

## Crossword

If the prize carried over, it'd be a crazy multi-rollover week. (It's not)

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## Campus

Busting out for Charity: Counting down to Jailbreak 2006

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## Sport

Gaudie's got the Blues, all of 'em

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# Gaudie

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13 February 2006

Only one man in a thousand is a leader of men – the other 999 follow women.

Est. 1934

## Always Coca-Cola?

News Gillian Bell

Coca-Cola's mission statement declares the company exists "to benefit and refresh everyone it touches." However, allegations surrounding human rights abuses resulting from Coca-Cola's practices have called the polished brand's statement into question recently, prompting many Student Unions to boycott the company's products.

SINALTRAINAL, a Union which represents Colombia's food and drinks workers, led the call for a worldwide boycott of the company's products in 2003. It alleges the company colluded with paramilitaries who used violence and murder to intimidate and de-unionise its members, many of whom we re-negotiating pay deals at the time of the incidents.

Unions are also concerned at the company's alleged malpractice in one of its Indian factories between January 2003 and February 2004, when a part-owned bottler is alleged to have extracted more than its fair share of water, leaving water of a poorer quality for the area's inhabitants. The same bottler distributed solid wastes to farmers which it called 'fertiliser' -

the material in fact contained dangerously high levels of toxins that led to the pollution of the surrounding environment. The company has since admitted to referring to the solids as fertilisers and apologised, but there still remains a dispute over the level of toxicity in the material. It strenuously denies all other allegations, pointing out that in

Colombia hundreds of union leaders are murdered every year. However, at the same time it has resisted any independent investigation into the allegations provoking suspicion.

Anti-Coke campaigns have since spread like wildfire, with the number of universities and colleges across the globe involved now totalling around 100. In the UK, the National Union of Students (NUS) has instructed its Ethical and Environmental Committee to investigate the allegations about Coke's factories in Colombia and India and will publish its findings at its annual meeting this spring.

The NUS holds a 25% stake in NUS Services Ltd (NUSSL), which holds a multi-million pound contract to ensure the supply

of the Coca-Cola Company's products to student bars and shops around the country. Three contracts between NUSSL and Coca-Cola are up for renewal this year, but it has so far pursued a strategy of 'constructive engagement' with the company. While its report in November 2005 noted the allegations against Coca-Cola, it also recognised recent initiatives taken by the company to improve its relations with the countries involved in the allegations, such as a \$10 million donation to create the 'Colombian Foundation for Education and Opportunity'. In the same report, it also acknowledged that its main rival, Pepsi, has an even more questionable

human rights record, making any switch to Coke's competitors more problematic.

The final decision, which is likely to be

lateral action being taken by some Students' Unions such as SOAS and Middlesex which have already passed motions banning the sale of Coca-Cola products in their Union outlets. Anti-Coke motions have been passed at a further four UK Unions: Queen's University Belfast, Leeds,

Bristol and Oxford.

The brand itself has said that it is "very concerned" at the recent global anti-Coca-Cola activity and hopes to remarket its image with an advertising campaign later this year using the slogan "Welcome to the Coke Side of Life". If the mud sticks and the 'Coke side of life' becomes synonymous with corruption and human rights abuses, it could find its polished brand permanently tainted.

heavily influenced by the NUS's Ethical Environmental Committee, is to be taken at this year's NUS annual meeting in April. However, this has not stopped uni-



## News just in: Lecturers are "not cool"

News Shaha Elsheemy

Apparently, students consider their lecturers to be stuck-up, disorganised, unpunctual, unfunny, badly dressed and too desperate to be "hip".

Almost 650 of the 1,093 students e-mailed this month by Opinionpanel Research were eager to offer their low opinions of lecturers, saying that they often failed to turn up to lectures, had 'objectionable facial hair' and assumed undergraduates were lazy.

However, it seems that what we find most objectionable about lecturers is their attempts to seem hip. One student complained: "they pick up 'street' information from the media and decide they understand today's youth. It is pathetic to talk about these things to us in the hope of seeming knowledgeable and cool."

In response to such comments it seems that academics are not moved, a spokesman from the Association of University Teachers maintaining that the truth is that "lecturers and students enjoy a healthy relationship based on mutual respect, and will continue to do so."

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