

The "Rage Page" Spreads Many Rumors, but Annoys Few

By **KERI ANN FLACCOMIO**
Staff Writer

To the shock of campus residents and the anger of Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity members, students in the Village found strongly-worded flyers posted on their doors in the early hours of September 14.

The newsletter-style handout, referred to as the "Rage Page," features three brief articles, providing unaccredited opinions on the use of tuition money and the September 9 incident deemed a "300-person disturbance" by the Bergen Record.

Within the student-generated newsletter are suggestions that funds from Ramapo's tuition increase are being directly allocated to President Peter Mercer, and that the events of September 9 were caused by sexual escapades between members of TKE and—separately—of the baseball team with a third party.

Across campus, people have mixed reactions to the Page. Some find the newsletter humorous, dismissing its significance. Others find it extremely offensive, taking the issue seriously, and the rest are unsure about what happened, reacting with indifference.

Sophomore Brendan Flanagan thinks there is a distinction between using freedom of speech to effectively provoke thought and to complain for the sake of complaining.

"I'm a big fan of freedom of speech and always thought an underground student newsletter would be an awesome way to get what students really thought out there without repercussion," he said, "but... [the Rage Page] was clearly slanted and presented its information in such a rude fashion that it could not seriously be considered a legitimate source for the student voice."

Senior Devon P. Gannon, secretary of TKE, expressed great disappointment in those students behind the Page, arguing that the remarks printed about members of the fraternity are false and unjust.

Finding it degrading that the members of TKE were labeled as "Guido," Gannon said, "The individuals slandered an organization that, in all actuality, is comprised of five individuals of Italian descent, whereas the other 18 members make up a variety of different ethnic backgrounds."

"The individuals who wrote the article most likely have zero interaction with the members, aside from hearing stories about parties," he added. "Therefore, they are not an authority on the construction of the fraternity or the actions of its members."

Beyond its risky proclamations, the reliability of the Page is being questioned due to errors in grammar, punctuation and

factual accuracy, as with the miscommunication over the specific allocation of funds for the Spiritual Center, a project made possible through donation.

Regina Clark, associate professor of journalism, points out that although the newsletter had some good points that could have been informative, the words used in the articles are weighted as opposed to unbiased.

In reference to the statement implying that tuition funds are "obviously" going to Mercer's bank account, she said, "Who has access to his account? How can you say 'obvious' if you don't have that access? Those words and accusations are clearly one-sided. True journalism shows both sides and allows all parties referenced, whenever possible, to share their side."

All eight staff members, including editors, writers and photographers, use pseudonyms to disguise their identities. The names listed do not identify actual students accounted for in the Ramapo address book online, or on Google or Facebook. Some argue that this, alone, damages the credibility of the content printed in the Page.

"If you are unwilling to place your name on what you report," asked Gannon, "how are you going to defend your position and/or consequences that are a direct

result of it?"

Flanagan worries that the approach taken by the staff of the newsletter has inaccurately portrayed the majority of the student body as uneducated, and has ruined the chances of a credible independent student publication surfacing in the near future.

Speaking generally, Edna Negrón, associate professor of journalism, explains that there are universal guidelines every publication should follow in order to maintain legitimacy.

"With any publication, the bottom-line questions are: Who is the source and how credible is the information? Is the content backed up with specific reporting and interviews with reliable, preferably identified, sources? Anything less is suspect and could be subject to possible legal problems if there are allegations of wrong-doing."

Gannon plans to write a letter to Mercer indicating that TKE does not condone violence, and was not involved in the fight that took place on September 9. He will be filing a complaint with Public Safety on the charges of libel, defamation of character and falsifying information.

To date, Mercer has not formally addressed the distribution of the Rage Page.

Healthcare, in the Left Corner:

By **RYAN SHAPIRO**
President of the College Democrats

There has been a lot of controversy over President Obama's new health care plan. Many conservatives and Republicans seem to think that this new plan will substantially raise our taxes, jeopardize our private health care coverage, and even create government-sponsored euthanasia and decide who lives and who dies. The purpose of this article is to lay out the facts so you can form your own opinion about this plan.

President Obama's plan does not restrict you to just national health care. This plan makes both options accessible and allows you to choose. His goal is to make sure every single American is covered and that insurance companies are required to cover all pre-existing conditions. What about small businesses? Obama would create a small-business health tax credit that would help them provide insurance to their employees. For larger companies that don't offer coverage, they would be required to contribute a small percentage of their payroll toward health-care costs.

If the health care plan is enacted, neither you nor your employer will have to change the current coverage or doctor. As President Obama said, "If you like your health care plan, you'll be able to keep your health care plan, period." In addition, if you lose or change your job, you will still be able to get coverage. This health care plan does not extend to illegal aliens. If you have the desire to shout, "You Lie!" after reading that, let me explain that this new bill is very explicit in prohibiting any federal money to help

illegal immigrants get coverage. They would still be allowed to get private insurance, but no tax dollars would go towards it.

One of the most important facets of this bill is that insurance companies would be required to cover preventative care procedures like mammograms and colonoscopies. While this would cause many people to be tested who would never wind up developing a disease, money would be saved because less people would get sick.

The fact remains that there are an estimated 30 million American citizens who cannot get coverage. Many of these people can't get covered because of pre-existing conditions or because they simply can't afford it. Just because they have less money than someone who has insurance, does that mean they deserve to be sick? This plan would lead to a healthier America and immensely improve the



photo courtesy of Creative Commons
President Obama has devoted much of his young presidency to healthcare.

... And in the Right Corner:

By **WILLIAM FENWICK**
Vice President of the College Republicans

Our healthcare system has been improving the quality of American lives at an ever increasing rate throughout the past 50 years. Life expectancy, death rates per capita, and the incident of infectious disease have all improved considerably and steadily throughout the years. Although we have one of the most advanced healthcare systems in the world, in recent years there has been a constant call for reform and a switch to a public rather than private system.

A public system would remove all incentives from the workers in the healthcare industry. The removal of the financial motive within the healthcare industry would have disastrous consequences to healthcare as the way we know it today. Without financial incentives the potential exists for driving hundreds of thousands of future medical professionals from the industry and instead would lead them to seek more lucrative careers. Such a drain in personnel and their respective lost contribution to medical advances would be disastrous to our already overburdened health care system.

Future generations of Americans would have severe shortages of doctors, nurses, and medical technicians to treat them leaving the public at considerable risk during a national emergency such as a flu pandemic. Not only would there be a decrease in the number of healthcare providers but waiting times for care would increase as well as a decrease in the quality of care provided.

The American pharmaceutical industry

has been responsible for the invention of the majority of vaccines and a considerable number of the world's medicines. These innovations are produced and distributed by companies for profit. Without a means of making a return on their products, pharmaceutical companies would have no reason to seek further advancement in developing new treatments and cures. The government would have to heavily subsidize companies to entice them to produce new medical treatments for consumers. In turn through increased taxation and other forms of revenue these costs would be passed along to the general public. The net result of a public health option would be a deterrent to medical advancement and add costs to the consumer with burgeoning costs of a burgeoning government bureaucracy.

Instead of creating entirely new and redundant bureaucracies to fix the problems with the current healthcare system, reform should be enacted by organizations within the current system. The health insurance industry is a sector regulated more heavily by the states than the federal government.

The agency which currently oversees the insurance industry in our country is the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. This agency is made up of the insurance commissioners from all fifty states. Different states have different regulations on their respective health insurance markets.

Many of the quoted failings in health care industry are already adequately addressed by particular states. For example an often cited problem in the current system is the

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