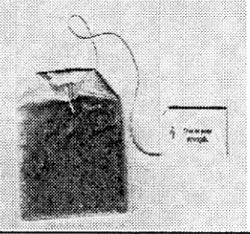


Teabags

Wait. What? What's this about Teabags? Looks like Adam's gotten himself talking about a the term and problems that go with it. **Page 4**



The Sting

www.thesting.org

Street Fighter 4

Are you ready for this? We finally have our own Street Fighter 4 review. Check it out on...

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September 16th, 2009

With that fresh, new Newspaper smell

Volume 64, Issue 1

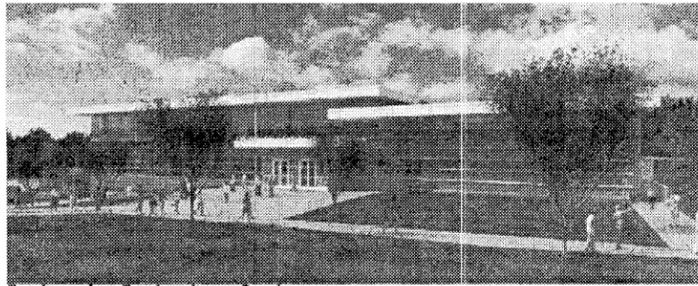
Town Hall Meeting

Melanie Allen
Staff Writer

On March 31, SPSU held a Town Hall meeting with the purpose of addressing the questions and concerns of the student, faculty, and staff population. An incredible amount of information was available at the event, including floor plans, rendered images of the completed building projects, project completion dates, and so on. Topics covered were new infrastructure plans, engineering technology center, architecture studio, parking deck, student housing, dining hall, pedestrian walkway, and special interest housing. In this issue of The Sting, you will find articles that cover the highlights of the event.

Over the next couple of years, students can anticipate a more functional, lively, eco-friendly, and beautiful campus. All of the

projects are aiming to meet the silver and gold standards of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) initiative, a nationally recognized third-party program that recognizes building and landscape designs that are efficient and sustainable.



Engineering Technology Center

Photo provided by Town Hall Meeting

New Studio Annex and ETC Building

•Estimated Completion Dates: July 2010 (Studio) October 2010 (ETC)

Architects from Cooper Carry shared their plans for the new studio annex and Engineering Technology Center (ETC).

The new studio annex sits down hill from the current first year studio, and will house the second year architecture students. First and second year students take classes from the Design Foundations program, before being accepted into the professional program. This building will facilitate communication between these students and allow the N building to be dedicated to students in the professional program.

The building is 14,500 sq ft. There are six studios with sixteen desks each, six faculty offices, a 286 seat Auditorium, and an informal outdoor studio.

The ETC building will house classes from the Computer Engineering Technology, Electrical Engineering Technology, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Telecommunications Engineering Technology, and Mechatronics Engineering programs. Students will gain thirty-six new laboratories, a machine shop, welding shop, and automotive shop.

Special Interest Housing

•Estimated Completion Date: August 2010

[Image SIHousing.jpg] "Watercolor of Special Interest Housing" image from ppt.

The ten new special interest houses will be open to anyone. Each house has

- 10
- BUILDINGS
- 10 HOUSES (12 BEDS/HOUSE)
- 120 TOTAL BEDS
- PARKING
- 130 SPACES
- New Community Center and Dining Hall
- Estimated Completion Date: August 2010

Confusing Tuitions

David Sluder
Free Lance

On April 14th, the University System of Georgia (USG) released a document detailing their surprising decision to suspend the Fixed-for-Four program for new freshmen. Other decisions were made regarding the cost of tuition, all resulting in an increase for students. Many of the decisions were university-specific, so here's the summary of SPSU's changes: continue paying the \$100 institutional fee first paid in Spring 2009, set per-credit-hour rate to \$146 for all students not Fixed-for-Four, and raise tuition cap from twelve hours to fifteen.

You're lucky if you started your college career between Fall 2006 and now since you're on the Fixed-for-Four program and won't feel any of these changes. Your tuition will not change for twelve consecutive semesters from your date of entry. If you graduate in four years, you have nothing to worry about! If you take longer, however, the first semester of your fifth year is going to leave your wallet hurting! So what does it mean to the one-half to one-third of students who are not on that program?

If you entered school prior to 2006, like me, your tuition is going up. This semester, Spring 2009, I paid \$130 per credit hour, capped at twelve credit hours, and then I dished out about \$465 for some fees. For fifteen hours of classes, this totaled \$2,025. Come Fall 2009, my per-credit-hour rate is being raised to what was the rate for Fall 2008 Fixed-for-Four students: \$146. Couple this with the tuition being capped at fifteen hours instead of twelve, and taking fifteen or more hours of classes will cost you \$2,190. Add the fees and you get \$2,655. That means that all students not on Fixed-for-Four will be paying an extra \$630 per semester for fifteen hours. If you just want to take twelve hours, you will be paying \$192 more per semester. Looking at what comes out of your pocket, in Fall 2009 you will be paying between 9.5% and 31% more (12 hours and 15 hours, respectively) than Fall 2008.

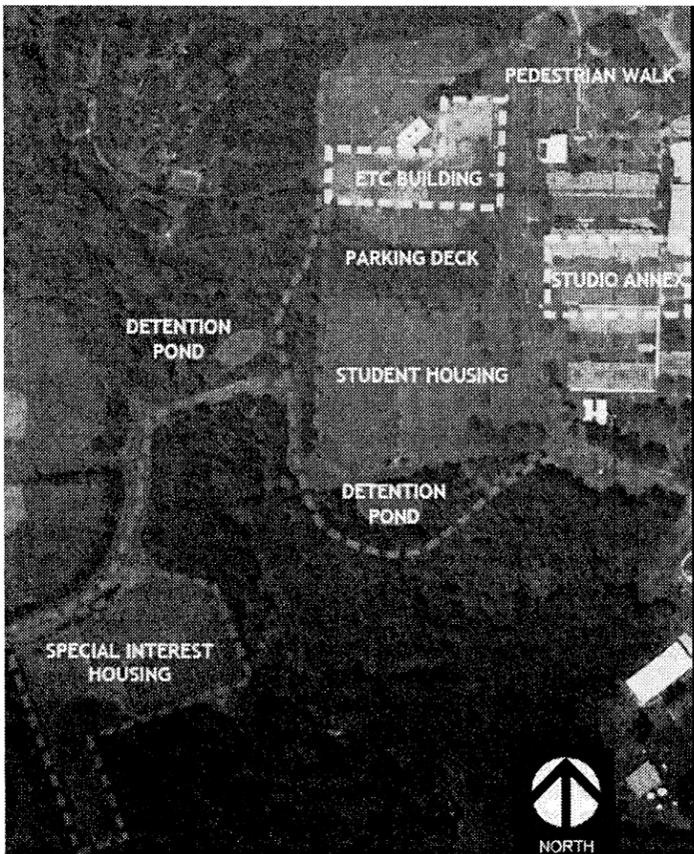
Pretty alarming, right? So now you have two options: either pay more and graduate quicker or pay less and stay in longer. It turns out that graduating quicker, in the long run, is actually cheaper than taking the minimum each semester and paying less for tuition. This also takes into account the fact that you are able and willing to take 15+ hours of classes and have the ambition to do well in them. Overloading yourself, while cheaper financially,

could end up costing you down the road (How's that for a cliché?).

Let me bring up one subtle point that confused the hell out of me when I was researching this article - the notion of what is "full-time." This is pretty important since things like insurance, scholarships, athletics, and financial aid have ramifications for those who are full-time (as well as part-time, which is a derivation of full-time). I talked to a few high-level administrators and I got referred to something even more authoritative - the University System of Georgia. Here's a quote from their 2009-2010 Tuition Frequently Asked Questions document that should clear things up: "For purposes of financial aid, insurance, [and] athletics, USG undergraduate students are considered full-time if they are enrolled in at least 12 credit hours in any semester and are considered part time if enrolled in 6 or fewer credit hours in any semester. The fact that students will be charged tuition for up to 15 credit hours has no effect on full-time student classification for the purposes of financial aid, insurance or athletics."

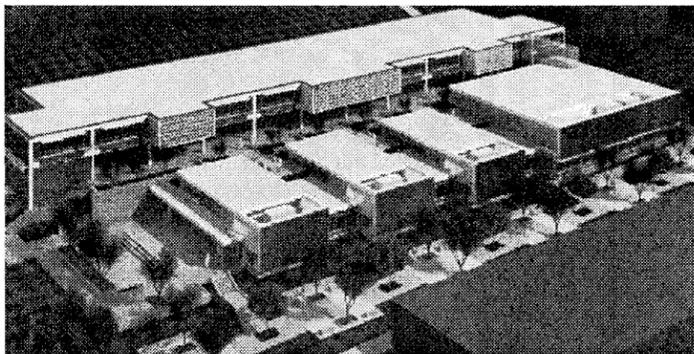
The bottom line, though, is that going to college is going to cost more money. Higher cost means that more students are going to be seeking financial aid. So what does Gary Bush, Director of Financial Aid, feel about all of this? He's not worried. He told me the HOPE Scholarship still covers all of tuition, Pell grant maximums are going up, as well as subsidized and unsubsidized loan maximums. There is plenty of financial aid to go around, as long as you qualify for it. From my own personal experience, however, beware that there are loan limits so don't go too crazy.

In closing, let me share a conversation I had with Steve Hamrick, Registrar. I asked him what, if any, the silver lining to all this was. He said, "Without these measures being taken, the university would have to cut programs, cut faculty, cut numbers of hours offered, and cut staff. You get to keep a well rounded and useful education. Yes, you are paying more of the full share of the cost of that education, but the product you will be getting is not going to be compromised by budget cuts. Your earning potential will remain at the same high level it is currently." Good answer.



Location of the new projects

Photo provided by Town Hall Meeting



Studio Annex

Photo provided by Town Hall Meeting

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Basket Ball Fall 09	Curious about what this semester's Basket Ball team has in store. Check out our article,	Page 2
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Transportation Problems	The Tenstone Papers has another addition to their roster. What could it be about this time? Check it out.	Page 3
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Normal Series	The Tenstone Series now has a Normal series, constituting of numerous parts. Check out part one in this issue	Page 5
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Guitar Hero 5	Interested in the new Guitar Hero game? Check out the review of one of our new writers, Stefan Seville.	Page 8
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Basket Ball Fall 09

Ronald Ellerbee
Staff Writer

The mens and womens basketball season is quickly approaching with the first jump off scheduled for October 24th for men and November 6th for women.

On October 24th the mens Hornet team will face off against Clark-Atlanta at Southern Poly at 4pm. After facing Clark-Atlanta they will head to Mt. Vernon, Georgia to play Edward-Waters College on November 6. I tried to contact head coach Jones and asst. coach St. Clair to ask questions about the upcoming season but they were unavailable. They have a really good roster and I expect them to have a great season, so I wish them the best of luck and I hope and ask the student body to come out and show support for the mens Runnin Hornets and for a great upcoming season.

Moving on to women's basketball, the Lady Hornets will be

having their first jump off against Warner University in Mount Vernon, Georgia on November 6th. For the Lady Hornets this should be a easy victory considering they also beat them the previous year. The day after Warner University, the Lady Hornets will be facing Webber University, also in Mount Vernon, on November 7th. Although practice starts September 27 head coach Teymor says they're already looking good and expects the first game against Warner to be a good test for the Lady Hornets as this game is going to be played on neutral ground. Mykenya Johnson, one of eight new recruits to be starting this year, played with Kirkwood Community College which has claimed seven national championships. Her position will be forward and expectations for her are high. Coach Teymor also plans to make the top of the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC for short) and asks the students of Southern Poly to

come out and support the Lady Hornets.

The complete schedule for the mens and womens basketball season can be found at <http://www.spsu.edu/recreation/index.html>, located on the left side of the page.

Returning Organization

NAACP
Organization

We would like to say welcome to all of Southern Polytechnic State University students, faculty and staff, whether this is your first year here or you're returning from the summer break. The fall semester is in full effect and with it comes a wealth of knowledge to be gained in and out of class, new people to meet, new relationships to be formed, new challenges to overcome, and new goals to accomplish.

There is a returning organization on campus that is dedicated to fulfilling all these tasks. You're probably thinking "What is this organization, who are these people, and how can I join?!" We are the newly reactivated National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) Youth & College Division of SPSU and we would like to extend an invitation

to all students to come and be a part of an organization whose legacy has always been committed to fighting for the equality of ALL people regardless of race, gender, or religion.

As we celebrate our 100 year anniversary we would like to continue the legacy of ensuring the political, educational, social, and economic equality for all. Our goals are to bring aboard new members to help extend this legacy by bringing forth new ideas that will strengthen our involvement in the community contributing to another 100 years of progress. Over the summer months we have already been able to make a difference in our respective community. Our chapter members worked hand-in-hand with the Cobb County NAACP Branch helping make the Juneteenth Festival a success in the Marietta Square. We were also able to take part in successfully helping Troy Davis gain the

Supreme Court's approval for a retrial through the "I am Troy Davis" campaign.

So join us as we go throughout the school year by getting involved, we urge you to join our Facebook group at Southern Polytechnic NAACP Chapter and visit our website at naacp.spsu.edu. We also have partnered with organizations such as the Southern Poly Society of Black Engineers (SPSBE), Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and the National Organization for Minority Architects (NOMAS) so look for these organizations as well.

If you have any questions feel free to contact us at spsu.naacp@gmail.com.

The Sting Apologies

Sean Fine
Editor-In-Chief

As you can probably tell, some of these articles in this issue are a little familiar. That's because the previous issue, released at the end of last year's spring semester, was not released in mass, or rather, it was released in mass, but then immediately recalled due to one of our writer's poor choice of wording in one particular article. Not going into detail, lets just say some racist terms were used in a mildly negative fashion.

Because of this oversight in copy editing, we've decided to re-release some articles that we hope the student populace still finds relevant to their interests, even if they may be some time late. We hope the student body can forgive us if they were eagerly anticipating a issue at the

end of spring semester, and to those who did find their issue and caught the poor wording can forgive our mess up in catching it.

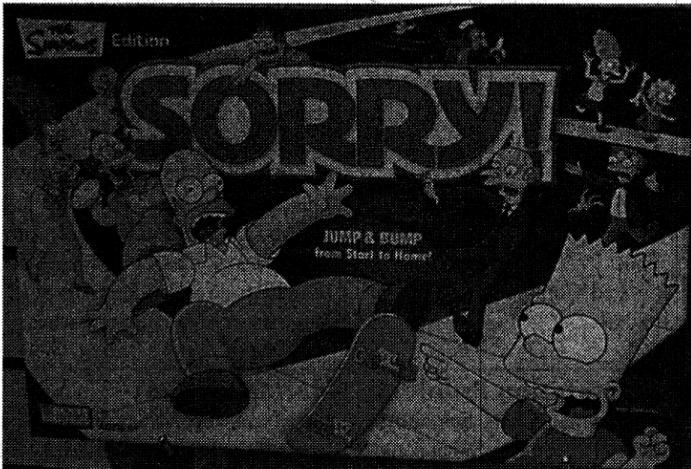


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The Sting welcomes letters praising or criticizing editorial policies or opinions. Letters should be typed or neatly printed, double spaced and should not exceed five hundred words. Letters must include a name, address, and phone number for verification purposes, but names can be withheld upon request. Unsigned or unverified letters will not be printed. *The Sting* reserves the right to edit letters for style, content or size. All letters are run on a space-available basis. Please send all letters to *The Sting*, Southern Polytechnic State University, 1100 South Marietta Pkwy, Marietta, GA 30060, or drop them in the box outside of our office in A252, or e-mail stingeditor@gmail.com.

ORGANIZATIONS

Articles written by organizations to inform the campus of activities and events are welcome. Articles must be submitted in electronic format (e-mail, disk) by the deadline printed below. All such articles are subject to editing for style, content and size, and are run on a space-available basis.

JOINING *The Sting*

Any student paying Activity Fees is eligible to join *The Sting*, though final decision is made by the Editor-in-Chief. We prefer creative students who have passed English 1101. Come to our meetings Friday at 12:30 PM in A252, upstairs in the student center, or call (678) 915-7310. This includes YOU, all you so-called members that never attend. *The Sting*: It's not a job, 'cause a real job pays more.

DEADLINE

Deadline for the next issue is **The Weekend of September 25th at 11:59 P.M.** Articles submitted after this time will not be printed in the next issue of *The Sting*, except through special permission.

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SPSU EXPANSION PROJECT TO BE COMPLETED THE MUCH AWAITED PARKING DECK!

Jarrett Bell
Senior Staff Writer

The secret has been out for a long time--SPSU's enrollment has been skyrocketing in recent years. Consequently, parking has been more and more of an issue for everyone--students, faculty and staff. Starting in September 2008, SPSU began construction on its first parking deck. Now at the beginning of the school year with the highest enrollment in the history of the university, questions are flying around as to when the parking deck will open. But fear no more! After a year of construction, the parking deck will be opening soon--very soon!

The new parking deck contains 863 parking spaces. That means there will be plenty of spaces to park once it is open. In order to park in the deck, you must have paid the transportation fee. For any classified student--those who live in the dormitories, commuters, et cetera--this fee was included with all of your other fees that you paid after you registered for classes. Faculty and staff can also park in the parking deck for a fee of \$75 per semester. But there is a caveat: faculty and staff are not guaranteed parking spots, according to Tamela Edwards, Parking Co-

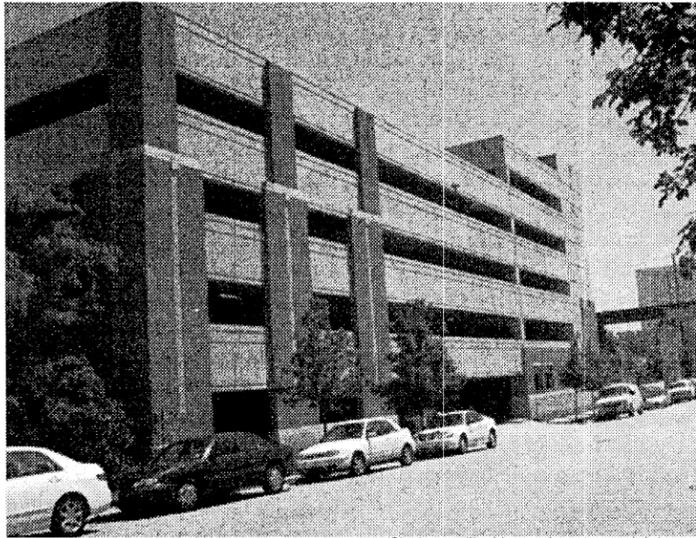


Photo credited to: godown/ownraleigh.com

ordinator in the Parking Office located in the lower level of the Student Center.

So let's get right to it--when does the deck open? If anyone reads the Marietta Daily Journal (MDJ) online, the MDJ website ran an article on August 21 in which Dr. Rossbacher, the President of the university, noted that the parking deck is expected to open on September 21. However, to be sure other concurrent projects do not interfere with the opening and the operation of the parking deck, the expected completion date is set for October 1. Kasey Helton, Auxiliary Services Director, did not want people "up in arms" if the parking deck

did not open on September 21 as indicated in the MDJ article. Ms. Edwards also noted the importance of making sure that the parking deck is properly signed, among other concerns that need to be addressed before it can open. But before anyone goes bananas about the differences in the two dates, the parking deck may open sooner if all operations are completed successfully.

OK, so we know when the parking deck is expected to open--how do we get into the parking deck when it is available? According to Ms. Helton, there are two ways to get in and out of the parking deck. One way is from the new loop road going behind

the deck and connecting the entrance from South Cobb Drive. The other entrance and exit is from the parking lot adjacent to the parking deck if you are coming from the J building on the loop road.

Due to the loss of two major parking lots for students, arrangements were made to help mitigate the impact of the closures on students. If you are very observant, you have seen the coach shuttles that have been running in specific areas letting students off. The shuttle service was first started on October 20, 2008 and dubbed SafeRide. This service is for students who were uncomfortable walking to their cars at night on campus. This service served as the basis for the shuttle idea that is being used to get people from the Roswell Street Baptist Church (RSBC), where additional parking is currently for SPSU students, to various stops on campus. According to Cedric Franklin, Parking Services Assistant, "lots of students really don't know" about the shuttle service to move people around campus and to their vehicles.

Once the parking deck opens, the shuttle service will continue all year on campus. With the opening of the parking deck, no SPSU students will be

able to park at RSBC. Instead, the church parking lot will become parking for students who attend Georgia Highlands College on our campus. The shuttle service may possibly be used by Housing and other departments in the future.

Finally, as the parking deck is indicative of the ever-expanding SPSU campus, so are other projects that are being built in the area around the parking deck, such as new student housing, the new Engineering Technology Center and a new architecture studio. According to Ms. Helton, new housing construction will not impede usage of the parking deck once it opens. The new student housing is expected to open in the fall of 2010. But for now, many students will be very satisfied when they can find a place to park much easier than they are doing now. That will happen when the deck finally opens.

THE TENSTONE PAPERS SOLVING TRANSPORTATION IN ATLANTA IS PARAMOUNT

Jarrett Bell
Senior Staff Writer

This article will be no holds barred.

Atlanta, Georgia--one of the most sprawling cities in America today. Atlanta is clearly a magnet for business and people, as both have dramatically increased since the 1996 Summer Olympics. Atlanta ranks third in the most Fortune 500 companies within city limits (and the metropolitan area.) Atlanta is a beta world city, up from being a gamma world city a couple of years ago. The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Gainesville GA-AL Combined Statistical Area (CSA) has more than 5.7 million people as of 2008, according to the U.S. Census estimated data.

With 5.7 million people living in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Gainesville CSA, everyone knows how bad Atlanta's traffic is, whether you live in the city or any side of it. Numerous articles from Forbes and other magazines and websites rank Atlanta at the top or near the top of the country's worst commutes. Other articles say that new companies are bypassing Atlanta because of the traffic jams and underdeveloped mass transit systems. The AJC ran an article about Phoenix, Arizona's new mass transit system and how Atlanta is in 'envy.' Other cities such as Charlotte and Dallas are moving forward with their mass transit systems while Atlanta is

being left in the dust. Finally, as of recently, the Obama administration listed Atlanta as the spot for a transit hub for high speed rail lines coming from Chattanooga and Greenville, South Carolina. However, the same article also said that the State of Georgia is well behind states such as North Carolina in planning for these high speed rail lines.

Even with all of that, the thing that strikes me as ridiculously absurd is the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) planning to put tolls on the HOV lanes on a 14 mile stretch of I-85 from the Perimeter at Spaghetti Junction up through Gwinnett County. The HOV lane will be called High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes. This is in the midst of the lack of action with the federal funds that are to be used to create the high speed rail line from Atlanta to Lovejoy (and possibly Macon.)

Do anyone smell a rat? Do anyone see the backwards logic with this situation? This new tolling system would make the current HOV a lane that is managed by congestion pricing. At peak travel times, in order to use the lane, the price to use the lane will increase as traffic increases to discourage people from using the lane. It "guarantees" a free lane of traffic. People carrying three or more people in the car would be able to use the lane for free. Other people wanting to use the lane will have

to pay for it.

This is a ridiculous proposal, as it will only compound the traffic congestion on the I-85 corridor. The people who currently ride the HOV lane with two people, which there are many people that do this, are not necessarily likely to pay a fee to use the lane. That only puts more traffic in the general purpose lanes which will only result in longer traffic jams for everyone else. Secondly, I consider tolls on a highway as double taxation. People in the State of Georgia are already paying for the maintenance of the highways, as well as adding additional capacity and other upgrades. By having tolls on the HOV lane, the people are effectively being taxed twice for something that they should only be taxed once.

We must realize that solving Atlanta's traffic issue is paramount to the quality of life, attractiveness of the city for businesses and people alike, and regional, national, and international standing of the city. What part of that do state politicians NOT understand? Do we need to spell it out for them--that if the economic engine of Georgia, being Atlanta, starts losing corporate business because of the politicians in the Gold Dome being victims of inertia, then all of Georgia will go down with the city? They are doing the Atlanta region and the entire state a disservice by continuing to subscribe to the 'Car is King' culture. These

incompetent, dimwitted leaders continue to believe that widening of highways and instituting tolls on existing lanes will somehow magically take cars off the road. If mass transit is not developed to be easier, cheaper, and more convenient than driving, we will continue to choke on traffic--all because politicians at the Gold Dome are not ready and/or not willing to commit to providing the taxpayers with transportation options. The only viable solution to the traffic issue is to expand and strengthen the current rail system that is controlled by MARTA.

The amazingly underfunded mass transit system, MARTA, relies on sales tax revenue from the City of Atlanta, Fulton County and DeKalb County to pay for operations and capital expenditures. However, with the current economy, MARTA can barely even function. However, notably, people from Gwinnett, Clayton, Cobb, Douglas, Henry, Coweta, and other metro counties drive themselves to a MARTA station and use the system, then have the audacity to complain about the service. As the largest mass transit system in the United States with no state funding, it is painfully obvious that MARTA service cannot be expanded to outlying areas or take people to more places where they need to go because of how they are funded. However, none of the transit solutions that the Gold Dome is providing include

anything about funding MARTA or working with anything mass transit. The primary focus is STILL on highways and grossly ludicrous, irresponsible proposals such as HOT lanes.

We must start embracing alternate forms of transportation. It is time that the people of the Atlanta region have options. They need options on how to get to places they need and want to go. Given the gas crisis of 2008, Atlanta was adversely affected by the irrational pandemonium that ensued as a result of geopolitical uncertainty and natural disasters. However, if mass transit was readily available and able to take people places in a convenient, cheap and efficient manner, the region would have been better insulated and capable of dealing with the calamity much better than it did. Do the Georgia politicians see it? Apparently not, since they keep farting around with federal money and playing footsie games with each other while not moving anything forward. However, they will start seeing it when North Carolina, Virginia, and other states start chopping away at Georgia's dominant position in the South. By the time our inept politicians realize it, it will be too late.

Here's the Deal: Teabagging Edition

Adam Myers
Senior Staff Writer

This past April 15 was Tax Day: the same day it is every year. But this year, the day took on extra meaning, as conservative and libertarian activists gathered in cities across the nation in a series of "Tea Party" protests. Now, while I must commend these individuals for taking part in these right-wing pissing contests heroic demonstrations against government excess, I can't help but notice confusion and be confused over the details of these protests, and I'm sure that many of you feel the same way. Therefore, I am going to take a closer look at these issues so I can tell you what the deal is. Now, where to begin...

To the participants of these protests who take offense to the jokes made over the moniker assumed by the protesters, "Teabaggers," here's the deal: You folks were the ones who came up with the term in the first place. Even if you weren't aware of the popular connotation of the word "teabag," a simple Google search should have provided enough of a fact check for you to realize that embracing that name as a rallying cry would open the door for pejoratives.

To the Birthers, a movement that questions the legitimacy of Barack Obama's citizenship which had a sizable presence at the tea parties, here's the deal: In the English language, a noun can be used as an adjective by itself before the main noun that it modifies, or it can appear in its genitive form after the main noun by adding the subordinating "of." Therefore, a "Certificate of Live Birth," as is issued in the state of Hawaii, can be altered to be called a "Live Birth Certificate." Considering that the conservative Media Research Center verified the authenticity of Obama's birth certificate nearly a year ago during the presidential campaign, it's probably a good idea to put this conspiracy by semantics a rest.

To Texas governor Rick Perry, who voiced support for his state's secession from the Union at a tea party in Austin, here's the deal: I understand that this is a little before your time, but about 150 years ago, a group of states thought they had the right to secede in reaction to the election of a President whom they feared would use the federal government to unjustly meddle in their affairs. There was a long and bloody civil war fought on this notion. Long story short, the outcome of that war was that those states didn't have that right; neither do you, Rick.

To the protesters calling for the abolition of the Federal Reserve in the wake of the current financial crisis, here's the deal: I'm not going to completely dismiss the notion of returning to the gold standard or some other value-backed monetary

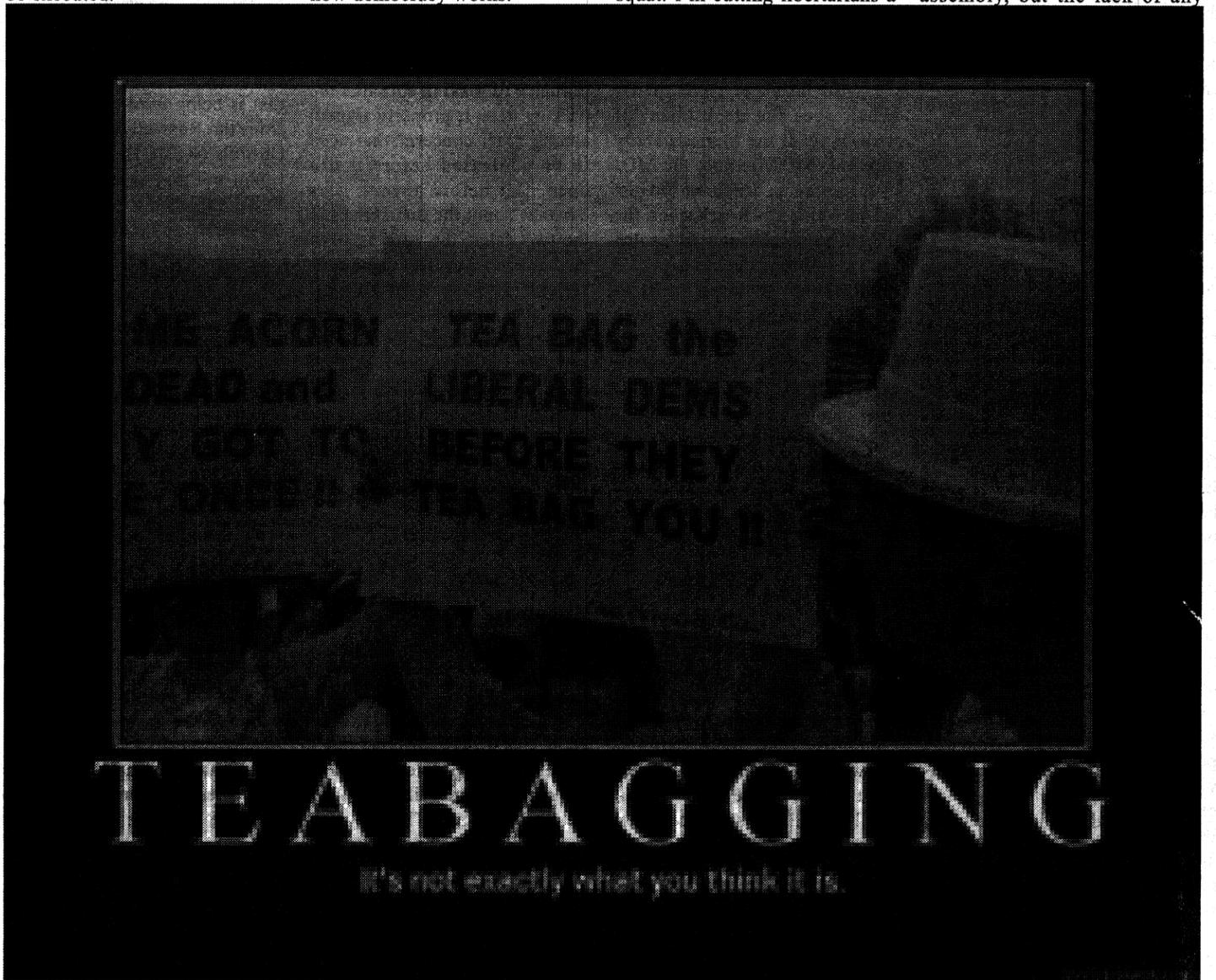
system, although it should be noted that the Federal Reserve's inability to print money due to the rigidity of the gold standard in place at the time led to the bank failures that exacerbated the Great Depression. Where I have a serious problem over the viability of decentralized banking is the fact that a strong regulatory apparatus would have to be in place to ensure that no one is printing money backed by gold that body doesn't have. Because the types who call for a return to the gold standard are generally also the types who oppose any type of government regulation in finance, I have serious doubts that such a system could properly be executed.

allowed to send a representative to, as well as by a chief executive who assumed his powers by birth, governed by divine right, and essentially answered to no one. Unless you live in the District of Columbia, which still does not have an official representative to Congress, you are democratically represented both in the legislature and in the executive branch. You might not like the ideological positions or party affiliations of the members of those bodies, but so long as you voted or could vote in the previous elections, your voice was heard along with everyone else's. More people in your state or district may have had a different opinion than yours, but that's how democracy works.

corporate robber barons and a tyrannical puppet master that dominate every nook and cranny of economy and government. Then there are the various former Eastern Bloc nations with a flat tax, whose economic growth in the past two decades has come mostly from the pipeline that sends billions of Western European money to those countries in exchange for millions of illegal immigrants. Sound promising?

Finally, to the majority of conservatives who attended these tea parties to show the government they mean business, here's the deal: Your try at populist rage over rampant government spending doesn't mean jack squat. I'm cutting libertarians a

message, the duplicity of the various other right-wing calling cards at the tea parties would be amusing if not for how troubling they were. First of all, anyone with an understanding of political understanding and a grasp of 20th century history should know that it is impossible for President Obama to be a communist, a socialist, and a fascist all at the same time, but this seems to be what the teabaggers see him as. Likewise, it is also impossible for Obama to simultaneously show disregard towards Israel while masterminding the international Zionist conspiracy. I fully respect the tea party protesters' First Amendment rights to free assembly, but the lack of any



See above for caption.

To the protesters who brought their children to the tea parties with signs bearing anti-spending slogans in hand, here's the deal: Don't use your kids as propaganda tools about issues they have no grasp of. That really goes for anyone, regardless of the cause. I'd say you're depriving them a day to learn at school, but I realize that most of the kids holding signs are home-schooled, and this is extra credit for them.

To the many protesters who evoked the original Boston Tea Party's message of "No Taxation without Representation," here's the deal: The colonists' main gripe against the British wasn't the "no taxation" part, but the "without representation" part. Rule of law in the British Empire in the late 1700s was established by a Parliament which the American colonies were not

On the taxation front, now, I can bring up several different points. If your aim is to not have to pay any taxes at all, you might love it in Somalia. You'll be forced to enter a life of piracy (which in these modern times lacks the romance of eye patches, tri-corner hats, and cockatiels) because the lack of any form of government or stable economy gives you no other options, but at least you won't have the man keeping you down!

If you're more of a flat tax supporter, you may want to know that there are exactly zero industrialized nations with working representative governments who implement such a system. You know who does have a flat tax? Russia—whose post-Soviet experiment in capitalism and democracy has been made into a mockery by the alliance of

break because I know they spoke up during the Bush Administration about government spending to anyone who would listen to them. Anyone who supported that administration's ability to turn a federal surplus into a record deficit in eight years' time, however, has very little room to talk. The fact is that neither George W. Bush nor that conservative demigod, Ronald Reagan, could come close to balancing a budget during their times in office. Yet, conservatives wait until they lack any political influence whatsoever (like in 1994, and the present day) to decide that they demand the fiscal responsibility their own figureheads couldn't manage from the people on the other side of the partisan divide who are now in charge.

Besides the obvious double standard in the anti-tax and spend

cohesive message to come out of these events allows me to feel no remorse in exercising my First Amendment right to free speech to lampoon them thoroughly.

THE TENSTONE PAPERS - THE NORMAL SERIES

PART I: DEFINITIONS ARE SUBJECTIVE

Jarrett Bell
Senior Staff Writer

The word 'normal' is a word that is thrown around and used as easily as throwing a beach ball across to your friend in the community pool. The word is used so much that many people do not give much thought to what the word actually means. Let us make the following assertion as the argument- that the word 'normal' is a subjective term that cannot be applied universally and the usage of the word for the classification of people is detrimental. We will support the subjective part of that assertion in this installment. The next couple of installments of this special series will be dealing with supporting the idea that it cannot be applied universally. At the end of the series, we will discuss the usage of word in classification of people.

Before beginning this part of the series, there are four prerequisites before beginning. First, let us introduce the definition of normal, according to dictionary.com: 1.) conforming to the standard or the common type; usual; not abnormal; regular; natural; 2.) serving to establish a standard; 3.) approximately average in any psychological trait, as intelligence, personality, or emotional adjustment; 4.) free from any mental disorder; sane. Each installment of this series will be handling each part of the definition and a wrap up of the discussion. Second- the entire discussion will be making the assumption that you as the reader know what being subjective and objective means, as this will be an integral part of the discussion. Third- we are making the assumption (and perhaps the safe assumption) that humans cannot be objective. This assumption will be discussed throughout the series and will be a critical part of backing up the assertion. Fourth- The discussion of 'normal' will be restricted to how the word is used to describe people.

Lastly, before beginning the discussion, this series is dedicated to a friend that I know well that has been blatantly ostracized by people who find him eccentric despite obvious and numerous commendable qualities such as his vast intelligence on a variety of issues. This paper is also dedicated to all of those who have been outcast by the 'normal' people and relegated to subhuman status because of not fitting the 'norm' mold. Finally, this paper is dedicated to celebrating our differences, as our differences make living on this Earth bearable.

Now, with the administrative rigmarole out the way, we can get down to business.

At some point in your life, you have run across a word that you did not understand. The first place that you end up looking to find out what the word means is the dictionary. However, has it ever crossed your mind that the definition of the word in the dictionary is actually based on an objective observation that has been subjectively inter-

preted, leading to a subjective conclusion? An assumption one could have is the dictionary's definition of any word is objective because the authors were somehow being objective when penning the definition into the dictionary. Another possible assumption to consider would be the dictionary's definitions are objective simply because society takes the definitions to be as such.

human to be objective regardless if they try to view the issue in question from multiple lenses.

We will assert that the second assumption is false but proving this will require us to show that there is an opinion involved. To do this, we must note that the society we live in believes that the dictionary provides unbiased, objective definitions to words (this is the second assumption); otherwise we would

taking a side and being opinionated about the issue. Armed with this discussion, the word 'belief' is the foundation of the subjective nature of the mutual agreement concept we are discussing.

Furthermore, this concept of the mutual agreement clearly shows the subjective nature of any definition in the dictionary on the basis of opinion. If two parties are conversing with each other, the

assumption is false on the basis that the definitions are subjective and simply taking the definitions as objective does not change the underlying subjectivity.

This discussion on showing how these two assumptions are faulty applies to the word 'normal' obviously because it's a word. However, this discussion is relevant in saying that normal is a subjective term since the underlying defini-

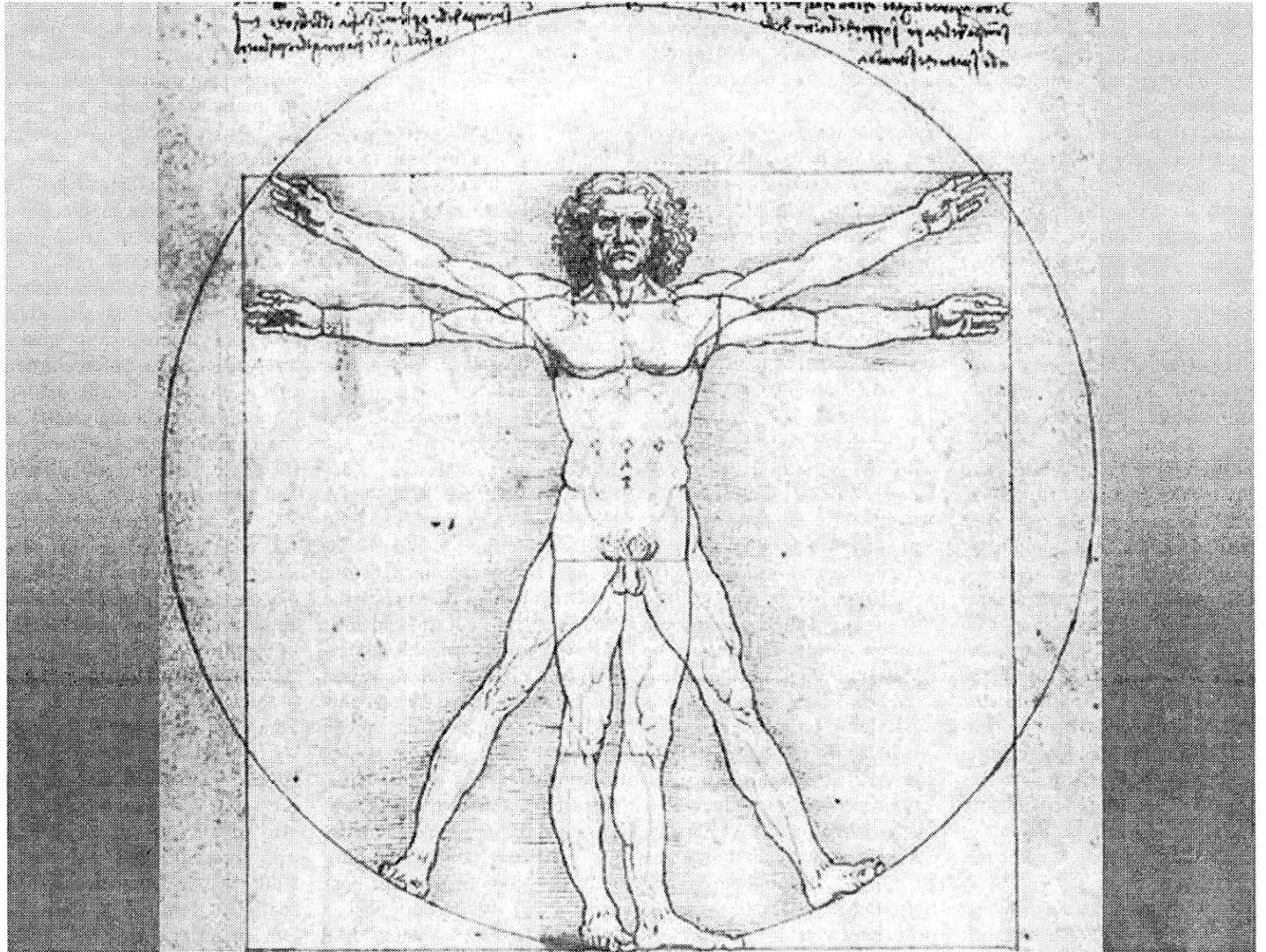


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These assumptions are not safe assumptions. As humans, we lack the ability to be objective and impartial. This is due to each and every person looking through their own lens. What the eyes see, the ears hear, the tongue taste real time is objective prior to interpretation. The brain must process what is seen, heard, and tasted, which is the phase of interpretation. Hence, however the brain interprets the sight, the sound, and the taste automatically taints that objectivity and puts a subjective spin on what was seen, what was heard, what was tasted. Even for one person to interpret any of those actions and take multiple sides of view cannot represent all possible points of view. Even the terminology 'point of view' intrinsically points to subjectivity, as each point of view represents an opinion of some type. In the context of definitions, those definitions must have come from an objective observation but cultivated by a subjective interpretation by the brain, which is unavoidable. Hence, this clearly debunks the first assumption that the authors of the dictionary were somehow being objective, as it is not possible for a

not turn to it for the 'definition' of a word. However, that 'definition' of a word that we seek the dictionary for is defined by a mutual agreement established on the belief that the usage of the word between people equates to the intended meaning of the word by the persons who use it. That is, a definition of a word is created by two or more people agreeing that the word in question that is being used have the same meaning among them and used in the proper context. If this was not the case, all of the parties involved would not understand each other.

We are emphasizing the word 'belief' because when one believes something, they are accepting a fact, opinion, or an assertion as real or true without personally knowing whether the fact, opinion or assertion is actually true. By accepting that fact, opinion, or assertion, that is effectively taking a side and being opinionated, and thus being subjective. For example (and without too much discussion), many people believe that a higher power exists (and on the flip side there are people that do not and some that are not sure.) However, by taking either side or even staying neutral, one is already

first party believes that each word that they are saying is being understood by the second party. This is because the second party believes that they understand each word that first party is saying. The parties involved are accepting the assertion (consciously, subconsciously or unconsciously- these collectively is to be known as states of consciousness throughout the series) that they understand each word that is coming out of each other's mouth. Once the assertion is accepted, for the word in question in that mutual agreement to be defined in a dictionary, the majority of the populace must also engage in the same mutual agreement internally. Should that agreement among the general populace take place, the word in question will have been defined by the people and eventually penned into the dictionary. Finally, since a mutually agreed upon definition connotes the parties involved believed the usage of the word equaled the intended meaning of the word, we can say that the mutual agreement is founded on/an opinion(s) and thus the definition in its final state is subjective. This final result shows that the second

tion of any word but in particular 'normal' is based on a mutually agreed upon opinion. Additionally, the usage of the word in how it is used to define people and objects primarily reflects either the opinion of one person using that word or the mutually agreed upon opinion of a larger pool of people. Therefore, since we can clearly see that the opinion of a group of people is necessary to define a word such as 'normal', we can safely conclude that the word 'normal' (as with any other word in the dictionary) is inherently subjective.

As a result, this has effectively returned us to the first part of our initial assertion that 'normal' is a subjective term. We will see by the end of the series that this word, when used to classify people, cannot be universally applied and is detrimental to the development of people and their self-esteem. Until that point, we will individually evaluate each definition and culminate the evaluations with that final discussion. Stay tuned.

THE TENSTONE PAPERS

PURE ECONOMIC SYSTEMS CANNOT EXIST IN PRACTICE

Jarrett Bell
Senior Staff Writer

As of recently, there has been so much talk about whether or not the United States is becoming more socialist. One of the reasons for this talk of socialism was Obama's comment of "spreading the wealth." Later on, the talk has been continued by Republicans and other dissidents of the economic stimulus package that has been championed by President Obama and passed by the Democratic Congress. The talk continues to persist with the mortgage plan from the Administration came out, which was highly controversial, given the many media outbursts in reference to it. However, the question we need to ask ourselves is do pure economic systems truly exist?

Let us first introduce some definitions of the two economic systems in question. Capitalism, according to the definition on Wikipedia, is "an economic system in which wealth, and the means of producing wealth, are privately owned and controlled rather than commonly, publicly, or state-owned and controlled." Now let us introduce the definition of socialism, also from Wikipedia: "a broad set of economic theories of social organization advocating public or state ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods, and a society characterized by equality for all individuals, with a fair or egalitarian method of compensation."

Given these definitions, I believe that there is no such thing as a pure economic system in practice. I do not believe that

pure capitalism and pure socialism can exist in the world- either in the past, present, or future. However, before addressing that particular statement, let us look back at those definitions. In the definition of capitalism, it says "the means of producing wealth, are privately owned..." This particular part of the definition is my prime reason why pure capitalism cannot exist in society.

To understand this, let us consider that in order for someone to be wealthy, one typically is educated. Let us introduce a boy named Joe. Joe has good parents that are big on education but do not have great amounts of money to send him to private school. They send him to public school from elementary through high school. He graduates in the top ten of his high school class. He attends undergraduate and gets his degree. He then continues to graduate school and gets his masters and then his Ph.D. Finally, he lands a job that pays six figures. Within ten years, he works his way up the corporate ladder and finds himself on the Board of Directors of a major company. He is now 42 years old and he is worth more than \$10 million.

While this is an extreme example of how someone can go to public school and become a very powerful person (and it is possible- it is what one makes out of going to public school), Joe built his wealth through education- public education, that is. However, the way that he built his wealth contradicts the definition of capitalism, as the definition says that the means of producing wealth are privately owned and controlled. However, public schools are not privately

owned and controlled - they are controlled by the State.

Obama's comment of "spreading the wealth," which was the primary driver of the conversation, is technically nothing new. Republicans and other dissidents have no standing to complain about the comments. The United States have been "spreading the wealth" ever since the advent of Income Taxes via the Constitution back in 1913. (Income Taxes started before 1913 but the Sixteenth Amendment solidified this form of taxation.) In crudest terms, the income taxes paid by the population of America are used to pay for the government to operate and to deliver services to all Americans, such as public schools, public roads, etc. That very idea is a socialistic element- yet all of us, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, whatever party one is affiliated with- reap the benefits of it.

As for the companies and financial markets, we can see how the injustices that were done back in the 1800s with the railroad monopoly and John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil monopoly makes it necessary to have regulatory laws such as the Sherman Antitrust Act and entities such as the Securities and Exchange Commission. However, having regulation like we do now and back when the first actions were taken to protect consumers from monopolistic companies and frenzied investors is clearly not in-line with pure capitalism.

However, we must note that pure socialism is not possible either. While pure socialism could work, in theory, like pure capitalism, it cannot work in practice. Perhaps the largest

problem with pure socialism can be seen these three ways- that it constricts people who are more outgoing and more capable to being on the same playing field as those who are less capable or not willing to exert the energies necessary to be successful; that it also forces those who are successful and those who have more wealth to subsidize those who have less wealth, regardless of what the reason is; that everyone has control over all the resources, which includes one's personal belongings, whether its tangible or intangible. Simply put, pure socialism means uniformity across the board.

Pure socialism also does not allow for free markets and enterprise to occur. Since pure socialism advocates public or state ownership and administration, companies that may exist in a pure socialistic atmosphere are subject to the administration of the company by the public. That translates to the profits of the company being owned by the public since the public owns and administers the company. This goes together with what was mentioned before- that pure socialism advocates uniformity and essentially prohibits differentials in socioeconomic classes of people.

However, I believe the real problem in why we cannot have pure economic systems in reality is because of human nature. Human beings are naturally going to be competitive. Humans also are very protective of their own personal assets that are of value- whether it be monetary or sentimental value. Pure socialism essentially suppresses the competitive nature of human beings as it advocates everyone

to be on the same playing field, even if you are more talented than the brother or sister sitting next to you. Socialism also suppresses the protective nature by completely removing the idea of having any personal assets, as the personally held assets are against the principles advocated by socialism.

Pure capitalism capitalizes on the competitiveness of human nature. On the other hand, pure capitalism endorses unfair competition as those who have the best talent, the best education, the best methods, what have you, are the ones that will ultimately have the most control and influence, the most money, etc. Those who do not have the best education, or have talents (as everyone has) but do not know how to exercise them, or have some other type of handicap will be at the short end of the stick and will typically be relegated to a substandard set of people. This is where the differentiation between the people begins and the divisiveness and inequality occurs; this is where regulatory systems come in to protect those who are less fortunate from potential abuse from those who are in control.

In any case, we can continue to debate this particular issue. However, due to human nature, which consequently leads to the inability to put any of these pure economic systems into practice, the argument that says America is becoming socialist is bogus. This country has a mixture of capitalistic and socialistic values. That is the only way that America can be a quasi-free market (since free market would intrinsically mean no regulation) yet prevent abuses of the system. Those who continue to contend that America is moving towards socialism are also the ones who use the byproducts of 'socialist' elements by using public roads and schools- and these same people are just as double-sided and hypocritical as the words that come out their mouth. If it is such an issue of having socialist elements in a predominately capitalistic society, how about these people build and pave their own roads, build their own schools and do everything without public assistance- and see how far they get.

We live in a country that is united for the common good of all who live here. If America was purely capitalist, we would be a divided house of cards that is bound to fall. By the fact that Americans look out for each other, we are both capitalist and socialist in theory and practice. A mixture of both is how America has continued to be a stable and livable country that we all have come to love.

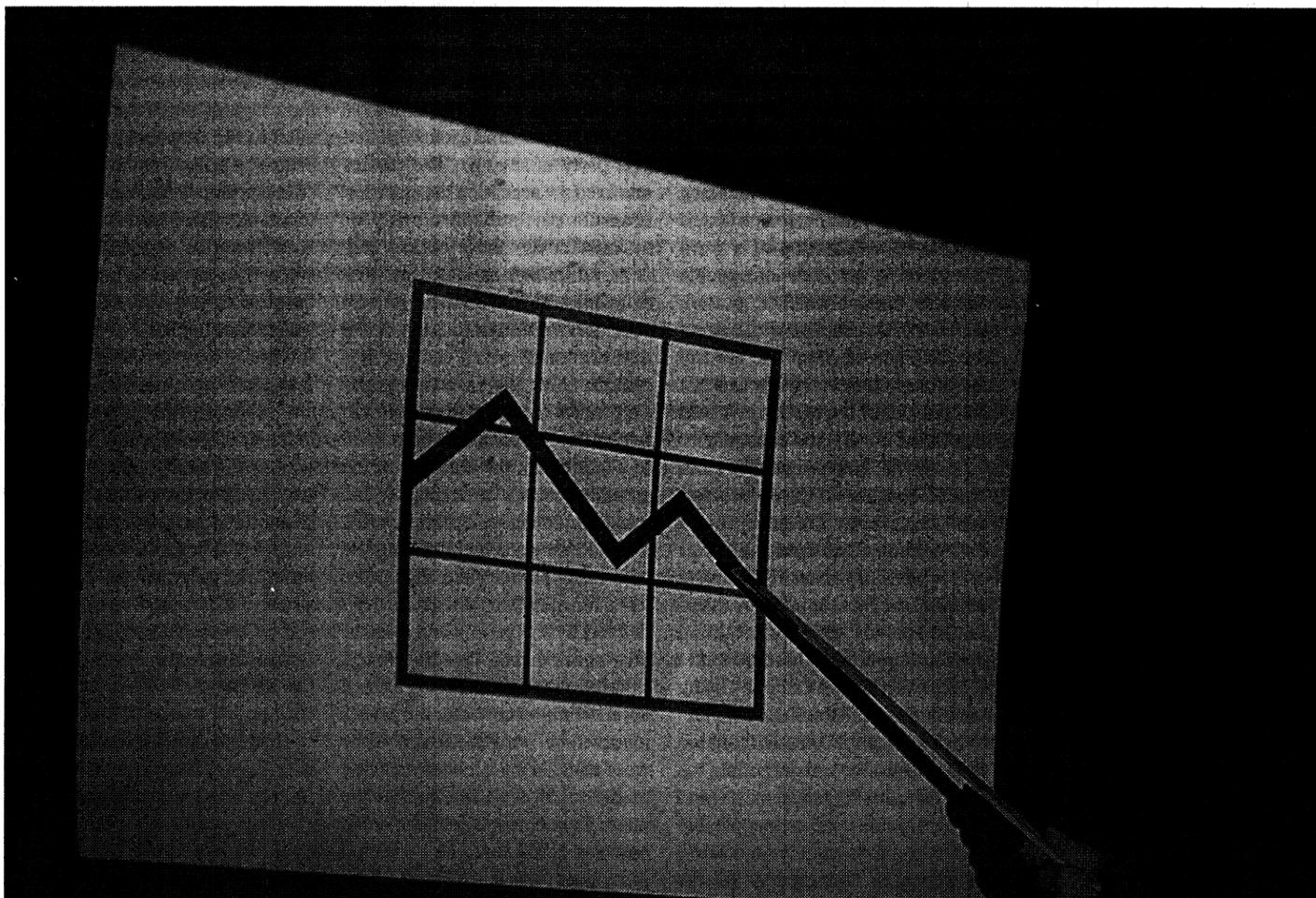


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Street Fighter 4

Can you play it? Shoryuken!

Sean Fine
Editor-In-Chief

Fighting games have existed since the dawn of man, if not in a virtual form, then at least in the sense of finding enjoyment by punching each other's light out: Gladiators, Jousting, boxing, and wrestling. Luckily, fighting video games were invented so those who lack athleticism could take joy in beating other people. But in 1991, Capcom released a game that would change the fighting game genre as a whole, with Street Fighter 2, the first game to allow players to choose from numerous characters each with different abilities and styles and fight each other. Now, Capcom has released Street Fighter 4 after a prolonged delay of a title after Street Fighter 3. Does it stand up to the hype that the series has built itself?

Story: Oh-ho-ho. Story? Story in a Street Fighter game is like raccoons living in the ocean. Something just doesn't work out.

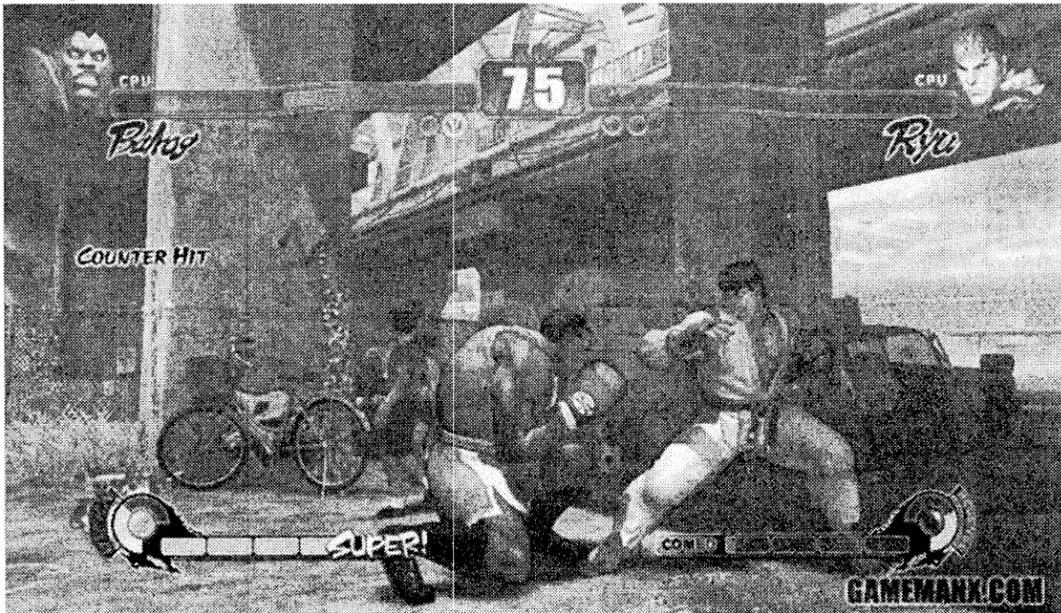
Street Fighter 4's plot takes place between 2 and 3, taking the liberty of bringing back as many (read: nearly all) characters from Street Fighter 2 and putting them in, even though their purpose in the story is completely pointless.

What the major plotline seems to be, includes Bison coming back to life for the n-th time, Ryu still is a boring wanderer who can one-shot someone and still not be satisfied, and probably more importantly, former R&A leader for Bison's Shadaloo Organization, Seth has decided to take command for himself.

Hearing all of this, I was thinking "Huh, hopefully, we'll have something like Street Fighter Alpha's endings that were you know... Endings?" Alas, most of the characters plots are completely and utterly pointless. For instance, Russian bear wrestler and fan-favorite Zangief's story is just that he goes into this tournament is to prove that he is truly the greatest to some kids.

It almost seems as though if the character isn't related to the villains in ANY way possible, their plot will be stupid and unnecessary, including half of the new characters. This isn't to say that the entire plot is stupid, I'm just saying that the game's presentation of the plot is stupid, but despite that, there are still a few moments of "That's pretty cool" such as the silent battle between Ryu and one old fighter.

Gameplay: In case you've been living under a rock since the 1990s, you might be surprised to find that Street Fighter is a popular series and for good reason too. Even though other fighting game titles have followed the similar formula and in some respects taken their own unique approaches to the fighting game genre, the Street Fighter



The focus attack and revenge gauge adds a new layer of strategy to fights that could normally seem one-sided

image provided by: gamemanx.com

series has always managed to find something to make it stand out. In Street Fighter 3, this came in the form of the Parry system. In the Street Fighter Alpha series, there were numerous little tweaks such as air blocking and 'Alpha counters'. Now, in Street Fighter 4, we have the Focus Attack System.

The Focus Attack System essentially gives players an easy to use parry that is less on timing and more about charging. It's easily done by pressing two medium attack buttons at the same time and the longer one holds it, the stronger level the attack becomes, from a decent blow to chain into other moves, a knock-out blow that makes one's opponent fall to your knees, to a guard breaking blow that will leave one's opponent open for almost anything. In addition, while one is charging a focus attack, they'll be able to absorb one attack (Read: Sort of like a parry) from their opponent, which adds to a character's Revenge meter (more on that later). This isn't to say that focus attacks are an end all-be all super move as all characters have armor-breaking moves that can shatter through a character's focus attack, leaving them open for an assault and taking extra damage even.

Personally, I like the focus attack. It adds a level of strategy to matches and leads to some interesting fights. It helps that each character's focus attack animation differs, giving some characters longer range than others and allows even some countering capabilities.

Other changes made include the introduction of revenge meter in addition to a super meter. The revenge gauge builds up as a character takes damage, giving characters access to a Ultra Combo attack, which one can think of as a powerful means to attack back and even the odds in a fight, so a player usually doesn't always feel like they're in a one sided fight. It's a interesting concept and all the ultra combos are very flashy, rewarding players for using their ultra attacks wisely.

If there is something I don't like about the Ultra combos and revenge gauge, it's what happened to the Super meter. It builds up the same, dealing damage to the other player, but they're only limited to one use of a character's super attack, and even then, chances are, it's better to use a character's EX moves, which are like boosted versions of character's special moves with special properties, done at the cost of a fraction of one's super meter. Furthermore, it just seems really boring when every character has only one ultra and one super (which one exception with Gen), since this is a series over 20 years old and they have so much material to work with. If not give them more super abilities, then at least make it so that everyone's super move and ultra move are actually different! It's almost painful to see half the characters have a unique special and unique special and the other half their Ultra is just a flashier version of their super, like Ryu's ultra "Metsu Hadouken" being just a fancier "Shinku Hadouken". It just feels lazy.

Other than those gripes, the game is still fun with a good online connectivity and giving lots of little things to do such as numerous time attacks or survivals with special rules, and even challenge modes to give players a idea of possible combos. Additionally, the game's balance is fairly good with constantly debatable tier lists (if you care about that sort of thing) where all the characters are fairly close in fighting ability. Overall, the game is good, though it's a mistake to walk in thinking it'll be just like previous Street Fighters.

Graphics: I believe at least 90% of fans who first saw the initial teaser trailer were really concerned when they saw that the new Street Fighter was going to be in 3d, but as more videos were released. The art style and graphics have come to be some of the nicest looking characters in a fighting game with a surreal ink effect, like a Japanese water color painting. It really takes cel-shading to a very colorful

level with intricate details to each of the characters and allowing some visually stunning camera work during special moves. Lip synching is obviously meant for the Japanese track, but it's works well enough for the English track. Speaking of which...

Sound: Voice acting varies for both Japanese and English. In some cases, the English voices fit their character perfectly while other voices are pretty bad, even for Japanese. Luckily, you can alternate for each character who speaks English and who speaks Japanese, though I'm willing to bet there will be people who change everyone to Japanese because of some belief that the English language is/always will be flawed. Music is also catchy with techno-themed remixes of character themes, while still incorporating nice use of orchestral instruments. The soundtrack also includes unique tracks for the

separate stages that change according to the how close one is to defeat. The game is also notorious for possibly the most catchy boy-band sounding theme in a game about burly men beating each other up. Overall, I think the soundtrack is very good, giving enough of a classic throwback to the old 90s age while still giving cool new themes for both new characters and stages. My only qualm is that character themes only seem to play during the arcade mode during special matches, which is a drag because I'm certain there are fans of Street Fighter 2 that want to hear more of the character themes.

Overall: The game is a lot of fun, providing a lot of competitive play that really separates casual players from more experienced players yet it still remains fun while players continue to train and practice. I'm fairly certain this is a game that will continued to be played, especially if Capcom does what it's known best for and make numerous versions with more characters. While I wish they had some more (read: at least one) characters from Street Fighter 3, the package we got is exceptional and plenty of fun. 9/10

The Verdict

Adam Eltarhoni
Free Lance

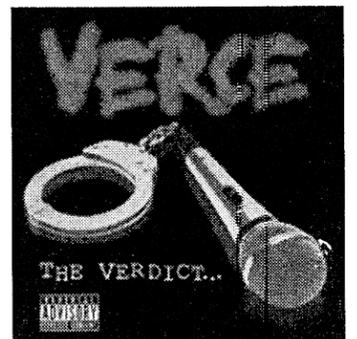
In his latest album The Verdict, local Atlanta rapper Verce tells us tale of a record label signing gone wrong. In what seems like a rap version of a tragic play, we hear Verce getting noticed by an A&R representative (Call Me), talking to a record company executive (The Victim), and the disaster that follows (Don't Shoot). The album ends with the title track, The Verdict, in which Verce stands on trail for his actions.

Of course, there are plenty of songs in between to keep us going. Hot Damn A, his first single from the track, is a bumping club tune about every rappers favorite town, Atlanta. Northside gives a shout out to Verce's home territory, claiming that Bankhead and College Park isn't the only place to find Atlanta rappers. Verce likes to be real, he doesn't claim to be some kind of thug from the hood, and he doesn't pretend to be a bling bling rapper. In his song No Diamonds, he states that he doesn't need diamonds around his neck to get

girls. Almost every rapper has a song about girls and Verce delivers with Bangtails.

While most tracks are fun loving rap songs, Verce also shows his serious side with The N Word in which he talks about the dangers of the word and how no one should use it (and yes, he is one of the few rappers who does not use the word). Overall, The Verdict is a great addition to the rap scene that is different from the usual Hip Pop you hear on the Top 40 radio stations. You can check out Verce online and listen to his newest songs at www.verceatl.com.

The Verdict album is available on itunes and cdbaby.



Guitar Hero 5

5 stars for 5th "Hero"?

Stefan Seville
Staff Writer

Sometimes it's the little things that make or break a video game - and those are exactly what Activision fixed to make Guitar Hero 5 the most user-friendly version of the smash-hit series.

Buyers of Guitar Hero in the past have had several complaints about the design, game play etc. of the game. For instance, when singing in Guitar Hero 'World Tour', the words were often too small to read and scanned by the screen at an impossibly fast rate. GH5 improved the font, size and speed of the words, even adding a second line to the queue so the singer can see what words are approaching. One star for that fix.

Another common criticism of the franchise's past versions was that only one player could play a certain instrument at a time. With the introduction of Party Mode, pre-game matches of rock-paper-scissors to determine the guitarist will be a thing of the past. Provided you own the instrument controllers to accommodate yourself and your friends, anybody can play any instrument available for that song. Another star.

At first glance, the game play screen seems to be missing a few trademark Guitar Hero gauges. These modifications will be appreciated more by the more advanced Guitar Hero player, as they make it easier to

discern performance levels without having to divert the eyes from the notes.

The "Rock Meter" has been morphed from its prior round dial format to a bar on the left edge of the note bar. As you hit notes and get the crowd going, a glowing light will slide up the note bar and turn green. Miss some notes and the formerly friendly green light falls and turns yellow, then red as the crowd begins to boo.

Star Power is now merged with the right side of the note bar along with the multiplier gauge - upon attainment of the 2x multiplier, a "2" will appear attached to the side of the note bar, and so on with levels 3 and 4. If the player successfully completes a Star Power phrase, the right edge of the note bar starts to light up in neon blue corresponding to the amount of Star Power built up. Yet another difference comes along with the execution of Star Power. Long gone is the lightning strike when you initiate the bonus - now a simpler set of stars criss-cross the screen and turn the notes blue.

In addition, the extra amplified effect Star Power used to have on your instrument is no more; it could get distracting during high-intensity sections of songs. Lastly, Activision seems to have realized that when making a musically-based game, it is a good idea to have the crowd clap in rhythm - which they now do quite well. Two stars, for a total of 4.

What about the most important

aspect - the songs themselves?

This is where Guitar Hero earns the fifth star. From the time you put the game disc into your console, you are able to play ALL 85 songs (from 83 artists, Nirvana and Tom Petty have two tracks each) on the version of the game. Included are popular tracks such as:

Kryptonite - Three Doors Down
The Rock Show - Blink 182
Song 2 - Blur
In My Place - Coldplay
Sultans of Swing - Dire Straits
Feel Good Inc. - Gorillaz
Ring of Fire - Johnny Cash
Sex on Fire - Kings of Leon
Smells like Teen Spirit - Nirvana
Do you Feel like We Do? (live) - Peter Dinklage
Frampton
Under Pressure - Queen and David Bowie
Du Hast - Rammstein
Bullet with Butterfly Wings - Smashing Pumpkins
Superstition - Stevie Wonder
What I Got - Sublime
Play that Funky Music - Wild Cherry

...and many more. The game has been praised and criticized for its broad selection of songs. While there is certainly something everyone will like, there will certainly be some songs that people will hate and never play. That can't be counted against Activision - their aim was to attract everyone who didn't already like the game, and with this song selection they seem to

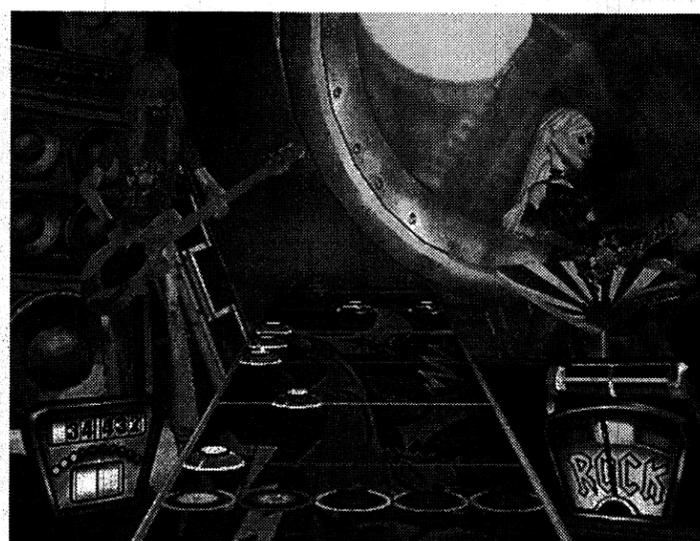


Photo credited to: brutalgamer.com

have done the best they could. Activision has also enabled the forward transfer of over 30 downloaded songs from Guitar Hero World Tour for a fee. This will enable all the new features (Band Moments, where if all players get all notes correct in a certain portion bonus points are awarded, and Revival, which brings back a failed band member) on the songs imported from earlier titles.

One final adjustment Activision made might go unnoticed to the untrained player. Due to numerous complaints of "loss of control" or "slipperiness" due to perspiration during heavy game play, the new guitar controller for GH5 is made with a special type of plastic that feels sticky to the normal touch, but enhances con-

trol when the player sweats profusely - though if you sweat THAT much during a game of Guitar Hero, either get your AC fixed or get a job.

One will not find a Guitar Hero (or Rock Band, for that matter) title with a more comprehensive reach over all aspects as Guitar Hero 5. With easier game play for beginners, new challenges for experts, and lots of songs for everyone, I can speak for everyone when I say Activision finally got it right. 5/5 stars

COLAS THAT (MOSTLY) AREN'T COKE OR PEPSI

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Cola, that carbonated concoction of caramel and caffeine, is a bulwark of the soft drink market. In particular, Coca-Cola and Pepsi hold a dominant grip on global beverage sales—so much so that easy to overlook other competitors in gas station coolers and grocery store shelves. Sorry, RC Cola.

But perhaps it is time for us to expand our soda horizons; there certainly no shortage of reasons why. The most of these would be the fact that the two giants of the industry sweeten their drinks with high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) instead of sugar. HFCS is cheaper than common table sugar, which explains why Coke, Pepsi, and other large food companies are so fond of it. However, the fructose and glucose that gives HFCS its sweetness is chemically different than the sucrose of table sugar, and that means that the body cannot regulate its digestion of HFCS like it can with sugar. Studies also suggest that increased fructose consumption leads to higher rates of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

In addition to potential health concerns over HFCS, the fact remains that Coke and Pepsi are the type of monolithic industrial powers that should draw the ire of your sociopolitical consciousness, regardless of your beliefs. If you're a conservative Austrian School devotee, the existing duopoly serves to limit your choices on the free market; on the other hand, if you're a granola-munching liberal, you despise the presence of two gargantuan corporations that spend

millions peddling influence in Washington and placing vending machines in school cafeterias.

Of course, there are other options if we are so willing to notice them. In that respect, I tried out three alternatives to the old cola standbys, all of whom take pride in being made with 100% cane sugar. The big question is, are any of them good enough to convert me from the big boys?

RED BULL COLA

First up is Red Bull Cola, the newest product in the Austrian energy



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drink firm's product line. Predictably from a brand known for selling liquid horse crank in silver bullets and placing their logo on any crazy new sport that requires a helmet, drinking a Red Bull Cola is an intense experience. How intense? Here's a clue: unlike most other soft drinks, Red Bull actually discloses those "natural flavors" that give the cola its taste. Among the 17 flavors listed with the ingredients are mustard seed, the coca leaf (as in cocaine), and mace.

Another notable thing about Red Bull Cola is the fact that its acidic bite does not come from the near-universal phosphoric acid, instead

choosing the less-chemical source of concentrated lemon juice. Once I read this on the packaging, I could swear that I could taste the lemon behind all of the other flavors, giving the impression of cola mixed with lemonade. I still can't decide whether the strong lemon tartness is real, or just something my mind made up.

Ultimately, Red Bull Cola is not something I could drink every day, for two reasons. First, the flavors are simply too rough to enjoy on a regular basis. More importantly, it's too expensive. With a four-pack of cans currently running in the \$5-6 range at most retailers, Red Bull Cola just isn't worth the cost.

RED ROCK COLA

Coca-Cola is not the only cola brand to come out of Atlanta. Red Rock Cola has been bottled in this



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area since 1885, which actually makes it a year older than its much more popular counterpart. Babe Ruth was featured in a Red Rock advertising campaign in the 1930s; the company claims that it was the only personal product endorsement the Bambino ever made.

Unlike Red Bull Cola, whose extreme clash of flavors bombards the taste buds, Red Rock Cola is unbelievably smooth. The strong vanilla presence within the formula is very pleasing, while the sugar of the cola seems to just dissolve on my tongue. With just the right amount of carbonation, Red Rock epitomizes the term "easy-drinking."

Red Rock Cola might be the best soft drink I've ever tried. At \$2.99 a four-pack of glass bottles, it is also priced comparably to other glass-bottled sodas. If you can find it, buy it—I promise you, you won't regret it.



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JONES PURE CANE COLA

Finally, there is Seattle's Jones Pure Cane Cola. The Jones Soda Company is possibly best-known for its limited-edition holiday packs, which include soda flavors such as

Turkey and Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, and Pumpkin Pie. Jones also holds the pouring rights at Qwest Field, home of the NFL's Seattle Seahawks, making them the only team in the four major professional sports leagues not sponsored by Coke or Pepsi.

While Jones Sodas are also sold in bottles, Jones Pure Cane Cola is the only one of the three colas featured here to be available in the 12-packs of cans typical of the major soft drink players. At \$4 a pack, Jones is definitely marketed to compete with Coke and Pepsi, not just to satisfy a niche market. Unfortunately, even with the addition of real sugar, Jones' cola is unspectacular. The formula exhibits a bland, almost generic taste, while an excessive carbonation robs it of mouthfeel. Basically, it feels like drinking a marshmallow. If you're looking for an alternative to Coke or Pepsi for daily soda drinking, you could do a lot worse than Jones Pure Cane Cola, but you could also do a lot better.

Interestingly enough, as I wrote this article it was announced that Pepsi would produce a limited-run version of its trademark cola made with real sugar, to be known as Pepsi Throwback. With no particular brand milestone to mark, I must suspect that the introduction of Pepsi Throwback is intended as a test run to permanently reverting back to using sugar instead of high fructose corn syrup in Pepsi products. With rising grain costs making HFCS less of a bargain compared to cane sugar and with popular sentiment moving against HFCS, Pepsi must feel that there is an advantage to be gained in making the switch.