobby of Ross Sport Center as members embarking on the MOVE service trip to India sold concessions to fundraise for Indian orphans.

Public Safety also supervised the crowds while the band's own event staff patrolled the scene looking for illegal photography and other disruptions.

Many of Third Eye Blind's songs brought back memories for students of middle school days as "Semi-Charmed Life" created an energetic encore.

"I'm a big fan of the 90's,"



Photo by James Dillon III

Lead singer of Third Eye Blind Stephan Jenkins sings to the less-than-half packed Ross Sports Center on Friday April 16.

said sophomore Jordan Graves. "They were a crucial part of my childhood growing up."

The announcement of this year's concert was met with some negative feelings from students in the form of Facebook groups projecting disappointment in the chosen band. Together the groups currently have 280 members. However, St. Michael's Facebook

users also rallied for the band with supporting groups, amounting to 225 members.

There was plenty of space for concert goers to roam and dance as the crowd only occupied less than half of the gym. Past years' concerts such as Lupe Fiasco who attracted 1,500 fans in 2009 and Wyclef Jean who drew 3,000 people the year before.

Despite the smaller turn out, lead singer Stephan Jenkins of Third Eye Blind expressed his appreciation for St. Michael's loyal crowd and his love for Burlington. In fact, he was inspired by the area for songs on the Ursula Major album.

Jenkins closed the show with a message for the fans:

"We lead a very strange cir-

cus life, it's very bizarre and we get to float out into space and get this incredible feeling. The reason we get to do it is because you invited us, thank you so much."

Concert photo spread:
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Under new leadership, SA filing cabinet opens

By Susan Bourque
Photo Editor

One year ago, The Defender and Echo staff reported on the Student Association's (SA) budget. The SA executive board was said to be dining out on the student's tab and reports of pizza and wings being ordered to specific members' townhouses surfaced. A charge for an expansion of dining hall meals was also noted. The Defender and Echo staff members requested to see receipts and petty cash slips for the executive board's expenditures but were denied access on several occasions.

This denial directly violated Article VI, Section 2 in the SA constitution:

"Records shall be open to the public consistent with the Freedom of Information Act of the United States Congress. Subsequently, individual S.A. members may examine such records within the physical confines of the SA office by requesting said files from the Secretary of Communications."

Last spring, junior SA senator Josh Hoxie dug through a tan file cabinet holding SA financial records. Hoxie found receipts amounting to more than \$3,000 spent on food.

On March 31, 2009 a breaking online Echo story quoted Hoxie as saying, "I want more time with that filing cabinet."

This year, The Defender spent time

with that file cabinet. Secretary of Finance Meghan Cary promptly responded to an e-mail request for viewing financial records was

Cary offered her office hours to view SA financial records.

"I'm willing to show you whatever it is you need to prove that we don't do anything out of line and out of what we are supposed to be doing," Cary said.

Behind a locked door in the SA office, the file cabinet holds a folder for the executive board along with folders for each individual club. The folder contained receipts for business cards, printing jobs, markers, tape and other various office supplies.

The only receipt pertaining to food

was \$185 worth of lollipops given to the student body. Cary explained the executive board wanted to make the meetings more exciting. They also put candy in mailboxes to make students aware of whom the members of the SA are.

The executive board purchased 50 dining hall meals at the beginning of this semester to be used by its senior officers, said SA president David Hiltz.

Though board members have access to the meal plan swipe card. Hiltz says it is rarely used.

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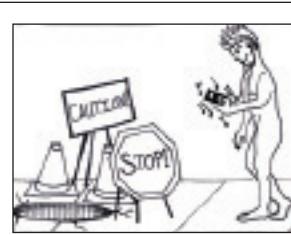
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NEWS

Social justice league goes to Washington

Members of various clubs on campus lobby representatives in D.C.

By Catie Watt
Fact Checker

Members of the recently formed Social Justice League took a trip down to Washington D.C. to have their issues heard and lobby different representatives during the weekend of April 8-11. For the past five years, members of the St. Michael's chapter of the Student Global AIDS Campaign (SGAC) have made the trip to Washington to lobby but this year was the first year the trip was opened up to all members of the Social Justice League, said SGAC faculty adviser and political science professor Trish Siplon.

Twelve students including members from SGAC, Student Action Labor Movement (SLAM), Green Up and The Peace and Justice Club traveled with Siplon to Washington.

The group split into two groups, one with five members and one with eight members to lobby various issues. These issues included the DREAM act, to help undocumented teenagers go to college and become citizens; violence and rape in the Congo; the currency transaction levy—an idea to pay for a global health initiative and to tax 0.5 percent on Wall Street; and funding for a global fund to combat AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. These topics were chosen through discussion with the groups and many of the students that went down take courses to become more well-versed in these issues, Siplon said.

"I thought it was really great because we had people at all dif-



Photo courtesy of Trish Siplon

Members of the Social Justice League on the steps of the capital with political science professor Trish Siplon.

ferent levels," Siplon said. "Some who had lobbied before and some who hadn't and people really cooperated and supported each other, which was really exciting. I think they all did really well."

The group met with the offices of the entire Vermont delegation and Reps. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) and Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.), Siplon said.

"We made sure that people in the group were from their states and were part of the group and

then we filled in terms of comfort level with the issues," Siplon said.

For the DREAM act, the students who were lobbying on this issue spoke with staffers of Reps. Lowey and Kennedy and Sen. Bernie Sanders, (I-Vt). All three of them were supportive of the issue which was positive, junior SLAM member Josh Wronski said.

"In previous years, we have spoken to interns and this year we got to speak to actual staffers and we had an actual back and forth

conversation with them, which was great," Wronski said.

They also made a surprise visit and got their message relayed to Sen. Lindsey Graham's (R-S.C.) office who is working on immigration reform with Sen. Charles Schumer, (D-N.Y.) and trying to create a bipartisan vote to push towards some type of amnesty, Wronski said.

One of the more frustrating things throughout the trip was when they met with the staffer of Rep. Lowey about the currency transaction levy. Lowey made the point that the levy was not something she would support because she has constituents on Wall St., said sophomore Anne Marie McNeil.

It was frustrating to hear that while most of the staffers were mildly in agreement, it seemed like they wouldn't go any further on the issue, McNeil said.

"All of the legislation that we were pushing for is an easy thing to say 'oh that's a good idea' and that's nice but what we need is someone to take it to heart and make it their issue and push it forward because if no one pushes it, it's just not going to go through," she said.

McNeil said one of the biggest ways to get their issues heard is by getting more involvement and outreach from students on campus.

"The more people you have the more they really have to listen, they just can't turn down the constituent," she said.

For Sarah DelGizzo, the only first-year on the trip and a first time lobbyist, the trip was very

successful and hopes to get more people in her class to go next year.

"It was so cool seeing how everything goes down and seeing that your voice can actually make a difference and help other people," she said.

Senior Madison Reeve, who has been on every D.C. trip said the best part was hanging out with fellow students who are also very passionate about these issues.

"The best part was to hang out with a bunch of activists and it was really exciting to get to spend the whole weekend with people who I am not going to see again," she said.

Siplon said they will definitely keep moving on the issues happening in The Congo. Since it has the worst violence going on in the world in terms of magnitude and rape and there is a growing Congolese population in Vermont, the Vermont delegation still needs to do something about it, she said.

"Something that we feel like the Vermont delegation doesn't get quite yet is that this isn't just a foreign policy issue and a humanitarian issue but their own constituents are affected by this," she said.

Students will be able to continue lobbying these issues as next year Siplon will be leading a trip to Washington D.C. in the fall with her Millennium Development Goals class and then another in the spring which will be open to any member of the Social Justice League, she said.

BUDGET: SA reforms practices

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"Most of us use the meal plans that we have because we know that it was a sensitive issue," Hiltz said. "The intent behind it was to interact with the people that we represent, not to get a free lunch."

Both Cary and Hiltz said only 12 meals have been used this semester.

The SA conducts most of its financial bookkeeping through KnightVision. The account shows a detailed list of what the clubs have spent their money on.

The SA constitution calls for accurate monthly audits of each club. However, Cary monitors spending more often.

Every day that I'm here I'm checking some club's budget," she said.

Before the SA meeting every Tuesday Cary goes over records to figure out the general reserve. The reserve currently stands at \$18,119.26 and can be used towards whatever the students want upon approval of the Senate. If the reserve is not used it will go back to the college's general fund, she said.

The Defender and Echo staffs attempts to see records spanned over the majority of the spring 2009 semester. The transference of power from Steve O'Neil to Hiltz took

place in April.

"The only thing I knew was what I heard from the paper," Hiltz said. "I didn't ask them, I didn't get involved."

A major complaint regarding the previous administration was lack of transparency. At the beginning of the year Hiltz and the executive board made the decision to maintain open communication amidst each other and those they represent.

Former executive editor of The Defender and Echo, Matt Tomkewicz published an editorial in the last issue of spring 2009 asking for a reform of SA practices. Tomkewicz asked that all student financial records be open to any student who wishes to see them, revive the finance committee, a training of student leaders to respond to requests for information and interviews, an outside audit of student finances with publication of results, and the creation of a speaker of the Senate position that would sit on the executive board and represent the views of the student body.

The current administration has made the student financial records easily accessible and responded promptly to information and interview requests from The Defender.

Though some of the reforms have been met, the current administration has not fulfilled all of Tomkewicz's suggestions.

According to the SA constitution, records including financial records of up to five years previous should be available for review by any student upon request. These records are to be viewed within the confines of the SA office. This article has been carried over throughout several revisions of the constitution.

When asked to see finance records for last year, Cary said all receipts go to the purchasing department after the academic year. Only this current academic year's receipts are available in the office.

"The only thing that hasn't changed is access to the five year budget, but everything else I think has," Tomkewicz said.

The current executive board took the previous administration's practices into consideration when planning for this year.

"The biggest lesson that we took as an e-board from the previous year was that communication is key," Hiltz said. "With students, with each other, with campus media and all clubs, that's what we've really strived for, and open line of communication."

Tomkewicz noted an improvement in communication this year.

"Last year, what we saw was that there was disconnect with members of the [SA] executive board and they had disagreements of how things should be transparent and run," Tomkewicz said. "Dave and Reese [SA vice president] have done an excellent job assuming responsibility and taking a lead role and making sure that communication is open."

Cary said if the food purchases from last spring were indeed made they should not have happened.

"They should have double checked the e-board budget. You can't buy your own food with students' money, that's not allowed. We don't allow clubs to do that so we don't allow the e-board to do that," Cary said. "That's something we haven't done this year, I've been very careful about making sure nothing happens that way because of last year and because it's wrong it's the students' money, not our money."

As far as the executive board's spending for this year, Hiltz said nothing has been used for personal use.

"No student money has been spent on us," he said.