

A Supreme Bore

by Thomas Lee

The Supreme Court nominations have become an anticlimactic farce. Both Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and liberals, have been extremely quiet and gun shy about their views on the nominees thus far. None of the nominees seemed to garner much controversy or even conversation upon their nomination, with John Roberts comparable to a cardboard cut-out and Harriet Miers a virtual unknown.

Their positions on key issues have been presented with such adjectives as 'may', 'probably', 'seems', and each has left barely any paper trail. The picks by President George W. Bush have been almost boring: Chief Justice John Roberts was universally considered a likeness in physical presence and charisma to Al Gore, Harriet Miers was a dark horse

with no history, and Alito, another dark horse, seems to have no special trait that separates him from the pack. This strategy is a cunning one by Dubya, perhaps -- bore America so his picks will get through.

The withdrawal of Harriet Miers was a slight surprise, but even before many people knew that her nomination process would be a boring and resounding no. Leaders in both ideological camps questioned her completely unknown stances on issues, while most of the rest of America who even knew Miers had been elected (or that you could even spell 'Miers' like that) questioned the wisdom of placing a person with absolutely no judicial experience and spotty private law record onto the highest court of the land.

The conspiracy theorists will say that Bush nominated her only as a smokescreen to push in



Samuel Alito Jr.

and asked me and my sister to emcee the culture show. I didn't get really involved until I entered Cal freshman year. Back then it was mostly grad students. But now we hope to increase visibility on campus and get more undergrads involved.

L: Ah visibility, that's every club's dilemma. Now how do you fundraise for all these great projects?

A: The big fundraiser is the Fall cultural show at the International House. The I-House is festively decorated to visually transport guest to India. This year's show "Images of India" features a wide range of dance styles (from folk and classical to Bollywood and Nepali), of music (from instrumental to choirs), and drama skits. We have two shows a matinee and an evening show. The line-up for each show is completely different, so come to either one. Well, come the night one because I'll be performing a dance piece.

L: haha of course. And how much does the fall cultural show usually make?

A: Last year's show we fundraised a net sum of \$10,000

L: Holy scheinse, that's A LOT of money. Very impressive.

(ASHA cont.)

sourcing of tech-related jobs to oversees nations such as India has led to stereotypes of well-educated Indian professionals "stealing" jobs from "Americans." So aren't all Indians really, really smart?

A: In reality, the much of the children in India live in such rural and poor areas that they have no access or very limited access to schools. Unlike here in America, there is no universal primary education in India. As encapsulated in the mission statement, Asha strives "to catalyze socio-economic change in India through the education of underprivileged children." We fund NGOs, groups, and individuals on a project by project basis. Projects must be secular, must have no political affiliation, and must meet rigorous criteria. In the past, money financed building new schools, paying teachers' salaries, purchasing computers, upgrading facilities, and hiring part time nurses and doctors. Projects are usually funded for 3 years to ensure stability and self-sustainability.

L: How did you get involved in Asha?

A: When I was 9 or 10 and in a traditional Indian dance class, my then classmate was a Cal student

The APA Journal

Vol. 4 Issue 2

Asian Political Association

Nov. 2005

THE RACE TO LEARN CHINESE

by Patricia Kim

On October 14, New York Times writer, Gretchen Reuthling, wrote an article titled, "Classes in Chinese Grow as the Language Rides a Wave of Popularity," that discussed the rising interest in learning Mandarin, the official language of The People's Republic of China.

The American Foreign Service Institute ranks Chinese as one of four most difficult foreign languages to learn. According the Institute, while an average Eng-

lish speaker needs 480 hours of study to become "proficient" in French, Spanish, or Italian, Chinese requires 1,320 hours. If Chinese is so difficult and time consuming, why is there a sudden race to learn Chinese? Why are there so many wait-listed students crowding Chinese classrooms in Dwinelle, waiting weeks in hopes of getting in?

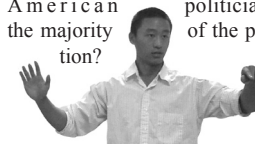
Reuthling quotes Scott McGinnis, an academic adviser at the Defense Language Institute in Washington who says, "Chinese is str-



Note from the Pres...

The line of purported race is not one easily cast aside and is much more easily embraced.

For those who strive to break stereotypes, the problem lies in the veneer of identity that is imposed upon them. Will we ever see an Asian-American politician not thought of as primarily an "Asian-American politician" by the majority of the population?



Why is it then that the Asian Political Association chooses to use a so-called arbitrary line of race inherent in its name? The question is difficult and there are valid contentions, one primarily being that we compound the situation more than we solve it. But, I can only hope that APA can liberate people through awareness and activism more than it codifies them.

I ask this of myself, and maybe you can ask it of yourself too -- give yourself a chance to experience something other than the pull of society, something other than identity in its most banal form. Give yourself a chance to be great, and with that greatness create an identity confronting the strictures of the perceptions of others.

- Albert Wu

Club Highlight: ASHA

by Lorraine Ling

At Cal, there are hundreds of clubs vying for your attention. In this issue I profile Asha for Education. I had the pleasure of speaking with Asha's treasurer Anjali Shastri about this service organization.

L: What does ASHA stand for?

A: Asha isn't an acronym. Asha means "hope" in Hindi. Hope for Education. Asha for Edu-

cation was started right here at Cal in 1991 by three EECS grad students from India. Since then it has grown into a worldwide organization with chapters coast to coast in the US, in Europe, and in India. The group is a mix of UC students, both grad and undergrad, and Bay Area professionals.

L: But the outcry against out-

WHAT'S INSIDE

Dear China, Let Taiwan Go - Pg 2

A Supreme Bore - Back page