Undergraduate Commencement Speaker Controversy Reaches Boiling Point

Supporters argue that Salman Rushdie should be allowed speak in favor of free speech and intellectual enlightenment

By Michael Bergbauer
Staff Writer

NSU's selection of Salman Rushdie to be this year's keynote speaker at Undergraduate Commencement has caused much controversy amongst students and faculty.

Twenty one concerned students met with Dean Don Rosenblum on April 20 to discuss the issue. "He was very responsive and heard the concerns from each attending student," said student Amrish Ramnarine, who suggested during the meeting that a compromise could be reached by giving Rushdie a more removed role from commencement, such as speaking very early or late during the ceremony so students could attend Commencement without hearing Rushdie. Members from Public Safety were also present and assured the students that the event would be safe despite Rushdie's reputation.

A world renowned author, Rushdie is most famous for his depictions of Islamic holy figures in his book *The Satanic Verses*, which many found offensive. His selection to be this year's keynote speaker at Commencement has raised feelings from excitement to resentment amongst the student body. Some students have created a forum of discussion over the topic, a facebook.com group called *The Rights and Wrongs of Commencement 2006* @ NSU, which as of press time has over 70 members.

Those in favor of having Rushdie coming to speak argue in favor of free speech and intellectual enlightenment. "To prevent such an important artist from speaking at our commencement because of one group's disagreement with (or misapprehensions about) his work would be a sacrifice of our intellectual and academic freedom" argues Dr. Lynn Wolf of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. Others argue that one has to look beyond Rushdie's single work. "Mr. Rushdie is not espousing a philosophy of hate. He is a fiction writer with a multicultural background, and it seems fitting that his work should contain the contradictions and challenges to a particular religious and ideological perspective." says Dr. Kathleen Waite.

However, others argue that Rushdie is too offensive toward religious beliefs to speak at Commencement. "I believe that freedom of expression that incites violence and turmoil is the abuse of the right to free speech," says Junior Ambreen Parvez. "I would welcome Salman Rushdie to our university at any other event, but graduation is a one time event for the students and their families to celebrate their achievements and challenges to a new future." Student Rez Alam, whose full thoughts may be found in Opinion Section of this issue says, "No matter what literary scholars may say, his satirical work was a pure affront and a spit on the face."

No decision has yet been made to change the Commencement speaker, so students have started organizing their own Commencement. The Class of 2006 asks that interested students, please RSVP by emailing NSUcommencement2006@gmail.com with their names, degree, and the number of family members and friends who would like to attend. This alternate Commencement, with interests of respect, will not be held at the same day and time of the Rushdie Commencement.
Snakes in a Bank

A Johannesburg, South African man became frustrated when the Absa bank sold his truck following his alleged failure to repay a loan. Reuters reported that Jan Abie Manamela became angry and threatened to bomb the bank, then asked for a $1.6 million compensation. When those methods did not work, Manamela released five deadly, poisonous snakes upon successive employees at bank headquarters. After one employee was bitten, Manamela was sent to prison for three years but was recently paroled, provided that he never contact bank employees or enter any bank locations.

School Board Books Wrong Jon Stewart

School board officials in Ogden, Utah thought that they booked one of entertainment's biggest stars — Jon Stewart, host of "The Daily Show" — for their annual gala. Unfortunately, according to the Chicago Sun-Times, the Jon A. Stewart they hired was actually a former motivational speaker and pro-wrestler. Jon A. Stewart contacted school officials asking if they had the right man, to which they affirmatively replied. The school had sold 700 $50 tickets for the event before realizing that they had the wrong man. Some asked for refunds, but once word spread about the mix-up, local acts began to donate their services. Despite his Web site's title — "The Official Website of Chicago's Own..... Jon Stewart; Professional Wrestler, Politician, Businessman, Writer," the teacher in charge of booking failed to get the right act.

Thief Sells High Price Equipment for Less

High-tech cell phone protocol equipment was lifted from the front porch of a Lynnwood, Wash., home and sold to a pawn shop for $300. Little did the thief know that the actual worth of the electronic device was about $1.7 million. HeraldNet said that the criminal followed the delivery truck right act. When the Absa bank sold his truck following his alleged failure to repay a loan. Reuters reported that Jan Abel Manamela said that the criminal followed the delivery truck right act. After hitting two cars, including a police cruiser, authorities tried to pull him of the road.

Man Inspired by Grand Theft Auto Flees Police, GetsCaught

To bridge the fine line between reality and video games, a Troy, NY, man believed he could outrun police because he had done so in a popular video game franchise. Tyrone McMillan led police on a 55 minute chase after authorities tried to pull his SUV over because of a parole violation, reported Capital News 9. After hitting two cars, including a police cruiser, the chase came to an end and McMillan explained to police "he thought he could outrun them because he played the Playstation video game 'Grand Theft Auto.'"

Caribbean

Ships join search for Holloway

According to the Associated Press, Aruban authorities said that the Aruba coast guard warned Wednesday [April 19] for missing teenager Natalee Holloway. The public prosecutor's office told reporters the coast guard "was using sonar and other equipment to check an unspecified area off the island of Aruba." Investigators have also continued their search on land, questioning witnesses in Aruba and working with authorities in the Netherlands. Officials have not released any details on the arrest of 19-year- old John Van der Sloot, the last person seen with Holloway leaving a bar on May 30, 2005. Deepak and Satish Kalpoe, two Surinamese brothers, were also arrested as suspects in Holloway's disappearance 11 months ago, but were released "after a judge ruled there was not enough evidence to hold them."

For more information visit http://news.yahoo.com.

South America

Crime waves hit Venezuela

Many Venezuelans have been protesting and criticizing President Hugo Chavez, "accusing him of failing to make crime a priority," reported the Associated Press. "There has always been crime, but not like this," said Freddy Dos Santos, whose 89-year-old father was shot in the chest during a robbery and placed in intensive care at a local hospital. "Now they open fire and that's it," he explained. The government has taken steps to lower crime rates, "but a series of particularly heinous murders sparked protests earlier this month by people demanding the president's resignation." In an earlier speech on April 18, Chavez said "the rich are condemned to hell" and that "to be rich is evil." His statements, many critics say, have added class tensions to the existence of dangerous crimes. According to reports from the Pan American Health Organization, Venezuela's murder rate ranked third after that of Colombia and El Salvador; armed robberies, carjackings, and kidnappings are also "frequent." The government has vowed to decrease armed robbery crimes by implementing a $4.6 million "gain buyback program that will offer people money to hand in revolvers and pistols." Even with those plans, many Venezuelans say they are afraid to walk outdoors.

For more information visit http://news.yahoo.com.
SPORTS

SPORTS

Sport Bytes
Compiled by Alicia Winslett

BASEBALL

On April 18, the NSU baseball team won against Barry University 3-0 to end a five-game losing streak. Pitcher Anthony Bello improved to 2-3 on the mound, only allowing two hits in 5 shutout innings while striking out two players. First baseman Chris Reynolds was 2-for-4 in this game with 2 RBI’s, while designated hitter Brian Ikalina was 1-for-2 with one RBI. In this game, the scoring came in the third inning. Franklin Mariner, Greg Burrows and Shawn Langlois all singled to load the bases with no outs. Chris Reynolds then stepped up to the plate to knock a two-run single, and Ikalina drove the evening, and the other by senior designated hitter, Brian Ikalina, who went 1 for 2.

Starting junior pitcher Anthony Bello kept a cool head and collected mentality on the mound as he was able to relax a bit due to the confident lead his offense provided, as well as the unstoppable defense his team put forth on the field.

In addition to the excitement of the game, April 18 was also Student-Athlete Recognition night. Prior to the game, all student athletes at Nova Southeastern who have maintained a grade point average of 3.0 or above were recognized. At the start of the game, it was “a love fest,” stated freshman Nathalie Cabrera.

"It was great that the SAAC community got everyone together to watch the baseball game, it was fun," stated Sophie Friis. Free pizza, soft drinks and snow cones were available throughout the first 3 innings of the game, as well as certificates for all those who were recognized.

Women's Rowing Team Competes at Southern Intercollegiate Rowing Association Spring Championships

By Alicia Winslett

On April 15 in Oak Ridge, Tenn., the NSU women's rowing team competed at the Southern Intercollegiate Rowing Association’s Championship Regatta. The women's team had a strong performance with three boats in the Grand Finals.

The Sharks' Lightweight 4+ won their event with a time of 8:05.8. The Sharks beat the University of Miami, Murray State and the University of Kansas, but they finished behind William and Mary and Kansas State. NSU's Varsity 8+ finished forth in their race with a time of 7:17.0 behind conference rivals Barry University, Grand Valley State University and the University of Washington. The Sharks finished ahead of Florida Tech and the University of California San Diego. The Sharks' pair finished in fifth place in their race.

The women's rowing team will compete in the Sunshine State Conference Rowing Championships on May 8. "We are looking forward to elevating our performance one more notch before the conference championships," said Coach Gartin.

ROWING

On April 15, the women's rowing team competed at the Southern Intercollegiate Rowing Association's Championship Regatta on Melton Hill Lake in Oak Ridge, Tenn. The Sharks' Lightweight 4+ won their event, beating Virginia Tech, the University of Alabama, Georgia Tech, and Georgia State with a time of 8:06.2. The Sharks' Varsity 8+ finished in fourth place behind conference rivals Barry University. They had a time of 7:17:0. Lastly, the Sharks' women's pair finished fifth place in the regatta.

SOFTBALL

On April 15, the softball team split a win with the Florida Tech Panthers in a doubleheader match. The Panthers took game one, 10-2 in five innings, and the Sharks won the second game 7-4. Jada Phillips led the offense with a double hit in both innings. RHP Shannon Lynch took her eighth win of the season, allowing 5 runs on 15 hits.
Steroids, a Minor Problem?

By Alicia Winslett
Sport Editor

Steroids have moved from being a major league problem, to a minor league one as well.

Arizona Diamondbacks minor league pitcher Angel Rocha was suspended for 100 games on April 18. This penalty has been the roughest since the suspension process has come into play. This wasn't Rocha's first time being suspended; he was also suspended for 15 games last June.

Four other players, pitcher Karl Jelinas of the Los Angles Angels, Jorge Reyes, a pitcher for the New York Mets, Jonathan Sivira, an outfielder for St. Louis, and Matthew Varner, a pitcher for San Diego, were also suspended 50 games apiece for positive tests. The suspension process has been drastically changed since last year. Last year, if a player had a positive test they were suspended for 15 games. Now, a player sits out for 50 games. If they test twice with a positive test, they are suspended for 100 games, up from 30 last year.

The punishment for the major leagues has also changed, lengthened from 10 days to 50 games for a positive test. Last season, there were 81 suspensions in the minor league.

Rowing Grand Finale

Women’s Lightweight 4+ Team (Time)
1. Nova Southeastern University (8:06.2)
2. Virginia Tech (8:12.5)
3. University of Georgia (8:29.5)
4. Georgia State (8:33.8)
5. University of Alabama (8:36.5)
6. Georgia Tech (8:37.3)

Women’s Varsity 4+ Team (Time)
1. William & Mary College (8:02.3)
2. New Stain (8:04.8)
3. Nova Southeastern University (8:05.8)
4. Murray State (8:07.9)
5. University of Miami (8:17.8)
6. Wake Forrest (8:45.6)

Women’s Varsity 8+ Team (Time)
1. Barry University (7:03.3)
2. Grand Valley State University (7:06.5)
3. Washington University (7:10.0)
4. Nova Southeastern University (7:17.0)
5. Florida Tech (7:17.8)
6. University of California-San Diego (7:18.1)

Softball

SCHOOL W L T PCT
Florida Southern 15 3 .690
Barry 15 3 .835 40 4 0 .909
Saint Leo 12 6 .667 33 7 0 .825
Florida Tech 13 8 .619 29 13 0 .690
Rollins 9 9 .500 30 15 0 .648
Lynn 7 14 .333 23 20 0 .333
Nova Southeastern 6 12 .333 20 24 0 .455
Tampa 5 13 .278 18 26 0 .409
Eckerd 2 16 .111 13 35 0 .271
Digression Magazine Captivates with Public Reading

By Michael Bergbauer
Staff Writer

On April 20, staff writer for Digressions, NSU's literary magazine, gathered in the Parker Lobby and held a public reading of the magazine.

The event started with the staff advisor, Suzanne Ferriss, graciously thanking this year's staff. Afterward, public readings from the magazine commenced, including "The Box" by Ryan Frabizio, "Little Things" by Elizabeth Harbaugh, and "My Closet" by Anthony Labson.

The event also showcased a display of all the photos and original artwork featured in the publication.

The magazine, created and staffed by undergraduate students, features poetry, short fiction, original artwork and photographs. Editor-in-Chief Elizabeth Harbaugh said that "We've had a beautiful staff and each year the magazine continues to improve. I look forward to next year being better than ever."

Frabizio, who is assuming the Editor-in-Chief position next year following Harbaugh's graduation, said that the quality of this year's installment set a high standard for coming editions. "It will be tough because Liz did it this year and she really is the best. I feel like I have a lot to live up to."

After the event, the staff had a short meeting detailing plans for the next edition of the magazine, including an earlier printing schedule, an improved website allowing for online submissions, and more publicity events with refreshments.

Digressions magazine can be found online at http://www.undergrad.nova.edu/hum/digressions.cf or in the Division of Humanities, Parker 380 and around campus. For further information, contact Ferriss at ferriss@nova.edu or (954) 262-8219.

Fischler School to Offer International Arts and Culture Infusion in Sweden

By Kristine Belizaire

"Create something global" is the theme behind the two week summer course offered by NSU's Fischler School of Education and Human Services. The course provides students with the opportunity to explore the arts, education, and culture in Sweden.

David Spangler, NSU's Interdisciplinary Program Administrator and Artistic Director, said that "students should join this program if they want to expand their discipline, whether its music, design or theatre, so that they can do larger interdisciplinary projects with a perspective on conceptual and creative issues."

Students will also be able to explore Swedish, Scandinavian and European arts and culture and receive optional course credit from NSU.

Orlando Espinosa, a senior at the university, spoke about his time spent with the program in Sweden. "It was an amazing experience to participate in an infusion of cultural art. Having an opportunity to see how other student create art, the similarities are astonishing. I definitely think that any one with the opportunity should go."

Presented by the Lovewell Institute for the Creative Arts, the class works with a cultural exchange workshop for Swedish and American teenagers in the city of Linkoping, Sweden. The curriculum allows students to write their own scripts, compose songs, choreograph dances, and assist with costuming, set design, lighting, and the recording of the cast album.

For additional credit, students can also participate in all three weeks of the summer program (July 16 - August 6, 2006) to receive advanced training in the Lovewell Method, or may choose to complete an artistic project in their field during the two week trip.

Room and board rates vary depending on the exchange rate and length of stay. Cost estimates will be available at the beginning of the summer. Spangler can be reached for more information at 800-986-3223 ext. 8363 or davids@nova.edu.
Strong winds blew through the Goodwin dorms during the second Farquhar/Founders/Vettell Block Party held on April 12. According to coordinators, the event allowed for students to have some fun before the stress of finals sets in.

Originally planned to be held in the Pagoda outside of the FFV halls, a power outage caused planners to move the event near Goodwin. The Zeta Phi Beta sorority, already having an event in the same location, combined their efforts with the block party.

"When we lost power, it gave us a reason to collaborate," said FFV Area Director Karen Regan. "[The Zetas] opened up their hearts and let us in."

The extra attendees in the area taxed the Zeta's burger supply, said Cassandra Oliver of the sorority. She said that the new organization has been enjoying their time on campus. "The students have been rather welcoming," explained Oliver.

With all of the construction obstructing pathways surrounding the dorms, the block party allowed for students to get together and have fun. "We're just trying to keep the residents' spirits up," explained Regan.

The circle in front of the FFV buildings served as a "natural environment" for the first party, since it was easy for students to access. Construction fences now in place make it difficult for passing students to navigate the campus, so the move to Goodwin worked out well.

Construction has been a major concern surrounding the dorms, but despite inconvenience when walking to class and added noise from trucks, Regan said that "it seems like the residents are doing fine." She is hopeful some stress for residents will be released when the University Center opens and more walkways become accessible.

According to Regan, the first block party in November attracted about 100 people throughout the night. Coupled with ZPB, the latest block party attracted many students who enjoyed the event. "I'm having a great time. It's great music, great food, great show," said Etta Mills, a junior at NSU. "They should have more of these. It's a lot of fun."

Regan is hoping that more block party events sponsored by Residential Life will be held in coming years.
There was a time when I thought that originality was a good thing. I'm not saying that it isn't, but let me introduce you to a little-known Atlanta-based band named Family Force Five. Now, if that band name alone hasn't got you running away, within two seconds of hearing the self-labeled "crunk rock" on their sophomore album Business in the Front, Party in the Back, your ears will be crying out for relief.

Not sure what "crunk rock" is? Well, I wasn't either, and unfortunately I found out the hard way. Remember, if you will, a time when Limp Bizkit and POD ruled airways (hard to imagine, I know). Now take this genre of rap-metal and fuse it with emo and you've got what I like to call rap-emo. Or Emo-rap. Or Perno. Or Emra. Who knows what it really is other than the band that created it: Family Force Five.

Maybe you're still not getting the picture. The guys of the Force have cited their inspirations as being Pete Rock, Kool and the Gang, Outkast, Kraftwerk, Rage Against the Machine, and (last but not least) Jesus. Instead of keeping these influences in their own personal collections, they decided to put them all together and produce an album that I'm not sure Jesus would even listen to.

Business in the Front, which may just be the worst name for an album ever, opens with the song "Cadillac Phunque." From the opening notes, you notice a few things: first, the Force boys didn't get the memo that stated that pasty skinny white boys rapping is not the best idea. Sure, Vanilla Ice had a song and okay, K-Fed has an audience, but I'm pretty certain that audience is his son, who can't speak up in his own defense when the music is blasted in his nursery.

Second, the Force boys aren't the best at writing songs, as is evidenced by lyrics like "Hey, you know....cardboard is, uh, one of the coolest things ever made by paper!" and "I give my props to the Speak and Spell/ it taught me grammar in the A-F-L.

And just in case you were wondering, yes, the letters are actually spoken by the Speak and Spell. The truth is, that instead of grammar, Family Force Five should've been focusing on spelling. "Cadillac Phunque?" "Kountry Gentlemen?" "Put Ur Hands Up?" What are you trying to accomplish by butchering the English language? What does music have to do with desperately trying to find alternative spellings? My poor spell check is currently experiencing its worst nightmare, all in the name of "crunk rock."

Musically, things don't look up for the boys. Post-hardcore guitars layered on classic Papa Roach beats and a few appearances by the keytar make the entire effort 42 minutes of pain and confusion. Each passing song is worse than the last, and by the time the album ends with the appropriately named "Numh," which is a song about moonwalking, I couldn't help but throw up a little in my mouth.

The saddest part of it all is that many of you will think that I'm kidding. Even if I tell you that the band's slogan is "May the crunk be with you," you still may not believe me. All I can say now is that if you actually bought the CD, leave the shrink-wrap alone. I think stores will let you return an unopened CD.

I wish I could rate this musical debauchery with negative points but I don't think that is allowed. Instead, I will give it one cent because, and only because, originality does count for something, and if nothing else, no other human being has ever reached the low of inventing "crunk rock." Kudos, Family Force Five. Kudos.

Rating: 50.01

Record Label: Maverick Records / Gotee Records
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of Business and Entrepreneurship
Christopher Kantenga
Fort Myers, Fl
Sophomore
Biology
“I feel he should give the commencement for this year. I am sure he has a lot of interesting things to say.”

Cristine Jaramillo
Ecuador
Senior
B.P.M.
“His statements were offensive, but his opinion is a bit exaggerated in the Nova campus.”

Kyle Nguyen
Vietnam
Junior
“I think it’s kind of late to vote against it now.”

Lauren Donnelly
Boston
Biology
Sophomore
“I think he should be allowed to speak at graduation, because everyone is entitled to freedom of speech.”

Anisa Andoni
Fort Lauderdale, Fl
Biology
Junior
“I believe that letting a person like him make a speech at NSU graduation is not safe, and very controversial for diverse students.”

Janothan Jordan
North Miami Beach, Fl
Sophomore
Law
“The people in the Middle East should enjoy the same freedoms that we share in the Americas. Expression without violence is essential for all governments around the world.”

Yi Jey Lin
Taiwan
Junior
Biology
“Even though I signed a petition for stopping him from coming, however, I have a second thought about it. I think he fits the name of ‘Good and evil’. Perhaps that’s why the school chose him.”

Akasat Bhargava
India
Sophomore
Finance
“I am fine with the speaker. The University supports freedom of speech and expression and I believe we should not penalize someone for that.”
This Week in Arts & Entertainment

Movie Openings

April 28

**Stick It**

*Starring:* Jeff Bridges, Missy Peregrym
*Director:* Jessica Bendinger
*Genre:* Comedy

**United 93**

*Starring:* J. J. Johnson, Gary Connock, Polly Adams
*Director:* Paul Greenberg
*Genre:* Drama

An 18-year-old ex-gymnast star with big family problems finds herself on the wrong side of the law after one too many arrests. Forced back into the regimented world of gymnastics to clean up her act, she rediscovers her love of the sport and gets the chance to make peace, with her dysfunctional life.

Available April 25

**Lex Lake It by the Goo Goo Dolls**
**IV by Godsmack**

Also Opening: *Akeelah and the Bee, Water, and RV*

Album Releases

Available April 25

**Life Laughs** by Jenny McCarthy

Jenny McCarthy, New York Times bestselling author of Baby Laughs and Belly Laughs, speaks candidly about the challenges and the humor to be found in balancing motherhood and the ups and downs of marriage.

Book Releases

Available April 25

**Vanished** by Karen Robards

Ten years ago, Sarah Mason’s six-year-old daughter vanished during an outing at a local park in Beaufort, South Carolina. Despite a furious search, little Lexie was never found, and Sarah was left to pick up the pieces of her shattered life and go on as best she could. Then, on one hot July night, she returns home from work to hear the phone ringing. When she picks it up, a child’s terrified voice whispers, “Mommy, help, come and get me.” The call is cut off, but not before Sarah’s heart goes into overdrive: the voice belongs to Lexie. Six-year-old Lexie. Though ten years have passed, she sounds exactly the same.

**Life Laughs** by Jenny McCarthy

Jenny McCarthy, New York Times bestselling author of Baby Laughs and Belly Laughs, speaks candidly about the challenges and the humor to be found in balancing motherhood and the ups and downs of marriage.

DVD Releases

Available April 25

**Scarlet Johansson in Match Point**

Heath Ledger in *Casanova*

James Franco in *Triss, the God of Love* and *Old School*

Charlize Theron in *Aeon Flux*

Entertainment

April 25

David Copperfield at the BankAtlantic Center in Sunrise

April 26

Fall Out Boy at the BankUnited Center in Coral Gables

Anberlin at the Culture Room in Ft. Lauderdale

April 27

Kenney Chesney at the Bank Atlantic Center in Sunrise

Movie synopses and photos courtesy of www.movies.yahoo.com

Book synopses courtesy of www.barnesandnoble.com

Compiled by Marines Alvarez
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Dear Concerned Students,

Recent letters and newspaper editorials have expressed concern over the selection of Salman Rushdie as the speaker at the upcoming NSU commencement ceremony. Two primary issues have been raised: concern for personal safety and perceived insult of the Muslim community. First, let me say that I am pleased to see expression of concern and debate on campus. These are important tools for exploration of ideas and serve, as the cornerstone of the role and mission of this university. Higher education is designed to be a forum for the exchange, exploration, and expansion of ideas. I fully recognize that these issues sometimes come into conflict with personal values (and contrasting ideas). This question is not whether we will disagree -- but how we manage those disagreements. This is the fundamental value of the institution: handling discourse in a rational and open manner.

In this regard, I take strong exception to calls to ban this speaker. Salman Rushdie has exemplified himself as an extraordinary writer and thinker. He has been recognized by numerous international organizations for his writing and his work on critical human rights and civil rights matters. Further, in his recent public appearances, Rushdie has spoken on the very real and relevant issues that we face in a complex and engaged global society. In more than 15 novels, countless essays, articles, and public speeches, he has addressed the fundamental rights of expression -- a value and commitment shared by this institution. Therefore, Rushdie's presence as a commencement speaker serves exactly the mission sought in this role: a person of great prominence and service framing thought provoking, salient, inspiring, challenging, and relevant issues.

Rushdie has served as a commencement speaker at several of the most distinguished universities in the world. His messages -- and the responses by students and faculty -- have been positive and celebratory. We are in very good company. In fact, the overwhelming response from the university community has been very positive: students and faculty are genuinely eager and excited to hear this speaker.

Please understand that Mr. Rushdie was not selected with the intention to insult any member of the community. His message is one of the rights of freedom and liberties. He advocates no violent action. To that end, the analogies to shouting 'fire' in a crowded theatre are simply inaccurate. At some level, all speech has the potential to offend -- we must strive to find ways to engage, not silence, those offenses.

Freedom of expression is what allows higher education to function. We would not have a university without it. I understand that some people may disagree with Rushdie (as some may disagree with many potential speakers and even teachers). The fact that we can disagree -- and yet be civil and support the right of a person to speak -- is a quality to be championed. Rushdie, himself, is well regarded for his teachings on this issue.

There appears to be no foundation for the concerns expressed about personal safety. In the past year, Rushdie has appeared in more than 20 public forums -- including several colleges and universities. Throughout, there have been no incidents, nor has he made any request for additional security protection. Nonetheless, NSU Public Safety officials have been briefed on the upcoming visit -- and the Public Safety office has worked closely with local law enforcement and with Arena personnel to ensure that all are prepared and aware.

Rushdie no longer lives in hiding and has become a very public figure. The death sentence has been lifted by all but the most radical/fundamental groups. Sadly, many distinguished individuals have comparable threats (including recent campus speaker, Ambassador Paul Bremer). I am confident that our commencement will be safe for our community.

It is important to place commencement in context. A commencement speaker serves the entire community. The last 100 years are filled with examples of major -- and often controversial -- statements that have been made at college commencements. British Prime Minister Churchill introduced the concept of the 'Iron Curtain' at the Westminster College, Missouri 1946 commencement. George Marshall introduced what would be known as the 'Marshall Plan' (to restore Europe) at Harvard University's 1947 commencement. There appears to be no opposition to Rushdie's speaking at commencement.

In conclusion, I would very much like to see Rushdie speak on campus. He is one of the most important voices in our world today. Rushdie has served as a commencement speaker at several universities in the world. His message is one of the rights of freedom and liberties. He advocates no violent action. To that end, the analogies to shouting 'fire' in a crowded theatre are simply inaccurate. At some level, all speech has the potential to offend -- we must strive to find ways to engage, not silence, those offenses.

Freedom of expression is what allows higher education to function. We would not have a university without it. I understand that some people may disagree with Rushdie (as some may disagree with many potential speakers and even teachers). The fact that we can disagree -- and yet be civil and support the right of a person to speak -- is a quality to be championed. Rushdie, himself, is well regarded for his teachings on this issue.

I hope you can understand that Rushdie was selected with the intention to engage, not offend any member of the community. His message is one of the rights of freedom and liberties. He advocates no violent action. To that end, the analogies to shouting 'fire' in a crowded theatre are simply inaccurate. At some level, all speech has the potential to offend -- we must strive to find ways to engage, not silence, those offenses.

Please understand that Mr. Rushdie was not selected with the intention to insult any member of the community. His message is one of the rights of freedom and liberties. He advocates no violent action. To that end, the analogies to shouting 'fire' in a crowded theatre are simply inaccurate. At some level, all speech has the potential to offend -- we must strive to find ways to engage, not silence, those offenses.

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... 12 and dumb... the pain and misery I could've saved if I had just looked away [from my Passions]."

someone's house be sucked into hell on "One Life to Live." Would people be picking magical mushrooms to keep evil at bay on "The Bold and the Beautiful"? Does anyone practice self flagellation on "As the World Turns"? Could re-runs of "Port Charles" be featured on the Sci-fi channel? I didn't think so.

But let me clarify. I am by no means defending this potato sack of crap known as "Passions." It's horrible, with horrendous acting and story lines way above and beyond what is expected from the genre. So much so that they should just say it's a spoof and call it a day.

I know that soap operas are to be far from realistic, but the day that Kay, one of the teen-aged main characters, sold her soul to the devil and was transformed into her arch nemesis/cousin so that she could have sex with her arch nemesis/cousin's boyfriend, I began to question. It seems likely that the writers got hold of the magical mushrooms their characters are fond of picking.

Can I just say that I hate monologues? I hate monologues. Hey, stupid, the person you're trying to keep a secret from is standing two feet away while you talk to yourself. Luckily though, in Harmony and in soap cities around the world, everyone suffers from acute hearing loss.

I think one day I'm going to march onto the set of "Passions" and say, "Hey everyone, I have an idea. How about someone has a baby and they know who the mommy and the daddy is?" And then I would be "escorted" off the premises.

All that being said, let it be known that I definitely do not watch "Passions"... regularly. Which is okay, because if I catch an episode once a year I can still know what's going on. I can guarantee that in any given episode, the town witch will be looking in her cauldron, there will be three love triangles, someone will be seeing God in visions, and someone will be suffering from some form of memory loss.

There is something that I like about "Passions" (shocking, I know), and that is the theme music. "I would hold the hand of the one who could lead me places and kiss the lips of the one who could sing so sweet." Isn't it cute (be thankful you can't hear me singing). That's about as much sense as the entire show makes: the opening music.

Okay, so maybe I would recommend tuning in occasionally. It's a good laugh, if nothing else at all. Plus you get to see my favorite character, Theresa, trying to rape the love of her life, like, everyday. I'm just saying.

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Stupid

continued from page 13

"... 12 and dumb... the pain and misery I could've saved if I had just looked away [from my Passions]."

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The Current, formerly known as The Knight, serves Nova Southeastern University from its location in room 105 of the Athletics and Student Activities (ASA) Building. The Current is NSU's established vehicle for student reporting, opinion and the arts. All community members are invited to contribute anything they desire to The Current. Editorialists, commentaries and advertisements in this publication reflect the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the University or its officials, The Current staff, or other advertisers. The Current will not publish unsigned letters except under special circumstances at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. The Current reserves the right to edit.

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Making waves!
“Rushdie’s presence as a commencement speaker serves exactly the mission sought in this role: a person of great prominence and service framing thought provoking, salient, inspiring, challenging, and relevant issues”


U.S. Presidents and world leaders have used the forum of a university commencement to introduce key issues and programs; the audience is informed and poised to lead the world into the next generation. A commencement speaker should address critical issues that will shape the lives and futures of graduating students. Salman Rushdie has been a commencement speaker at some of the most distinctive universities in the world. We are privileged to be his audience.

A university should be a “safe zone” where many controversial ideas and ideas that offend some should be openly discussed, with no one fearing retribution or censorship. Students boycotting a commencement exercise because they find the speaker has ideas that offend them seem to me to signal their intolerance and disregard for the core mission of the university. Rushdie is a major proponent of freedom of speech and those who seek to silence him would seem to be embracing an intolerance of ideas they find offensive, a position anathema to the core mission of the university.

Salman Rushdie has come to represent independence of thought and expression, the core values of academic life and democratic society. His appearance at NSU’s commencement ceremony not only signals our recognition of one of the greatest writers of our time, but it celebrates our commitment to the idea of the right to freedom of expression and affirms our dual commitment to excellence and academic freedom.

Appearing at MIT some years ago, in response to the death sentence issued against him, Rushdie proclaimed, “The only defense against terrorism is to refuse to be terrorized.” He went on to say, “The attempt to suppress a book is the attempt not just to suppress the right of the writer to write or the publisher to publish or the translator to translate; it is also the attempt to suppress the right of the reader to read.”

Intellectual inquiry, the life-blood of the university, requires broad-mindedness and openness. A commencement speaker serves exactly the mission sought in this role: a person of great prominence and service framing thought provoking, salient, inspiring, challenging, and relevant issues.

Letter from a Reader

Dear NSU,

The concerned students at NSU would like to inform you that the leaders of NSU, Dean Rosenblum, and the majority of the faculty in Liberal Arts and Humanities, think that we the students are “misinformed,” “intolerant,” and “suppress freedom of speech.” This comes after the meeting with Dean Rosenblum, Public Safety, and others for almost two hours, where the issues of the concerned students were raised. However, it is they who are misinformed and intolerant. They are misinformed as to what we the students feel about the issue and they are being intolerant to our right to express our disagreement with the issues. They did sit with us at the meeting and they did engage in conversation with us in the recent past, however, they were not open to hear our side of the issue. If the point of the meetings were to have an understanding of each others opinion, why were letters pre-written and handed out stating only one side’s opinion before the meeting was even over? There was no chance of even having a compromise, the decision to go ahead with their choice of their commencement speaker was already unilaterally made. Aren’t we, the students, entitled to our own opinions? Don’t we have the right to have those opinions expressed? Shouldn’t those opinions be heard, and not only heard, but shouldn’t they be taken into serious consideration? Is it not we who are silencing freedom of speech; we invite compromise, but it is the few that are silencing by not respecting the opinions others.

They want us to come to our own graduation to listen to someone who disappointed and insulted certain groups who happen to be our professors, our classmates, and our friends. The Dean wants us to listen to Rushdie’s lecture so that we may “educate” ourselves.

Commencement is a time to enlighten, but its main purpose is to commemorate the students and their families, not the speaker! Therefore, we, the group of concerned students from various backgrounds, ethnicities, races, and religions, feel that we have the right to at least be respected at our graduation, even if it means that we have to have another one.

The Class of 2006 cordially invites all students and faculty to our own graduation. Stay tuned for updates on a fun-filled commencement. We will not stoop down to the level of the insensitive authorities of this university by holding our commencement on May 7th because unlike them, we do have respect. Instead, we’ll hold it another day so that those who would like to attend both commencements are encouraged to.

Graduates, please RSVP with your names, degree, and the number of family members and friends who would like to attend. Without tickets, you will not be allowed to enter. Email us if you would like to help out in any way. We need financial support, and a lot of help to make this a memorable commencement for not just the Class of 2006, but for NSU.

Thanks! Email: NSUcommencement2006@gmail.com

Sincerely,
Concerned Students at Nova Southeastern University

This letter was prepared by a group of approximately 25 undergraduate students.

I personally feel that it is the university’s responsibility to have chosen a more neutral and more respectable role model so that everyone can look back and be proud of the commencement of 2006. This is not an issue of being tolerant, but an issue of respect.

Sincerely,
Rez Alam
President of Astronomy/Rocket Club
Ex-Secretary of Martial Arts Club
Fischler School of
Education and
Human Services
Nova Southeastern University

Welcomes the Urban Teacher Academy Program
Annual Conference

Wednesday, April 26, 2006
9:00 am – 2:00 pm
DeSantis Building Atrium

Beginning in 9th grade, students in this program are inspired and thoughtfully prepared for future teaching careers within their own urban communities. This component includes a rigorous four-year curriculum, earned college credits, and early field experiences in urban classrooms leading to fully-paid college tuition and a guaranteed teaching position.

The Fischler School of Education and Human Services at Nova Southeastern University is honored to be the host of this wonderful, difference-making program.