**The Dean's Almanac**

**Things That Keep You Up At Night**

*May 24, 2006*

It’s summer, and I suppose you can afford to stay up all night, wondering why it still feels like early spring instead of summer, why Johnny Damon left Boston, why Gampel Pavilion is so small, and why anyone would get their lower lip pierced.

I wonder about the Connecticut state motto, “He that transplanted sustains.” I guess it’s a nice message, but not exactly inspiring, like, for instance, Missouri’s (“Let the good of the people be the supreme law”) or deep, like Oregon’s (“She flies with her own wings”), or even inscrutable, like Maryland’s (“Manly deeds, womanly words”). On the other hand, it’s not as passive as Washington’s (“By and by”) or as banal as Michigan’s (“If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look around you,” that is, unless you live where I once lived in Michigan, far from any water other than the mighty Kalamazoo River).

Anyway, back to your questions. **Mike** and his pals from the Orientation staff have been wondering about those large orange fish in Mirror Lake. What kind of fish are they? And are they supposed to be that color? They are carp, and yes, that’s one color they come in. They are large and voracious, and according to Associate VP of Y’all Sam Miller, make excellent snacks for the resident alligators (I told you to stay out of there, didn’t I?).

An update on cable TV, for all Yankees, Mets, country music and Spanish-language soap opera fans: David Clokey, Executive Director of Finance and Technology, tells me that Charter is our cable provider, and state law prohibits us from anything different. So we’re limited by what Charter provides. That being said, we can and will figure out how to 1) get input from students on what channels should be added, and 2) request that Charter add them. It’s not as simple as the phone call you might make to change your package, of course. Also, according to David,

*“The head-end room (the location were the cable and satellite feeds come in to campus) has limited additional space for new feeds. Network Services is also concerned about adding more feeds because the new federal guidelines require digital TV compliance by fall of 2008, which would mean we would need to buy new equipment to access new stations and then replace that equipment within two years.”*

That being said, we’re going to keep working on this and I’ll keep you posted.

**Brian** wrote to ask if there was any truth to the rumor that wireless would soon be installed in the residence halls. Tom Bloom, Director of Student Affairs IT, says no, at least not in the immediate future. There may be a pilot program in one hall to see how it would work, but that hall has not been selected, and even that possibility is uncertain.

**Robert** asked a provocative question: “If this is a research university, with a lot of funding going to the sciences, how come I still have upperclass science courses with 200 people in them?” For the answer, I turned to Veronica Makowsky, Dean of Undergraduate Education (among other things), who responded:

*“There has been a surge of interest among students in the sciences, particularly biological sciences, and we do need to hire more faculty in some of the heavily enrolled disciplines. The Provost is seeking from the legislature funding for 150 new faculty over the next five years, his New Faculty Initiative; some of these lines would in all probability be assigned to these disciplines.”*

So you need to either bug your state representatives to support the Provost’s request, or find a new academic interest. I’m partial to Sociology, and Political Science makes you a more interesting dinner companion. But that’s just my opinion.

One final question from **Jennifer**: “I’m living in Charter Oak Suites for the summer. Why can I lock my suite-mates out of the bathroom, but not out of my room? The locks for the bathroom are set up so you lock the door from the inside, therefore there is no possible way to lock the suitemates out of your bedroom.”

That’s pretty confounding. So of course, I turned to the King of Confoundment, Logan Trimble, head of Housing Operations. Logan says, “*Yep. That’s true, and it’s because of the building code.” Logan writes, “The scenario used by the code officials was this: Suppose someone wanted to play a practical joke on a roommate who was in the shower by locking him/her out their suite. On the other side of the bathroom, the residents are away for the weekend and have locked their door as well. The prankster doesn’t know this and leaves the building, thinking all is well and that he/she has done a good one on the roommate. A fire breaks out in the building. The locked-in roommate can’t get out. The scenarios go on and on, and include serious conflicts where someone is shoved into the bathroom, locked in, and everyone leaves for a long break like Thanksgiving or Spring Break. Staff may not go from suite to suite looking in the bathrooms for several days after students leave.”*

Geez. I’d hate to think some of you would play such a joke on your roommate. But then, I was in college once, and I thought toothpaste on a doorknob was hysterical.

So there’s your answer, Jennifer. Let’s hope your suitemates are trustworthy, and you are, too.

And that’s about it from Storrs, where the fish are big and orange, the incoming freshmen are getting oriented, and lines at the Dairy Bar are long. Hope you’re all having a great summer (even if it feels like March).

*More dangerous than an unanswered question is an unquestioned answer. - unknown*