

# UNS *Link*

## Other side:

- ▶ UNS 86'ed
- ▶ Editorial by Mike Saffran on radio consolidation in *R&R*
- ▶ Game-programming courses featured in *The New York Times* (see addendum)

## CAST, CCIS and COE academic leaders' link to RIT University News Services

### CAST | COE | CCIS

#### Important dates:

- May 17**  
Final day classes
- May 18**  
Final Saturday classes
- May 18-22**  
Final exams
- May 24**  
CAST Commencement/  
Academic Convocation
- May 25**  
CCIS/COE Commencement
- May 26-June 2**  
Spring/Summer Break
- May 27**  
Memorial Day/RIT holiday
- June 3**  
Summer Quarter classes begin
- July 4**  
Independence Day/RIT holiday  
(classes in session)

#### News & Events

- May 16 (deadline April 26)
- July 11 (deadline June 28)
- Aug. 15 (deadline Aug. 2)
- Aug. 29 (deadline Aug. 16)

#### Contact UNS:

- E-mail**  
mjsuns@rit.edu
- Telephone**  
475-5697
- Fax**  
475-5097
- Internal mail**  
1187 Building 86
- U.S. mail**  
132 Lomb Memorial Dr.  
Rochester, N.Y. 14623-5608

IT

UNS Link ♦ Spring Quarter 2002  
Vol. II, No. 3

## Have an opinion? Shout it from a rooftop—or, better yet, write a letter

An excellent way to express your viewpoints and simultaneously shine a spotlight on RIT's wealth of faculty acumen is by writing a letter to the editor.

A lengthy letter, usually accompanied by a photograph of the writer, is called an "op-ed," derived from the phrase, "opposite the editorial page," but also commonly meaning "opinion editorial."

Whichever format you choose—letter or op-ed—University News Services can assist you with editing and placement. By collaborating with UNS, you maintain an integral role in the editing process. Conversely, if you were to submit a letter directly to a newspaper, editing decisions are left to the discretion of the paper's editors—you wouldn't know what has been cut until you read your letter in the newspaper.

#### For starters, you must have a strong opinion

In selecting a topic, keep in mind that, unlike at dinner parties, having strong opinions is considered a plus in editorial writing.

Follow these guidelines:

- ▶ Letters should be 175 words or less.
- ▶ Op-eds should be from 300 to 750 words.

Once your editorial is written and edited, UNS will assist with placement.

General-interest magazines and newspapers are suitable forums for editorials on topics of community-wide interest. Editorials on industry-specific issues are appropriate for trade publications. Editorials on topics of relevance only to the campus community are ideal for "Viewpoints" in RIT's *News & Events*.

Unlike press releases, which are widely distributed, editorials are submitted for exclusive publication. But like press releases, timeliness is important for editorials relating to topics in the news.

#### Do as I say and as I do

This issue's featured news placement in "Brick City in the news" on page two is, fittingly, a letter to the editor. Written by me, the letter recently appeared in the radio and recording-industry trade publication, *Radio & Records*.

Like many in public relations, my career began on the other side of the fence, in the media. Having worked in radio for nearly two decades, I maintain a strong interest in broadcasting and closely follow industry trends.

My letter highlights the oligopolistic affect on radio as a result of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which facilitated ownership consolidation, and the legislation's adverse impact on broadcast licensees' willfulness to serve in the public interest.

My intent in providing this backdrop is to further highlight the qualities of an effective editorial. Writers must have:

- ▶ Expertise on a given topic
- ▶ Willingness to stake a position
- ▶ Ability to express an opinion with clarity and passion

UNS encourages you to consider writing a letter or op-ed. To help you get started, please read the article, "Expert Opinions," included with this edition of *UNS Link*. As the article's author aptly states, newspaper editorial pages are "a powerful outlet for visibility." □

Academic Convocation is on May 24.



Commencement is on May 24 and 25.

## New focus for "In the news"

Beginning with this edition of *UNSLink*, the "In the news" addendum lists print and electronic news placements exclusive to CAST, CCIS and COE.

To ensure a comprehensive list, please tell me when you have been contacted by a member of the media, whether as a result of my efforts or direct contact from a reporter.

Highlights of university-wide news placements can be found under "RIT in the news" on the University News Services Web site at [www.rit.edu/news](http://www.rit.edu/news). □

## UNS '86'ed' to new campus home

University News Services has moved to Building 86, which is located between the Carey, Link and Ross buildings.

Building 86 is also home to University Publications, select information-technology faculty and classrooms. Its location can be pinpointed on the campus map in the back of RIT's 2002 telephone directory.

UNS has not been exiled, it only feels that way. In part, this is because of the meaning of the expression "86," as recently explained in the newspaper:

**Democrat and Chronicle**

**JUST ASK**

**Question:** Can you explain the origin and meaning of the expression "86"?

**Answer:** The term means "nothing left, no more." It appears to have originated in restaurants and bars as a sort of code to mean "sold out of the item ordered."

The book *Picturesque Expressions: A Thematic Dictionary* says the expression apparently was chosen because it rhymes with nix — slang for "nothing" or "no." □

## Brick City in the news



### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Amid Consolidation, Radio's Public Interest Role Should Not Be Forgotten

Kudos to R&R Washington Bureau Assoc. Editor Joe Howard on a thought-provoking analysis of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 ("Telecom Act Turns 6," 2/15, 2/22). It was heartening to read comments attributed to New Northwest Broadcasters President Ivan Braiker, who is to be commended for his reminder to broadcasters that it is a *privilege* to hold a station license, even in this day of consolidation. Sadly, this important point seems lost on many.

Adam Thierer of the Cato Institute appears to be one such person. Despite his lofty job title in telecommunications, Mr. Thierer seemingly has no knowledge of the Communications Act of 1934, which grants broadcasters the *privilege to use*, not ownership over, the *publicly owned* airwaves and mandates that they serve the public interest, convenience and necessity. Toward that end, the legislation seeks to ensure, through ownership restrictions, that a broadcaster cannot attain undue concentration of control. I remind Mr. Thierer that, although updated by later legislation, the earlier law's public-interest requirement was *not* superseded by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 but, rather, remains in effect today.

Mr. Thierer would do well to familiarize himself with said proviso and, moreover, to avoid irrelevant comparisons between broadcasters and the manufacturers of au-

tomobiles and soda pop, which, he intimates, are not unique from one another. Well, Mr. Thierer, while purveyors of cars and sugar water use their own resources to make and peddle their wares (and, in doing so, are subject to myriad governmental regulations), broadcasters, in contrast, use a limited, *publicly owned* resource — the airwaves — to deliver their product. Should they not also be subject to governmental oversight?

To assert, as Mr. Thierer does, that broadcasting's public-interest mandate is "arbitrary and undefined" suggests a misunderstanding of the radio and television industries. Moreover, he doesn't do any favors for the broadcasting industry through his belief that radio is like any other business — a notion that, arguably, is at the root of many of radio's troubles today.

(Consistent with his views, should we expect Mr. Thierer and others who share his sentiments to rally in support of greater unionization of employees in radio? I suppose so, if it were true that radio is no different from Ford or General Motors. Better be careful, Mr. Thierer, for your faulty analogy may lead to the media behemoths getting something they didn't wish for.)

In analyzing the effects of the Telecom Act, better to heed the cautionary words of Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott, who laments, "There may have been too

**LETTER/See Page 15**

### Letter

Continued from Page 3

much consolidation" ("Lott Says He's 'Disturbed About The FCC,'" 3/1). Similarly, Sen. John McCain has derided the law's resulting "megamergers."

Ironically, a 1996 FCC summary of the legislation's intent is ludicrous in retrospect. It states, "The goal of this new law is to let anyone enter any communications business." Clearly, the result has been the opposite, to the detriment of radio and its listeners.

As nascent technology 80 years ago, radio was described by the *New Republic* as being "under the control of men unfitted by training and personality for posts of such importance." Author and professor Susan J. Douglas interprets, "These were businessmen ignorant of radio's 'proper use' and 'indifferent as to whether it is used properly or not.'" Resonating today, those words aptly describe 21st-century media conglomerates that have been abetted by the Telecom Act and backed by an unfit member of a certain Washington, DC "think tank."

**Michael Saffran**

Media-relations specialist, Rochester Institute of Technology  
Communications and media technology graduate student, Rochester  
Institute of Technology,  
Rochester, NY

