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USG Senate Votes to Restore Zebra Path to Zebra Colors

Campus Facilities Will Repaint Before Path's 30th Anniversary. Finally, Goodbye Candy Cane Lane!

The SBU Undergraduate Student Government (USG) passed a resolution to get the Zebra Path repainted to its original colors; black and white. Senator Craig McCarthy wrote the resolution, with Rian Shah, to preserve one of the longest standing traditions at Stony Brook. Dating back to 1981, it was created by Stony Brook student Kim Hardiman to brighten the center of campus with a living work of art.

Senators enthusiastically passed the resolution. They noted that many of their constituents were angry about the change to what is now mockingly referred to as 'Candy Cane Lane.' The University community believed the change was for the 50th anniversary only, not a plan for the path to be the school colors forever. Interestingly, in 1981 the school colors were scarlet and gray, which could have been chosen but were not. Although being Red Hot is new, the color itself isn't.

The resolution made a few other key points about the path. The red does not represent the artist's intention, nor does it fit with the name, Zebra Path. The Career Center has been hoping for restoration too. They embraced the original path by incorporating it into their online job finding service, ZebraNet.

Like everyone else, Shah thought the change was temporary. Then he saw it being repainted in red. He did not want to lose more history. He came to SBU having heard about the Bridge to Nowhere but when he got here, the Bridge was gone without even a marker. Even the restaurant, the End of the Bridge, had been renamed Wolfie's.

So first came the USG resolution. After it passed, Shah called the office of Barbara Chernow, V.P. for Facilities. Two weeks ago he began a Facebook group. Just by word of mouth it has over 500 friends. Shah's simple comment on FB says it all: "School spirit is about pride in our history, not just our colors."

It took repeated calls but Shah was finally told that Facilities will return the path to its original colors this semester. Facilities must wait for warm weather and when less students will be walking on it. But the timing is perfect - next year will be the 30th anniversary. Kim Hardiman plans to come back to do a performance piece on it in celebration.

USG represents 14,500+ undergraduates at Stony Brook. It is responsible for appropriating student activity fees to over 160 clubs and groups, including SB Press and AA E-Zine, to create a sense of community and enhance student life. For more than 50 years, USG has been an organizing force for student power on campus through activism and representation in important decision-making bodies. For more information, please visit USG's website: <http://sbusg.org>

The above is an edited press release from David Mazza, USG V.P., with updates.

My Yin Yang Gift to Stony Brook by alumna Kim Hardiman

I grew up as an Asian American woman in New York. I had to balance two opposite cultures in my life. I was born in Hong Kong, but my biological parents abandoned me and I lived in an orphanage. Subsequently, I was adopted by an American family in Uniondale, Long Island. I used my personal life experiences in my art work when I studied art at Stony Brook for my BA ('81) and at Hunter College in New York City for my MFA ('85).

My original design for the public art walkway, now known as the Zebra Path, was a simple concept of yin and yang. The object of my original theme was not to paint the school colors for the walkway since at that time, red and gray would have been extremely depressing colors. The concept of yin and yang is to show how opposite things in nature can coexist in harmony and balance. Black and white colors are a universal concept of yin and yang.

The simple basic colors of black and white are more vibrant than red and white, the colors it was repainted for SB's 50th anniversary. It is clean and simple. We don't need to add colors to feel the energy. In fact, I think that black and white photographs have a unique quality that photographs with colors don't have.

Since the walkway was a very long, narrow shape, I had to fit my idea of yin and yang by using straight lines and repetition. Since the walkway is

also on an incline, the illusion of the straight lines changes shapes as one walks up or down the path. In fact, the far end of the walkway almost looks like a pattern of small squares or a chess board. Later touch-ups have rounded the edges of my original design and I hope the restoration of colors also restores the sharp angles.

The Public Art course that I took at Stony Brook with Prof. Mel Pekarsky in 1981 that led to the creation of the Zebra Path was the most exciting, challenging, and rewarding class that I have ever taken. I never knew that my art work would affect so many people who have attended Stony Brook. While I wish the budget cuts at Stony Brook were not so devastating, it is wonderful to know that to help save the department, Prof. Pekarsky was lured out of retirement to teach again.

In addition, the metamorphosis of my public art piece demonstrates that the art work is still alive today; it is a daily process that becomes part of each person's experience as they walk along the path. I am sure that everyone has a different experience even though they may not be so conscious of it. Artists, photographers, actors, and dancers would probably have a more visual experience since they understand abstract concepts.

My master's thesis and fine art work continued to reflect the concept of yin and yang. I currently teach ESL at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida. During my reading and writing class, I put up both aerial photographs of the walkway, one in red and white, the other in black and white, without letting my students know I had anything to do with the path. We had an interesting discussion about the meaning of the colors. Most of my students are studying to become pilots and technical engineers, so their observations are very analytical. I was surprised when they understood my concept of yin and yang. Some of my students thought that the red and white colors represented a Christmas theme since it looked like a candy-cane lane. They thought it would be inappropriate to keep those colors all year long.

I also want to mention that my public art walkway is a unique piece of art work created by an alumnus of Stony Brook University. Most outdoor public art works are large sculptures that are bought or commissioned by professional artists. I am very proud to have left my artistic legacy as an alumnus at Stony Brook. I hope everyone will keep it alive for years to come.

I really appreciate the members of the Student Government for all their efforts to have my public art project restored and repainted to its original colors.



Zebra Path artist Kim Hardiman being honored in 2001 on its 20th anniversary by the SB Alumni Association.



Kim Hardiman painting the Zebra Path in 1981

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Weekly AA E-Zine meetings every Friday at 2pm in our office, Student Union 071 * 631 831 6062
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