



# The Grad News

The Newsletter of the Hopkins/Homewood Graduate Community

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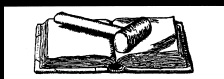
March 2001

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GRO

Graduate Representative Organization



The Johns Hopkins University

## You want to complain?

Dan Bain, DOGEE

If you pay for something, you should expect it to work, right? Your health insurance is no different. Over the months, the GRO has received numerous complaints about MEGA Life's and the university's service on the Johns Hopkins student insurance policy. These complaints range from students being dropped entirely from MEGA Life's computers to lengthy prescription reimbursements.

Many grad students have had an opportunity in the last couple years to deal with MEGA Life's customer service machine. This process tends to leave the typical grad student spitting mad. Many will tell you that this is simply the way insurance works, and that all are companies are really the same. Ultimately, if you have (either now or in the past) unusual difficulties with MEGA Life customer service, there is a way to turn your anger into justice.

The Maryland Insurance Administration investigates and attempts to resolve consumer complaints against Maryland insurance companies. If you feel like you have been mistreated, consider filing a complaint. The more investigations involving MEGA Life that proceed, the more likely it is that patterns of behavior emerge to investigators. With a pattern of behavior, justice is more likely to be seen.

Filing a complaint is relatively simple. You need to include the following for a complaint to be considered:

1. Your name, address, daytime and evening phone numbers.
2. The name of the insurance company, the type of insurance, and the policy number (i. e., The Mega Life and Health Insurance Co., health, & 2000-1368-1 for students on the university plan).
3. The claim number and a *copy* of your card and/or policy.
4. A description of your situation (be as specific as possible including all names, phone numbers, etc.).
5. *Copies* of pertinent documents (citing these

in your description above).

This paperwork should be mailed or faxed to:

Maryland Insurance Administration  
Attn: Consumer Complaint Investigation  
Re: Health Insurance  
525 St. Paul Place  
Baltimore, MD 21202-2272  
Fax: 410-468-2334

If you have any questions about this process, the insurance administration can be reached by

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## Mugging made easy

Greg Burrill, Philosophy

The most interesting thing about my recent mugging might be the reactions of my friends and colleagues to the mention of this experience—many have been empathetically fearful or angry on my behalf. Some have suggested that I should allow this single incident to change a decades-long pattern of activity. I have taken many long walks in cities all over the U.S. without ever being robbed. I am more alert when I walk home now, but I realize that I was prepared for this attack, that such incidents are rare, and that I have been taking steps to minimize my risk all along.

I hope to share with you what I believe to be the most important lessons that I have learned, and, what it turns out, I already knew. Getting mugged is like winning a negative lottery—it doesn't happen often, and there are ways to minimize even the small chance that it could happen to you. Think of the following suggestions as "not buying a ticket."

Think before wearing fancy clothes or jewelry when walking. Muggers profile potential victims. Walk purposefully, and know when not to act like a tourist. Muggers think tourists are both unfamiliar with their surroundings and are

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## Want some cash?

If MEGA Life charged you for annual exam laboratory tests at the Student Health and Wellness Center during the 1999-2000 school year, you deserve some money back. The GRO has been lead to believe that this lab fee is not your responsibility.

If this is your situation, contact MEGA Life immediately and ask for a reimbursement. If that does not work, enlist the assistance of Mary Ellen Porter and the Student Health and Wellness Center. If that doesn't work, contact us (gro@jhu.edu).

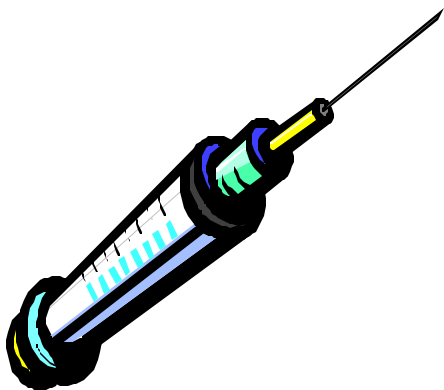
## Health plan

(Continued from page 1)

phone (410-468-2000 or 1-800-492-6116). Once the complaint is processed, you should receive notification from an investigator that it has been received, and later, you should be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

If your insurance is issued in another state (e.g., you are still on a parent's policy), none of the above is pertinent. You must contact the insurance commission in the appropriate state to determine the correct complaint procedures for that state.

Got a complaint? Give 'em hell. And cc: a copy to your state and U.S. rep with an impassioned plea for a patient's bill of



# Restaurant Review

## Thai Restaurant

April Wuensch, French  
Steve Dillingham, Philosophy

The Greenmount area doesn't necessarily call to mind exotic cuisine, but Thai Restaurant, unassumingly situated just north of Thirty-third Street, is a surprisingly pleasant dining experience. Service is friendly and helpful, and the interior of the restaurant provides an elegant, relaxing atmosphere. You might not want to walk there at night, but there is a convenient parking lot located in the rear. They also offer carryout.

Now for the important part: the food. Tod Man Pla ("the most famous Thai dish"), an appetizer of minced fish and shrimp pancakes battered with Thai curry sauce and deep fried, served with a peanut and cucumber sauce, is not as complicated as it sounds: just tasty little pancakes with a vinegary sauce. Other appetizers include Sate—small skewers of beef or chicken with peanut sauce—various types of dumplings and eggrolls, and seafood dishes like steamed mussels or fried calamari. The weather in Thailand may be warm, but there's still nothing like a hot Thai soup on a cold day in Baltimore: if you like tomato but are tired of Campbell's, try Tom Yum Koong, which is described as "shrimp soup with chili, lemon grass, mushrooms and lime juice," but is actually more of a tangy tomato broth with stuff in it. The Taom Ka Kai, with chicken, coconut milk, and lime juice, is a comfortingly creamy broth with a bite.

Our favorite main dish is Pra, a spicy sauce served sizzling hot over beef, shrimp, tofu, or—best of all—squid. The Duck Choo Chee, one of the house specials, has thin slices of tender duck meat in a mildly spicy, creamy sauce, with snow peas and pineapple. "The Big Threes" is a beautifully presented seafood dish of sautéed shrimp, scallops, and [supposedly] clams, though it turns out the clams are three giant, chewy clams still in their shell, on top of which all the other ingredients are piled. Pad Thai (also "the most famous Thai dish"!) is a delicious, reasonably priced (\$9.95), and filling option. There is a wide selec-

tion of stir-fries, with sauces ranging from chili paste to oyster to tomato-garlic or sweet and sour, and ingredients ranging from the more conventional mushrooms and beansprouts to asparagus and pickpaws. There are four types of curry—red, yellow, green, and ma-saman—which they can prepare with a variety of main ingredients, including meats, poultry, and several types of seafood. For an unusual taste, try the ma-saman curry with carrots, potatoes, pineapple and peas. Thai Restaurant is quite vegetarian-friendly—vegetables and tofu are available with all the curry sauces and stir-fries.

Be sure to save room for dessert. Even non-banana-enthusiasts will like the fried banana with honey and sesame seeds. Other options include sweet mango rice pudding, taro custard, and mango or coconut ice cream. The ice cream is delectable; get a scoop of each—they compliment each other nicely.

And don't forget the beverages. There is a full bar, and Singha beer goes nicely with spicy dishes. The Thai iced coffee is not to be missed. Also try the refreshing young coconut juice, with slices of fresh coconut meat that you should fish out and sprinkle with sugar before eating.

So to plagiarize every other Thai restaurant review we've come across in Baltimore: "Thai one on!" It's convenient, affordable and tastes good.

Thai Restaurant is located at 3316 Greenmount, and can be reached at 410-

## Grad Student Listserv

The graduate student listserv provides information about events, issues, and concerns of importance to grad students. If you are not already on the graduate student listserv, email gro@jhu.edu to subscribe.

## A Bullseye for HITS

Mary Berk, Philosophy

Johns Hopkins is on the cutting edge of research in numerous areas, but you may have noticed that it falls short of desirable standards in others, such as registration procedures and graduate computing facilities. For example, most humanities departments have only one or two computers available for grad student use, if they are available at all, and the computers are generally more than four years old. Such computers are barely adequate for email, much less for more intensive projects like palimpsest image deciphering or internet research. Well, someone has finally noticed.

The Research and Instructional Technology department (RIT) of Hopkins Information Technology Services (HITS) recently contacted the GRO to discuss grad student technology needs. Graduate students representing the broad academic sectors of the Homewood divisions have met with Deborah Savage, Macie Hall, and Keith Kaneda four times this semester. While RIT does not have the power to bring about changes themselves, they can draft plans and advocate on behalf of graduate students, as well as incorporate the needs of graduate students into RIT short- and long-term planning.

Some issues under discussion are discounted software purchase, technology training courses (for web page design, Excel, etc.), a graduate computing lab, participation in pilot programs (such as the one for on-campus wireless web access now in progress), and discounted hardware purchasing.

In early April, RIT will provide an online survey to graduate students which will try to assess their technology needs and wants. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Help RIT help us: give them your input. The survey will be available in mid-March and can be accessed from the GRO web page.

### Take the survey!

The Graduate Student Technology Survey will be online during spring break. Check the GRO webpage for details and to link to the survey:

## Putting your Resume on the Web— An Introduction to HTML

Want your own web page? Research Information Technology Services (RIT) is offering a free two-part course on HTML for graduate students. HTML (hypertext markup language) is the language in which all web pages are written. The class will be held on March 21 and 22 from 4 - 6 pm in Shaffer 1. Enrollment is limited to 24 students. Contact Macie Hall (x67315, macie.hall@jhu.edu) to enroll.

## Mugging

*(Continued from page 1)*

carrying lots of money. If you have had too much to drink, take a taxi. If you look inebriated, you may be targeted because you aren't in control. Avoid walking past vacant lots or buildings, and carry your keys in your hand when approaching your car or entering your home. Lock your door as soon as you get in, and start the car—even if you have things to do before driving off. Pay attention to people around you. These precautions minimize the chance of being accosted, but, as I can attest, you may have armed men confront you despite your precautions.

Try not to look fearful or defiant. Give them your purse or wallet, and they will probably run away with it. Get to a phone as quickly as you can and call 911. Give the best description you can to police of your attackers, but remember that you might make them nervous if they catch you trying to look more closely at them during the robbery. In my case, I did know the height and build of the muggers, remembered what they said, and was able to describe the gun in detail.

Actually, the difficult part was not the mugging itself, it was replacing the plastic in my wallet. It was very helpful that I was only carrying two credit cards and that I knew the account numbers of those taken. It is very important to report the stolen cards right away and to know when you last used the card. It is also important that you keep your card issuers informed of your current phone number. A friend told me that her credit card was stolen, unnoticed, from her purse. The next day she got a call from her credit

card company's consumer fraud division because the charges on her card did not fit her spending patterns. There are two lessons here: Check for your credit card if you leave your wallet or purse unattended at a party or in your car, and make sure your credit card issuer has your current phone number. If they try to contact you and fail, you may be held liable for fraudulent charges that they tried to prevent.

Some find it important to have many other cards in their wallet or purse—frequent flyer cards, school ID, shopper cards, etc.—while others prefer to take only the cards needed when running an errand. However you prefer to operate, it is a good idea to keep handy a list of cards and their service numbers in case of an emergency. Another way to protect yourself is to report all crimes, no matter how petty. The police need to know where crimes occur to combat them best, which, in the long run, will help keep you safe. If you see someone else getting mugged, don't be a hero. Call the police, and try to give them the time, address, and descriptions of both the muggers and the victims. Before you decide you don't want to get involved in this simple way, think about how you would feel if those around you ignored your plight when you needed help.



## National Graduate-Professional Student Appreciation Week

The GRO is hosting the first annual celebration of GPSA Week at Hopkins, April 2-6. Enjoy freebies and events every day of the week.

Don't miss our grand finale, a booze cruise on the Inner Harbor. Ticket prices include dinner, unlimited beer and wine, DJ, and transportation to and from the event. Purchase your tickets by March 16 and save \$5. The subsidized ticket price is \$30, or \$25 if purchased by March 16. Tickets can be purchased at the weekly coffee hours, happy hours, or by appointment with the GRO. Cash only, please.

### MON Coffee Hour

Free Café O mug, free coffee, and good company  
Gilmán Coffee Shop, 3-4 p.m.

### TUE Happy Hour

Freebies, cheap beer, free food, and fun  
PJs Pub, 6-9 p.m.

### WED Dean's Luncheon

Free buffet lunch with the Deans.  
Come with questions, concerns, and ideas.  
Great Hall (Levering), 12-2 p.m.

### THUR Open Microphone

Drink specials, laughs, and your friends making fools of themselves.  
Sing a song, do a dance.  
One World Café, 6-9 p.m.

### FRI Booze Cruise on the Inner Harbor

Dinner, music, beer, wine, and transportation included in ticket price.  
Tickets \$30. Purchase by March 16 and get \$5 off.  
Bus leaves from Shriver at 7:30 p.m., returns at 11:30 p.m.

**It's your week; you deserve it**

# Movie Review

## Miss Congeniality

Janie Zhou, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Miss Congeniality introduces us to Gracie Hart (Sandra Bullock), a nonsense, tomboy FBI agent who is part of a team on the trail of a vicious serial killer who goes by the name of "The Citizen." Before she grows up to become an FBI agent, Gracie is a tomboy who can beat up the other kids at school. As an agent, she clomps around looking clumsy and graceless, pounding on punching bags and running red lights until she's assigned to impersonate a beauty pageant contestant. In order to track her suspect, she must go undercover as Miss New Jersey in the annual Miss United States beauty pageant. After convincing the pair who run the pageant—Kathy Morningside (Candice Bergen) and her faithful sidekick, Stan (William Shatner)—that her participation is warranted, Gracie starts getting to know her co-contestants while keeping the FBI team leader, Eric Matthews (Benjamin Bratt), informed

of the status of her investigation. Meanwhile, Vic Melling (Michael Caine), a disgraced but still brilliant beauty consultant, is brought in to transform Gracie into a picture of elegance and grace—a task he initially deems impossible.

Sandra Bullock is charismatic and appealing—qualities that are inexplicably absent in her portrayal of Gracie, Miss Congeniality's protagonist. Supporting players like Michael Caine and William Shatner liven things up. Caine seems to be enjoying himself as a gay beauty contest consultant. There are some funny scenes as Michael Caine, supervises her makeover and teaches her how to dress less like a model for L.L. Bean campwear.

"Miss Congeniality" is a silly, funny sort of a movie. If you like Bullock, it will certainly increase your appreciation of her. The plot is weak, however, and the movie revolves around Bul-

## Soccer Club Invite

The GRO Soccer Club invites all graduate students and post-docs, male and female, to play pickup soccer. In the coming week we have reserved Homewood Field on Monday and Wednesday evenings, 8-10pm.

The GRO Soccer Club also fields a team in a competitive soccer league which starts in mid-April. The pickup games serve as the recruiting ground for new players.

### Contact information:

Dirk Bonker  
bonke\_d@  
jhunix.hcf.jhu.edu  
(410) 243 2982

# BRAIN TEAZERS for DUM DUMS

### Crossword puzzle:

1. Across  
2. Down

### Can you help the mouse get the cheese?

### UnScRAMBLE THESE wORDS:

- Celednar
- Msart
- Brain
- Airplnae
- loser

### wordSearch:

find these words!

F	D	O	G
C	O	X	I
A	Q	O	S
T	Z	A	D

- I
- A
- At
- It
- Dog
- Cat
- Qos
- Tead
- Gxxt
- Food
- Encyclopedia

### OpticAl IlluSion:

Stare at this dot.

### connect The dots!

### How Many Words Can You Spell With These Letters?

ABCDEFGHIJKL MNOPQR  
STUVWXYZ

GRO

Graduate Representative Organization



The Johns Hopkins University

## The Graduate Representative Organization

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Credits

# Getting a handle on sexual harassment

Alexis C. Lewis, Materials Science & Engineering

If a Hopkins graduate student is facing issues of sexual harassment or discrimination, he or she has many resources for counseling, action, and help. Unfortunately, these resources are not very well advertised. Below is an update on the status of offices and resources on campus, available to anyone facing these issues.

Currently, there exists no central office on campus to deal with issues of sexual harassment and discrimination. The services formerly offered by the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Resolution Program (SHPRP) will, in the future, be offered by the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office. This office will be headed by a new Associate Provost, who should be in place by the end of this academic year. It will house a Sexual Harassment contact person and an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance person. Both will be responsible for handling complaints and training.

Though the link to the SHPRP web page from the main Hopkins website has been broken, their page is still up (and still linked to other sites at Hopkins), and their hotline is still advertised. A graduate student who calls this hotline (x64001) will most likely be referred to the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FASAP). As the name implies, this program is designed to help faculty and staff members, rather than graduate students. Until the new Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office is in place, there are several other options for Hopkins graduate students.

Because of the decentralized nature of this campus, graduate students seeking advice on topics both academic and personal are most often referred to their academic advisors or department chairs. If this is not a reasonable alternative (e.g. if the person with whom you have a conflict is your advisor or another professor in your department), there are several other recourses both for confidential counseling and discussion, as well as for filing a formal complaint.

There are a number of offices on campus that can offer confidential counseling about issues of sexual harassment and discrimination. The Counseling Center is equipped to deal with a wide array of issues. Because the decision of whether to make a formal complaint can affect a graduate student's personal well-being as well as their academic and professional career, the Counseling Center might be the first place one should look. The Counseling Center offers individual and group counseling as well as referral services when warranted. More information and contact numbers can be found at their website (<http://www.jhu.edu/~ccenter/>) or by calling the office at x68278.

Confidential counseling and discussion are always available through JHU Campus Ministries (<http://www.jhu.edu/~chaplain/>, 410-261-1880). In the case of sexual assault, the Student Health and Wellness Center and Hopkins Security can be of assistance. Further information is also available from the Office of Education for Health and Wellness (<http://www.jhu.edu/~health/>).

To make a formal complaint of harassment or discrimination, students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students. Formal complaints can also be made through the offices of the Deans of the various academic schools. Students should be aware that, in general, the Deans are required to make formal reports of all complaints of this nature, whether or not the student has decided to press charges or request an investigation.

In the future, the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office will provide a centralized resource for students facing a variety of issues. Even after this new office is in place, however, the resources currently available will continue to provide their services. While the mission of the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office will likely be to prevent cases of harassment and discrimination, students should continue to be aware of their options in these situations.

## GET IN TOUCH

### GRO Guide Online

Your favorite source for restaurant reviews, tips on navigating the administration, and outdoor fun is now online: [www.jhu.edu/gro/GROGuide/](http://www.jhu.edu/gro/GROGuide/)

### Grad News Online

Catch previous issue of the *Grad News* online at [www.jhu.edu/gro/gradnews.html](http://www.jhu.edu/gro/gradnews.html)

### Coffee Hour:

Every Monday from 3 to 4 pm in the Gilman Hall Coffee Bar. Free coffee and good company.

### Happy Hour

Every Tuesday night from 6 to 10 pm at PJ's Pub. Bass and Guinness pints for \$2, as well as free food.

### The Grad Forum

Post a wanted ad, sound off about your latest passion, make a hot date, or just see what other grad students are up to. Link to the Grad Forum from the GRO website: [www.jhu.edu/gro](http://www.jhu.edu/gro)