

THE STONY BROOK **PRESS**

VOL XXXI ISSUE 7

"2009 SPJEOPARDY CHAMPIONS!"

DECEMBER 9, 2009



**NY State
Senate: Get
with the Times**

Plus: The Fall '09 LitSup

Look Both Ways Before You Cross the Road

By Raina Bedford

Any student who's crossed the street between the Student Union and the Melville Library during campus lifetime knows what a pain it is to get cars to stop at the crosswalk.

"I feel bad you have to make the cars just start and stop and cut them off," said Victoria Goldenberg, a third year student from Brooklyn.

"Maybe they can build a small bridge so we don't have to stop cars, we can just walk over them," she said.

While this would solve the problem, Barbara Chernow, the Vice President of Facilities, has an alternative solution. She has proposed a plan to close John S. Toll Drive to vehicular traffic and instead only allow delivery trucks to access the six loading docks located near the food centers at Jasmine and the Student Union.

"I felt years ago that this was an area that perhaps pedestrians weren't crossing and looking as best they could," Chernow said.

Last year the university stopped routing busses down John S. Toll Drive

for this very same reason. Chernow said she fears that students may be in danger of being hit by vehicles on that road.

Farooq Zafar and his three friends know that fear all too well. Zafar said that two years ago while crossing John S. Toll Drive near the Physics Building, he and three friends almost got hit by a car.

"She stopped for us and then just started going again," he said. "We came really close to getting hit."

For this reason Zafar said that closing the road to vehicular traffic is a good idea but Goldenberg is not so sure.

"I don't really think they should close off a road," she said. "What are they going to do with the space instead? They should just build a small bridge for us."

Goldenberg's opinion stems from her concern that campus traffic may worsen if John S. Toll Drive is closed. She said that the streets are already congested with traffic, especially around peak times, and that closing off a street like John S. Toll Drive may cause more problems than it solves.

Vehicles have struck students on

campus before, but not in front of the Student Union. On Dec. 8, 2005 a car struck and killed Simona Grabocka on Circle Road in front of Roosevelt Quad near the bike path. A black silhouette cutout remains at the corner where she died.

Since her death the University has increased the number and visibility of stop signs, and in 2006 even hired Wiley Engineering P.C., a consulting engineers firm, to study pedestrian and driver habits on campus. The firm analyzed campus roads at peak hours and found several areas of campus to be especially dangerous.

The intersections of Circle Road and John S. Toll Drive, Circle Road and Campus Drive, Circle Road at Roth Quad, Circle Road at Engineering and Circle Road at the Kelly bus stop were all identified as areas of concern by the consulting firm.

Lauren Shep-
row, Head of Media

Relations, was reluctant to give any further information on the proposed plans to close John S. Toll Drive to traffic. The plan is still in the development stage and many of the details have not yet been planned. It is also unclear when the university plans to close the road to traffic if they ever do.

So it remains a brainchild of Chernow, one proposal pending among many. Maybe they will close off John S. Toll Drive to vehicular traffic, maybe they won't. Or maybe they'll just build a small bridge instead.



Pedestrians crossing Abbey Road

Students Go Gay for Marriage

By Najib Aminy

One week after the New York State Senate voted against a same-sex marriage bill, Stony Brook students joined together in front of the Kenneth P. LaValle stadium in protest of Senator Kenneth LaValle's vote opposing the the bill. Students argued that LaValle's vote is one against equality and that the university should not honor someone against equality.

"History does not excuse purveyors of hate because they built football stadiums or made the trains run on time, nor should it," said Doug Newman, founder of the Stony Brook Students for Equality. "It may, shamefully, still be acceptable to many in this country to deny equality to people on the basis of their sexual orientation, but if we accept that, we will never change it."

Members of the Stony Brook LGBTA, College Democrats, and the student body came out last Monday calling for the University to change the name of the stadium. The group of students has started a petition that will be

presented to Stony Brook University President Samuel Stanley.

The vote, 38-24, marked the end of what looked to be a promising year for same-sex marriage proponents, especially when gay rights organization spent roughly \$1 million in 2009 to



Carolina Hidalgo

lobby for the bill, according to *The New York Times*.

Of the three state senators in Suffolk County, only freshman senator Brian Foley, a democrat representing the 3rd district, had voted in favor of the bill. Foley had received roughly \$17,500 from gay rights groups, according to the

New York Public Interest Research Group. Senator John Flanagan, a republican of the 2nd district, had voted against the bill, despite receiving an estimated \$4,000 from similar groups. LaValle, the republican incumbent of the 1st district since 1977, also received \$4,000 according to the NYPIRG report.

LaValle's office was contacted but would not comment on both the stadium protest and his position on the marriage-bill. A statement was made available on his website regarding the bill and his stance which said that the support for gay marriage is equally divided.

"I believe the next transitional step for gay and lesbian couples is civil unions," LaValle said in the statement on his website. "I believe this would be accepted by society and would provide same sex couples equality of rights under the law."

For Adam Peck, an organizer of the protest and petition, the notion that society is not ready for the change of same-sex marriage, strongly resembles the civil rights movement. "That argument could be made for any social

movement," said Peck, the Editor-in-Chief of *Think Magazine*. "There wasn't a time for the civil rights movement but it happened. These kind of movements always happen in the middle of what people say is not the right time."

Just hours after the state senate voted, Newman created a Facebook group that called for support of equal rights and motioned for the removal of LaValle's name. Newman said he was surprised by the reaction and feedback the movement has gotten on the Facebook page.

"I have no expectations for how this fight will end up, but I think the administration and Sen. LaValle may be surprised how much passion there is in it and how many people care about it," Newman said. "I didn't really see this reaction coming and I doubt they did either."

The stadium, which hosts a number of Stony Brook athletic teams and community championship games, was completed in 2002. The stadium was named after LaValle for his work in securing funds to construct the \$22 million project.

Will There be Continental Breakfast?

By Andrew Fraley

Caitlin Fisher-Reid is a PhD student at Stony Brook in the department of Ecology & Evolution. The subject of her dissertation research has been the behavior of indigenous salamanders on Long Island, from the red variety in the west near Oyster Bay, to the black variety in the east near the Pine Barrens. Right in front of the Main Entrance to the University, in an 11-acre stretch of forest, is a rare place where both varieties are numerous and active. "It's one of my best sites," she said. Unfortunately, all of that will be destroyed with the planned construction of the new hotel in that forest.

The controversy surrounding the plans for a hotel on campus have attracted a much larger audience than the University Senate had originally anticipated. The Town Hall meeting held Friday, December 4, had more attendees than could fit in the originally scheduled SAC 302. The SAC auditorium held over 150 members of the university and surrounding community, many of them outspoken in their opinion on the new Hotel's plans.

The Town Hall meeting, moderated by Michael Schwartz, President of the University Senate, consisted of a debate between Barbara Chernow, Vice President of Facilities & Services, and Malcolm Bowman, a Professor in the School of Atmospheric and Marine Sciences and president of the Stony Brook Environmental Conservancy, followed by comments and questions from the audience.

The primary issue at stake is the tract of land on which the hotel is set to be built. The 11 acre stretch of forest in front of the main entrance is a small part of the Green Belt, the area of forest surrounding the university that acts as a buffer it from the surrounding community. It is by no means an insignificant part of the green belt, however. In addition to creating a buffer, the forest enforces Nicolls Road's tradition as a non-commercial area. "It was designed that way," explained Bowman. "From Highway 25A to Route 347, there are places of worship, of school administration, a firehouse, but there are no commercial properties."

The forest acts as an educational area for biology undergraduates as well. Fisher-Reid, who also teaches biology undergrads, remarked that students are surprised that she works so locally. "I'm able to include more undergrads in my

research because I have a campus field site," she said. "Many students tell me that they didn't even know salamanders were on Long Island, let alone Stony Brook." The area is also used by other biology labs, such as BIO 352. Marvin O'Neal, course director for the Biology Department, urged the Administration to reevaluate their priorities. "I encourage Stony Brook to invest our current resources into educating our students and supporting the teaching mission of our institution," O'Neal said.

Other professors have attributed this controversy to the administration, their priorities and practices. Jeffery Levinton, distinguished Professor in the Ecology & Evolution department, claimed that this has been a problem since the previous administration. "Over the past 15 years, with regards to sustainability, landscape considerations, and even ecology education on campus, our administration has ignored two basic actions: ask and listen," explained Levinton. Bowman and others have also been actively involved with preserving that area and the rest of the Green Belt for nearly 10 years. A motion passed by the University Senate in 2001, denotes the forests around campus as *University Living Treasures*, and resolves that the University President must comply with the State Environment Quality Review Act. SEQRA requires an environmental impact assessment before a state agency can proceed with any planned projects or activities. Chernow asserted that the university has so far complied with SEQRA, and will continue to do so.

Construction has yet to be undertaken until SEQRA is complete, but Chernow has stated that ground tests need to be made beforehand. Bowman, however, began and ended his presentation with the claim that *no* action may be taken before the SEQRA is complete. According to SEQRA's rules and regulations, "A project sponsor may not commence any physical alteration related to an action until the provisions of SEQRA have been complied with."

Other concerns include the environmental impact to the area, and Stony Brook's perceived commitment to sustainability. Chernow asserted that the footprint to the area will be minimal. Only 3.7 acres of the 11 are to be used for the hotel. The rest will be kept to maintain the buffer, which will be a minimum of 175 feet from Nicolls Road. Several Biology and Ecology professors insisted that the impact would be greater than just the amount of forest cleared. "It's not just the footprint that matters...it's the spillover," described Jef-



Roman Sheydvasser
The red tailed hawks, which reside in the forest, will soar no more once the area's integrity is destroyed.

frey Levinton. "If you would have asked a single ecologist on campus we would have told you, it's not just a spot you can clear out that has the effect, but it's the effect of noise pollution and disturbance of the things surrounding it."

Others brought up the questionable action of the university in promoting itself as a sustainable university—by even going so far as to open an sustainable campus at Southampton—but not acting on it. Michelle Pizer, a senior at Stony Brook and president of the Environmental Club on campus, was the first of several students to express concerns about the university's prerogatives. "As a school that claims to be part of the solution, why are we contributing to the problem?" Pizer asked. "Stony Brook should stop thinking green...and really act green." Levinton also mentioned the hypocrisy involved with Stony Brook and Southampton. "Maybe Southampton will be Dorian Gray, and we will be the portrait that will gradually deteriorate," he quipped.

Not every speaker spoke out against the plans, however. Representatives and heads of the University Hospital, the Long Island State Veteran's Home, the sports department, and the Center for Excellence in Wireless and Information Technology all spoke of the hotel's necessity for visitors to the campus. Even those against it all recognized the hotel's importance to the University, given the current economic crisis. The hastiness with which the plan has proceeded and the unfortunate location are the complaints brought up by those who spoke out against it. Several alternatives have been explored by members of the University Senate and the Stony Brook En-

vironmental Conservancy. Some of these alternative locations were even proposed by a few speakers, including several parking lots around campus, with displaced parking being made up for with a new parking garage or underground parking. Levinton, to much applause from the audience, proposed building the hotel near the train station, to encourage the use of mass transit.

The location, however, is where the ultimate problem lies. The ground lease, acquired 20 years ago by the university, specifies the 11-acre woods. Both Chernow and University President Stanley have asserted that it would be virtually impossible. The current climate of the state legislature, according to Chernow, would never allow for a new ground lease somewhere else. Bowman, on the other hand, insisted that, according to Senator Kenneth LaValle, instead of acquiring a new ground lease, the current ground lease could be relocated with relative ease. Any further action should be held off until all the options have been sufficiently explored, according to Bowman.

"If we walk away from this developer, what we are saying is there is not going to be a hotel," Chernow said. "Because they're not going to wait many many years after we have to wait many many years for a new ground lease." Stanley has said that he remains committed to moving forward with the project. Bowman and others remain committed to convincing them that there are feasible and suitable alternatives, and have sent a letter signed by 43 professors sent to the president.

In the meantime, the red and black Salamanders await their fate.

Editorial Board

Executive Editor
Andrew Fraley

Managing Editor
Najib Aminy

Associate Editor
Natalie Crnosija

Business Manager
Erin Mansfield

Production Manager
Tia "Quark Ate My Soul" Mansouri

News Editors
Raina Bedford
Laura Cooper

Features Editor
Ross Barkan

Arts Editor
Doug Cion

Sports Editor
Jason Wirchin

Photo Editor
Eric DiGiovanni
Roman Sheydvasser

Copy Editors
Kelly Yu
Katie Knowlton
Iris Lin

Webmaster
Roman Sheydvasser

Audiomaster
Josh Ginsberg

Ombudsman
James Laudano

Minister of Archives
Alex H. Nagler

Layout Design by
Jowy Romano

Staff

Kotei Aoki	Matthew Maran
Vincent Barone	Chris Mellides
Laina Boruta	Justin Meltzer
Matt Braunstein	James Messina
Michelle Bylicky	Steve McLinden
Tony Cai	Samantha Monteleone
Alex Cardozo	Roberto Moya
Lionel Chan	Daniel Murray
Mike Cusanelli	Frank Myles
Caroline D'Agati	Chris Oliveri
Krystal DeJesus	Ben van Overmeier
Joe Donato	Laura Paesano
Brett Donnelly	Grace Pak
Lauren Dubinsky	Tim Paules
Nick Eaton	Rob Pearsall
Michael Felder	Kelly Pivarnik
Caitlin Ferrell	Aamer Qureshi
Vincent Michael Festa	Kristine Renigen
Joe Filippazzo	Dave Robin
Rob Gilheany	Jessica Rybak
David Knockout Ginn	Joe Safdia
Evan Goldaper	Henry Schiller
Jennifer Hand	Natalie Schultz
Stephanie Hayes	Jonathan Singer
Andrew Jacob	Nick Statt
Liz Kaempf	Rose Slupski
Jack Katsman	Marcel Votlucka
Samuel Katz	Alex Walsh
Yong Kim	Brian Wasser
Rebecca Kleinhaut	Matt Willemain
Frank Loiaccono	Mari Wright-Schmidt
Kenny Mahoney	Jie Jenny Zou

The Stony Brook Press is published fortnightly during the academic year and twice during summer session by *The Stony Brook Press*, a student run non-profit organization funded by the Student Activity Fee. The opinions expressed in letters, articles and viewpoints do not necessarily reflect those of *The Stony Brook Press* as a whole. Advertising policy does not necessarily reflect editorial policy. For more information on advertising and deadlines call (631)632-6451. Staff meetings are held Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. First copy free. Additional copies cost fifty cents.

The Stony Brook Press
Suites 060 & 061
Student Union
SUNY at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, NY 11794-3200
(631) 632-6451 Voice
(631) 632-4137 Fax
Email: editors@sbpress.com

editorials

Save the Red Tailed Hawks!

The university administration has been pushing for the new hotel since they announced it, rushing headlong into its planning and development without regards to the vocal opinions of others. Last Friday there was a mostly symbolic Town Hall meeting, in which Vice President of Facilities & Services Barbara Chernow calmly listened to the grievances of students, faculty, and local community members—with the occasional expression of support—before telling them that she understood and agreed with them, but unfortunately this was still happening. We're reminded of the Bush Administration's pushing for the Bank Bailouts at the end of 2008; they both used a budgetary crisis to convince everyone involved that this was absolutely necessary for the community's survival, as disagreeable as it may seem. The end result of the bailouts was \$800 billion wasted to keep the big banks afloat, all on the backs of

the taxpayer. In our case, we're losing an important historical, educational, and aesthetically forested area for a financial quick fix.

Without giving the rest of the community ample time to consider and discuss the plans, and to deliberate on them, the university administration decided that this had to happen, and the only way it was going to happen was if it happened immediately. Apparently, this hotel cannot be built anywhere else, because a new ground lease at a different location would be virtually impossible to obtain, according to the administration. From what we've heard from several faculty and community members, there are a dozen feasible alternatives, and relocating the current ground lease, not getting a brand new one, is also a possibility. If that's the case, then why is the university pushing so hard for this hotel project, and not holding off for other possibilities or further discussion?

Because this is the fastest and easiest way to get it done.

Several alternative locations have already been proposed to the administration, but allow us to propose one. There is an undeveloped area of land at the back of the South Parking Lot where you could build it. Hotel patrons could take the express bus to get onto campus, and then take it to get back. After all, this is what commuter students, who pay \$5,000 a year, have to do 5 days a week. Seems fair to us.

Several professors have been actively involved in a letter writing campaign to Chernow and President Stanley, and we encourage students to get involved too. Let them know your opinion on this matter. They can be reached via email at barbara.chernow@stonybrook.edu and samuel.stanley@stonybrook.edu, respectively.

"I Thought This Was America"

The decision by New York lawmakers to vote against same-sex marriage goes against the principle that the United States was founded on, and ignores the successes and hardships of the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s.

The notion that this country is not ready to deal with lawfully married same-sex couples ignores the fact that society has already accepted this style of living. One's sexual preference does not make one right or wrong, human or inhuman. Rather, it should not be an issue, period.

There was a time when being different meant you had to sit in different sections, sip from different water fountains, and be subjected to a number of other discriminations. It took years of protests and social action to realize how

wrong this was. We are now faced with a similar dilemma. So how can we truly say that America boasts equality when Americans are being denied the right to marry?

We pledge allegiance, at least from kindergarten to high school, to the American flag for which it stands...indivisible with liberty and justice for all. How is it that a matter like same-sex marriage has left us divided, with the liberty and justice of many Americans in question?

One argument behind the vote against same-sex marriage claims that this isn't the right time to introduce this social change. This is a cop-out. Lawmakers should not determine the right time for equality, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; the populous should.

As for the argument that marriage is a union under the holy teachings of the major three monotheistic religions, the response is simple—there is a separation of Church and State. So when State Senator Ruben Diaz has been known for going on the record to vote in the way of the bible, we must ask, where is the separation between this elected official and the church?

Either you have marriage become uniform and honor all unions, such as Iowa has done, or honor no marriages and keep it equal, like Texas, only that was unintentional.

In the end, one is entitled to their belief and should not be harassed for that. Similarly, one should be entitled to marry and should not be harassed for that.

Write for The Press!

Meetings Every Wednesday at 1PM, Union Building 060

RE: "Maybe They Should've Aborted iCare..." / 20091119 / Samuel Katz / The Stony Brook Press

The Long Island Coalition for Life partnered with Human Life Alliance to insert the advertising supplement iCare into The Statesman. Not surprisingly, this elicited some student complaints. Most notably from Ms. Meghan Shalvoy who is offended by the pro-life supplement, complaining that it is "clearly promoting an agenda."

Let's take a look at Ms. Meghan Shalvoy's neutrality on this issue. Ms. Shalvoy is involved with the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance (FMLA). FMLA is part of the Feminist Majority Foundation which, according to the FMF website, has a campus program "to inform young feminists about the very real threats to abortion access... posed by right-wing extremists." The website further states that the FMLA works "on a range of feminist issues, with reproductive rights as the cornerstone of the Choices Campus Program."

Finally, Ms. Shalvoy's brief bio on her MySpace page says, "Interning at Planned Parenthood." That would presumably be an affiliate of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the nation's largest abortionist, which commits more than 300,000 or nearly a QUARTER OF ALL U.S. ABORTIONS in 2007 (PPFA's annual report).

One can go to LiveAction.org to see the undercover tapes of Planned Parenthood employees ignoring state laws to report possible statutory rape of minors. Or learn from the latest Planned Parenthood defector, Ms. Abby Johnson, about the drive to do more abortions at the Planned Parenthood office where she worked. So, is Ms. Shalvoy's blatant pro-choice agenda acceptable while our pro-life agenda is not? Are we to blindly believe her "fact" sheets while dismissing pro-life information as just mere "propaganda" (a description attributed to The Statesman editor-in-chief Bradley Donaldson)?

Ms. Shalvoy says iCare is "not science." What exactly is it in the supplement that is false? We welcome a debate. Quite frankly, we don't understand why people think pro-lifers need to lie. If women did not suffer physical and emotional pain from abortions, abortion would still be wrong because it kills an innocent human being (biology 101). If there were no link at all between abortion and breast cancer we would still speak against abortion because it denies the fundamental human right to life. And finally, if abortion doesn't kill preborn infants, why would we even be bothering with this issue. We have nothing to gain by pretending life begins at conception, only to spend our time arguing with an individual who proudly proclaims a right to kill her very own flesh and blood offspring within her very womb.

Ms. Shalvoy calls the ad insert "biased and sensational" and is concerned that it is "potentially harmful to the health of its readers." However, Ms. Shalvoy's biased and inaccurate attack on ads like iCare and her attempt to block them from publication are harmful to the health of Stony Brook University students.

Peace begins in the womb.

Celeste Broyles, PhD

Jerome B. Higgins, DVM

Long Island Coalition for Life, Inc.

Celeste and Jerome,

Since your letter is mostly directed at Ms. Shalvoy, we've decided to let her respond directly to your criticisms, especially since you make some pretty bold attacks on her credentials. If you have anything more to say to us, by all means do. We would love to hear from you again. We can respond to you ourselves then. In the meantime, it appears we've run out of space!

Peace begins in your mom's womb

The Stony Brook Press

Re: Long Island Coalition for Life LTE

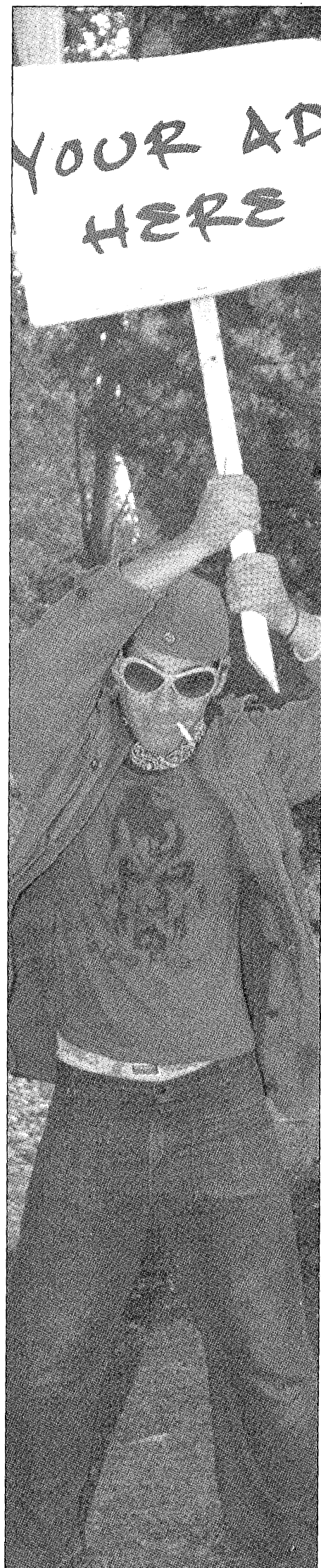
If you have even the most basic understanding of the abortion debate, it's clear that it has been one of the most divisive issues of the last half century, with little consensus to be had between the two sides. The Long Island Coalition for Life—a network of anti-choice organizations and crisis pregnancy centers—has the express right to promote their agenda to protect life, just as I do to defend access to comprehensive reproductive health care for women. Their letter to the editors of the Stony Brook Press attacks a neutrality on the subject that I never claimed to represent. Better than neutrality, the campaign aims to spread awareness of fact-based information that assists our community with making important personal decisions. Instead of simply standing behind their position, however, the Coalition has taken the position to personally attack me for mine. I did in fact intern at Planned Parenthood a year ago because I believe in their mission, yet I don't see how this makes my position less valid in any way. Furthermore, the Coalition is not a part of our campus community, and yet questions my right to organize within it. Also missing from the Coalition's letter is any direct defense or validation of any of the information from "iCare."

If the Coalition were members of the Stony Brook campus, they would easily have access to the information I have been distributing over the past several weeks. I would simply like to spread awareness to the Press' readers that all of the services offered by crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) like the Long Island Life Centers are available on campus. As part of the comprehensive medical care offered at the Student Health Center, the Women's Center offers a range of women's health services including pregnancy testing and counseling. Both the University Counseling Center and the Center for Prevention and Outreach provide an open and free counseling resource for a variety of issues including sexual health, pregnancy and relationships. The Interfaith Center provides a spiritual resource for the campus, representing the major religious perspectives in our community, and students can receive religious counseling from clergy representing the faith of their choice, as opposed to the volunteers that staff CPCs.

If you are interested in more information or want to get involved, please contact me at sbstudentscaretoo@gmail.com.

Meghan Shalvoy

Senior, Women and Gender Studies



Request an ad packet:
editors@sbpress.com



The Great Debate

By Najib Aminy

When Judit Castello came to Stony Brook University as a visiting researcher, she had done her studying. Only, it wasn't for any related coursework that Castello studied. It was the United States healthcare system that she looked into before leaving from her native country of Spain.

"I was never worried about these things because I know the other European countries have universal healthcare," said Castello, a 30-year-old PhD student who attends Maastricht University in the Netherlands. "But here, even if I am covered and everything is fine, I still have to know who is my insurer, what I have to do, that was kind of difficult to get into this healthcare world."

For Castello, who is nearing the completion of her research on services to help the disabled in find jobs, the United States' system of healthcare may seem foreign, but even to Americans, the current debate of health care reform is just as puzzling. In a recent *60 Minutes* and *Vanity Fair* poll, roughly 70 percent of Americans polled could not explain what the "public option" was.

Part of the reason why the debate over healthcare reform is so complex is because of varying interests, comparisons to international systems, and differing policies within the reform currently on the Senate table. While

the current reform is puzzling, the debate is nothing new.

Since the administration of President Harry Truman, health care reform has been brought up time and time again. Because of the business and political interests that come along with healthcare, any true reform has been limited at best, says Dr. Charles Robbins, Associate Dean of the School of Social Welfare at Stony Brook University.

"Healthcare is big business. Healthcare is money. It is the largest sector of our gross national product," Robbins said. "There's an incredible pressure on elected officials to maintain the status quo, to tweak it a little bit, to make people believe that you are changing something, but not changing it fundamentally."

The Washington Post reported that the insurance industry has spent roughly \$1.4 million a day attempting to influence the outcome of healthcare reform. This, according to Robbins, is just one part of the problem.

The other falls in line with a cultural belief to keep that government should stay away from business. "People don't want to be told what to do, they don't want anyone getting in their business," Robbins said. With healthcare reform, Robbins says that many Americans fear that the government will get in the way of their health and their doctor, but that they fail to realize the involvement of these insurance companies in the same scenario.

"Neither you or your doctor can do anything without the approval of insurance companies," Robbins said. "We are naïve to believe that insurance companies are this benevolent organization looking out for our own good. They are looking for their own profit and their own shareholders."

Ultimately, what Robbins argues that is the current system of health care, which is driven by market forces, is not working. The profits of one company will determine who gets what coverage, what rates are offered, and most of all, the affordability.

At the core of this reform lies policy, a term that Dr. Sabatini Dwyer, chair of healthcare policy and management at the School of Health Technology and Management, says is both overlooked and ignored. Policy, as Dwyer defined during a healthcare seminar for students, is the deliberate plan to guide decisions to achieve a rational outcome. This simple definition, Dwyer says, goes a long way into understanding the core of the healthcare debate.

According to this definition, rational outcomes, as Dwyer discussed in her lecture, was to be determined by society through, in America's case, elected representation. At the end of this all, the point Dwyer emphasized was that behind every policy is a clear objective, and in the case of healthcare reform, is to lower costs. This comes after the fact that since 2000, premiums have increased at a rate faster than before, while health ex-

penditures have increased faster than the rate of inflation since the 1960s, according to Dwyer.

"It really takes people to feel the pain before they realize they need change," said Dwyer, a former senior economist in the Social Security Administration. "The culture is that we only embrace government intervention when we realize we need them."

Because healthcare is market based, in that the majority of care providers are through private insurance companies, much of the availability and efficiency is determined by profits. If insurers find that they are taking too many demanding high-risk patients premiums for the average, healthy American would increase to maintain a profit.

But in the past, there have been times where the government set up programs to help deal with the higher risk patients and work towards increasing availability, easing the burden from the private sector and providing care to those in need. The implementation of programs such as Medicare, which provides funding to those 65 and over as well as residency training; Medicaid, government funding for low-income households; and employer tax incentives have been key components of what Robbins calls socialized health care.

But when arguments against reform are brought forth, such as, that the government is seeking to have full control over healthcare, Robbins says that these are inaccurate and misguided.

"These are scare tactics going back to the Clinton reform, the reality is what they are describing is what the Medicare program is or Veteran Assistant programs," Robbins said. "To call the health reform socialism wouldn't make sense."

Roughly one month ago, the House had passed their version of the health care bill, 220 to 215 votes. All but one republican had voted against the legislation while 39 democrats had voted against the bill.

Currently, there are revisions being discussed to H.R. 3962. Initially, a "single-payer" system was thrown around in the beginning of the summer. However, that has now been reduced to a public option that critics now say has been watered down.

"The public option is for people have no other way of getting insurance," Robbins said. "Whether they can't afford it, don't qualify for Medicaid, or have a condition that would have them paying high expenses at a private insurer, it's a pool of last resort."

This would free up, according to Robbins, the demanding patients that were once covered by the private insurance companies resulting in profits for these insurance companies. "Initially, the public option was to be done in a manner that was cheaper than the insurance companies," said Robbins, who was involved with the Clinton healthcare reform of the early 1990s. "But if your people are high demand, to run it at a cheaper cost is highly unlikely and just about impossible."

Dwyer suspects that, given the public option, those who are currently insured, either independently or through their employer, will likely remain unaffected if the health reform were to pass. "The way the law is written, large employers are discouraged to participate in the public option," Dwyer said.

The Senate is currently debating whether to drop the public option and replace it with a government monitored, private-run, non-profit system.

Having experienced a universal healthcare system in Spain, Castello, who also has private insurance, finds it confusing that people would be against a universal system.

"I cannot possibly understand why people would be against having a public sector. Some people want it private, fine, sure why not? Why should it prohibit someone from having public insurance?" Castello asked. "I am also willing to pay taxes so someone, not as fortunate as me, can have access to health care."

Stony Brook junior Aditya Ramanathan believes, having a government-run healthcare option would severely limit insurance companies, and is a misguided attempt at true reform.

"The public option won't make the healthcare costs go away," said Ramanathan, a member of the Stony Brook College Republicans. "The idea



Judit Castello

Najib Amiry

is that we want to make insurance affordable, to have a balance of private and public," Ramanathan said. "We are not doing that by increasing the tax on Cadillac [high premium] healthcare plans. These taxes increase cost on private insurance."

Ramanathan argues that with the increase of this tax, private insurers will be looking to charge more, become less likely to cover high risk patients, and have employers drop from private coverage to a public-run option.

"The public option is not just going to cover 40 million uninsured," said Ramanathan, a Biochemistry major. "It will be covering a lot more high risk patients and be a lot more expensive than imagined."

The alternative to taxes on the higher-priced plans would be to open competition rather than restrict business with taxes. Private insurance companies, for the most part, operate at a state level. They are faced with competition only in that region or state. This competition does not cross over state borders and allows companies to essentially run premiums with less competition.

Ramanathan argues that, by opening competition and freeing up the market, the system of health care wouldn't need the giant overhaul that is being proposed, and prices would lower due to the increased competitiveness among companies.

"We want the model

of what's going on in France. We want the plans at the top of the list. We are not choosing that," Ramanathan said. "It's misguided to think we are going towards a European model. We are going towards a very strange, different, absolutely catastrophic model, as far as I see it."

The question that remains unanswered is how the American populous views healthcare. Is it a right or a commodity? Other issues that factor into this debate also range from the cultural aspects of health in America. Should there be an increased focus on preventative care to avoid chronic diseases and illnesses? As of now, the support and opposition amongst the American people for health care reform is roughly the same. Some are worried by the price it may cost the country.

Independent research by the Congressional Budget Office done in early October found that the Senate healthcare bill, at the time, would cost roughly \$850 billion over 10 years and cut the federal deficit by \$81 billion, all while expanding those who are insured in America to 94 percent.

It remains unclear as to what will happen with the House version of the health care reform bill and what the Senate will do.

As for Castello, who will return to the Netherlands to continue her studies, the differences of healthcare between the United States and Europe were part of her educational experience at Stony Brook.

"It's very interesting to see how all these different systems work," Castello said. "I think it's all due to culture."



Dr. Charles Robbins

Najib Amiry

Call of Foody: Modern Warfare

By Laura Cooper

Emma Backfish, a Stony Brook University senior, winced as she dropped a plate covered in tortilla chips, sour cream and crumpled napkins into the garbage during lunch time on a Tuesday morning in early October.

"I can't believe I even ate that," she said. "I know it's bad, but we really don't have a choice."

Backfish's concerns echo those of fellow Stony Brook students – many feel that the food on campus is both disgusting and expensive, but they have no choice but to eat it.

Stony Brook University has had problems for years with student unrest regarding food prices, quality and variety of food available on campus. Chartwells, which had provided Stony Brook with campus food for years, was infamously known by students for charging high prices for its food, such as the price of salad by the ounce. It was clear that students were dissatisfied with the service. When there was a new contract opening for food services at Stony Brook, it was not Chartwells, but Lackmann Culinary Services that won an excruciating bidding process to provide dining services in the campus for the coming years.

Officials said that the bidding process itself took months and involved meetings with potential campus food providers, trips out of state and drafting detailed plans. "The bid took place to be fair to all the competition," said Dawn Villacci, Faculty Student Association representative and customer advocate in charge of organizing the bid committee. "We wanted to offer new programs because we knew students were unhappy with the quality of dining on campus."

The bid committee was made up of 14 students, including undergraduate chair Abhi Bikkani. These students took visits to other state schools including University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the University of Rhode Island and the University of Connecticut, said Bikkani. The committee tasted food and interacted directly with each other to draft a contract before it was presented to Lackmann. The intent was to see if Stony Brook could house an "all you can eat style service," which each of these colleges had. Surveys Villacci conducted among students suggested that a buffet style was something students wanted.

Chartwells, had its contract extended—much to the students' dismay—to let the bidding process play out. "It was very important to explore all the options, we needed more time," Villacci said.

After visiting schools around the Northeast and meeting with several culinary providers, the bid committee found that Stony Brook did not have a large enough facility to have hundreds of students eating at once.

"At Stony Brook University, our students are used to flexibility," Villacci said. "You can't bring things out of all you can eat. Our students need to be able to take things on the go." In an all you can eat buffet style dining hall, leaving the hall with food is not permitted. As a result, the months of visits and meetings with buffet style culinary providers became useless. The committee decided it was more practical to stay with a full retail plan to provide more flexibility.

The surveys and interactions with students that took place with representatives of the Faculty Student Association found that Stony Brook students had three main concerns regarding the new campus food provider on campus. These concerns included having a more "hands on" customer service atmosphere, advancing environmental concerns and lowering prices on campus. A Meal Plan Resolution Committee was also created as a forum with the hopes that the new provider could fix problems right away.

"Students had many concerns but obviously, due to the economy, their ability to stay on budget was a huge issue," said Villacci. "They'd either have many meal points left at the end of the semester or none at all. There was very little in between, and this made students upset."

According to both Bikkani and Villacci, one of the main reasons Lackmann was chosen was because it provided the soundest plan to help students stay on budget. Lackmann is providing combination meals daily for a fixed price as well as displaying signs suggesting meals that are "budget friendly." In addition to the signs there are placards by the register describing how many points students should have at this week in the semester to stay on track with specific meal plans until the semester's end.

Both Villacci and Bikkani praised Lackmann for its work in crafting a budget for its students. However the small signs by the register that provide insight into meal point usage are eclipsed by boxes of candy, are outdated or are falling off. The signs are so small that when asked if they had seen them, six out of ten students said they hadn't and out of the remaining four, two said they hadn't read them.

Lackmann and the committee prided themselves on its program known as "three under three," meaning that the meal was under \$3 and 300 calories. These snacks include small wraps, fruit and desserts in on-the-go containers.

Villacci said another aspect important to the committee was the availability of "grab and go items." After the research revealed that students had to be able to take the food with them to their dorms or activities on or off campus, the idea of fresh grab and go food was central to Lackmann's plan.

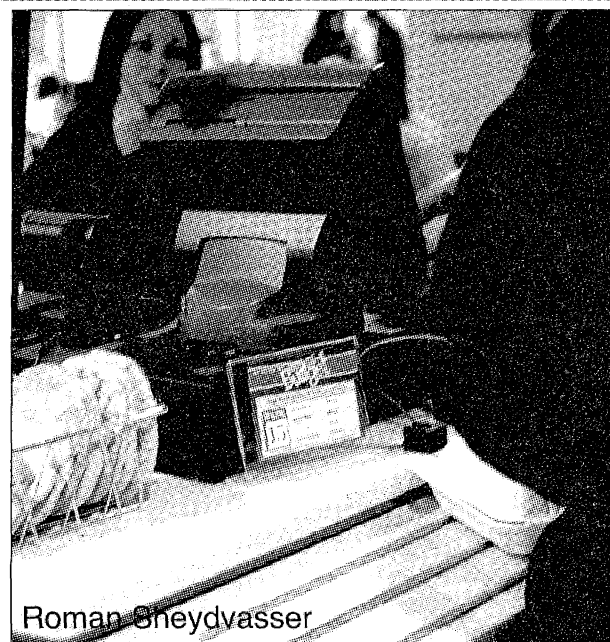
According to Joseph Rudolph, the Stony Brook representative for Lackmann, the main idea was keeping all the food and production local in order to lower prices overall.

"Our motto is that we are fresh, local and focused," Rudolph said. "We have moved the production of many things that used to be outsourced on campus. Grab and go is all manufactured here, and we began two fresh bakeries on campus, one in the Union and one in Kelly Quad."

Though the idea was to bring higher quality at a lower price by baking bread buns, cookies and snacks on campus, students are not impressed.

"The food is not exactly good," said Maria Del Mar Piedrabuena, a senior Women's Studies and journalism major. "The other day I got chicken pot pie at the Student Activities Center and it had one piece of chicken and one carrot. It was six dollars! It was so disgusting, I had to throw it out."

Lackmann also provides food to Adelphi University, Hofstra University and SUNY New Paltz. The company is supported by Compass, Inc, the same



Roman Sneydvasser

company providing money to Chartwells.

"We are two separate, independent companies," said Rudolph. "Compass allows us to do what we want, they don't interfere. They manage \$20 billion internationally. They told us 'Do your business, we're here to support you.'"

Many students couldn't even tell that there was a new provider on campus. While it was evident when the campus switched from Coca-Cola to Pepsi a year earlier, students seemed to believe the campus was just adding new concepts and not really changing anything comprehensively.

Living on campus, Frank Loiacono, a senior Engineering student from Manhattan, said he had no choice but to eat campus food. "Seven dollars for a sandwich is ridiculous," he complained. Though Loiacono has a car, he said it is often hard to get off campus on breaks between classes and that trekking back to his dorm in Kelly is both time consuming and pointless to make his own food in such a short amount of time.

"I asked for ham and turkey, so they gave me half of each," he said of his sandwich purchased from the Union deli. "They used to give me double the size of what a regular sandwich would be."

Rudolph was optimistic about how students would react to Lackmann's performance during its first year at Stony Brook University. "We encourage feedback with comments," he said. "We have management photos posted and encourage that if there is an issue, to take it straight to the manager. It is very important to use to bring higher level service, service with a smile and to provide an eating facility that reflects these values."

Lackmann is in the process of retraining the staff to provide "hospitable service" to the student body, Rudolph said. The entire staff that worked under Chartwells was hired under Lackmann. "We have to create a consumer-friendly culture in our facilities," Rudolph said. "It will not happen overnight, but it will happen."

For now, students say prices are high, food quality is low and food even runs out in certain places on campus during the weekend. When Rudolph was asked about this he said, "I did not know about that. It is important that students keep us involved and tell us about these things. We want to know what you think."

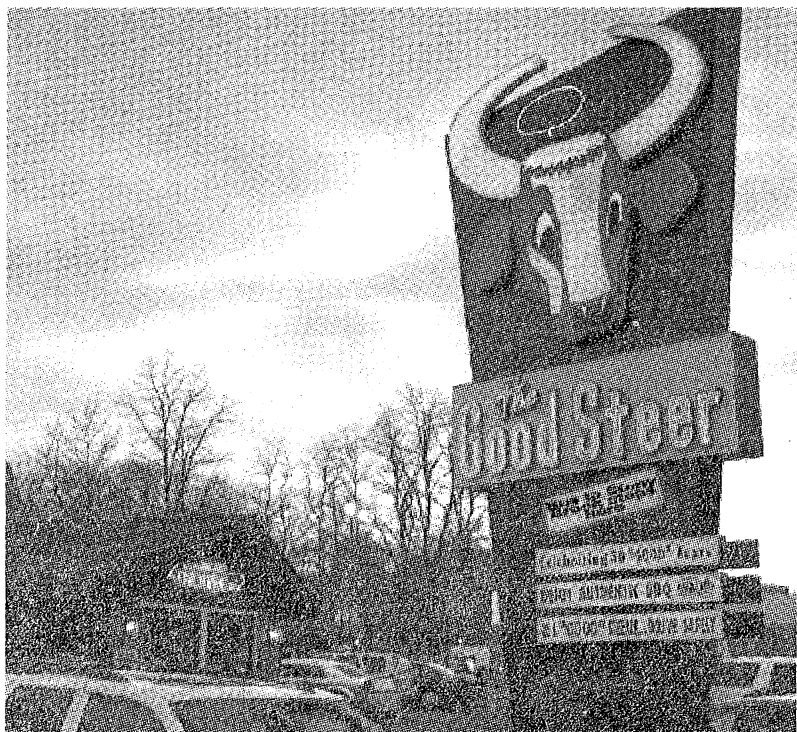
Want your club/organization to be featured in a future Club Spotlight?

E-mail *The Press* at
editors@sypress.com

Submitted For The Approval Of The Midnight Society

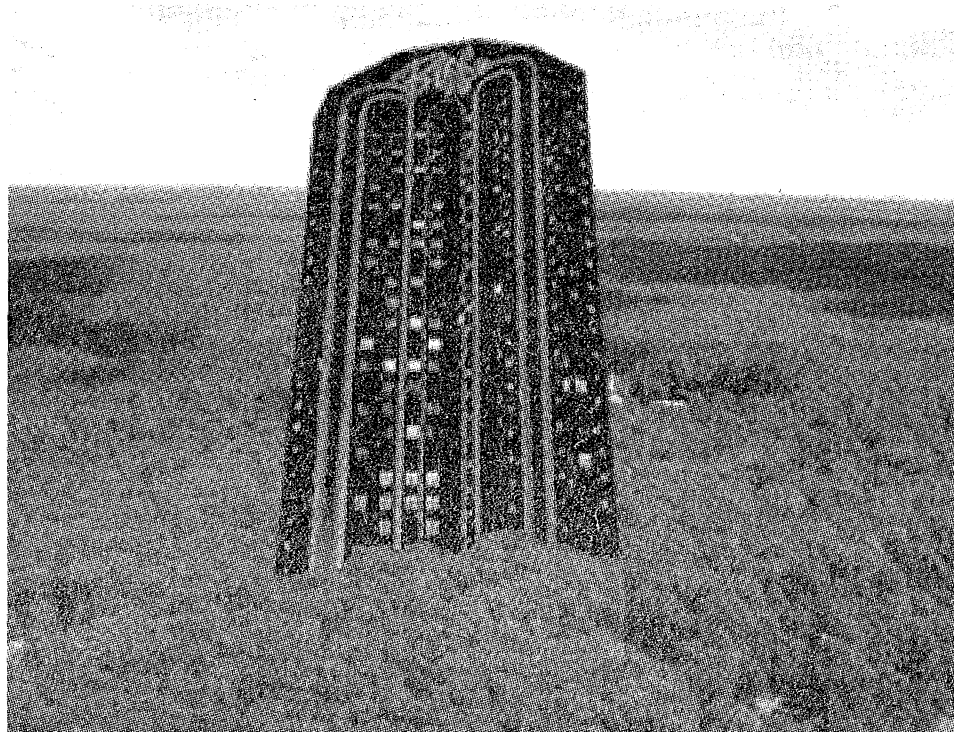
5 More Suitable Locations for a Hotel on Campus

1. On Top of South P Lot



Just build the hotel on the South P Lot, sillies! It's fucken' huge! Any displaced parking could be relocated to the Good Steer, over in Lake Grove. They've got plenty of parking. Commuter students can utilize the Suffolk County transit system to get back to campus. It only costs a dollar with your Stony Brook ID. What a brilliant idea! Why didn't you guys think of that?

2. Ashley Schiff Park Preserve



The Ashley Schiff Park Preserve is another obvious choice. It's not protected by any law, so it's a sure thing! And who's gonna put up a fight? Those hippy dippy Ecology professors? A judicial application of pepper spray and stun guns will take care of that nuisance! Then you can name it the "Ashley Biff Park Preserve"! Get it?

3. Planet Hoth



A well fortified secret hotel on the remote ice planet Hoth. You could easily evade the Imperial Starfleet, and the rebels have an energy field strong enough to deflect any bombardment.

4. Roth Pond



Go Atlantis style with this one. An underwater hotel would be a smash hit! And think of all the diverse ecology in that pond you could display through the viewing areas!

5. The forest in front of the main entrance

It's perfect! Patrons could come with their tents and sleeping bags, and just simulate a campout and stuff. Get in tune with nature and all that. You could house salamanders, and hawks, and all sorts of other wildlife there as well. Exploit that untapped market! This is the best idea yet!



essay

Journeying to the Heart of the Hungry Soul



Ross Barkan

We are a hungry nation. We are hungry for success, for honor, for wealth and for...food. Yes, the United States—still the wealthiest nation on planet Earth—is struggling to feed millions of its own citizens. Hunger is far from dead in this new century.

According to a report by the Department of Agriculture, the number of Americans in households that lack consistent access to adequate food skyrocketed in 2008 to 49 million. This is the highest number since the government began tracking “food insecurity” 14 years ago. About a third of this 49 million struggled with “very low food security,” meaning a lack of resources forced families to skip meals, eat smaller portions, and forgo future meals. The other two thirds had enough to eat but only by eating a cheap, unbalanced diet and relying on foods stamps and food pantries.

Even more upsetting is the 506,000 households containing children who face “very low food security.” The troubling figures are the result of rising food prices and a souring economy. No wealthy industrialized nation should have to struggle to feed its own citizens. In a time when science and technology can make almost anything seem possible, the dinner plate should not still be empty.

At the most basic level hunger, next to thirst, is what drives human beings. When we are fed, we are productive. When we are not fed, we are angry, depressed and weak. And then we die. Though people will try to rationalize what politicians, economic systems, and institutions they believe are just, all that truly matters is who or what is best at putting bread on the dinner table. Everything comes down to bread. We are nonequilibrium thermodynamic systems in need of energy. The average voter could care less about Republicans and Democrats as long as the money exists to buy food.

Hunger! Nothing is as physically and psychologically debilitating as hunger. If only every individual could understand how horrific hunger can be. If only they could know what people across the nation and earth endure every single day. In a world of hunger, there is no time for philosophical reflections, comedic musings, whimsical reveries, and essays such as the one I am

writing. Hunger saps all strength. Hungry people cannot fight back, combat injustice, or even laugh at the world around them, perhaps the most important thing of all...

Let's imagine hunger. Let's imagine starvation. There are the obvious ills: weight loss, depletion of vital nutrients, and a faltering immune system. Prolonged starvation is detrimental to the mind. Months of semi-starvation re-

pain of living meal to meal. His narrator wanders the city of Oslo without money or comfort, moaning in the mire of dreadful, soul shattering poverty. His hair falls out, his body shrinks, and his world fills with blood, vomit, and nausea. Hunger destroys him. He can't think. He can't act.

While the trials of this narrator might be more extreme than the battle impoverished Americans wage against

starvation. The study aimed to discover the best ways to feed survivors of famine, especially those in Europe in the wake of World War II. Thirty-six men volunteered for Keys' experiment.

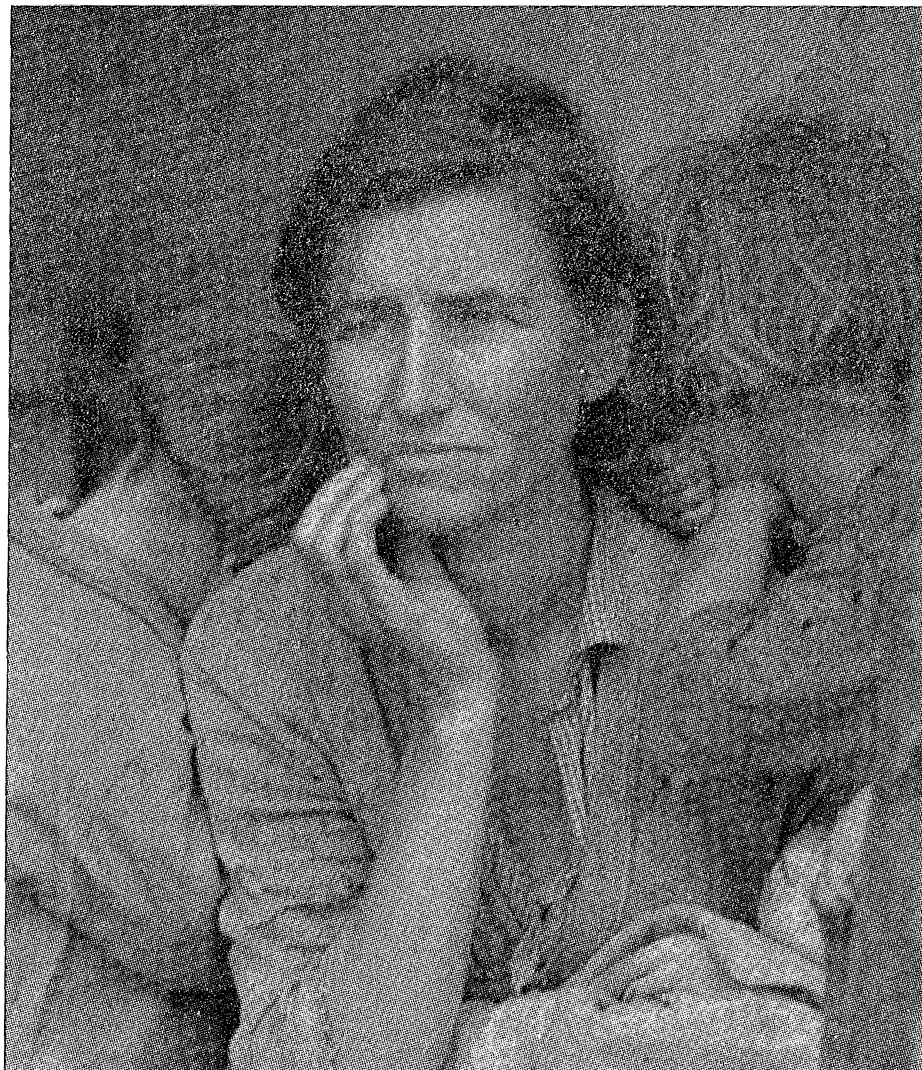
As the participants found their rations drastically cut, they first lost their libidos. Extreme weight loss destroyed sexual desire. Strength dissipated. Mental concentration wavered. Bob Willoughby, one of the test subjects, described the genesis of a new outlook, “We were no longer concerned about the problems of the world. We weren't as concerned about helping others. Our thoughts were dominated by food.” When coffee and tea were eventually the only luxuries they were allowed, some participants resorted to chewing gum madly. One consumed 18 packs in a single day.

Behavior grew increasingly irrational, especially when food was nearby. One participant shoplifted potatoes, carrots, and onions, the basis of the prescribed diet in the study. When the starvation stage finally ended, the rehabilitation stage began. For some of the men, it was the most psychologically trying time. One participant, Sam Legg, chopped off three of his fingers with an ax. He was never sure if it was accident or not. Many other participants were despondent about their ongoing hunger, even when salvation was so close. They could think of nothing but food.

The experiment led to a far greater understanding of human starvation on both a physical and psychological level. The two volume, 1,385 page report titled *The Biology of Human Starvation* opened the eyes of a nation to the visceral nature of starvation. Today, we should remember the experiment. The participants eventually recovered and lived healthy lives. They were lucky. Their hunger was only temporary. For the millions without access to consistent, nutritious meals in this harsh economic climate, hunger is perpetual. There is no reprieve.

Congress and President Obama should make alleviating hunger a top priority. Federal nutritional programs should be expanded. Stimulus money should ensure that virtually all citizens are able to earn a living wage. A living wage is not just enough to scrounge together a meager meal to feed a teeming household. A living wage is much more. No American should have to fret about where their next meal is coming from or when they will eat again.

Deliver every citizen from hunger, Mr. President, and you will actually be changing something.



American Hunger

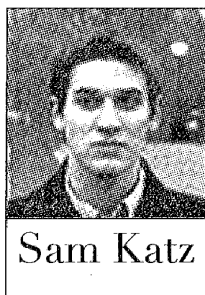
sults in depression, hysteria, and severe emotional distress. The mind and body are burning away.

“I clenched my fists madly, started crying from sheer helplessness, and gnawed like a man possessed. I cried so much that the bone became wet and messy with tears. I vomited, swore, and chewed again, cried as if my heart would break, and threw up again. Then I swore aloud and consigned all the powers of the universe to hell.” These are the words of the unnamed narrator in Nobel Prize-winning Knut Hamsun's 1890 novel *Hunger*. Perhaps no writer ever captured the sickening sensation of hunger—that great death spiral—better than the Norwegian Hamsun. Once an impoverished writer, he understood the

hunger, the point of the novel remains valid. We give too little attention to the problem of hunger and the effects it has on society. The sufferings of third world countries are acknowledged, though not alleviated. Living near starvation is thought to be impossible in the modern, industrialized state. Those who are well-fed struggle to understand the physical and psychological hell that hungry people deal with daily. They struggle to even understand the *possibility* of such hunger.

In 1944, physiologist Ancel Keys led an experiment at the University of Minnesota to study the effects of starvation on the human body. Before then, little scientific research had been conducted about the penetrating torture that is

Afghanistan: A Kafkaesque Nightmare



Sam Katz

As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect." These famous words that begin Kafka's masterpiece, 'The Metamorphosis,' are what kept on crossing my mind as I was watching the president's speech on Afghanistan, his "New Way Forward." As I was listening to the President laying out his plan for an escalation of troop levels in Afghanistan and how he was struggling to present it to a skeptical nation and hostile region, one thing was clear, "As America awoke one morning from uneasy dreams she found herself transformed into a gigantic insect."

That morning was June 1st, 2002 when then President George W. Bush laid out what would later come to be called "The Bush Doctrine", the idea of justifying preventive war with nations that pose no immediate threat to us. Since then we have had that international "Insect" status. Two wars, high debt, and demonstrated incompetence on issues such as climate change has turned us into a political insect, one that other nations want to avoid interactions with at any cost.

Watching our current President address the world, I began seeing what we can perhaps call the American Ecdysis. (Ecdysis is the process by which the reptiles shed their skin. It comes from the Latin word *ekdyein* meaning to strip an outer layer.) I think Kafka's tragic novel of the downfall of successful salesmen can perhaps be a guide as to what not to do when you have "insect status". I know the analogy is weird, but bear with me.

Kafka's *Metamorphosis* tells the story of Gregor Samsa, a successful, yet unhappy, young salesman who provides for his aging parents and younger sister. The story begins as Gregor wakes up one day to discover that he has morphed into a giant insect. The mere sight of him causes disgust in people, especially his parents. The first to come to terms with him being an insect is his sister Grete. Gregor struggles to get his family to acknowledge who he has become, something his mother is unable to do. And he struggles to get his family to still treat him as he once was, something his sister can't do.

Gregor appears as the likeable enough guy at the beginning of every

tragic tale. He is the protagonist who drives away his own demons by occupying himself with other people's problems. Gregor is frustrated with his job, yet he spends his time thinking about how he can get his sister, an amateur violinist, to attend a conservatory. As he awakens from his sad dreams he discovers that he has become a creature who is appalling to all. Note how he didn't become a creature that people avoid because of the threat it might pose, but rather one that is avoided due to its grotesque appearance.

Towards the end of the story, Gregor decides that he wants to join his parents in listening to his sister performing on her violin. Gregor knows that his appearance would scare his family, yet "he felt hardly any surprise at his growing lack of consideration for the others; there had been a time when he prided himself on being considerate." As he advances to the room where his sister is playing, he remembers who he used to be, how he was the one they all looked up to, how he once had plans for his sister. Blissfully, he remembers how he "had the firm intention of sending her to the Conservatory, he would have

"Now, in the international community, our standing is at an all-time low. We are the insect that many avoid."

announced it to everybody without allowing a single objection. After this declaration his sister would be so touched that she would burst into tears, and Gregor would then kiss her on the neck, which, now that she was a young working woman, she kept free of any ribbon or collar."

Yet, as his sister notices him she stops her playing and lets out a great



SAMSA!!!!!!!

scream. What she sees in front of her is not the brother who looked after her for so long, only a giant insect covered in dirt. Sobbing, she begs her parents to remove the "thing." Upon hearing that, Gregor retreats to his room and let's out his last breath. So ends the life Gregor Samsa.

Our country was a Gregor Samsa. We were successful and prosperous, liked and admired. Then trouble hit us. And as we desperately struggled to drive away the demons that have come to haunt us in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, we have embraced actions that caused us to lose those qualities. Now, in the international community, our standing is at an all-time low. We are the insect that many avoid.

On June 1st 2002 George Bush gave his now famous speech outlining our new approach to the war on terror. As his administration outlined it in their strategy report later that year:

"The security environment confronting the United States today is radically different from what we have faced before. Yet the first duty of the United States Government remains what it always has been: to protect the American people and American interests. It is an enduring American principle that this duty obligates the government to anticipate and counter threats, using all elements of national power, before the threats can do grave damage."

The paragraph reads like the response you might expect from a paranoid Shakespearean character that has lost his sense of proportion. Along with this hyper paranoia came the "Spread-

ing of Democracy" talk. Samsa diverts his thoughts from his own troubles with the corporate world he so desperately depends on by focusing on how he can help his sister get what she needs. The United States under the Bush Administration sought to brand their reflexive policies with the nobility of different pursuits. Beneath all the democracy talk lies hidden a series of rash actions few wanted to admit to. And now its policy and conduct have come to be seen as repulsive.

It is against this backdrop that President Obama took to the podium last week. We are not yet in the Obama era as much as we are in the post-Bush era. The challenge for the President was not only to outline a satisfying strategy for the way forward in the war. What he had to prove that night was that he can shed the skin we have grown over ourselves. Such a challenge was by no means easy because there are two camps to please: the national community and the international one. And they were both looking for very different things.

In *The Metamorphosis*, a crucial moment comes when Grete decides to move out the furniture in her brother's room. After all, she reasons, he is an insect now and doesn't need them and would even benefit from the additional space he now has to run around. His mother doesn't like the idea. Gregor wants his sister to still think of him as a person and he attempts to keep her from moving his furniture. As he tries to do so, his mother sees him dangling from a picture frame on the wall as the

essay

ARTICLE continued from page 11

grotesque form he has become.

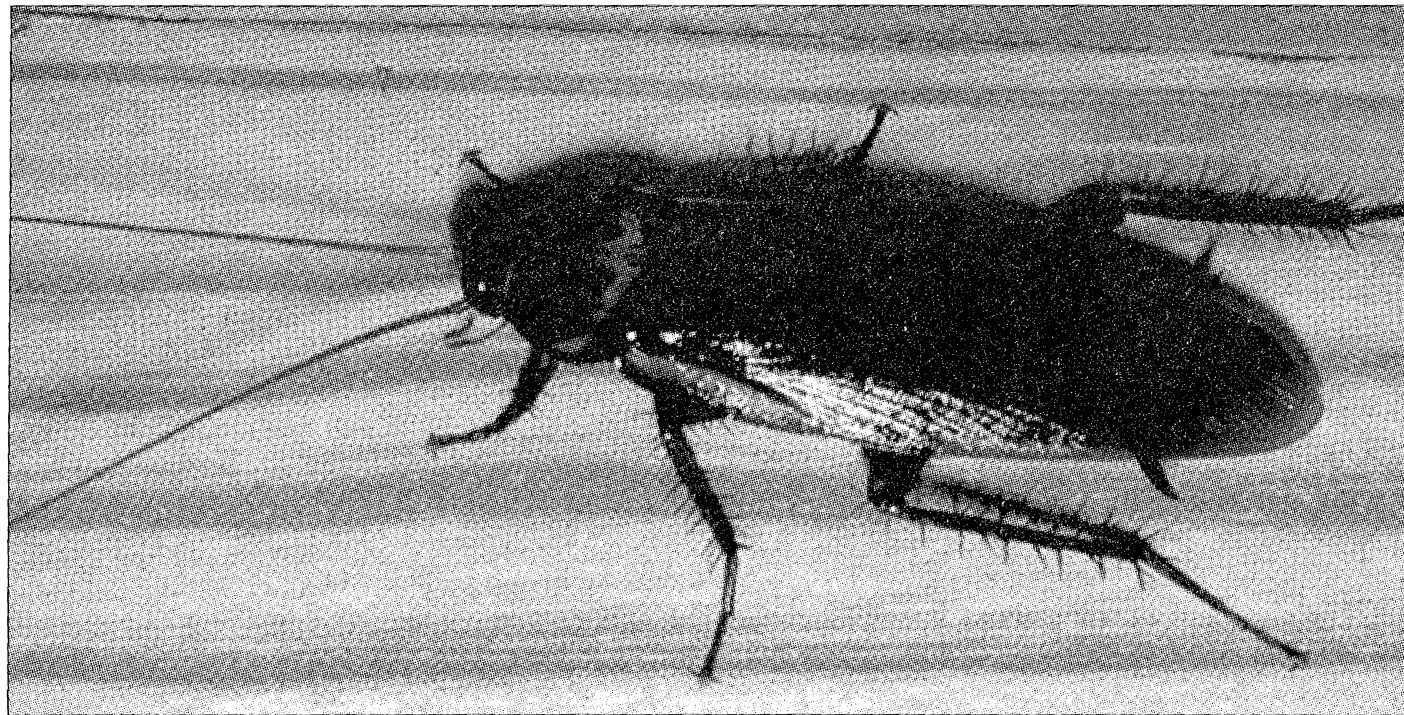
And there is Gregor's mistake. He tries to get his sister, who has come to accept his status as an insect, to see him as the human being he once was. He forces his mother, who still thinks of him as the Gregor she once knew, to see him as an insect. In doing that he loses them both. He allowed his own sense of self to dictate how others will see him as. This backfires terribly.

Intuitively we think that it is with those close to us that we can confide in our shortcomings and to those distant to us we need to portray a sense of self-worth. But perhaps the opposite is true. Those close to us have that same desire as ourselves to believe in our imagined self-worth, and therefore what fuels your sense of being is what fuels their image of you as well. The same thinking that convinces us of our magnified status is what leads to the reluctance of the ones close to us to acknowledge that those beliefs are self-serving, because we share the need for self-validity. To force them to confront that truth would be like Gregor Samsa forcing his mother to see him as the insect he has morphed into. She can't and won't.

Amongst those more distant to us the reverse might be true. While we would like them to think of us in a certain way, they have nothing that would fuel such illusions and hence are reluctant to accept such stories. Our personal conceit has nothing to feed on amongst those who do not share our aspirations. Gregor's sister saw him as an insect. She has no reason to convince herself that her brother is more than that and so she gets frustrated with his insistence on still being treated as a human.

Such was the challenge the President faced in his address to the world. For America, he must show his resolve. Whether our sense of superiority and strength is justified or not, Americans have a strong desire to believe it, a desire that would make them refuse any other interpretation of their status. Yet the international community wanted to see the United States owning up to who they have become, the mistakes they have made, and where they have arrived.

Former President Lyndon Johnson already realized the first part of this challenge when he was deciding on his strategy in Vietnam. In a phone call with his friend from the Senate, Richard Russell, he recounts what a friend from Texas told him. "A.W. Moursund said to me last night," Johnson tells Russell, "damn, there's not anything that'll destroy you as quick as pulling out, pulling up stakes and running, that America wants by God, prestige and power. And they don't want—I said, yeah, but I don't



Samsa on the move...to a dormroom

want to—I don't want to kill these folks. He said, I don't give a damn. He said, I didn't want to kill 'em in Korea, but said, if you don't stand up for America, there's nothing that a fellow in Johnson City—or Georgia or any other place—they'll forgive you for everything except being weak."

"They'll forgive you for everything except being weak." Russell responded, "Well there's a lot in that. There's a whole lot in that."

The question before the Afghanistan speech was: can he do both? Can he channel that sense of strength Americans so desperately need to see from their president while simultaneously appearing to the international community as humble and modest?

I think he partially succeeded.

Halfway through the speech, the President addressed the Afghan people. He lowered his chin, bent down a bit and looked straight into the camera, "Tonight, I want the Afghan people to understand," he said, "America seeks an end to this era of war and suffering. We have no interest in occupying your country. We will support efforts by the Afghan government to open the door to those Taliban who abandon violence and respect the human rights of their fellow citizens. And we will seek a partnership with Afghanistan grounded in mutual respect — to isolate those who destroy; to strengthen those who build; to hasten the day when our troops will leave; and to forge a lasting friendship in which America is your partner, and never your patron."

Evidently absent from this part of the speech was the Roosevelt-like resolve with which most of the speech was given in. What you heard was a nation begging to be seen in a different light,

to be reconsidered. Not like in the past when we had pretended that we are all about spreading democracy in the region, a story those in that region had no reason to believe. The President was trying to get those people to see us as the struggling nation we are, trying to protect our self-interest. "America is your partner, and never your patron." What was strong about that statement was not its revelation; the Afghans know that already. What was powerful about that statement was that the United States acknowledged it.

The speech was full of requests for

"They'll forgive you for everything except being weak." Russell responded, "Well there's a lot in that. There's a whole lot in that."

reevaluation. "For unlike the great powers of old," the President said, "we have not sought world domination. Our union was founded in resistance to oppression. We do not seek to occupy other nations. We will not claim another nation's resources or target other peoples because their faith or ethnicity is different from ours. What we have fought for — what we continue to fight for — is a better future for our children and grandchildren."

Towards the end of the speech the

President had to follow Johnson's advice of showing strength to the American people, to feed the image of ourselves we so desperately cling to. And so he did.

"Our cause is just," he said in a voice that rang across the room filled with enthusiastic cadets and decorated generals, "Our resolve unwavering. We will go forward with the confidence that right makes might, and with the commitment to forge an America that is safer, a world that is more secure, and a future that represents not the deepest of fears but the highest of hopes."

We have become the insect of foreign relations and the President knows that. Many oppose our ideals and some resent our sense of right. If there is hope to get out of this mess it would be by not repeating the mistake Kafka's Gregor made, forcing those who want to see us as strong as being weak, and pretending to be perfect to those who see our faults. Like Gregor begging his sister to let him have his room, or confronting his mother with his misshapen insect body, both are bad. Both lead to inconsistent relationships and fracture of communication. The President's speech at West Point tried to avoid that. The president needed to appear strong to the nation and humble to the world. To tell the world that we know our mistakes and flaws as well as the geopolitical status we have gained. And to allow Americans to continue to live with the comfort of knowing that we are still a superpower like we once were. If he succeeds, perhaps we will begin to see the American Ecdysis, where we begin to shed the insect skin we are so deeply embedded in.

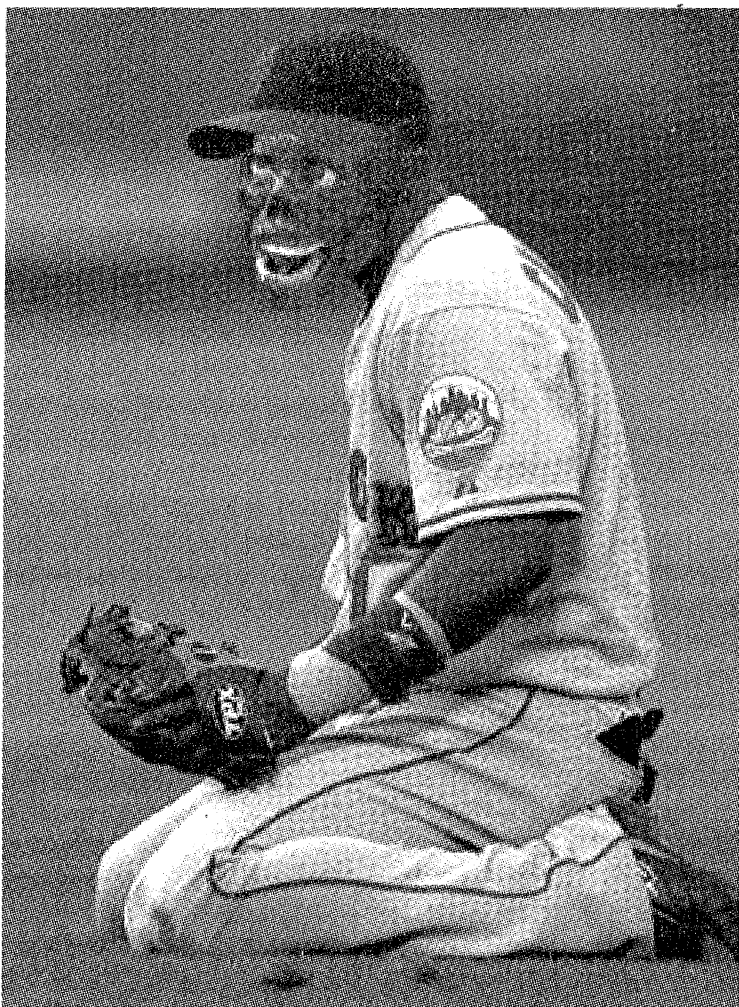
The Very Best Moments of the Next Decade

By Ross Barkan

With the decade coming to a close, the time has

come to discuss what a wild ten years it's been. There have been some hysterical highs, some tragic lows, and a whole lot of ennui. Overall, it's exciting to finally be entering the roaring 2020's. Here are some of the moments to remember from the 'teens. Huzzah, huzzah!

11. Kanye West's untimely demise: Who can forget when rapper Kanye West piloted his helicopter into the Chrysler Building back in 2014? The nation wept for its fallen hero, a true spokesman of his generation. Indeed as he burned to death in the exploding fuselage of his private helicopter, he was on "the hottest rap label around."



10. The Mets are contracted: In 2016, Major League Baseball finally put to sleep the dying antelope that was the New York Mets. 5 consecutive 120-loss seasons sealed the fate of the Flushing franchise. Signing the HIV-positive Matt Holliday was certainly a blunder. Letting the withered corpse of Luis Castillo man second base for the entire 2013 season was a tragedy. God rest your soul, Luis.

9. Facebook forms its own republic: 2017 will always be remembered as the year Facebook, everyone's favorite social-networking site, finally seceded from the union. With over 5 billion users worldwide and a standing army, Facebook erected a citadel in the Bronx and systematically obliterated New York City. All hail Facebook, our lord and savior!

8. MC Lil' Nastyfuck elected President: Everyone knew Barack Obama had no chance against independent MC Lil' Nastyfuck, the most powerful entertainer on the planet. His soulful electronica, hard jazz, and love of gerrymandering swayed the masses of America who were tired of a president who just wasn't enough of a celebrity.

7. Goats outlawed: In 2012, goats were outlawed. No one knows why.

6. Someone read a book: Americans cheered across the land in 2018 when Flint, Michigan accountant Mitch Conway actually read a whole book from front to back. The book, *Cannery Row* by John Steinbeck, was described as "sorta cool and trippy" but "not nearly as good as the live action movie, you know, the one where the chick what's-her-name Naomi something shows her tits."

5. Health Care: Nope, still ain't universal. But hey, "Free Band-aid Friday" was a hit until a 2011 riot outside CVS killed 955 people. Everyone loves those fucking band-aids.

4. Hot chick hooked up with another hot chick: That hot chick at the party sitting next to that other hot chick, the one with the sick cans, totally made out with the



brunette. You didn't think they would but then *whoaaah* it happened, bro, I was there and me and my buddy Anthony high-fived the whole ride back. It was sick man, yeah, best night since the chick with the weird nipples put a whole VCR up her...

3. Everything is a reality show: A 2014 bill ensured everything in America would be some sort of reality show. While *Rite Aid Whores* became a huge hit, *Timmy McPherson's 9th Grade 7th period Masturbation Hour* tanked in the ratings, partially due to the fact that McPherson would always try to hide the fact he was masturbating in Ms. Lipmann's 7th period world history class.

2. The Avatar sequel bankrupts mankind: James Cameron's 735 trillion dollar sequel to 2009's *Avatar*, *Avatar: Fuck You*, successfully bankrupted everyone everywhere. Critics lauded the film for its realistic portrayal of blue alien sexual intercourse but wondered why over 400 trillion dollars were poured into animating a furious, gay octopus monster that added nothing to the plot.

1. Terrorists miss Statue of Liberty in hilarious mishap: Awkward, misguided Al Qaeda terrorists attempted to fly a commercial airliner into the Statue of Liberty on the morning of September 10th, 2011. Instead of smacking Lady Liberty in the face like they intended, the bumbling, daffy terrorists flew the plane straight into the heart of the sun, triggering a solar flare that thankfully eradicated mankind in 2012, just like those shitidick Mayans said it would. impoverished

HEY!
 IF THE PRESS WERE MADE FROM
 BARBECUE SPARE RIBS, WOULD
 YOU JOIN IT?

IT'S A SIMPLE QUESTION, WOULD YOU
 COVER THE NEWS IF YOU COULD EAT
 IT?

JOIN THE PRESS... CUBS
 WIN, CUBS WIN!

MEETINGS EVERY WED @ 1 P.M. STUDENT UNION ROOM 060 + 061 631-632-6451 APPREZZNEWS@GMAIL.COM

arts&entertainment

By Henry
Schiller

The Guggenheim Museum is a terrible place. Less a museum than an overpriced gallery, as expensive as the Whitney and the MOMA, the Guggenheim also has rarely more than a handful of artists featured at one time. It's full of so many despicable hipsters that you would swear you were nestled cozily in Williamsburg, not on east 89th street in Manhattan. The spiraling building, the one that alien jumped off of in the beginning of *Men In Black*, has made a name for itself as one of the leading institutes of pretension in New York City. So in defeat, begrudgingly I must say the Guggenheim's presentation of

Kandinsky, a retrospective on the abstract artist's entire career was excellent.

Vasily Kandinsky (1866-1944) is intrinsically linked to the museum's history; he pioneered a style of painting known as nonobjectivity, inspiring Solomon R. Guggenheim to open the Museum of Non-Objective Painting, which showcased the work of Kandinsky and his peers. As the exhibition is a career retrospective, it covers Kandinsky's work from the earliest years of the 20th century to his death in 1944. The museum's interior spiral is utilized perfectly for the exhibition – as one ascends the spiral one is taken through

the different phases of Kandinsky's artistic career. There is likely no artist who loans himself more readily to this treatment than Kandinsky, and one can tell that the paintings at the top of the museum and those at the bottom were done by the same man, let alone in the same century.

Kandinsky's early work is more or less impressionist, with pointillism playing a large role in many of the pieces on the first floor. These earlier pieces are not daunting in the least, and as a result only a few stand out, *Riding Couple* (painted in 1907 and offering a highly figurative take on a dreamy Russ-

ian night), being perhaps the best of these early paintings.

The human form goes through several drastic changes in Kandinsky's career – while it rarely takes center stage in his early work, it is almost absent from his work in the 1910s. When it does appear it is in an oddly juvenile fashion, full limbs and features being replaced with suggestive curves and implied action. By the 1920's, humanity has all but disappeared from Kandinsky's work in any immediately recognizable form.

Many of the early 20th century pieces (particularly 1911-13) have a sort of wine bar aesthetic that makes them easy to overlook – Kandinsky's oil and tempera pieces from this period stand out from the oil ones, many of which were sort of schmaltzy. The painting *Lyrical* (1911) stood out to me as something one might find in some sort of OTB parlor or in the opening credits of *Frasier*, although this style of simple abstraction may just have been appropriated from the work of Kandinsky and his peers.

One of the difficulties with nonobjective painting is that the pieces are firmly aware of the fact that they have no objective connection to the real world. It is a forced and forward thinking conclusion to expressionist thought, but one that often yields incredible results.

When Kandinsky eventually ditched tempera for good (1920s) this abstraction translated into nearly geometrical art which is amongst Kandinsky's best and certainly most succinct. The style then shifts from the geometric to what one might look at as a decade long ode to micro-flagellum – pieces begin to resemble the cross sectioned drawings of cell components that might be found in a biology textbook.

The museum's walls are lined with facts about Kandinsky's life and influence including how the importance of music to Kandinsky but many of his later pieces seem to have a literary or historical component to them as well – there is a deconstruction of form first to geometric and then to organic parts. Perhaps Kandinsky was himself lashing out at different supposed fundamental truths; are mathematical constructs the a priori basis for all human knowledge? Or is even something so fundamental as geometry just another product of our own biology? That said, the pieces also have a coolness to them, a swank demeanor one might find in the lair of some 60s superspy but one far more interesting than James Bond.

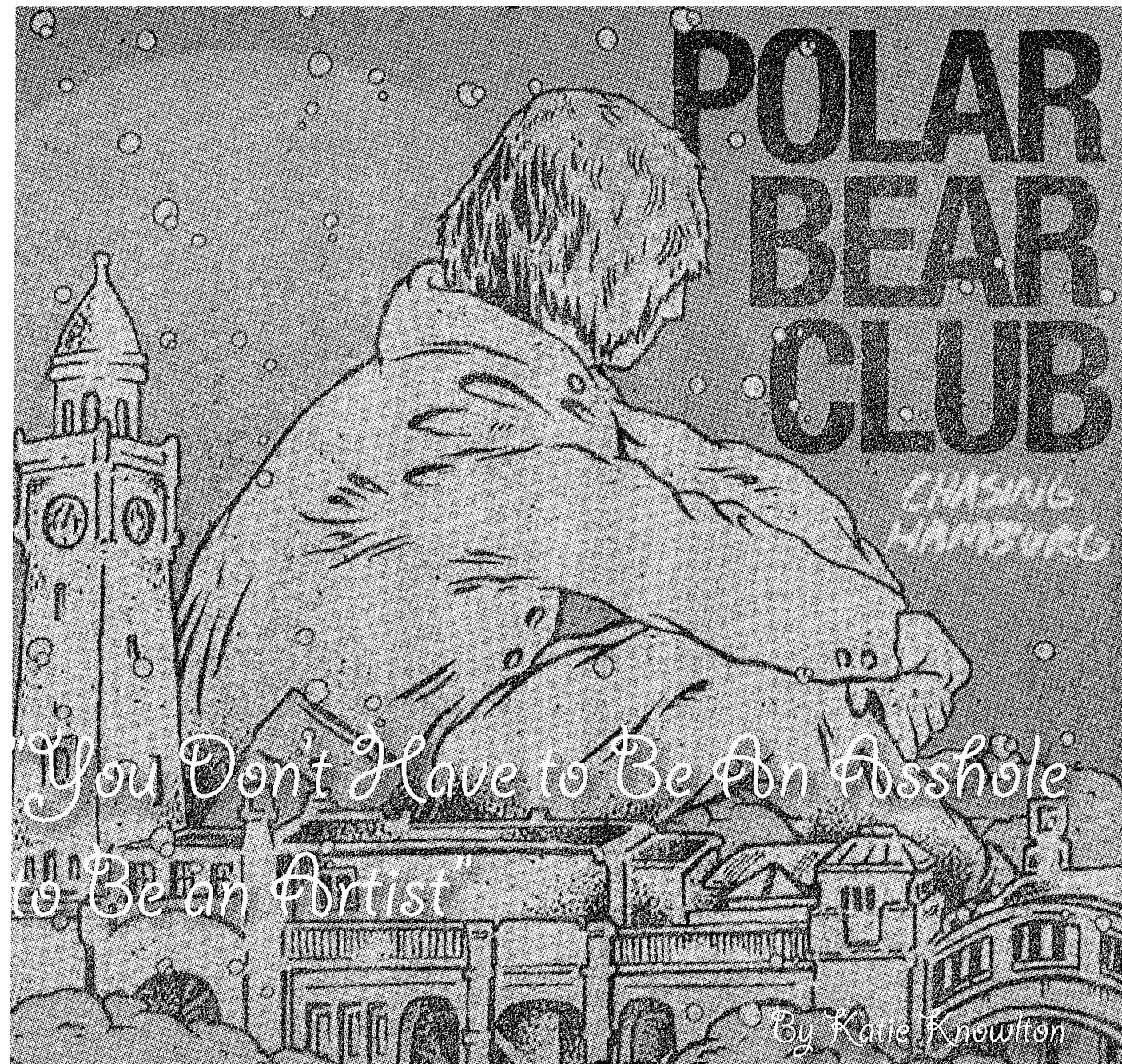
It is certainly difficult to appreciate an artistic retrospective for all that it may be worth when one has almost no background in the subject; the *Kandinsky* exhibition at the Guggenheim is, however, a fantastic place to start building an artistic repertoire. To appreciate art is to be able to appreciate the diversity of human creativity, and no artist embodied this diversity more than Vasily Kandinsky.

Chasing Hamburg is the sophomore full length from Upstate New York post-hardcore band, Polar Bear Club. It's an album that I want to like and that I know I should like, but all its combined elements end up creating a mediocre album that just doesn't manage to capture the fire their first EP and full length did.

Musically, Polar Bear Club takes cues from hardcore and pop-punk, and melds them in a way that makes their stuff appealing to fans of both. It's an impressive feat, given the very specific tastes of most upstate hardcore kids, and for that I commend them. On the surface, there does not appear to be much to their music. It sounds like power chords layered with some vaguely interesting riffs. Upon closer inspection, however, they manage to sneak in interesting progressions and chords that give a uniqueness to their music that's not immediately recognizable, giving them room to be creative without alienating their fanbase. This aspect of Polar Bear Club is one of the things that I truly enjoyed about *Chasing Hamburg*, they surprised me, but not so much so as to take me out of the song in order to analyze their musical decisions.

Most of the talent resides in the two guitarists, Chris Browne and Nate Morris. At the very least, they are given the most to do. Slower tracks like "Song To Persona" and "Chasing Hamburg" showcase their abilities the most, with great lines over strong progressions. On faster songs, the technicality fades a bit, but there is nothing necessarily wrong with that. The rhythm section does their job very well, but they are definitely nothing to write home about. They keep everything together, driving the songs forward and perhaps being the band's strongest root in both hardcore and pop-punk, making the band more accessible to a wider range of music fans.

Vocalist Jimmy Stadt is an interesting case to me. He utilizes both a clean and more gruff/shouting style, which is not uncommon, but the way it is utilized is confusing and fascinating. On previous releases, he predominantly uses the gruff style, shouting his lyrics with passion, giving them a deeper meaning and increasing the connection between



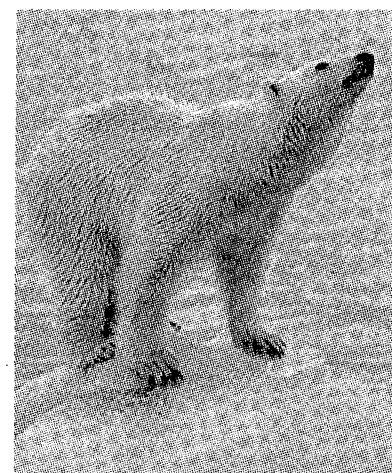
listener and performer, even when the words bordered on being silly. His clean singing voice is good, but used sparingly, and generally with no real rhyme or reason. It seems as though he just used it whenever the hell he felt like it and that was that. It worked for the most part. On *Chasing Hamburg* however, he utilizes this clean vocal style more and with more discretion, and to me it just doesn't work. The more contrast available, the more it makes his gruff vocals sound forced, and to me, that is one of their trademarks and one of the reasons I really began listening to them in earnest. By using it less and making it sound forced on top of that does them no favors.

Lyrically, Polar Bear Club is smart, but not obtuse. Stadt sings about the familiar: friends, the scene, the music industry, but does so in such a way that it doesn't sound clichéd. It's refreshing to hear new ways of saying your best friends are pretty awesome. These

songs are proof the familiar does not have to be boring and stereotypical. Stadt has done away with the more awkward and hilarious lines that popped up on their earlier releases, and the improvement is more than welcome, but unfortunately, the lyrical upgrade does not do enough to help this album.

The best songs on this album are those that sound most like they could have been on their first LP *Sometimes Things Just Disappear*. "Living Saints," "Light of Local Eyes," and "One Hit Back" are all hard hitting and catchy tunes perfect for singing along. The music and vocals fit together nicely, and the lyrics are mature and unique. The main improvement from that last album is the level of production is much higher; it's better recorded and better mixed. Overall it brings out the best of this band. Signing to a label (in this case, Bridge 9) has ruined some acts, but for Polar Bear Club, it's been a relatively good move for both the band and fans.

It is hard to really have a concrete opinion on this album. On the one hand, there has been some progression of both music and lyrics, despite vocals taking a hit. On the otherhand, all these elements that are great on their own just don't fit together with the same consistency as they did on their previous work. There are a couple of stellar tracks, but almost everything else is missing *something* that keeps them from being truly great.



Fun fact: Polar Bears are going extinct!

White People Still Love Wes Anderson

By Nick Statt

If you think Wes Anderson is aiming to deliver something new with *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, think again. It is, like every Anderson film, a feel-good movie with a twist. What it does accomplish is an interesting throwback to the days of stop motion, blended with the artsy wit and complexity of textbook Wes Anderson. The result is a film that will make up for every piece of cinematic trash that you've wasted money on this year.

In the eyes of Hollywood, Wes Anderson is an infamous perfectionist. He strives to make each project a seamless representation of his literary-driven script and will go to great lengths to do so, even if it means spending months constructing a soundtrack or being insultingly picky about letting a newcomer into his inner circle of actors.

But *Fantastic Mr. Fox* is the first time we get to see Anderson make the step off his soapbox and take the back seat. The film is based off of Ronald Dahl's 1970 book of the same name. Although he does co-write the script, it's his first film based wholly on someone else's idea as well as his first venture into animation. It would be typical of Anderson to make his dialogue and themes paramount given the fact that he's famous for utilizing both of those artistic tools beautifully. But this time around, Anderson plays nice with the other aspects of filmmaking and lets the true appeal of *Mr. Fox* – its animation and voice acting – to shine through.

The film's plot is simple, which means that Anderson's hand, now invisibly working behind the scenes in the animated world, is that much more noticeable. F. F. Fox, excellently voiced by George Clooney, is introduced as a witty and risk-loving animal who makes a living stealing chickens from dim-witted farmers. But when he almost gets himself and his wife killed, he promises to retire from the dangerous hobby. Especially when he learns of his wife's



pregnancy, while facing possible death at the hands of an infuriated farmer. Years later, Fox has a hilariously awkward son, voiced by Jason Schwartzman, and makes a living as a newspaper columnist. But during a fit of a mid-life crisis, Fox makes the decision to live his dream and move his family out of their hole and into the fresh air above ground. The complications arise when Fox discovers that his new home is perched right between a group of farmers and his instinctive desire to out-wit and steal boils to the surface.

Mr. Fox, cinematically, breaks down quite nicely – the animation and voice acting act as the cake of the film, while Anderson's writing and the accompanying feel-good glow are the frosting.

The stop-motion animation is in a delicate and deliberate balance between shabby and fluid. At times, you're eyes are straining to follow the motions of each character because of the lack of Hollywood-accustomed CGI, but after 15 minutes you're able to watch without disruption and truly enjoy a filmmaking technique that has long since cooled on the backburner. At times, the motion slows down to emphasize how imperfect and nostalgic stop-motion can be,

but then revs up in action scenes involving running and quick escapes to create a nice contrast.

The animation also allows Anderson to employ some juvenile, but highly entertaining, slapstick humor. After a heart-felt expression of his mortality and desire to finally live out of a hole, F. F. Fox then devours a stack of pancakes in a truly vicious animal fashion. Another great example is the game of whack-bat, which Owen Wilson as Coach Skip, explains in one huge rush of breath that hilariously underplays the complicated nature of the game. More harmless fun is thrown in the mix when Ash, Fox's awkward son, is completely embarrassed by the athletic abilities of his cousin Kristofferson, who is forced to stay with the family while his father gets over pneumonia.

The voice acting in the film will most likely be overlooked, but it really deserves enormous attention. The surprising newbies to voiceacting, George Clooney and Meryl Streep (Fox's wife), do so well in fact that I completely forgot the comical anthropomorphic exchanges between a husband and wife weren't human beings. Jason Schwartzman absolutely embodies the awkward

and bitter lines of Ash, the confused and "different" son who strives to live up to his father's wit and popularity. Everyone else, from the stingy badger lawyer with Billy Murray's unforgettable voice to the purposely over-done bodyguard rat played by William Defoe, make the film easily rival the likes of Pixar for voice-acting prowess.

Fantastic Mr. Fox really is one of the only good films that have graced screens in 2009. Wes Anderson, even though he stingily sat in his apartment in Paris looking at the animation work done by 20th Century Fox in solidarity, made a noticeable effort to let his work blend in with others'. The payoff is a great team effort that really shines in modern cinema. If you're a Wes Anderson fan, you probably didn't read past my first paragraph, either because you thought I didn't have any worthwhile to say about such a director or you have already seen the film and love it. If you had no idea what this film was about, then pay the money and see it immediately because *The Twilight* series, 2012, and *The Fourth Kind* rank on par with straight-to-DVD time wasters when compared with the truly fantastic *Fantastic Mr. Fox*.

Do you want to know how
I got these scars?

By joining **THE PRESS**

UNION 060 WEDNESDAYS DURING CAMPUS LIFETIME



Sadly, Huge Explosions Leave Cusack Alive

By Vincent Barone

I'm a lazy, apathetic asshole. If the alien gods from the planet Ufraton came down to me and asked me to write a tell-all story about my encounter, I would say, "Sorry man, I just popped an Ellio's pizza in the oven, and I can't leave that shit unattended". But Director Roland Emmerich has found a way to inspire me to warn you about 2012...the movie.

My inspiration hit me early in the film when I wished that the prophecies would come true right then and there in the movie theater. Oh, how I wished that the Earth would spit from under my seat and gobble me up into its boiling mantle, or that a cataclysmic earthquake would hit and bring the theater's ceiling crashing down, ending my life and the lives of the other, poor, tormented souls who thought it would be a good idea to see this movie.

The film, based off the eschatological theories (and the beliefs of your 13-year-old cousin who finds the Twilight series to be truly enthralling) that the world will end in 2012, was destined to be another end of the world megaflop. But for any of you imbeciles who still had any ounce of hope for this movie, allow me to take a dull, rusty knife, and savagely massacre any intentions to see it.

2012 actually starts in 2009, when Dr. Satnam Tsurutani (Jimi Mistry) discovers that Earth is in dire straights when neutrinos from a massive solar flare have raised the temperature its core. Egads! We're doomed with another 140 minutes of a terrible script,

unfunny end of the world puns, and deplorable dialogue.

After we undramatically find out that the world is going to pieces, the film jumps to 2010, then to 2011, and then finally 2012 in a couple of minutes, where we shift focus to John Cusack who plays struggling writer, Jackson Curtis. Curtis takes his kids, who both hate him, from his ex-wife, who, naturally, hates him, on a camping trip to Yellowstone Park, where they meet Charlie Frost (Woody Harrelson), the token absolutely insane conspiracy theorist who informs them of the world's impending destruction.

Of course, Cusack rights him off as a bearded psycho who lives in a trailer in the middle of the woods, and goes on his merry way with his unbelievably bratty kids. Only later does he realize that this lunatic was right, and he goes home to scoop up his ex-wife and her boyfriend while California experiences earthquakes and cracks like a stale cookie.

All the while the richest and most important people in the world are informed of this little conundrum and buy tickets for an exclusive future-esque



Damn you, Mayans!

Noah's Ark that is docked in China in hopes to weather the apocalypse. This brings up themes about the ethics of governmental secrecy and equal opportunity. Many outraged people overcrowded the dock and demanded (and succeeded) to be let in the vessel.

Most of the movie revolves around Cusack and his family's uninteresting, far-fetched excursion to China, and yep, you guessed it, the family bonds and unites at the end. Oh, what about his ex-wife's boyfriend? He dies, but it's not like he, or any of the other characters are endearing anyway, so whatever.

I'm trying my hardest to save you

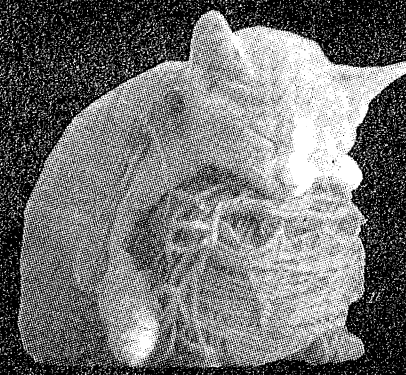
the longest 2 hours and 38 minutes of your life, but if you must see this film, bring your iPod, put on some destructive music, and just watch everything fall down; I'll admit, the \$200-260 million dollar budget provides some nice special effects.



Play America's Greatest Pastime

"Dead or Sleeping"

Every Wednesday at 1pm
060 Student Union



The Stony Brook Press:

Where dead things and sleeping things can peacefully co-exist... and then we guess which is which

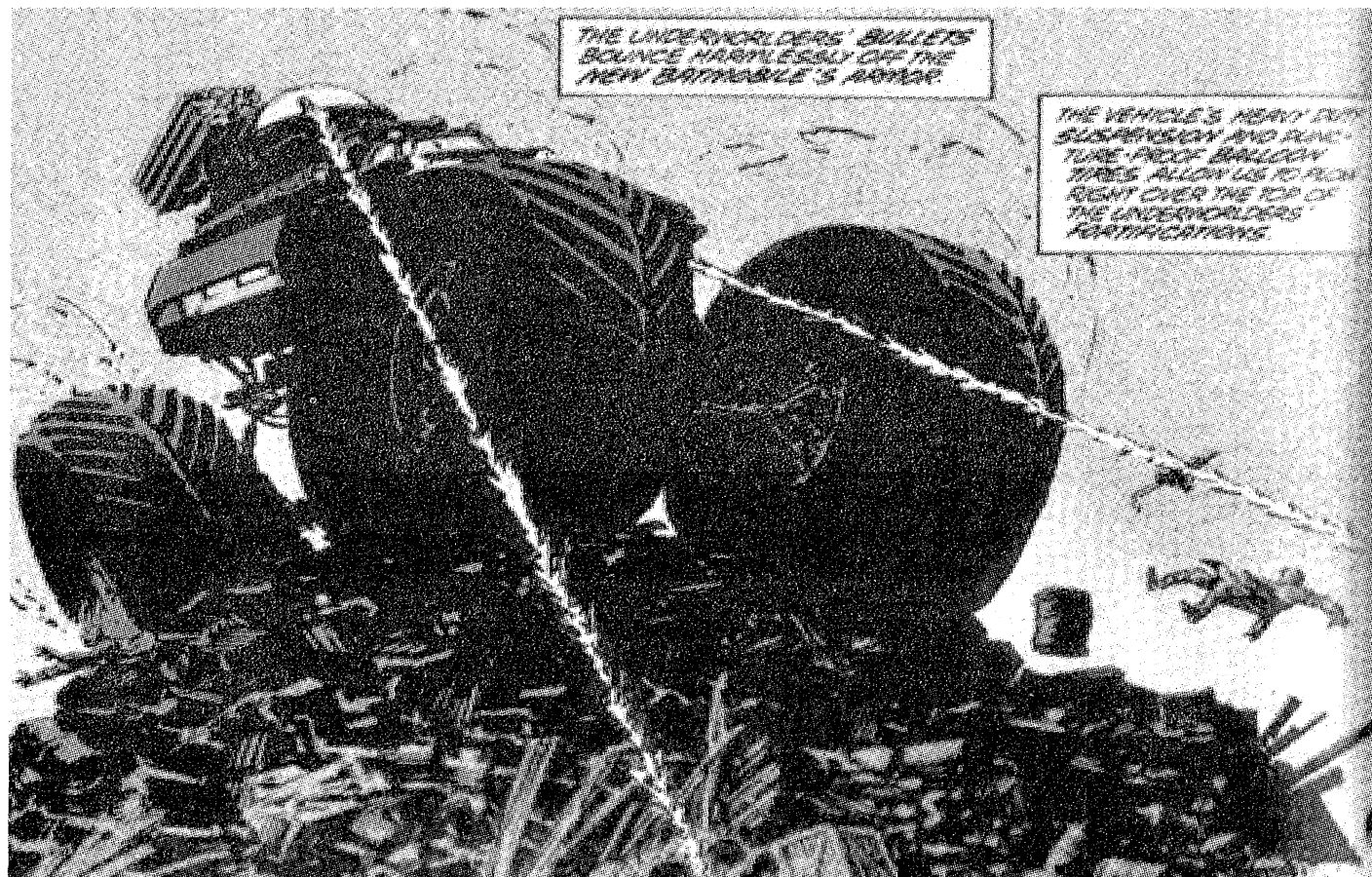
COMICS

Batman's Always Had A Cult Following

By Evan Goldaper

Since I was in third grade, there was one fact I knew for certain: Batman is the best superhero ever. Sure, he's not the most powerful, but one trait Batman has is versatility. And I don't just mean the character; I'm also referring to the franchise. Half of the time, Bats is singing duets with Neil Patrick Harris and employing Shark Repellent Bat-spray. Other times, he's stopping insane anarchists and delusional lunatics from blowing up innocent people. It's impossible not to love a character who works on so many levels.

Speaking of those levels, the recently re-released *Batman: The Cult* paperback is one of those stories that push Batman's limits as a dark, mature character. Without a doubt, this is the bloodiest, creepiest, most disturbing Batman tale I've read in a long time. The comic centers on a new villain, Deacon Blackfire, a charismatic orator who rallies Gotham's sizeable homeless population behind his messages of hope and brutal vigilante justice. Of course, Batman is suspicious, but his investigation plans fail when the Deacon forcefully pulls the hero under his mysterious control. What follows is a gruesome tale, filled with dozens of



gory shootings, axe murders, drug-induced hallucinations, and unsettling imagery as Batman desperately struggles to free himself and Gotham from Blackfire.

It's certainly an intriguing story, with lots of parallels to key historic moments. Even Robin notes the Hitler connection that you've probably already

begun to consider. The plot occasionally jumps around, dipping in and out of the past, the present, and the fictional, but this is appropriate given the fact that the protagonist spends most of the story in a haze induced by drugs and fatigue. Plus, the brutality of the story allows for Jim Starlin to explore a new side of Batman—he really has never been this vulnerable. The writing also allows for the excellent use of small panels to bolster tension. For example, a quick sentence can be spread out across as many as 30 panels, forcing the reader to take his or her time and focus on each line of dialogue. In a story like this, a continuous sense of pressure is vital, and I never once felt like it was forced.

Not everything about the plot is good, though. In particular, the fourth chapter features a few too many ridiculous moments and happy coincidences. A handful of subplots are never really developed to their full effect either. Still, I can't complain. As a whole, the plot's worthwhile.

A story like this needs good supporting artwork, which Bernie Wrightson definitely delivers. It took me a few minutes to get used to his art style, but once I did I can say that it's perfect for

The Cult. His sketchy lines coupled with Bill Wray's coloring create a terrifically gothic mood with great emphasis on light and shadow. He also draws plenty of dramatic close-ups, all of which perfectly emphasize the anguish, rage, and horror throughout the comic. I also feel quite comfortable saying no one draws better delusions and nightmares than Wrightson—they are all incredibly disturbing.

So of course, the bottom line is—would I recommend *The Cult*? If you're a Batman purist, I might actually say "no." Batman does some things in this comic that push even his ever-shrinking boundaries, and if you're the sort of person who cringes whenever this happens, don't pick it up. Also, if it hasn't been made abundantly clear, this is not a comic to get your little cousin for the holidays, regardless of how much he or she likes Batman. For everyone else, I would definitely give this book a try. It's an excellent example of how to set a mood in comic form, and has a story that won't make you lose your interest. If it piques your curiosity, you might want to pick it up before it sells out again, as it's gone through quite a few printings already.



COMICS

Russian Accents, Men, and Winter. Nice.

By Kenny Mahoney

What better way to settle into the cold December weather with a comic that has the word "winter" in it? Jesus, that's an awful lede, my J-school professors would be ashamed. But like I was saying, *The Winter Men*, written by Brett Lewis with art by John Paul Leon takes place in the frigid reaches of Russia, and is a post-Cold War memoir of a former "super soldier," Kris "the Poet" Kalenov.

For those unfamiliar, the Cold War (while not actually a "war") was the largest scale pissing-contest ever recorded between the nations of the U.S. and Russia from 1950-1980's. Think of it as having your neighbor buy a brand new television and you try to one-up him by getting an even *bigger* television. Replace "television" with "nuclear missile" and you've got the gist of it.

Most people think that all of those stories about Russian super soldiers and fancy weapons were just a bunch of propaganda that the Soviet government used to make themselves seem really awesome. Well, Kalenov and his former unit, the Winter Men, would beg to differ. Though after the Cold War was over, the government didn't have much use for that kind of thing, which left Kris and his unit out in the "cold." (Oh boy, clichés abound in this one. You can stop reading now if you like, I won't take it personally).

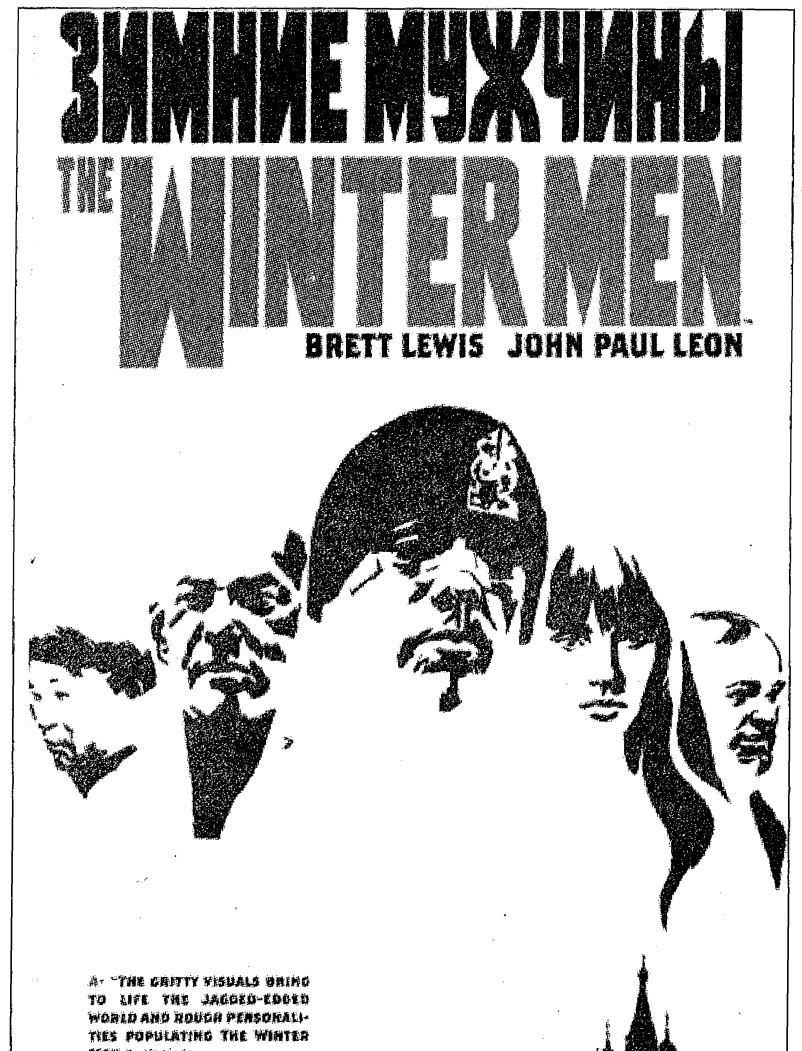
Years later, Kalenov is running around Moscow getting odd jobs from here and there trying to make ends meet, until he gets a job trying to rescue a kidnapped girl. It turns out that the case is way more complicated than it first seemed. I won't get into detail because that's what makes up the meat of this book and I'd hate to spoil it. "Plot twist" is an understatement; I'd describe it more as a "plot cluster-fuck."

Doubles are crossed, backs are stabbed, and absolutely *nothing* is what it seems to be. The ending will leave your head spinning, but you'll like it.

Kalenov's sense of crass and straight-forward manner of speaking perfectly characterizes his no-bullshit Russian thug attitude. Each page has him making another clever remark or blunt insult that will leave the reader in stitches (and more often than not, leave Kalenov literally in stitches as well).

Overall, the book has a very *noir* kind of charm about it. The earthy color-palette, dark shadows, and bold penciling are a perfect fit for the gritty underbelly of Moscow. Anyone who has seen Eduardo Risso's illustration in *100 Bullets* will know what I mean. All of your favorite *noir* tropes are present; both bullets and fists will be flying (along with men in suits of rocket-powered armor), and cryptic conversations are a dime a dozen. The conversations never get stale though, as each character, even the minor ones, bring their own unique personalities that vary the mix.

The sheer amount of text in the book can be a bit overwhelming for some, and that fact, coupled with the intricacy of the storytelling, will lead to a lot of re-reading. I found myself flipping back through to book to clarify facts on more than one occasion. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with this or that it was poorly written; just don't expect to breeze through *The Winter Men* on one lazy afternoon and understand it all.



So if you're willing to put a little bit more time and effort than your usual comic, Wildstorm's *The Winter Men* is a solid read. Be forewarned though; if you're anything like me, you'll get so far into it, you will apply your own made-up Russian accents to everything you read thereafter. It just makes everything else sound so... so badass.

Batman: The Bat and the Cat Review

By Eric DiGiovanni

Don't be fooled by the title, this is all about Barbara Gordon, the newly minted Batgirl, a baxom red-handed spitfire.

The magazine collects issues 17 to 21 of the series *Batman Confidential*. It opens with Gordon, a librarian trying to decode a notebook that belongs to her father, Commissioner Gordon. The book is stolen by Catwoman and she's on the chase. What seems at first like a case of petty theft soon turns into something much deeper.

We never find out what's in the notebook, but it takes us everywhere from a club, to a junkyard, to the rooftops of Gotham, all the way into the

headquarters of the Russian Mafia. Catwoman, in order to save a friend of hers from servitude, steals the notebook to use as a bargaining chip. Batman comes to help just as the mob takes the notebook and enlists the help of The Riddler. The final issue takes Batgirl through the bowels of Arkham Asylum, where, and I'm not making this up, she avoids confrontation with The Joker by winning a riddle contest.

What drew me to the book was writer Fabian Nicieza. His previous writing credits include *X-Men* and *Citizen V*, and was the editor in chief for the short-lived Acclaim Comics from which we get the *Turok* series of video games. However, he is best known for co-creating *Deadpool* with Rob Liefeld. So I went in expecting some witty, light hearted adventure that remains true to

the spirit of the characters. Oh, and a shit ton of inner monologues.

My only complaint is the layout. Kevin McGuire's art is really expressive, but whenever a fight scene took place, things got claustrophobic and hard to follow. Other than that, it was an enjoyable read. Would I buy it? Not at the \$13 recommended asking price. Still, it got me interested in *Batman Confidential*, so at the very least that series has a new reader.

As a side note, if you're expecting girl-on-girl action, Batgirl and Catwoman totally wrestle naked in a hedonist club. I'm just sayin'.

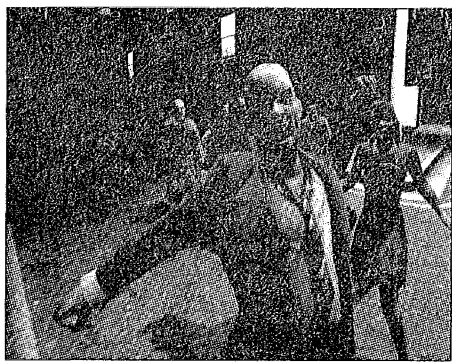


If you look closely, there's a building in this picture

Santa Needs to Kill Some Terrorists

By Mike Cusanelli

During the holidays, it's easy to be buried under an avalanche of games, most of them not worth your time or money. However, this is the time of year when, if you're lucky, a whole mess of awesome games comes out all at once like a veritable Second Coming of videogame awesomeness. I've sifted through some of the crap to try and help you have the most fragtastic, hidden blade stabbiest, cliff leapingest, amazing holiday break ever. Here are my picks,



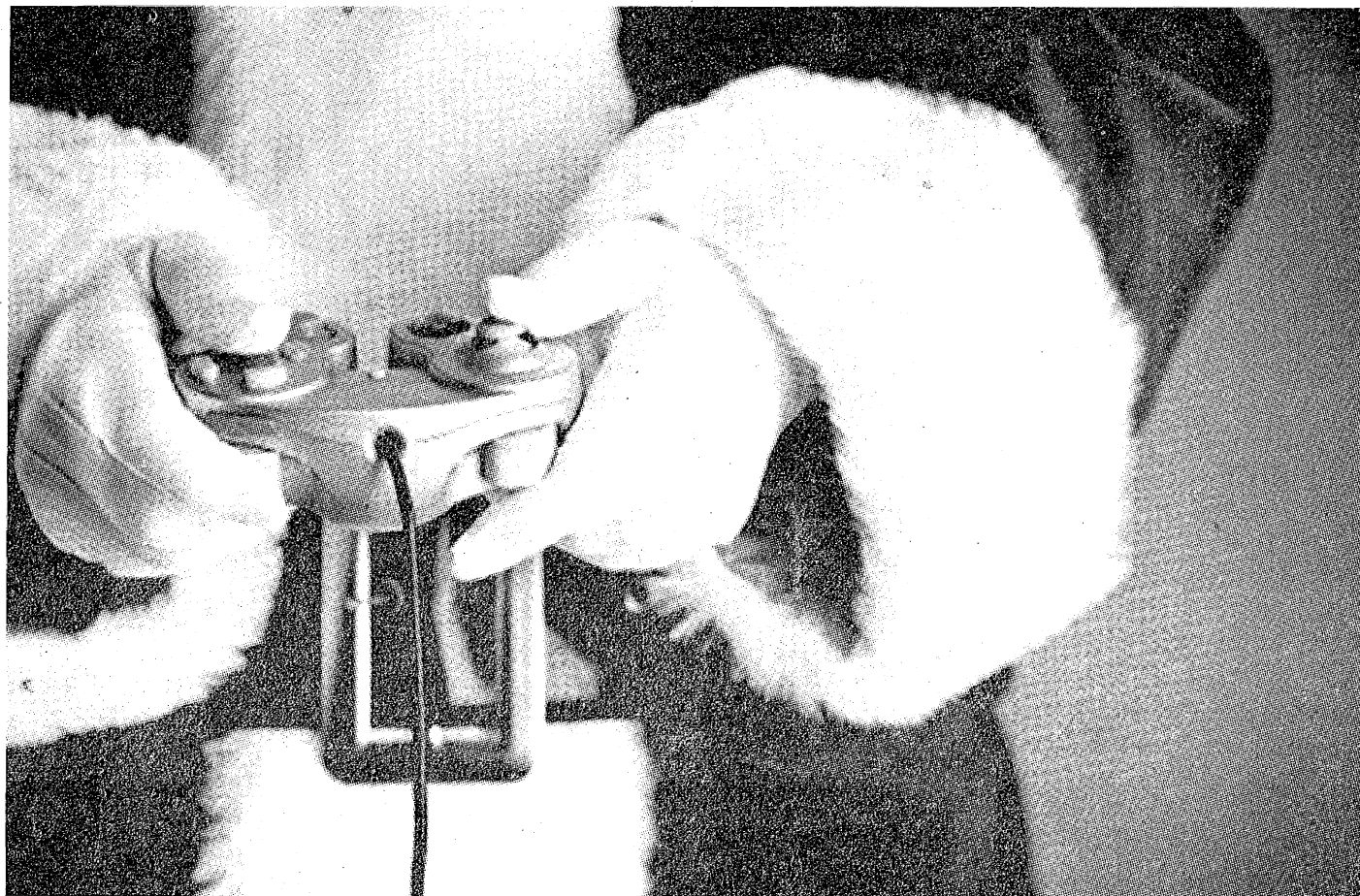
Zombie Time!

5. Left 4 Dead 2-multi

Do you have friends? Do you like zombies? Do you want to kill zombies with said friends? This is your game. *Left 4 Dead 2* is the sequel to last year's amazing zombie kill-a-thon from Valve, makers of *Portal*, *Team Fortress 2*, and *Half-Life*. With a whole new group of survivors, new weapons (including sweet melee weapons like guitars and machetes) and a promising array of new situations and environments to explore, this is your one stop shop for complete and utter zombie genocide. To top it all off, you can go online and play four on four zombie vs. survivors mode so you can make someone else's holiday season a little more violent. So toss aside the fruitcake and get ready to feast on some delicious brains with your pals.

4. Uncharted 2- PS3

This game is one of the few reasons beside *God of War 3* that I really wish I had a Playstation. *Uncharted 2* is the sequel to the smash hit game that made so many Xbox gamers drool with envy. As Nathan Drake, you can climb, shoot, and leap through the lush jungle environments of which Drake seems to be drawn. The multiplayer allows you and two friends to play cooperatively or



you can duke it out online with nine other players. As a huge *Tomb Raider* fan, this is one game that I can't wait to get my hands on. Now I just have to be friends with someone with a PS3...

3. DJ Hero-multi

If you've got the cash to plunk down on the super cool turntable peripheral for this game, this is one game you've got to play for yourself. I thought it looked pretty lame until I tried it myself; before I knew it, I felt like Grandmaster Flash in the middle of Best Buy no less. It's one of those games that looks dorky but turns out to be really original and fun for almost everyone. If you're sick of *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* games and you're craving a new music game, then check this one out. Just get ready to lay out a Benjamin and then some for all the equipment.

2. Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2-multi

This is without a doubt one of the most awesome games to come out...ever. The only reason it isn't number 1 on this list is because it's exactly what everyone was expecting. There isn't much I can say about this game that hasn't been said by so many others, so I guess I'll mention the intense cinematic single player mode, the sweet two player co-op missions, and the unparalleled online multiplayer. You'll be fragging and knifing fools in the back for months to come once you get your

hands on this masterpiece. As a proud veteran of the first *Modern Warfare* (and all the WWII games before it) this game has me trembling with anticipation. Many are calling it The Second Coming... of the *Modern Warfare* franchise, that is.

1. Assassin's Creed 2-multi

If you want to experience escapism at its very best in a multitude of ridiculously convincing Renaissance cities in Italy, then by all means, play this game. From scaling buildings and leaping across rooftops, to knifing someone in the face with your hidden blades, and chillin' with your boy Leonardo Da Vinci, this game has it all. The developers were sure to address all of the gripes that fans had for the first game, and it really shows this time around. If you're looking for a single player experience that will keep you entertained for weeks and take your breath away with its visual beauty, brutal violence, and charismatic antihero, then look no further than *Assassin's Creed 2*.

Big Lump of Coal: What Not to Buy

Unless you hate the people you're buying presents for, avoid these games like you would a person with the swine flu.

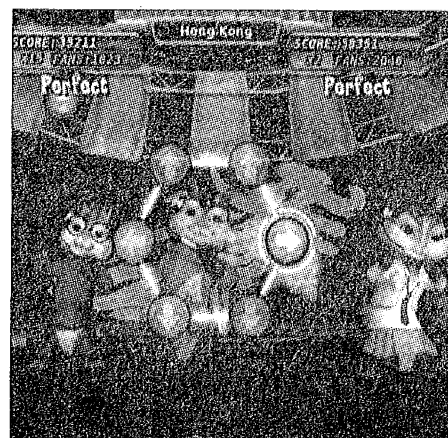
3. Tony Hawk: Skate-multi

I've only heard negative things about this game so far. It looks boring, clunky, and all around frustrating. As soon as you boot up the game, prepare

for a world of sadness and pain unlike anything you've experienced since some of the early Wii games. Unless you desperately need something large to toss on your fireplace during the cold winter nights, don't bother.

2. Alvin and The Chipmunks: The Squeakquel-Wii

Words cannot describe my utter disgust for this game. No. Just...no.



I didn't know they made evil into a video game.

3. Just Dance-Wii

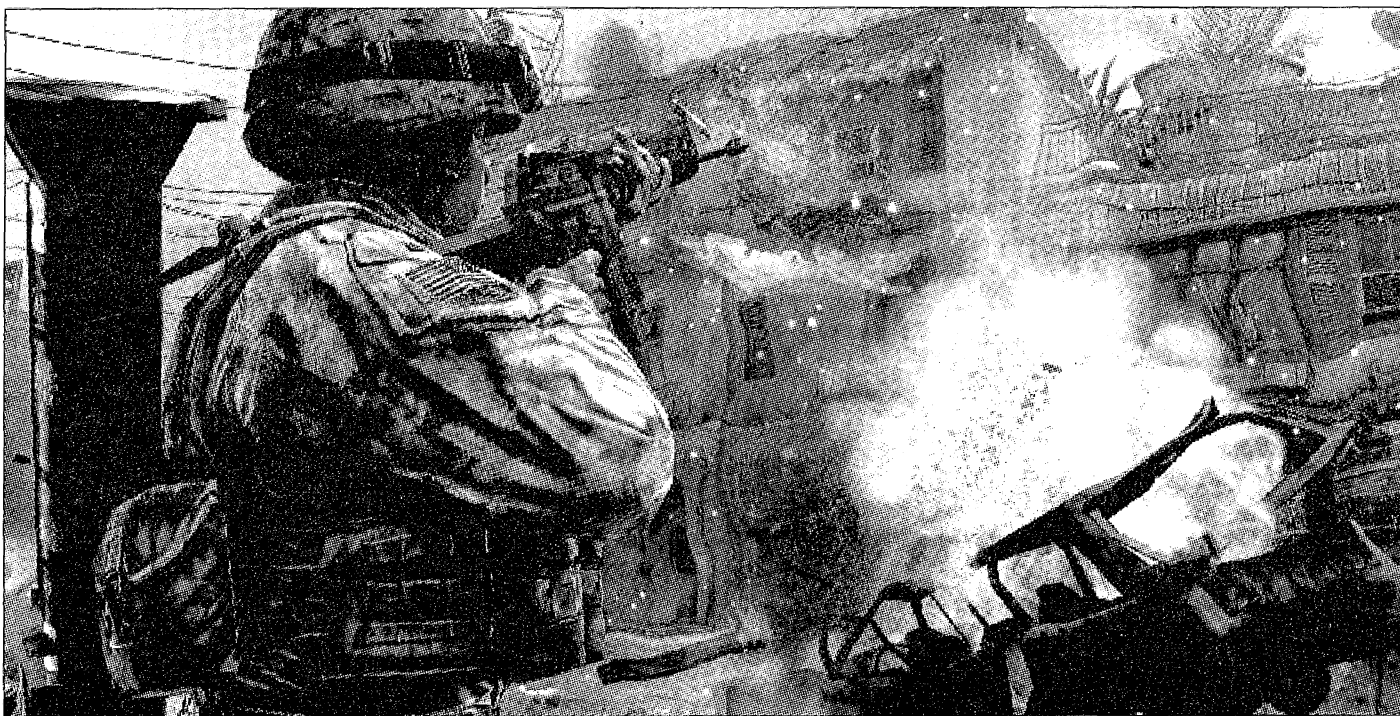
What's the fun of flailing your arms around in your living room if there's no fake instruments or flashing dance pad? All this game does is make you look like a spaz after one too many glasses of eggnog. I haven't played this game nor do I intend to, and you shouldn't either.

Collector's Edition: Pre-Order Bonuses

By Kenny Mahoney

Over the next couple of months, game companies are rolling out their big holiday releases, many of which will be released as special collector's editions offering trinkets and knickknacks to fill the shelves of your studio apartment/dorm room/parents' basement. Retailers are also getting in on the action, offering similar collectible junk when you pre-order the game from their store. Here's a list of just a few of the great titles coming out of there next few months and the treasure's you'll get with them – provided you either shell out an extra threehundred dollars or, enter a legally binding decision to purchase the game seven months in advance.

One of the most anticipated games coming out this year is the sequel to 2007's *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*, *Call of Duty 4 2*. No wait, that's not it. It's um, *Call of Modern Warfare 4 Again?* No, that's not it either. Let's just call it *Modern Warfare 2*. The game is being dumped on consumers in three different versions. There's the regular old it's-just-the-game version, the "hardened" edition, packaged in a steel case for smuggling the game through insurgent infested territory, and last but not least, the Prestige edition, which comes with everything the hardened edition has along with a set of night vision goggles. Unfortunately, orders of the game ran too high and not enough night vision goggles were produced to meet the overwhelming demand of 14



Boom, Boom, Pow!

year-old boys who desperately desire to sneak out into the bushes at night and spy on their neighbors in the shower. Developer Infinity Ward has you covered though, so in place of night vision goggles comes a long stick with a mirror taped on the end of it – perfect for looking up skirts and under bathroom stalls. Maybe it's not so useful for covert spy work, but c'mon, what the hell else were you going to do with those night vision goggles anyway, pervert?!

Bioware's latest game, *Dragon Age: Origins*, has already been released for this holiday. However, they're really banking on *Mass Effect: Modern Warfare*, the sequel to *Mass Effect* to be their

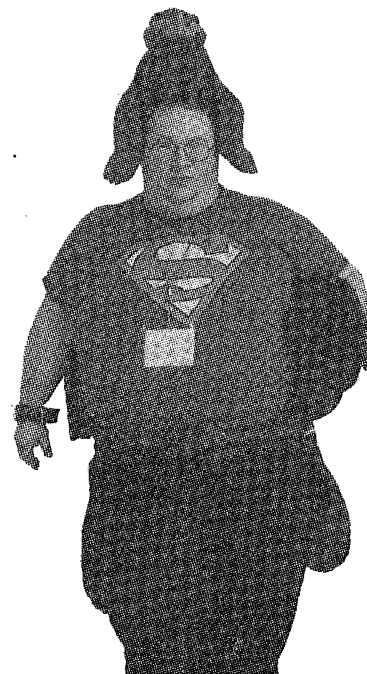
cash cow. Wait, no, sorry I got kind of confused there – it's just *Mass Effect 2*. All of these sequels start to sound the same after a while. You may or may not remember the controversy surrounding the first game; it contained a love scene (alright, it's a sex scene) in which it was possible for a human and an alien to do the nasty. Don't worry, it was a human-looking alien, not a person humping an *Aliens* alien. Of course, the great news organization Fox News fairly and balanced-ly reported on the issue, offering game journalist Geoff Keighley an opportunity to waste an afternoon getting his ass chewed-out on cable television by a pack of rabid, uninformed commentators. This time, Bioware is making it easy for all of the news networks clamoring for another excuse to make an example out of videogames as a reason for corrupting the youth of America. For *Mass Effect 2*, they're going to bundle the game with a collector's DVD featuring a real life alien sex tape. Straight from Area 51, the DVD is jam packed with director and cast commentary, deleted scenes, and interactive menus so good that I think staff writer Chris Mellides is going to write about it in the next issue.

Lots of stores are offering special pre-order bonuses in exchange for a down-payment on a future release. Valve's *Left 4 Dead 2* is no exception. However, many have feared that these pre-order bonuses will disrupt the balance of the games, giving certain players

an unfair advantage based on where they bought the game. Game retailer *LameStop* eschews the norm of offering an exclusive level or in-game costume in favor of a special code that will ensure that a player will win every single encounter they get into. Surrounded by the zombie horde? You will magically regain your health and smash through the undead like a plow through snow. Getting grief from some annoying 12 year-old? His Xbox Live account will be immediately banned, and all saved files will be corrupted. The code will be a unique, single-use scratch-off card that will work both on and offline ensuring absolute dominance over other players who clearly did not buy the game at the right place. *LameStop* – power to the ~~players~~ those who can afford it.



Flame and death are fun on a video game console.





T.V. EYE

By: Johnny Thunderballs



"The Darkside of the Quiet Beagle..."

"Vesectomy"? Let's hope those aren't reversible.

SHADES

THE

SOCIALITE



**It's time we question all of the perverts
who like kids....**



Warm my lap you hoe hoe hoe!

I'll give you a sack with my
jingling balls!

Ride 'till my pole goes
N-N-North!!!!

**The same perversion
that gets people wishing
Shades to be ghey!**



Cum get a milky-white fist-
ful of Jacko fun!

Stop that...

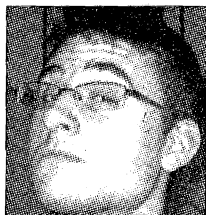


**But Shades lives free with
a vesectomy!**

A straight-edger who only does 18+

**Kids suck, kids blow but she
ain't gotta know!**

Top 40 Radio Should Die A Quick Death



Eric DiGiovanni

In this world, there lives a strange creature. Nobody really knows how it came to be; or if it can ever die. Mythology has somehow built up this beast to a Godlike status where the masses hold it in utmost reverence. The stories say that the creature sings a song, like the sirens, and it is the greatest song in the world. However, all that have seen the "legend" know that this is not the case, yet many remain deluded. Its song is nothing worthy of a lineage, but its wail drowns out all the others. And it sings



Ga Ga, oo la la!

"Top 40? The greatest 40 songs ever? Hardly, the top 40 format only refers to the best selling...of that week"

its tune everywhere, all the time. This creature I speak of, is Top 40. And it needs to die *right now*.

For those unfamiliar with the term, "Top 40" refers to the "Contemporary Hit Radio" format. CHR is mostly comprised of mainstream pop songs, but can also include softer rock songs, and R&B. The term originated in the 1950s from jukeboxes. At the time, the average jukebox could only contain 40 vinyl singles. Todd Storz, Bill Stewart and Gordon McLendon capitalized on this and built a radio format around this phenomenon, as opposed to original programming and news, which was the norm of the era. Eventually it grew, and

in 1970 Casey Kasem hosted the first *American Top 40* show that counted down the top 40 singles from the Billboard charts. It is now hosted by Ryan Seacrest. Today it refers to popular music in general.

The name itself evokes a certain arrogance that is condescending to the listener. Top 40? The greatest 40 songs ever? Hardly, the top 40 format only refers to the best *selling...of that week*. Keep that in mind, as well as the fact that someone made a shit ton of money on Snuggies, which is a completely new and innovative idea for anyone who has never thought of turning a robe backwards. Also, it assumes that every other song/band is not worth listening to. Why would you want anything but the "best" pop music? Let's play it everywhere!

For example, WBLL, a Top 40 station, is the default radio station at the gym. "Bring your MP3 player then. Crisis averted," you say. That's true, but what happens if you forget to bring it, or the batteries crap out halfway through? You're stuck with the radio. Also, the employees have no choice in the matter. I asked a few of them their

opinions. Yadira, who works at the main desk said, "I like some of this music, some of the stuff I don't like. Some of it's not really appropriate for a gym, but it's all right."

Just then, Coldplay's "Viva La Vida" came on. "So, is something like this appropriate?" I asked.

"Yeah, it is."

"Why?" Coldplay was never really known for rocking the fuck out.

"Well, the beat goes pretty fast."

One employee actually submitted a CD to play over the loudspeaker instead. "[The music] drives me crazy. I gave them a CD; they said they'd look over it for curses and stuff. That was two months ago."

Curses? The Wellness Center management is concerned about curse words in a gym populated almost entirely by college students? Even on classic rock stations I've heard maybe two objectionable phrases ("Who the fuck are you?" *Once* in The Who's "Who Are You?" and the word "faggot" was used a couple times is Dire Straits' "Money For Nothin").

Out on the floor, a few students did the smart thing and brought their own

music players. I asked a couple girls on the treadmills what they listened to. "Sometimes rap, sometimes rock, you know, whatever's on the radio," said Maya, a sophomore.

"Well, then why bring your music player? Why not just listen to the radio?" I inquired, as "Hey There Delilah" came on.

"Coldplay was never really known for rocking the fuck out."

"Well, sometimes you'll get stuff like this, ["Hey There Delilah"]."

Allowing, "Hey There Delilah" to play all the way through in a gym, or *any other location*, is a screw up. That song has a maximum of four notes. Most punk uses four notes (or chords) too, but at least they had the idea to

TOP 40 continued from page 24

speed it up. "Delilah" sounds like something Bob Dylan would write if he didn't have talent, integrity or balls. Are record companies just going around to college parties and handing out contracts to the douche that's playing "I Gave My Love a Cherry" or "Wonderwall"? Seemed to work for Jason Mraz.

In the free weight section, things are a bit different. A couple of guys deadlifting don't mind the music. "We usually don't notice it and tend to focus on the workout," said one. However, another in the group had a chance to listen to the radio while he rested. His thoughts were, "Actually, this music is pretty gay. It's a little annoying."

Like their cardio machine comrades, a few lifters had brought their music players as well. "I usually listen to hip hop," said Manny, a senior.

"Have you noticed a difference when you forget to bring you MP3 Player?"

"Yeah, I'm less motivated. [The music on the radio] doesn't really pump

"I've heard 'Poker Face' so much I want to punch Lady Gaga right in the dick."

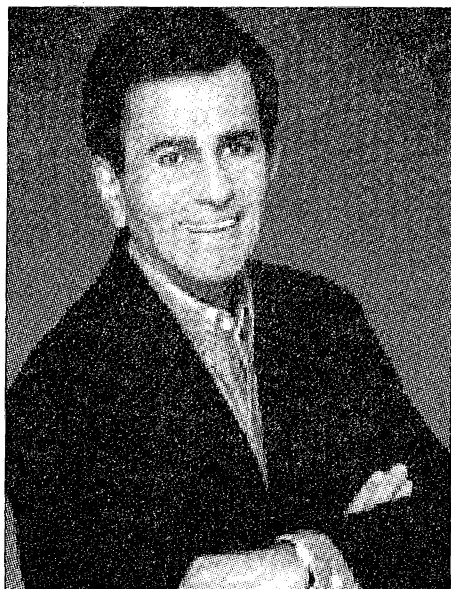
you up. They also play a lot of the same songs."

Even for those who like whatever's on, the main complaint was hearing the same song several times an hour.

But hey, it's pop music, right? They wouldn't call it that if everyone didn't love it! The notion of "pop music" is presumptuous. An entire genre of music whose sole focus is based on being popular? Lots of bands outside of the "pop" genre have legions of dedicated fans. What makes it popular? Who determines all of this? Yes, you can argue that record labels hire the best songwriters and producers to get behind "pop" music artists, making sure that more people will like it. But it's not sincere. It's not their own music. It's a product, not a song. Hell, in an interview, Miley Cyrus states that, despite what she says in "Party In The USA", she has never listened to Jay Z.

I've heard "Poker Face" so much I want to punch Lady Gaga right in the dick. I've heard "Disturbia" so many times I want to thank Chris Brown. Nickelback? Fuck, I want a full refund. I also want the three minutes I had to spend listening to your goddamn song

back. For "Love Story", I want to slit Taylor Swift's throat with a copy of *Band Hero* while reading *Romeo and Juliet*. I want to destroy every acoustic guitar ever made in the hopes that we



This is Casey Kasem.

never get another "I'm Yours" or "Hey There Delilah".

Want to know something really messed up? I actually respect these people in a way. Lady Gaga went to NYU's Tisch School for The Arts and during her tenure there she wrote dozens of analytic papers and essays. She's named after a Queen song. Taylor Swift started her own music career, going from open mic to open mic, singing country songs with a karaoke backing track. At 11, she went to Nashville with a demo tape, hoping to be picked up. She was rejected, but started writing her own songs and playing 12-string guitar at the age of 12. Rihanna was an army cadet in an ROTC program in Barbados, and only worked on her demo tape

'The Wellness Center management is concerned about curse words in a gym populated almost entirely by college students?'

during Christmas and summer breaks so that it wouldn't interfere with her schoolwork. Their music is far from the worst I've heard.

Then why do I harbor this loathing? Because they've been shoved down my throat by DJs who say "They're the best! They're the best!" and naturally, everyone buys their songs on iTunes, thus shoving the same songs even more in my face, and further limiting the music palate of others.

And every song will be driven into your skull. Think about it: each song lasts about 3 minutes. With 40 songs, that's about 2 hours of music, which means that, factoring in commercials, you'll hear the same song 10 times a day, give or take.

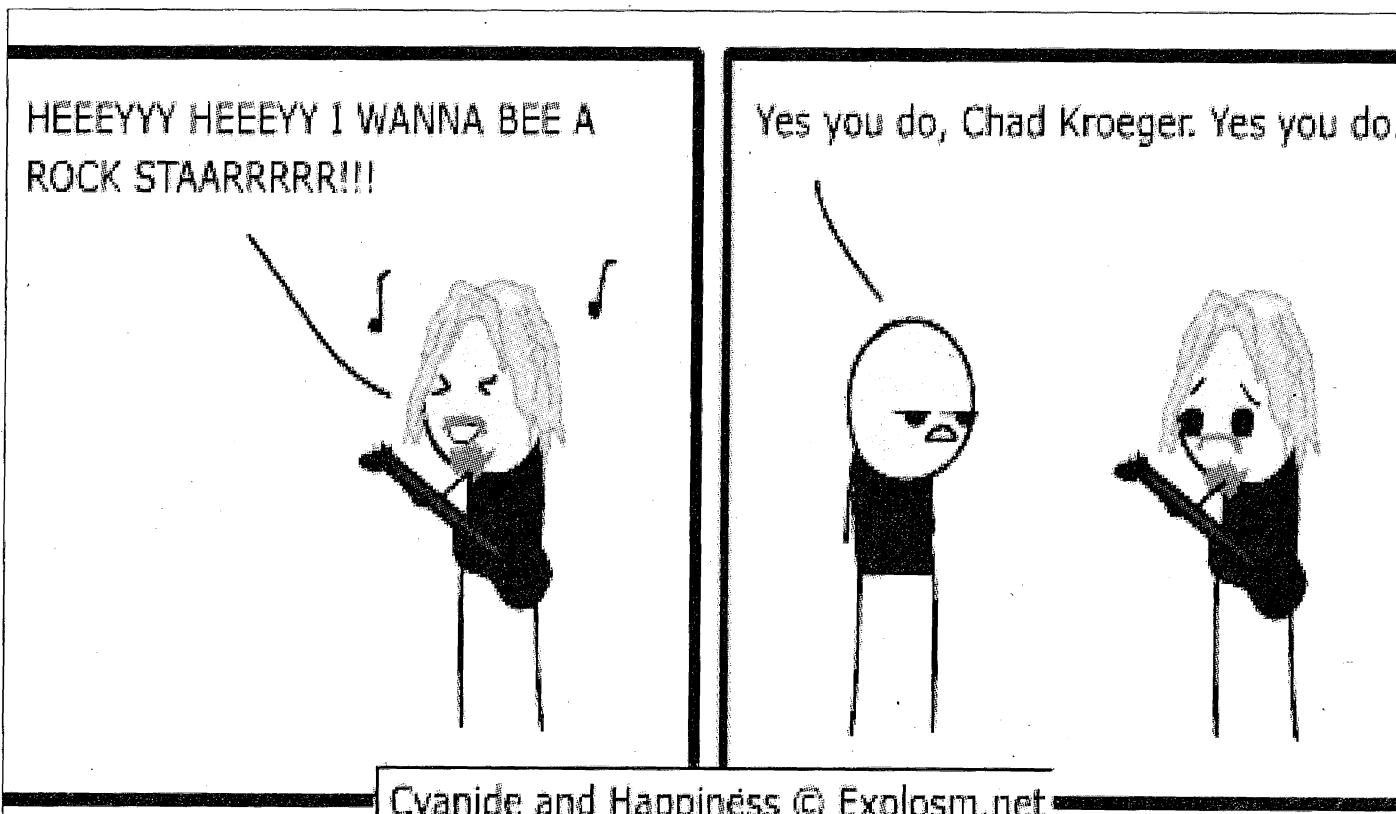
So what do I propose? First, adopt a "Recent Music" format. Take all the singles (barring excessive swearing if that's the thing you worry about) from all the labels of every genre. Then take those songs, and play them on shuffle. After 30 days, take the song out of rotation. Why is it a better alternative? One, it leaves a much bigger pool to choose from. Yeah, you will still have Pink and Britney Spears, and every other pop artist, but then again you'll also hear more acts that are strictly rock, such as

Green Day or The Hold Steady, that would otherwise be sequestered solely to the Rock Stations. Even a few popular metal bands like Mastadon and Atreyu can get a chance to catch on with the public. Second, by limiting the run to only 30 days, it will encourage ALL the songs on an album to be better, because in order for an act to stay on the radio, they would need to release a new single every month. And because songs that fall out of rotation are never heard again, listeners would have to pick up the album.

The other day in the SAC Lobby I saw a table for a fledgling group on campus called "Extreme Music Appreciation Society". The group looks to introduce people to more metal and punk bands by encouraging the Student Activities Board to get more of those bands playing shows on campus. Needless to say I signed up. If you've agreed with me at all, even if you're not a fan of metal, it's worth it to give them a look, if only to see the other side.

Better yet, turn off the radio, and turn on your mind. Get recommendations from friends, strangers, Pandora, anywhere. Go to Wikipedia, find a genre you like, and just start clicking on random bands. If you like it, download it. If not, nothing's lost. You should be the one deciding your own musical tastes, not some DJ. If we all have this attitude, then maybe we can finally slay the beast known as Top 40.

"You play the hits. You play 'em to death. A lot of people object to that, but the masses listen to it," -B. Eric Rhoads, publisher of Radio Ink, a radio industry trade publication.



Hofstra Football Follows the Dodo to Extinction

By Jason Wirchin

After 72 years, Hofstra University football is dead.

Citing high costs and fading interest among fans, officials at Hofstra University decided last week to cut their Division I football program. The move came after a two-year review of the school's budget by its board of trustees. The university weighed several options to save the program, including a shift from the Football Championship Subdivision to the Football Bowl Subdivision, but Hofstra's officials said they had to pull the plug.

"The Southeastern Conference and the Big Ten weren't calling us," Stuart Rabinowitz, Hofstra University president, told *The New York Times*. "It proved to be impossible to justify the money and upgrades that would be necessary for that jump."

With a stadium capable of seating 15,000, the Pride attracted an average of 4,260 fans this season, according to the *Times*.

Rabinowitz said the \$4.5 million spent annually on football would now be fed into academics and student

scholarships. The program's 84 players can keep their scholarships if they remain at Hofstra through graduation.

"We know it's naive to think they will all stay, but the offer is there," Rabinowitz said.

Hofstra became the second Colonial Athletic Association school to eliminate its football program within the past two weeks, joining Northeastern University in Massachusetts, which ended its program November 23.

The news came as a shock not only to the Hofstra crowd, but to athletics officials at Stony Brook University, Long Island's sole remaining Division I school.

"I was saddened to receive the sobering news that the University had decided to discontinue its football program," said Jim Fiore, Stony Brook University director of athletics. "Hofstra set the bar on Long Island for Division I college football and indirectly helped to make the Stony Brook University football program better. We will miss the rivalry and camaraderie that had developed between our respective football programs."

Stony Brook University students and alumni echoed Fiore's sentiments.

"Hofstra has produced the likes of



Administrators taking down the football budget.

[former New York Jet] Wayne Chrebet and I feel bad for that whole community," said Stony Brook University junior Patrick Jacques. "They lost more than they probably realize."

Stony Brook University alumnus Fernando Gomes said he agreed, but admitted tough times call for tough

measures. "If they have to choose whether to cut an athletic program or funds from education, then this is the more obvious choice for an educational institution," Gomes said.

None of Hofstra's other 17 athletics programs were cut, according to the *Times*.

Sweaty Men Punch, Kick. Yeah!

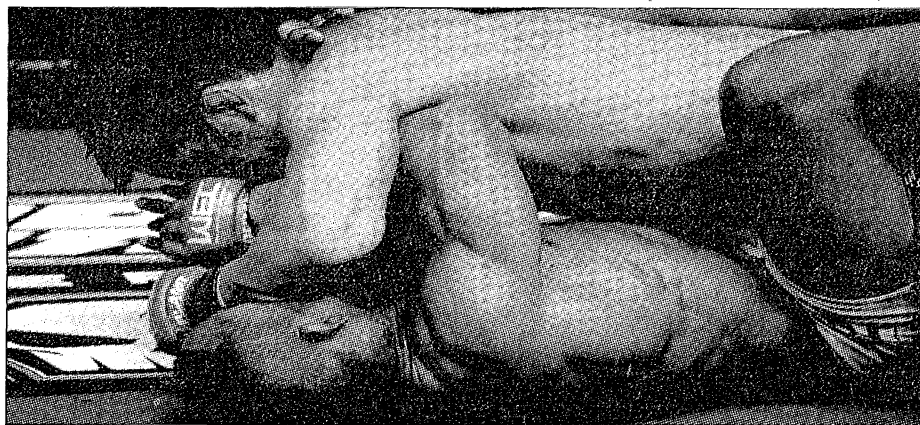
By Matthew Maran

On December 2nd, *The Ultimate Fighter* featured the final four fights before the finale. In the final two quarter-final fights James McSweeney beat Matt Mitrione and Marcus Jones defeated Darrill Schoonover.

Mitrione had been complaining about his head hurting and possibly not feeling well enough to fight, even going as far as to claim that he might have swelling of the brain. It was rumored that Kimbo Slice would be the one to fill in if Mitrione canceled, but Kimbo could not fight due to arthritis in his knees and Mitrione ended up fighting anyway, revealing that the head injury was all a ploy to get into the head of his opponent, James McSweeney, who won the fight by first round submission.

Marcus Jones, who is a massive six-foot six-inch 265-pound former first round NFL draft pick, was looking to hurt Matt Mitrione when it was revealed that Jones' teammate, Scott Junk, was injured in his fight with Mitrione,

and there was a chance he would never fight again. Junk ended up being okay, and Jones was held back from attacking Mitrione. Marcus Jones would go on to beat Darrill Schoonover in his quarter-



Hot.

final fight by first round knockout.

Marcus Jones has been referred to as "Big Baby" by much of the other cast due to him being extremely sensitive and being a very gentle giant. Jones' coach Quinton "Rampage" Jackson said, "Marcus is the nicest person you will

ever meet, but he'll kill you!"

In the semifinal matchups Roy Nelson defeated James McSweeney by technical knockout and Brendan Schaub scored a shocking victory over Marcus

Marcus Jones came into his fight against Brendan Schaub with at least a 25-pound weight advantage and an edge in reach. Jones took Schaub down quickly and began the fight the same way he did in his previous matchup against Schoonover. However, unlike Schoonover, Schaub was able to maneuver more effectively from his back. When Jones moved to full mount, Schaub pushed the massive Jones off and brought the fight back to their feet. Then Schaub proceeded to knock down the big man with a huge right hand and pounced on him to secure the upset technical knockout win.

On *The Ultimate Fighter*, there are usually a few fighters who impress UFC officials, and they are given a chance to fight on the season finale—Matt Mitrione fought Marcus Jones, and defeated him by knockout. Withstanding the entire crowd booing him, Mitrione exposed Jones' weak stand up game and knocked him out ten seconds into the second round.

Kimbo Slice made his long awaited UFC debut in the finale against Houston Alexander. The fight was expected

Jones. Nelson grounded McSweeney and crucified him, a position where the opponent's arms are pinned down leaving the head exposed. Nelson then dropped several unanswered blows, similar to the way he beat Kimbo, leading to the referee calling for the bell.

Fight Club: Thursday Night Nerf Fight

By Eric DiGiovanni

It's never easy being a soldier. There's a lot of "hurry up and wait". The waiting is the hardest part, especially when you know there's going to be a siege. "Defend the base!" they say. Why? What's so important about an empty room that we just can't give it to the enemy? Why are they the enemy? Oh, right. Because they say so.

I was sent to the patrol the area, to see where the enemy was coming from. Luckily, I listen to Green Day, so I knew I needed to know my enemy. As I crouched into position, I began to wonder if they knew why they were fighting.

Just then, I heard clicks coming from the other hall. It was an ambush! Fortunately, or unfortunately, if you were a loved one of those poor bastards, we stopped them dead in their tracks. My next mission had us turning the tables on them and infiltrating their base. We were a squad of four, but we were the toughest, most unholy bastards the battlefield had ever seen. The plan went like this: Alpha team would head down first, and draw fire. Then, a minute later, I would take the elevator downstairs, while my partner went down the stairs. That minute felt like a lifetime. The elevator came and my finger was getting a little trigger happy. It was clear, and Bravo team began our descent. The elevator ride to hell left me off but a few feet from our goal. As those doors opened, I stroked the trigger ever so

slightly. Not a soul around. I had visual of my partner, and we bolted toward the door. Neither of us got shot, but Alpha team was long gone.

"Perfect infiltration!" shouted my partner. "That was just like Call of Duty!" Poor sumbitch didn't know what he was talking about. Nobody has to

tor would have at least intimidated or something. Yet again, I heard the calls of "Oh, shit!" and gunfire in the background. They looked over to me, I ran away. You might call me a coward, but hero would be more appropriate. The police left the girl out in the open to deal with my teammates, so I came

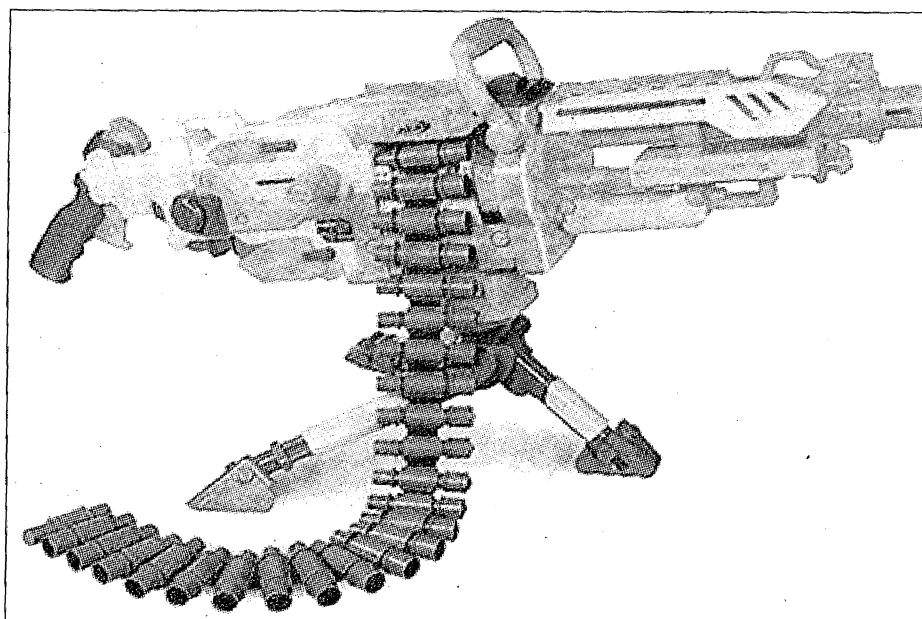
me, dying on the floor. Every little decision I made, I immediately regretted, because it brought me right here to this point: standing over a dead girl I don't even know for doing the right thing.

She got up and said, "That was a great game, guys!" I helped her pick up some of the Nerf darts off the floor. Everyone gathered around. We would have went another round, but most had to leave.

This was more or less what happened Thursday afternoon in the Union basement. While these Nerf skirmishes aren't an official club, it will be as of next semester. Tom, one of the combatants, originally started a club two years ago, but it petered out after he graduated. "Like a cancer that has gone into remission," he says, "it came back."

As far as equipment goes, you can bring your own, and a couple guys brought a whole cache of guns. None of the weapons are modified, but I did see a guy who made his own riot shield. There were guns modeled after Tommy guns, standard pistols, and even one of those new ones that start out as a rifle, but also has a detachable pistol on top for when you make your last stand.

This is just one of those examples where, if you're an opportunist, you find some really cool stuff. It was fun, and it really takes you back to the days of being a kid when your gun was a measure of how much your parents loved you, and not a penis compensation device.



This kid's mom loves him very much

mourn a pile of polygons.

Later, I was hired to assassinate the sole witness in my contractor's trial. We were to ensure that she saw Death's cold hard stare again. Once more, I was on scout duty. I patrolled up and down the empty hallways as they stood by the room where she'd be secure. You'd figure a man as powerful as our contrac-

tor would have at least intimidated or something. Yet again, I heard the calls of "Oh, shit!" and gunfire in the background. They looked over to me, I ran away. You might call me a coward, but hero would be more appropriate. The police left the girl out in the open to deal with my teammates, so I came

Pfft...

My gun misfired. The only friend I had in the world betrayed me. I tried it again. I shot her in the back as she ran away.

You should have seen the look of sheer terror in her eyes, as she looked at

ARTICLE continued from page 26

to be a slugfest. However, in the first round Alexander stayed away from Kimbo and ran around in circles only engaging by throwing leg kicks from afar.

Finally, in the second round Kimbo scored several impressive takedowns showing a much-improved wrestling game. There were opportunities for Kimbo to go for a submission, but it still appears he needs to improve his jiu-jitsu if he wants to be a complete fighter.

The third round was more like the first round. There was not as much engaging, but Alexander landed a devastating leg kick that took Kimbo off his feet. Kimbo scored a takedown, but the referee stood them up when Kimbo was not working.

The fight was expected to end early with a knockout, but it went to a decision and the judges scored it unani-

mously in favor of Kimbo Slice. The big story of the fight was that Kimbo Slice did not fight like a street brawler, he fought like a mixed martial artist.

Jon Jones is considered one of the rising stars in the UFC light heavyweight division. He is 22 years old and holds a 9-0 professional mixed martial arts record. He fought Matt Hamill and appeared to win the fight by technical knockout. However, when he had Hamill grounded, he dropped an illegal elbow. Jones was warned by referee Steve Mazzagatti and deducted a point. At this point it became clear that Hamill was unable to continue and the fight was ended.

This is where it got interesting. Despite the fact that Jones completely dominated the fight and had dropped numerous unanswered blows including several legal elbows, Mazzagatti disqualified Jones due to the illegal elbow.

Although I prefer not to be biased in my mixed martial arts articles I must vent my frustrations for Steve Mazzagatti. The UFC does not pick their referees. They are chosen by athletic commissions. Mazzagatti has a history of making bad calls and being criticized by high profile fighters Brock Lesnar and Kenny Florian. The President of UFC, Dana White has said, "This fucking guy shouldn't even be watching MMA on TV, let alone refereeing it. I think he's the worst ref in the history of any fight business, ever. He's horrible."

Well I think White is being too polite. I am recommending for Jon Jones' next fight, he gets locked in the octagon with Mazzagatti and no referee (which is probably about as effective as if he were refereeing). And if not, lock me in there with him. I'd like to get my hands on this fucking idiot and rip him limb from limb. I would gouge his eyes out

and blind him, but I don't think I can do any more damage to his already piss poor eye sight. This motherfucker must have been the lookout for Pearl Harbor. He makes me want to create a research department dedicated to discovering a way to conduct post-natal abortions. Steve Mazzagatti is proof that the Three Stooges had an inbred illegitimate child and he is the most worthless person in sports.

In the main event Roy "Big Country" Nelson defeated Brendan Schaub by first round KO to become the newest Ultimate Fighter winner and landed a six-figure UFC contract.

Nelson scored an early takedown on Schaub, and Schaub impressively got out of it and brought the fight back up to their feet. They were both trading hands well until Nelson caught Schaub just behind the ear with a big right hand the Season 10 Ultimate Fighter.



Death Egg Zone



THE STONY BROOK

COMRADE

FALL 2009

**Local and National
Duma Updates**

**Tribute to Father of
All Turkmen People**

**Poster of Glorious
Leader of the Month**

**Socialism. This Holiday
Season's Best Gift**

Editorial Board

Fuckmeister Supremo
Andrew Fraley

Minister of Editing
Najib Aminy

Associate Editorisky
Natalie Crnosija

Business Venture Capitalist
Erin Mansfield

Production Fucktion Manager
Tia "Quark Ate My Soul" Mansouri

Nudes Editors
Raina Bedford
Laura Cooper

Truth Editor
Ross Barkan

SmArts Editor
Doug Cion

Sports Editor City
Jason Wirchin

Photo Manipulators
Eric DiGiovanni
Roman Sheydvasser

Koppi Editurs
Kelly Yu
Katie Knowlton
Iris Lin

Webmeister Supremo
Roman Sheydvasser

Audiomeister Supremo
Josh Ginsberg

Ombloodsport
James Laudano

Minister of Archives
Alex H. Nagler

Layout Design by
Jowly Romano

Staff

Kotei Aoki	Matthew Maran
Vincent Barone	Chris Mellides
Laina Boruta	Justin Meltzer
Matt Braunstein	James Messina
Michelle Bylicky	Steve McLinden
Tony Cai	Samantha Monteleone
Alex Cardozo	Roberto Moya
Lionel Chan	Daniel Murray
Mike Cusanelli	Frank Myles
Caroline D'Agati	Chris Oliveri
Krystal DeJesus	Ben van Overmeier
Joe Donato	Laura Paesano
Brett Donnelly	Grace Pak
Lauren Dubinsky	Tim Paules
Nick Eaton	Rob Pearsall
Michael Felder	Kelly Pivarnik
Caitlin Ferrell	Aamer Qureshi
Vincent Michael Festa	Kristine Renigen
Joe Filippazzo	Dave Robin
Rob Gilheany	Jessica Rybak
David Knockout Ginn	Joe Saldia
Evan Goldaper	Henry Schiller
Jennifer Hand	Natalie Schultz
Stephanie Hayes	Jonathan Singer
Andrew Jacob	Nick Statt
Liz Kaempf	Rose Slupski
Jack Katsman	Marcel Votlucka
Samuel Katz	Alex Walsh
Yong Kim	Brian Wasser
Rebecca Kleinhaut	Matt Willemain
Frank Loiaccono	Mari Wright-Schmidt
Kenny Mahoney	Jie Jenny Zou

The *Stony Brook Comrade* is published fortnightly during the academic year and twice during summer session by *The Stony Brook Comrade*, a student run non-profit organization funded by the Student Activity Fee. The opinions expressed in letters, articles and viewpoints do not necessarily reflect those of *The Stony Brook Comrade* as a whole. Advertising policy does not necessarily reflect editorial policy. For more information on advertising and deadlines call (631)632-6451. Staff meetings are held Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. First copy free. Additional copies cost fifty cents.

The Stony Brook Comrade
Suites 060 & 061
Student Union
SUNY at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, NY 11794-3200
(631) 632-6451 Voice
(631) 632-4137 Fax
Email: editors@sbspres.com

editorials

The Day the World Cries

In the coming weeks, the World will grieve over the third anniversary of the death His Excellency Saparmurat Niyazov, the first president of Turkmenistan and Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers. Turkmenbashi, leader of all Turkmen, is most remembered as the Father of all the Turkmen people.

While western propaganda tainted Turkmenbashi's legacy as a self-loathing dictator, Niyazov worked on sharing the peace and love he enjoyed in his life by renaming the months of the year to family members and changing the term bread with the name of his mother. Truly, His Excellency's goal was to better the Turkmen people by sharing the people he loved with everyone.

Niyazov had become more than a leader in modern times, but a figure, revolutionary, and father for all future rightists. He had targeted all the important things that troubled Turkmenistan and introduced bold initiatives such as



The Supreme

the ban of lip synching during concerts, the limit of one dog or cat in the great Ashbagat City, and banning the use of make up on television arguing that Turkmen women were already beautiful enough appear on television.

What made Niyazov stand out was his emphasis on the social aspect of government, from living to even dying. His Excellency ordered all the hospitals to close so the sick would come to the capital to seek care—he was a clear visionary of what healthcare should be. In fact, the great father had such an influence on the state of medical affairs that doctors took oath under him and abolished the Hippocratic oath.

The list of accomplishments can go on and on, but with his auto-biographical book, the *Ruhnama*, and his style of governing, Turkmenbashi is a figure that all rightists should look to.

It is because of this that on every December 21, the world cries.

Unionize Stupid!

Workers of the World....unite? United States' unemployment rate pushed passed 10 percent this month. Where were the unions, keeping members in their homes? In the shadows of an America where unionization has become a foul word and being named a union member has become a crude epithet...

In the glorious days of grimy proletarian struggle in America, unions muscled through and demanded higher living standards for their workers. It was the Great Depression that brought workers together to fight for their collective benefit. Then, workers realized that each individual worker's struggle

was common and shared. They, therefore, needed to work together to solve the problems of their age. The first step was realizing that in order for a worker to work to save himself, he would have to save his fellow workers as well.

Though it may have seemed ridiculous to the leaders of that era to listen to demands of blue-collar workers, those captains of industry were forced to give into the demands of their workers for fair treatment.

Perhaps if American workers had such a strong, united voice just a few years ago and were able to argue for fair treatment from CEOs, corporations would not be able to coldly eliminate

workers without consequence.

Unions have lost the political might that put them in American homes. Unions no longer are able to battle for its members' rights without prompting a McCarthy-esque knee-jerk rejection from corporate America.

How bad does life in America have to get before people turn to unions to fight for them? Do we need mass homelessness, unemployment, drought and famine? Americans need to unlearn their anti-unionism and realize that if it worked for their grandparents, it could work for them too.

Write for The Comrade!

Meetings Every Wednesday at 1PM, Union Building 060

Local Duma Fails People

By Piotr Lambroski

In a historic decision by the state of New York Duma, a bill that would have not only allowed but actively encouraged gay marriage has been struck down. A forceful attack on the community of homosexuals, which makes up an embarrassingly large portion of the liberal constituency, New York has symbolically stepped down from its position as a friend of the Western Left. The USSR stands behind them proudly, for limiting the rights of the workers is a sign that the United States is one step closer to true socialism. Besides, who knows what horrors would truly be faced should the homosexuals begin to marry.

In a two man household, there would be no spouse to do cooking or cleaning. The home would be dirtier than the filth ridden hovel called England. The stink would rise high into the air, a stink we would not have experienced since the time of Churchill, a man with most infamous hygiene habits. In a two woman household, even more problems would arise. There would be no income and with their weak womanly desires the couple would raise too many children. More children

than Mother Russia herself could possibly raise. Cities would be overrun with breast milk and placenta, society would crumble below the weight of dirty diapers. Not to mention the dangerous precedent this sets for the future. Just as when Stalin took us to war it led to the murder of thousands of comrades, it was as if a lesbian mother bear had decided to eat her young. Should the homosexuals begin marrying then what is next? Will people begin to marry animals? Probably. Will the homosexual marriages lead to more and more homosexuals infiltrating the homes of western civilization? Definitely. But there is still the greatest danger of all, genocide. Stalin will rise from the dead and once again begin systematically decimating our fellow socialists.

Premiere Patterson may be blind, but he had the foresight to allow this bill to reach the duma and be denied. His enhanced senses of hearing and touch aid him in guiding New Yorkers through these dark times of potential social progress. After the historic California vote last year, only 48 more states must deny the homosexuals, then we can finally be safe. It won't be long before Comrade Obama sees this and joins our righteous cause as a fellow socialist. The decision would be perfect

except for one taint of injustice.

The USSR always strives to fight for the workers, yet the state of New York has left us torn. By insisting on using a language as inferior as English, the state of New York has both struck a blow to the homosexual community and simultaneously stifled workers. The bill strictly prohibits the packing of fudge, leaving many hard working chocolate

warehouse employees without work. Through additions to the law the foolish lawmakers have not only put fudge packers out of business, but the clam diving industry is reporting record losses and the competitive carpet eating industry is facing a massive decline. Just what their economy needed, another win for communism!



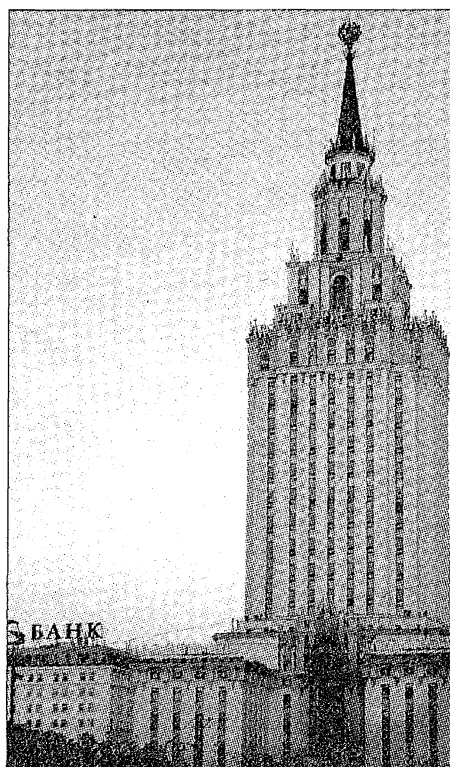
Provincial Governor Paterson is blinded by the truth. And literally. Seek socialized health care.

The Eighth International Has Found a Home

By Natalia Markovna Chernoshovsky

The University Senate held a proletarian meeting on December 4 regarding the plans for a campus hotel. Professors and students questioned the wisdom of the establishment of a conference center on campus. Fools with their environmental concerns! Now, we finally have a locale for the Eighth International Socialist Labor Congress. In these times, when doubt in the socialist system abounds, the administration, like a crafty spider, has assured the campus that it will reap capitalistic benefits from the building of a 135-room hotel. Seduced by the siren song of wealth and prosperity, the bourgeois populace remains ignorant of Stony Brook University's true red agenda.

Since 1935, the International Socialist Labor Congress has been without a home. Too long have we been unable



Hotel Leningradskaya

to discourse on the pressing issues of the day. Too long has it been since we had rousing speeches, propelling us into the glorious future. Too long has it been since we made plans as a united corps of true believers in the movement.

Now, we have a base. We have roots. We have a mighty platform from which to address the proletariat. We have a place where we may form a fountain from which a new era may spring.

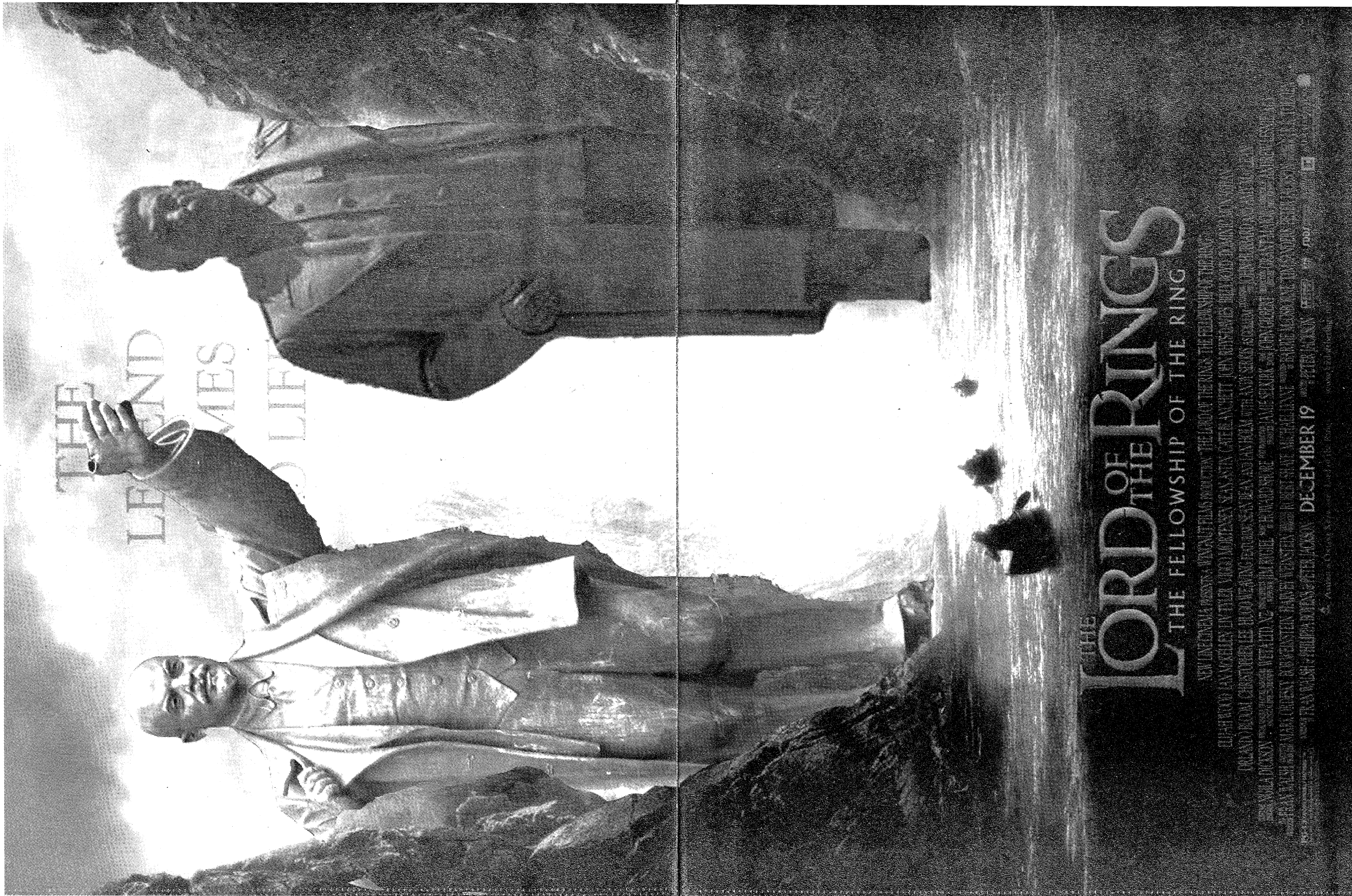
Brothers and Sisters, this is not the time to think of animals and greenery. These bourgeois predilections are remnants of the past. The luxury of greenery and natural landscapes, preserved for the greed-glazed eyes of the aristocracy, left many a worker cold, without firewood. The enjoyment of wild animals prancing about and the resulting semblance of Arcadian idealism are eternally selfish. The animals should be converted into food for the masses. The conversion of the forest into a conference space and lodging for orators and

propagandists is the most utilitarian usage of the space. The displaced animals should be caught and processed into nourishment for the students, our soon-to-be indoctrinated leaders of tomorrow.

Stony Brook University has lost its strain of youth activism. There are no Young Pioneers and no youth groups dedicated to the veneration of the glorious Stalin. The university administration is clearly trying to inject this impetus to promote utopian ideas into its students. The new conference center will bring great thinkers to our humble campus so the age of progress may begin again.

The glorious days of the International Socialist Labor Conferences will be relived. The age will be recreated but not repeated.

All this will be accomplished through the hotel and its development into the arena of new age socialism.



THE
LEND
LES
LIF

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

MVINECEM PASO VON THASOCTIA THE LADY THE WAS THE FELLAND THE...
 ELPHRAD PAXHELY IN THE VODMPTENY SANASTA CAERANETT JOHN RAYENBES THE LADY MONTA...
 ORANDYON LERSTU PER LE HUGWEANG PAKOW SA AN AN AN HAN WITH AN AND AND AND...
 SAMILA DIXON VERALINE THE RING...
 DECEMBER 19

analytics

The Thorn in Every Empire

By Alex Nagler

The pathetic Americans seek to dig up the bones of the Graveyard of Empires to move the massive boulder that crushed Darius, Alexander, Britannia, and my own beloved Mother Russia. They seem to have learned nothing. This idiocy amuses me, thinking they can "win" Afghanistan. Afghanistan is an unwinnable quagmire, the death knell of many an empire before this imperialistic youngling. Whether they send 30, 40, 50, or 100,000 troops, nothing is winnable in that part of the world. It has been eternally cursed to suffer the ignominies of faltering plan after fumbling crusade.

Let us look at it this way: the Soviet Union, when it attempted to take Afghanistan, was far more prepared to take on the problem. It was at the zenith of its power. We did not know at the time that we would soon be declining, but then we had everything. Afghanistan would be another jewel in the crown of our expansion and allow us access to further resources and a gateway to contest the American influence on a sphere they had no rightful claim to be involved with.

Subsequently, in a measure to defeat us, the United States created its own worst enemy. As Americans have seen in their film *Charlie Wilson's War* with the impeccable Philip Seymour Hoffman, the United States clandestinely funded the Taliban with weapons, sup-



plies, and everything they would need to halt the oncoming Soviet advances. It worked. Too well. When we fell, the Taliban turned on their American backers and attempted to govern the ungovernable through the strict moralistic codes of Sharia. Who would have thought only a decade later, they'd become America's enemy?

I did. I know too well what happens when cells are planted and left to their own devices. Do you think I did not try to warn Stalin of what would happen when all of the international cells he planted were left to their own accord?

What would happen when an organization trained and armed by a major power decided they felt they had enough experience to forage out into the world on their own? Disaster happens, that is what. Look at what has happened to the former Soviet territories when we have left. Disaster, that's what happened.

Nothing can ever flourish in Afghanistan. It is as if the land's soil has been permanently sewn with salt. Afghanistan is the Grave of Empires. You go in, but you do not emerge the same. Obama will learn this the hard

way when Uncle Sam's tombstone emerges from the poppy fields.

There is no escape from the death-trap. Once you have entered, you cannot leave. Even immediate withdrawal will not stop the disaster that is to come. The Americans can only hope that their own jingoistic propaganda is true and that they are the favorite of the creature they call God and the natives refer to as Allah. Maybe that creature will allow America to succeed where absolutely everyone else has failed. InshAllah.

Dear Capitalist Pigs, Welcome to the Healthcare Party

By Piotr Lambroski

Dear Yankee Dirt Eaters,

It has come to the attention of the mighty USSR that your freedom loving lawmakers have decided to reform your backwards healthcare system. Finally, for years the glorious Union has looked upon your weak nation with eyes of pity. Your citizens pay tens of thousands of rubles for your health services. While here in the everlasting Republic our people have known the wonders of free healthcare for years upon years. You capitalist fools may brag about your surgeries and antibiotics, but at what cost? In this great motherland any citizen can get the finest in herbs and leech reme-



dies, mother Russia knows we do not need fancy pills. Capitalist pill poppers are making the west weak like sick oxen. And a sick ox must be shot for the glory of the motherland. So Comrade Obama, you may think yourself a socialist, but the Soviet Union laughs at your false socialism. Ha! You will never live up to the great Lenin's legacy. Lenin single handedly provided healthcare to every Soviet citizen, one at a time. His health services changed society and revolutionized our people's lives. Of course this is not surprising to me and should not be to you either. For as we both know, in Soviet Russia, healthcare reforms you.

Sincerely,
Piotr Lambroski, CCCP

Guide to the World's Remaining Communist Nations!!!

By Professor Laudano

Cuba

Motto: "Come visit our giant island paradise, located just a few miles south of Florida. PSYCHE! Haha, you will never know the beauty and grandeur of our beaches, forests and massive fleets of 1950's American-made cars."

Main Exports:

- 1) Cigars.
- 2) Superior baseball players.
- 3) Phoned in socialist Che Guevarra t-shirts worn by Williamsburg hipsters.
- 4) Bananas.
- 5) Banana boats carrying desperate migrants.

Fun Facts:

1) Former Cuban leader Fidel Castro tried out, unsuccessfully, for the Washington Senators in the 1950's. Apparently he isn't as good as Cuban expatriates Jose Contreras, Rafael Palmeiro, Orlando Hernandez, and, of course, Rey Ordonez.

2) Contrary to popular belief, Bad Boys 2 was not filmed here.

3) Cuba has many underground limestone caves! Fun!

Vietnam

Motto: "We won. You lost. It wasn't a tie. Get real"

Main Exports:

- 1) Shrimp.
- 2) Shrimp cocktail.
- 3) Fried shrimp.
- 4) Coconut shrimp.
- 5) Gumbo shrimp.
- 6) Prostitutes.

Fun Facts:

- 1) The currency is called a Dong
- 2) The currency is called a Dong.
- 3) The. Currency. Is. Called. A. Dong.
- 4) Literacy rate in Vietnam is 94 percent.
- 5) The currency is called a dong.
- 6) In 1985, the dong experienced serious inflation leading to the now popular Vietnamese folk saying, "If your dong experiences inflation for more than three hours please contact your doctor immediately as this may be the sign of a more serious side-effect."

North Korea

Motto: [Censored by People's Organization for the Protection of National Information]

Main Exports:

- 1) Diplomatic Tension

Fun Facts:

We'll let the FAQ from North Korea's official webpage do the talking:

Q: Can I travel to North Korea as a backpacker?

A: No. You must travel as a group only, even if you are the only participant you must be with Korean guides at all times.

Q: I hear that North Koreans are very poor. Is this true?

A: By international standards, DPRK citizens enjoy a very high standard of living. In Socialist Korea, the state guarantees all citizens the right to quality healthcare, education, stipends for the disabled, retirement pensions and access to recreational facilities, as well as a wide array of other state-supported services. Indeed, DPRK citizens are guaranteed many provisions that are uncommon in many developed capitalist societies, which are home to real poverty. Unlike in many countries of the capitalist world, the DPRK is a state free of homelessness, unemployment, prostitution and starvation.

Q: I've heard that everybody starves in North Korea. How is the food situation?

A: It is no secret that there was a crisis during the mid 1990's in the DPRK. Because of the collapse of the Socialist market, and due to the isolation caused by US embargo and sanctions, the country suffered a difficult period. A natural disaster caused floodings, and combined with the other factors, it created a period which we now call the "Arduous March" where the DPRK had to recover from this situation, and the collapse of the Soviet union while still

unduring [sic] hostilities by the US who continually to this day try to stifle and isolate the DPRK. Since the end of the 1990's and around year 2000, the country has completely recovered from the "Arduous March" and has survived as a country which has now become even stronger and more independent [sic] than before.

Q: Can I work in North Korea as a teacher/interpreter/(other)?

A: No.

Laos

Motto: "Ha! Bet you forgot about us. But, yep, we're still communist!"

Main Exports:

- 1) Wood.
- 2) Heroin. Lots of heroin.

Fun Facts:

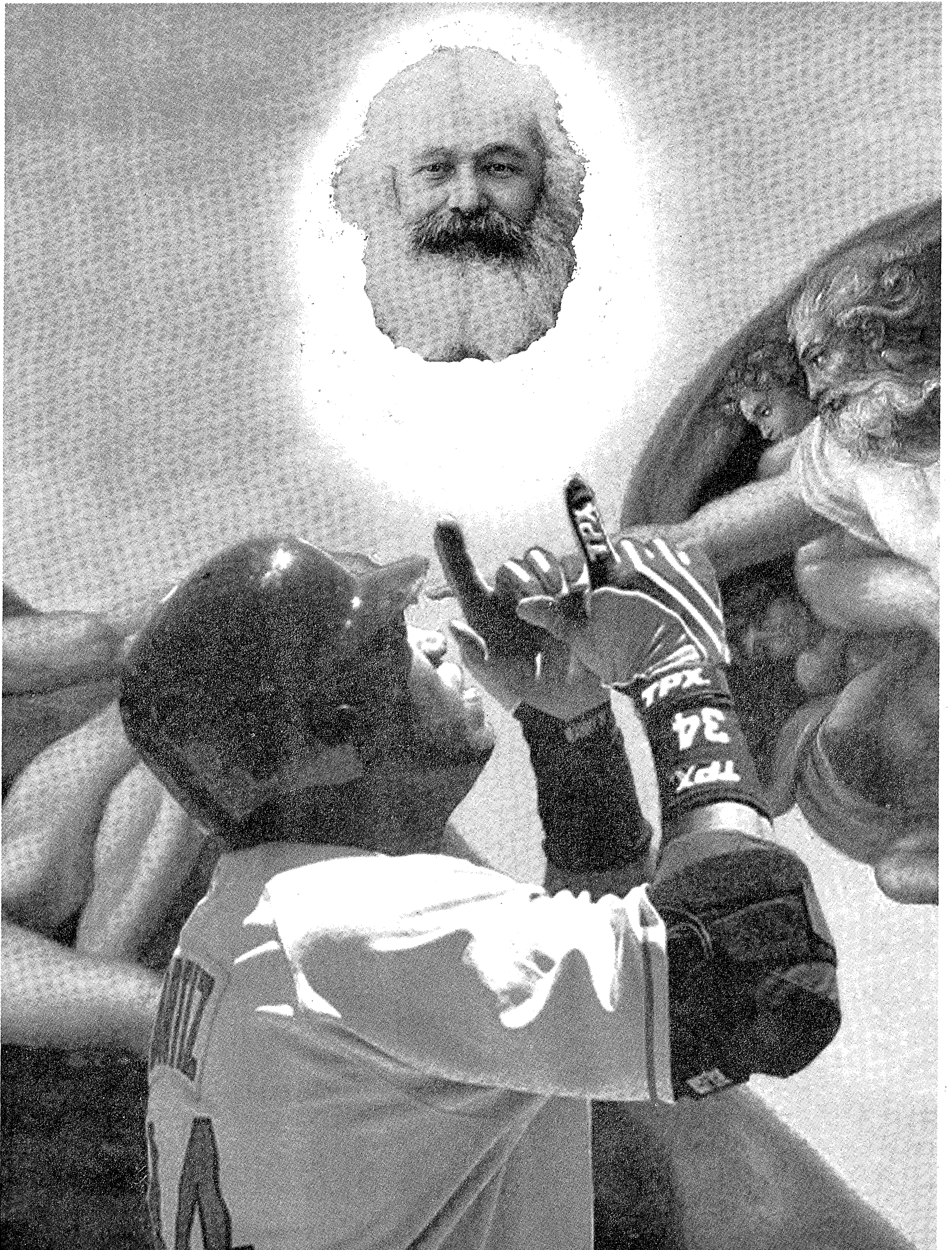
- 1) There is nothing fun about Laos.

Side Note: The Chinese are phonies. They aren't true Communists. Not only are they too timid to do what must be done about Taiwan and the Americans, but they are also quickly becoming the richest country in the world. Yet still they claim to uphold the banner of the great Chairman Mao. C'mon guys, you cant have your bubble tea and drink it too.

GLORIOUS MOTHER RUSSIA

BY ANTON VELCHER

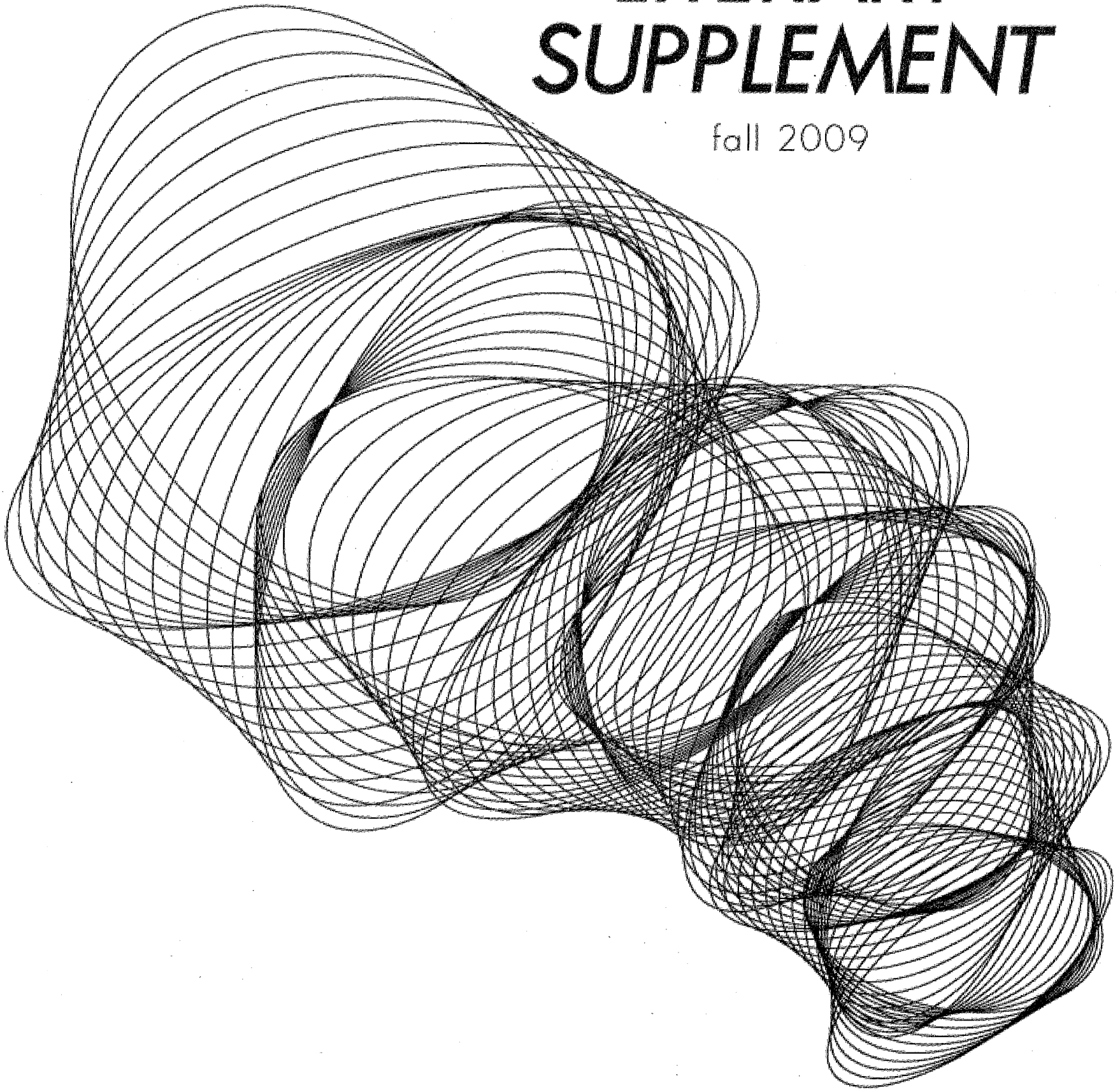




The Stony Brook Press

**LITERARY
SUPPLEMENT**

fall 2009



POEMS

almost

KELLY PIVARNIK

That girl would fiddle her way through those fences almost everyday
To try and free the horse who only quieted himself for her

She took the little girl
Walked her to the ocean
Pushed her off the rocks
And almost let her drown

She walked alongside the road at night
Let herself sip the tears that streamed her face
Then ran through the tall grass
Til he caught up with her
Then smacked her right in the face

And yes
I took the whole stack of newspapers
To give to all my loved ones

I'll let you find your name
In the infinite tiles that paint your face eternity

And that night on the couch
So terribly violent
Yet she found it so beautiful
She almost even caught her breath

Eternity's an awfully long time
And I've no clue how to spend the hours

And you set your words on fire
So they'd fall to pieces
And I've yet to catch my breath

I'd love to be trapped in my old room
Sit for awhile
Trace the walls that bear eternity
That bear the tears that once streamed my face

I wish I knew what to look forward to
But every once in awhile
My mind takes me back to those sirens
Back to the tall trees
Back to the river
Calling me
And it always catches my breath
So I'll let the leaves float in the wind
And hope to never catch my breath

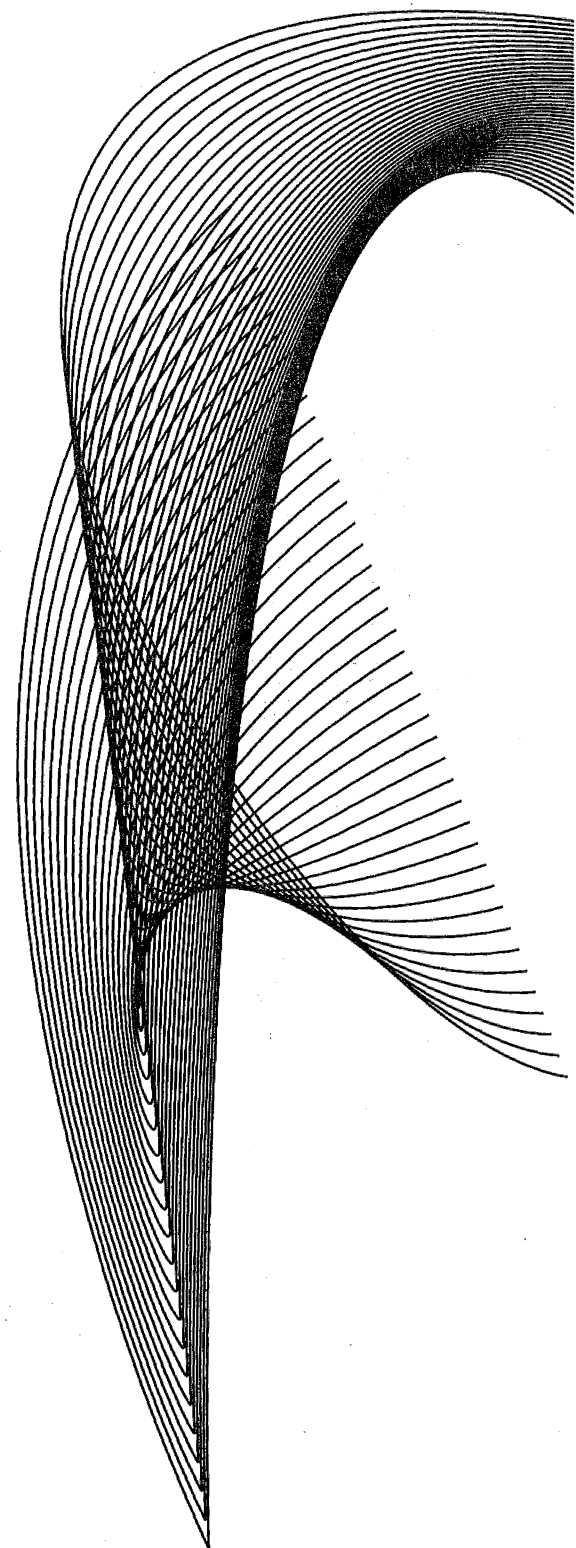
fungus

J. NELSON

Laughing behind you
Weird red breasted
Yellow tooth'd
And cloudy
I didn't know I could
Steel-toe, open mouth bubble
Just stupid, sometimes
And cloudy

Something in my
Long Island congested
Tskush, back of the nose
New England accent
New York look
Black body hair like
Elizabeth's baby crying
Old recipes for brewing
Sharp mint tea before work, 5am

Rereading Grandma's old love letters
Dusty and romantic and losing interest
And I'll later find
Smell like my supervisor in a yellow polo
Wet straw and careless step in spilled diesel puddle
A warehouse clerk
Under permanent fluorescent noon
I pay for college
Every day.



love candle time erase

DAN DEPUY

I am taunted by the writing on the wall
 Bringing back these memories
 Of something lost but not forgotten
 I liked it when she loved me.

This incense is stale as the words on the wall
 This candle burns slowly
 Bright and strong
 Until time diffuses it
 Sending it into oblivion

I am haunted by the memories
 This candle still burning
 Hoping to find this once again
 I wish that someone loved me

The flame has been snuffed
 And the wax all has dried
 And now it is cold
 Cold and dead
 Where once it was warm
 But now it is empty

This candle burns no longer

pain, my old friend

DAN DEPUY

The angel's protection is gone
 A rapping is heard at my door
 Boastfully, loudly
 He bellows in mockery
 "it's been a long time, my friend"

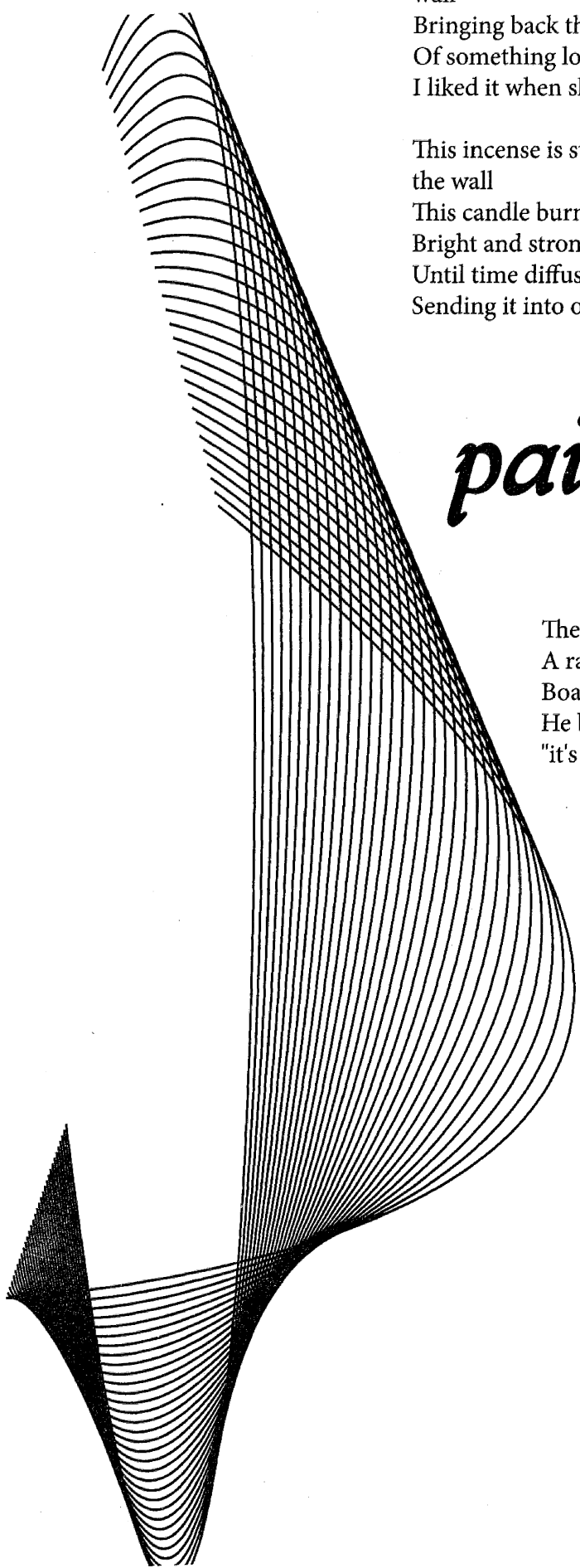
*the cycle of
man's heart*

DAN DEPUY

Life has lost wonder
 For I am stuck in a cycle
 A cycle of grief
 A cycle of sadness
 A cycle of boredom which gives way to madness

Light bleeds through windows
 Left open to show
 The sorrow within
 And the terror below
 The spot in the corner where you used to be
 A halo in darkness I no longer see

For how can man live with hope as his drink
 Dripping from faucets of ill-cared for sinks?



POEMS

editor's note



Why do birds suddenly appear every time the Lit Sup is near? Because I wish they wouldn't – they get their business all over the windshield and it's really quite difficult to clean off. Shouldn't they have all flown south already? I blame the ice caps melting and the sea level rising and the sudden mass hysteria over vampires. The only vampire for me is Count Von Count, but that's because he does my taxes every year – for free.

Anyway, back to the matter at hand – the delightful array of poems and short stories that you, Dear Reader, are about to embark upon.

In fact, I was so excited to just get to 'em already that you'll notice this Editor's Note appears after the first two pages! It's really a reflection of the "theme" I've embraced for this semester's version of the literary supplement – the idea of a literary work being linear, or perhaps non-linear. You'll flip through the pages and notice lines dashing in and out, curving, swirling, contorting and melding into one another. All the best writers know how to fashion lines – lines of words, story lines – and twist and fold them together elegantly. Therefore, I wanted to supplement your supplement (yes, I just said that) with some visuals that will hopefully give your mind some exercise just in time for finals week. Sit down with a cup of something warm and splendid, kick your feet back, and enjoy. Just remember not to park your car beneath streetlights, because that's where all the birds hang out. Oh, and never invite vampires into your home. You'll regret it.

-Fia Mansouri

FEATURING THE TALENTS OF

RABIA GHIAS

JOEL MALER

DAN DEPUY

CINDY LIU

JON PLAISTED

BRONCO & CHUTNEY

ERIC DIGIOVANNI

KELLY PIVARNIK

LIZ KAEMPF

ALEX H. NAGLER

KAT KNOWLTON

J. NELSON

STEPHEN GROTTICELLI

JOHN ACORN

SAMUEL KATZ

DANIEL LUKASCZYK

PAUL CALHOUN

FACEBOOK (SEE HAIKUS)

Feeling nostalgia for a time I don't know

KAT KNOWLTON

There's a picture
of my grandfather
from when he wasn't much older than me.
Standing, smoking,
canvas pants and a white t-shirt,
looking like the person I wish I could be.
Hardened and vaguely war torn
but with that soul
you can see in gray eyes.
He is James Dean and Marlon Brando,
or everything they played in a movie.
I never got to meet him
and he probably wouldn't understand why,
but I want to try.
Make the memory in a black and white photograph
proud.

the angel

DAN DEPUY

The angel uncertain
A wound on his brow
Would he dare to return
In forgiveness somehow?

Another wound would be death
Though he almost has healed

The assailant still beckons
Towards her he staggers
Behind her back he's looking now
Searching for a dagger

an atlas of sorts

CINDY LIU

I stumbled upon a dungbeetle the other day,
rolling heaps of assorted feces
twice his size
and lovingly tucking them
into the soil.

Well, I asked him,
Why do you do that?
and he stopped, looked up at me,
and said,

it is not a matter
of rolling shitballs
and burying them into the ground,
it's about wading
through all the bullshit
for the sake
of creating
something necessary

and sure it breaks my heart
to watch beauty consumed
and turned, once again,
into waste
but well,
I can't help but do it
'cause if I can't do what
everyone else disdains doing, then
we may as well
be dead

and as the dungbeetle left me
to plant the seeds of his labor,
I wished then for a burden
as significant as his.

POEMS

One reason to love the Greyhound

KAT KNOWLTON

I've had thoughts
daydreams
or extended trips into imagination
of running through the trees
on the side of the highway.
The hint of wild juxtaposed to
100,000 vehicles a day.
It's not an original thought,
yes,
but these are my thoughts anyway.
What did it look like 500 years ago?
That's why I want to travel
through the sparse woods
pretend I'm part of the history I love so much.
Then there's a "Posted" sign
and I come back to consciousness.

Eternal Moon

DANIEL LUKASCZYK

Twist the frame, reverse the gilded days.
Life preserved and filled with pain.
Feelin' cursed, so turn the drill and gaze
Into unearthly hills that pervert and spill new rage.
Find cover from the rain, turn and conceal your face,
Seek powders, needles, herbs, and pills to take
That burn until everythin' that's real escapes.
Sometimes that's just how we deal with fate.

Some of us here can't survive the storm.
Life is gone, the trial's born.
Watchin' time move on with no light or torch;
So how the fuck am I a child of God?
No sight to realize what's wrong.
Unconscious, lost in dreams, can't even find the cause.
Blind and lost, still divine, it's odd.
Beaten down until the chests out screamin'
"Who y'all gonna try to harm!"

The clouded eyes that blur the view
Keep us wanderin' and immersed in fumes.
The play's been over and the curtain's drew.
Wanna curl up and return to wombs.
No flower here can reach a perfect bloom.
There's no excuse, just worthless truth.
Sheddin' tears and only concerned with doom.
Forever lost under our eternal moon.



POEMS

the epic of adrian

DAN DEPUY

I

There once was an angel named Adrian.
He was a fair angel
He was honest and true
But there was an emptiness in his heart
For although he was an angel
Adrian could not fly.

He tried his hardest to get in the air
But his wings would not carry
His body into the sky
He tried to catch the wind in his wing
But she would not come
Adrian was alone.

One day fate was good to Adrian
He wasn't even trying to fly
When a strong wind blew
Right into his waiting wings
And raised him in the air
Adrian was flying!

Adrian was a loving angel
And he fell in love
With that gentle wind
Which caressed him and brought him warmth
And the wind fell in love with him, too
For Adrian was beautiful.

He rode the wind as far as he could
Away from the earth below
And escaped the harsh truths
That plagued him on the ground
He stopped one day to take a look one day
Adrian was blinded.

"Where is my home? Where are my friends?"
he asked in disbelief
for he had been carried so far by the wind
"You are with me, my Adrian"
the wind replied.
Adrian was lost.

II

The wind grew weary of his weight
And his home called to him
And soon the breeze was not so gentle
And soon the flight was not so graceful
When Adrian slept it rocked him.
And when it blew he closed his wings.
Sometimes it blew cold on him
And in flight the wind blew hot

He shouted out in frustration
And the wind returned with a thrust
That blew him straight out of the sky
And he plummeted towards the earth

He hit the ground with a thunderous crash
On his back with at a blinding speed
And his wings were badly blistered
And atmosphere had torn at them

The coming times were painful
He feared that he may die
And the tears came out in rivers
And the whimpers shook the clouds

And his wings were in such pain
And his body in such ruin
And his mind in such a panic
And his heart in such a state

III

His wings how they ached
For many nights
How broken now
No gift of flight

The feathers fell out in clumps
The skin beneath blistered and broke
Attached to his back were breaking hinges

And they shed slowly
And he cried through the pain
And one day he awoke to find them gone

Too afraid was he anyway
Of soaring in the sky
Too afraid to fall again
Afraid that he would die

And for awhile he did not want the sky
And the wind would blow to curse him
And torment him howling as the others flew
above

And one day it all changed to him
He began to miss the sky, the flight
He began to miss the wonder and began to
wonder

"Perhaps if I could fly again
The wind may leave me be
Perhaps if I just try again
It might just be okay"

IV

His time on earth he spent it well
He fell in love with technology
He devised a plan to gain his flight
Through artificial means

He built himself two wings of steel
And leather bound with bone
That he stole from carcasses
He dug out from their homes

He strapped them to his back with haste
And they fit him far too well
If any knew what he had done
For sure he'd go to hell

But with these wings he'd fly away
And better than before
Because these wings were made by him
And never any more

Still he couldn't fly too high
Still he was a bit scared
Still he stayed low in the sky
To soar he wouldn't dare

From rooftop to rooftop he would glide
A bit higher if clear were skies
And never did he try too hard
But it sometimes made him cry

V

He stared into the sky one night
And yelled quite clear, with all his might
"I will rule you when time has come!
I will be the only one!
And when I find the strength to soar
I will live in fear no more!
No wind or sun or rain will stop
My grand ascension to the top!"

And with this hope he looked away
In hope that on another day
The fear would hold him back no more
And above the wind
Faux wings would soar

haiku

The Jasmine Garden
Shady Man sits quietly
Naked in the sun

BRONCO & CHUTNEY

POEMS

soliloquy

RABIA GHIAS

Fragile and keen presence thrust into the bewildering whirlpool that is this mundane reality.

Continually drifting through vacant, vague recesses; empty anchors drag at your wispy hems.

Ascending from your haven, you become forsaken of bliss, draining yourself of your vitality

Desiring and longing for haphazard adventures, you expose yourself to the sinister abyss that is this world, a vulnerable gem.

Out to take risks, now out to seek security. Concerning yourself with the future, now dwelling on the past. Out to fulfill lust, now out to pursue love.

Continually emphasizing you didn't choose to be thrust into this bewildering whirlpool, you already made your mark.

Past regrets distressingly linger, and you always yearn to run back to your ivory tower.

Feeble and spineless presence, grit your teeth and gather up your hems, there are more casual adventures on which we should embark.

The universe being your grand arena, star-crossed entities map out your stepping stones, you have a presence to empower.

United Talmudical Something

SAMUEL KATZ

I used to sit in UTA
the United Talmudical something.
I used to listen to what they had to say
Trust me at that age you could've told me
anything.

They taught me all their crap
from A to Z
except, in that crazy place
they didn't even do it alphabetically.

I sat on their hard benches
listening to what they had to sell
watching ticking clocks
eagerly awaiting the bell.

After a while even I
bought into the plot
understand, I was just a kid
boiling in the pot.

I learned there
about
Snakes looking for female peers
Noah getting drunk
after he lived 120 years
of getting all animals to have sex in his
trunk

Abraham trying to kill but missed,
and Isaac raped a three year old,
Jacob and Rachel french kissed,
don't look at me, it's what I was told.

Lot doesn't fuck with male angels
but his virgin daughters, that shall pass
Yehuda and Tamar,
they went to Amsterdam, I guess

Then came Moses, the hero you know
with laws about POW women
that make me think of Guantanamo
as a paradise of a prison.

Those people
really molested my mind.
I was young and innocent
just as they ordered my kind.

While kids were learning
about algebra and hash
I was being fed
dark ages trash
while knocked up teens
were running for abortions
I was fed
their stupid distortions.

My mind was touched in the most uncom-
fortable places
by those teaching freaks they paid
I'm sure he wouldn't of hit me that day
if the night before he had gotten laid.


While other kids
were watching condom covered bananas
and flat maps of the spherical earth
I was learning
what my teacher said I learned
before birth.

I was just a kid
listening to their voices
but, fuck it,
they are just teachers
I don't need their choices.

I'll never forget you,
United Talmudical something.
after all we had a hell of a time together.
but, maybe it's not you just me
that thinks people deserve better.

rolling

JOHN ACORN



I stand alone in a parking lot,
 the November wind wraps my mind like a blanket,
 Smoke dances off my lips like a gypsy stomach,
 nicotine like novacaine gently sings a lullaby to my lungs,
 I can see straight for days and weeks
 and still my peripheral yields to her face,
 wretched, and contorted, demon hands pull from all directions,
 her bags have been packed to leave for years, to make an escape,
 but she left them sitting underneath her eyes.
 They dont see what everyone elses do, but then again whos does.
 Blessed in Jesus name I pray,
 hypodermic words stab me as I pass,
 they shake and wake me from the spectrum supernova of my sleep,
 and leave me feeling somehow grey,
 She weeps as she molests herself,
 purity against a perversion,
 she grasps and penetrates,
 like her memory on the backs of my eyes,
 the nurses fight, neither her nor themselves,
 She calls out to Him, perhaps the last words of a
 prayer to prevent the very thing that drives her repetition,
 so many years, never getting to finish,
 Saliva runs uncontrollably from trembling lips and
 tissue paper skin,
 varicose virtue throbs,
 she weeps and repeats,
 weeps and repeats,
 Blessed in Jesus name I pray,
 Blessed in Jesus name I pray,
 Thpse words papercut, trying to turn this
 page in my life, He wont let me forget,
 She is His child, like any other,
 a pearl before swine, the gift of her mind melting
 away like a candle,
 her soul trapped in the wax cage of confusion,
 miles below sanitys sunlight,
 rocking back and forth,
 kneeling before the wailing wall of a hospital wing,
 in metronomic syncopation with Israel,
 Blessed in Jesus name I pray,
 Blessed in Jesus name I pray,
 all in the vanity of a psychological illusion,
 perhaps
 Today I delivered her meal to an empty room,
 the aroma of death and soup takes me to her,
 and they say, in writing, its best to say
 the most with the fewest words
 Well, "Jesus wept",
 but somewhere in the parking lot,
 the November wind whispered Amen.

POEMS

Standing Clear of Opening Doors

CINDY LIU

In a sickly fluorescent subway car,
a musical laugh, inviting, offensive

swallowed whole
by dumb stubborn faces
reluctant to shed
stale tragedies, scared shitless
of a blip on a radar

in so many words but in one word,
connection--
a bump on the tracks,
a flick in the lights.

A missed stop.

Up to My Knees in Broken Dreams

DAN DEPUY

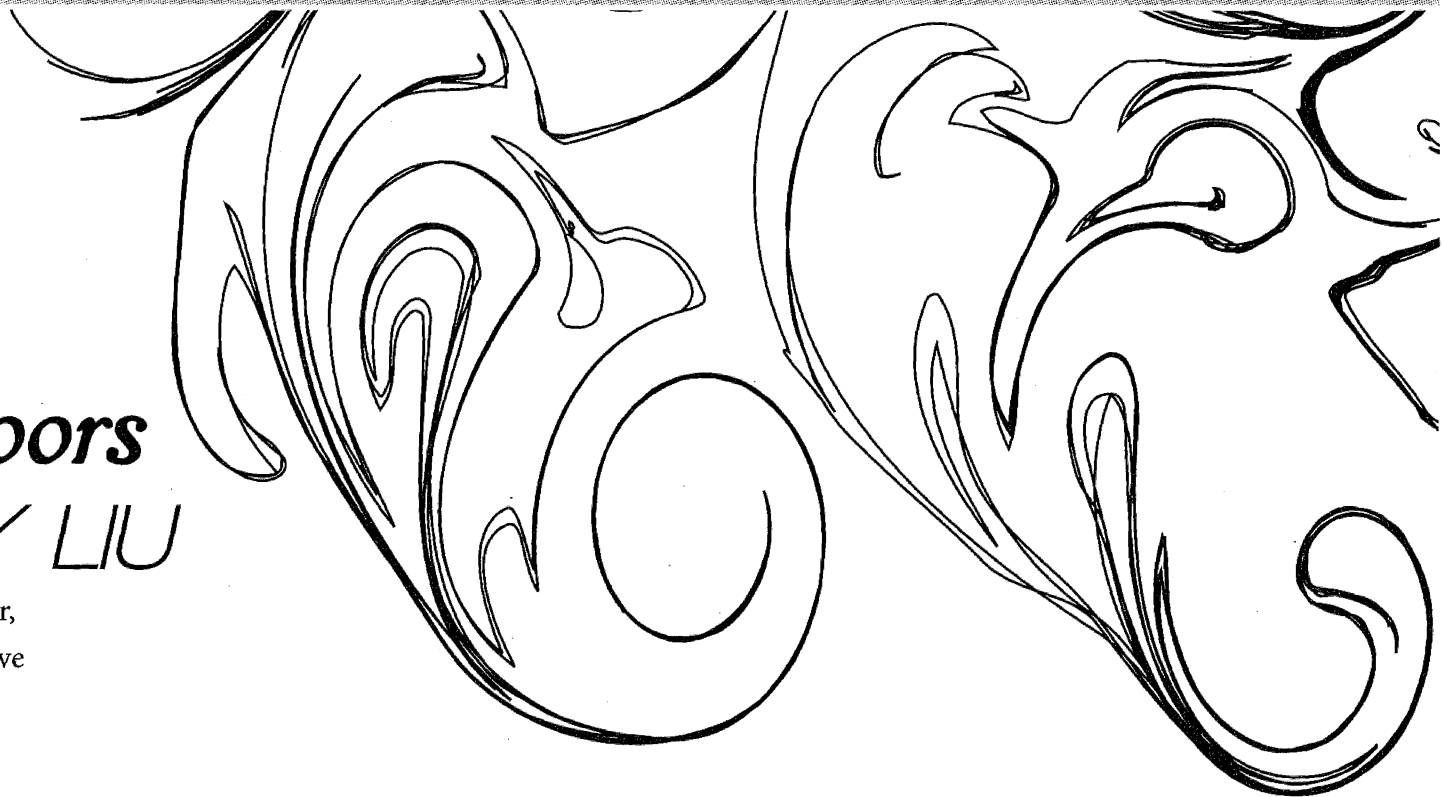
Have you ever awoke and seen
the shattered pieces of a dream?

My dreams bleed and they drip through my eyes
everytime I am reminded a piece of me dies
what's in my head is distorted in silence
my animal tendencies turning towards violence

I'm somber and sobered
a smile turns over
my spirit is dropped and nothing is accomplished

I bleed and I suffer
I sweat and I hurt
I lose one more piece of me
thrashing in the dirt

my head starts to spin
my dreams wash away
I pity myself and hope for a brighter day



Leda and the Swan and the Jack Russell Terrier

JOEL MALER

Perhaps,
Due to a Jack Russell Terrier's
Exasperated pace

After having been
Confined to my unrefined
Environs,
Now recompensed
And condensed upon
The bark of a neighborhood
Tree

I might have been
Preordained to distraction
For fear of my dog's disdain
And doomed to allow
Zeus to have his
Way.

And then
A scream, a shriek,
The sound of soft feathers
Moving while white wings beat
Or not--

So I thought
The Terrier walked
A small, domesticated
Mammal, facilitating
War.

POEMS

Withered Bouquet

DAN DEPUY

This is the story of a withered bouquet
 Time and tide took it's life away
 This is the story of a dead old bouquet
 I can't bring myself to throw it away

And now I'm looking at this withered bouquet
 I wish so much that I could throw it away
 What's so special about this dried up bouquet?
 It used to be so beautiful one day

Bridge:

I have to bury you deep in my heart
 In a place I'll never return to
 If I can bury you deep enough
 Then maybe I can forget you

I stand here holding onto this old bouquet
 I never thought that it would end this way
 So many hues and fragrance of a spring day
 Now all wasted dried and withered away

Maybe I should have given them more water
 Maybe I should have given more sun
 Maybe I should have allowed them to grow more
 Maybe I should have given more love

(bridge)

Chorus:

All flowers are beautiful
 And you'd like to think they live forever
 But lesson learned they will all die in time
 And the only things left are the thorns
 And these thorns will tear open your chest
 And these thorns will rake into your heart
 And these thorns are so unforgiving
 When the life of the rose has stopped

What can I do now with this withered bouquet?
 I wish it would come alive one day
 Stabbed by the thorns of this dried up bouquet
 I only want to put it away

I turn my back now to this withered bouquet
 I only hope it will go away
 I close the door and shut off all the lights
 I must forget that I have it tonight

(bridge)

(chorus)

(bridge)

(bridge)

*Chupracabra,
Beloved*

CINDY LIU

"Minding my steps and narrowly avoiding the grasp of a supposed life size replica of the South American Chupra Cabra, I emerged into an open patio, the purple-orange sky silhouetting the city."

Max Rivlin-Nadler

The current ebbs at
 shores across the
 Adirondacks.

Elusive Chupracabra
 you're not a legend
 but a myth.

I wanted to
 be you,
 leaning in with
 starving eyes
 telling me you're
 sorry.

I stared, face flushed
 extra hard
 at my sandals.

...

He adores
 dark hair
 and cherry lips
 paired with
 smart eyes

as he adjusts
 his tweed hat.

The style of the day.

...

Ragged breathing,
 a blue light murmurs.
 He dies for a while
 beside a
 glowering dull gaze.

Somewhere, a phone
 continues to ring.

A warm, moist pillow.

...

A boy-man switched to
 thick black frames and
 was still a genuine genius.

He could rhetorically con-
 vince her

she was happy
 with him.

Logic holds a lighter, not a
 candle.

...

A man was almost 30
 and wanted closeness
 but there was no time
 anymore for wanting,
 no time anymore for
 flirting, no time
 anymore for falling, for
 feeling.

He had to be a man,
 quick.

She had to be a lady,
 quick.

He had his help
 running the place
 and his no-frills love.

His.

...

I'm begging you--
 give me more time,
 a chance to have
 my heart beat raw.

Please
 take everything but
 don't take the beating.

I just wanted to be you.

...

She is the Chupracabra,
 today.

She is the ugly Chupracabra
 held fondly squeezed tightly
 by their dreams.

HAIKU DEATH MATCH

VARIOUS DENIZENS OF FACEBOOK

Oh snap its haikus
The LitSup is upon us
Let the war begin

-Nagles

I dont think I can
Shell shock from the last Great War
Syllables scare me

-Lowdown

It is quite funny
That I am in Mexico
And writing Haikus

-Eaton

Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Tell me, mirror, what is wrong.
Can it be my De La clothes?
Or is it just my De La song?

-Dr. J

Public Option set on a wall,
Public Option had a great fall,
(While falling from the gate,
PO also hit Roe V. Wade.)
All the 60 Democrats and congress' 233
couldn't stop PO
from ending like Humpty Dumpty.

-Sam Katz

The public option
Was just corporate dog shit
Made by lobbyists

-Eaton

The public option,
like the one at SBU,
doesn't cover shit.

-Bearwrestler

If I may,
Churchil used to say,
That there is no good decision in foreign policy,
Only the least bad.
As for health care the same can be said
I don;t know about the one at SBU,
and I certainly can't write a haiku.

-Sam Katz

Pragmatism sucks
A result of our broken
political realm

-Eaton

Excuse me good sirs,
but i thought haiku only?
rhymes not required.

-Fluffy Persian Kitty

listen, you bitches
haiku's pretty simple if
you're not a dumbass.

-Balls

The hot dog sonnet

A meat bouquet of turkey, beef and pork
From off the grill, 'ere fires should o'er do't
Suspended pendulous upon my fork...
Plate palette of horse radish—dog dragged through't
A simple Apollonian ideal
The meal reduced to these constituents
Stark contrast highlights radishes appeal
And speeds the dogs' esophageal descents
Then in the still reflection of repose
When naught is left but fork and grease and plate
The gourmand's heart can ponder what he owes
To Heav'n above for making hot dogs great
Their providential origins assured
With hot dogs, hunger's tethers are unmoored

-Willemain

Really tired now
Dragon Age: Origins, ugh
It's like crack for nerds

Da diddy dadaaa
Daa da daa. Da di dadaaa
Indiana Jones

Red Bull Cola, whoa
Way too much of a good thing
Flava Flav, yeahhhh boyyyy!

And I sing, I want
I want Charles in Charge of me
Because who doesn't?

He's in the basement
This show is kind of creepy
What's he in charge of?

Time to stop bashing
Blockbuster sold their whole stock
of Twilight pillows

Suck that, New York Times
Hope that fact haunts you at night
Sycophantic pricks

Mania's just fine
Until people think it's good

When it's clearly not

Heya, New York Times
Alvin and the Chipmunks 2-
next Citizen Kane?

Twilight pillows, yep
Choose between Edward, Jacob
Pedophile battle

Jacob takes the crown
Edward stalks high schools for girls
Doesn't fuck babies

Fucking an infant
Is way worse than eating one
You lose, sir. Good day

Werewolves are roguish
soaked in the blood of victims
not body oil

Werewolf legend says
silver bullet to the heart
makes pretty rainbows

It's the new wolf clan
Terrors of hairiness? No
Chip n' Dales models

-Knockout

Haikus-only is lame city
Limericks are fun and not so shitty
They can be cool
Unless you're a tool
And like a poetry form that's not witty

Don't be such haters
@ you, Emma and Tia
Let people be free

Oh snap! I previously hated
My hypocrisy has not abated
Forgive my crime
Of preferring to rhyme
My disses be unsubstantiated

-Fraley

Why was I not tagged?
Because of my lazy eye?
Eye surgery STAT!

-Pete

A BRIEF INTERLUDE

STEPHEN GROTTICELLI

Come on. It's just a doll."

He was right. He usually was. But fuck it all, this was my doll. I had owned this thing since I was three. That is twenty-two years. Did he really think I would not have an attachment to it?

"It's not like you even play with it anymore. I mean, you're an adult, Izzy."

An adult with a childish attachment to her childhood toy, then. But I would acquiesce to him. It always ended up that way. It was easier than fighting him on the matter.

"Fine." I relented. "But if I bail you out like this, you're going to owe me this time."

"Sure, sure. Whatever you say, Izzy."

"I mean it! I don't have an unlimited supply of cherished childhood memories for us to sell off, you know. There are going to have to be changes."

"Is that so? Well then we'll talk all about it later."

Later never actually comes. You'd think I would protest this, but I just take it. It always goes this way. He tends to get what he wants. If I could just grow a damned spine and tell him off! But he was all the family I had, and I couldn't dare jeopardize that. And he had raised me, I suppose. After our mother had been shot and died from her wounds, he had to saddle the awkward role of brother and father. It must be hard to raise a child when you're only a year older than her.

He dropped out of school. He told me he wasn't going to "learn any of the real shit" there. I was sure he was just saying that for my sake. He had dropped out to better raise me. Made me feel pretty guilty at the time. It still does, actually.

I make him sound responsible, don't

I? Then you're probably wondering why he has to sell off my possessions. Well, inheriting a child he never expected and having to entirely change the course of his life proved to be pretty stressful for him. He needed to find a way to relieve the stress.

"Don't you know how bad that stuff is for you?"

"Damn it, Izzy. It's my body. Ain't I got freedoms? I'll do what I please with my own money so long as I'm free to make my own decisions."

He never used to be like this, did he? It was all my fault, I knew it was. I was why he dropped out of school, why he bought that disgusting stuff. I was ruining his life. I can give you another example. Our mother never really cared for us much. She gave us financial support well enough, but beyond that she was mostly just a figurehead. My brother was doing most of my raising even then. He never had time to make other friends and struggled to gain strong social skills. This, coupled with his lack of even a high school diploma left him without the ability to advance in his employment. He didn't have the sort of money coming in that mother used to. He barely had enough to feed the two of us and keep us in our home, let alone enough to get his relief. And he seemed to need more of that all the time.

"Come on, Izzy. We'll just be selling off a few things we don't need until I get that promotion. It's just like a garage sale."

"And when is that promotion coming, anyway? Every time you talk about it it seems to be just another "soon" away."

"Real soon now, Izzy. Come on."

That was six years ago. "Soon" still isn't here yet. He did get a small raise, though. It just helped combat inflation and rising taxes a little. He told me that it was better than nothing. He said that this was just the



struggle until we were the richest family in the world. I laughed at such a ridiculous jest, and he laughed too. But I could see he was just masking pain.

I tried to find a job myself. But that damn psych evaluation they gave me in high school killed me every time. They weren't supposed to know about the results of those sorts of things. They weren't supposed to discriminate against me because of them even if they did. But fuck if they didn't find out anyway and turn me down. I guess I would create far too much paperwork if something went wrong. And they can find more where I came from without any of my problems.

My brother blamed himself when he heard about the diagnosis. Another weight I burdened him with. Now he was ruining his life to support mine and my lousy brain had gone and made it seem like he wasn't even any good at that. Just can't stop fucking things up for others, can you Izzy?

So that's why I don't protest too much when he does things like that. I need him and I owe him. But it's selfish of me to expect him to placate my desire for family at his own great

expense, isn't it? So that's why I've killed myself. You've likely noticed my body dangling near the ceiling fan by now. I don't know who will read this, really. Probably just you, dear brother. But isn't it great? We're free! You're free! By ending my own life I have saved yours. This suicide was the greatest form of gratitude I could think to offer.

Thank you for the twenty-five years of life you gave me. It was a wonderful experience. But it's time for you to finally have some time for yourself. I don't want to be your obligation weighing you down, anymore. Aren't you happy now, brother? Your sentence is over and we both have our release. I don't think two individuals have ever had a moment quite as cathartic and charming as this one.

Loving you from beyond the grave,

Izzy.

SCENES FROM AURORA'S FLAME

ROSS BARKAN

The motel settles in her blood. At least there's a bed, a shower, and a chance to sleep. Moth-bitten blankets are better than bottle caps.

Laurel makes Copperfield, Colorado her home. Has it been one week or two since she cut him? She can't quite remember. The nights are wet on her memory, amorphous bubbles popping in gray pools. Pinpricks of heat and memory burst from the gray, burning under the sheets. It comes back. Newspaper blankets, overpass lies, the taste of exhaust, the rubber's thunder, a plastic shudder—the modern doom beats through her waking sleep, bulging like a cyst. She hitchhiked with too many types of people. Old, young, tired, dead, and everything in between. They spoke with greased tongues and crusted eyes. Some paid the bills, some dined and dashed. Some left her in the heat to sleep. Days contorted and bled, fuming minutes that could've been years, plastering a counterfeit sunshine on her scuttling limbs. What she wants to do...

...is watch the stars in a field. In a clean field, not the lots of filthy cans and candy wrappers. Jennifer knew all the constellations. She insisted on Jen but Laurel preferred Jennifer, preferred the crystal pleasure of the name. Jennifer, oh Jennifer, my tongue can play with you like a harp. Laurel couldn't think of anything else. The night in college, the night before they first slept together, still rises above the muck of her existence. All the days on the road (with Quillinger, cradling despair as if it was actually her own) are eviscerated in the aura of this memory. Laurel looks above.

Jennifer knew all the constellations. Orion's Belt, Sagittarius, Big Dipper, Little Dipper, Canis Major, Scorpius... She held her finger like a wand to the sky and plucked every form from the astral recesses. She would always whisper, air trickling from her delicate mouth, feeding the grass, tickling the wind, touching the sprawling body of a girl at home in shadow. Their hands meet through the blades, blending like warm pa-

stels, caressing, communing, building to an empyreal shudder, a sound, an image awash in ecstasy. They cradle the stars. In the autumn calm she clutches a leaf and listens to Jennifer's breath. She talks about astronomy and Michigan, the men squirming into her life, the sorrow leaking out. She wants an artist. Not a painter, not a writer, not even a thinker—a god damn artist. Someone electrified, a soaring monster, a creature bursting at the seams with a light so manic and brilliant it renders further human creativity useless. Someone who met the divine and spat in its face. Laurel doesn't dare interrupt.

"I've never met a man like that," Jennifer says, dropping her head. "Or a woman. Only in dreams." They're nostalgic for the future. The years spread over them like a new sky, raining stars of unborn memory. Days on the veranda, nights in Vienna, and the soft moments in between are blooming under their eyes. She is reading a paper by the window, the pines waving outside. Jennifer floats in, juice in hand. They share the unity of the stare, the ontological kiss. What is a moment but two people standing together, merging thought and beauty? Vivify me, Jennifer. She slides from a solemn darkness to the eternal embrace. Lips coalesce, soft as dust...

...the pillow has no answers. Laurel rises from the ratty bed and glares at the window. The view of the trashcan parking lot pushes her back under the sheets. Everything spins. She is somewhere between past and present, straddling the nauseating line. Crags fly at her from all ends, smashing the foggy mirrors, scalding the shards, and scattering the last bits over her dream. She sees color become people, people become sound, sound become despair. Drums slam through her eyelids.

When she's at breakfast she realizes she is out of money. The waitress takes her order and Laurel feels inside her own pocket. Somebody must have taken the last twenty. It could've been that fucker Klecko, the one from Charlestown. He was shifty. Black hair, black eyes, thin ferret-like build, and spots of crust on a thermal shirt told her to watch

out. She did. Either way, the twenty is gone. She has two choices. Beg someone for money or dine and dash.

Begging is out of the question. Laurel is ferrible at asking for things. Even the most basic requests make her uncomfortable. She can remember her mother telling her to brown-nose the teachers in class. Talk to them honey, get to know them, ask them about themselves. There's nothing worse than asking an empty person about themselves. Men especially. The male teachers prattled on and on, leaking their banalities in every crevice.

But that's not the real reason, Laurel. Why do I hate asking for things? I hate... extracting. Prying things from people. I can't supplicate myself, that's the problem. No one is worth it. No one is worth groveling to.

Or I'm afraid. Independence is precious. To ask is to throw a hook into the flesh of another and be joined indefinitely. Links are dangerous. Once a favor is asked, disaster arrives. I used to ask Quillinger for things. And he'd lie there like a viper, lapping it all up, poisoning whatever charity is. Even the good people can't be asked too much. Every relationship based on favors, on god damn reciprocal altruism, is a lie.

She still has no money. It wouldn't be so bad to ask a stranger. The place she's in can barely be called a diner. More of a hole with tables, a greaselined womb dug into the plains of nowhere. The people look friendly. Flannel smiles and coffee breath fill the space, warming the tin. The one man picking at his toast at the counter could be America's grandfather. He's plump, ruddy, and downright jovial. That goiter's like a Christmas tree ornament. I could ask him for money. Could I? No... not him.

Laurel rifles through the rest of the faces. A blonde twenty-something with oversized breasts sitting in front of her might be willing to spare a buck or two. Her tics seem harmless. Purple lipstick, metallic and raw, is smeared generously on her platypus face. She is eating a biscuit. Crumbs dance down her chin. Laurel can't ask her either.

A bell chimes. Laurel doesn't no-

tice the man come through the door. Her eyes are still tracing the room, registering the colors, moods, and tendencies. Flies of light and torpor dot the peeling place. Gum smacks. Everything tics, from the tin counter to the uneasy grill to the calk boots cracking the linoleum bent upwards like a tentative grin. Flies of light, flies of... well flies. She can't stop screaming about the flies. They're everywhere, ducking into the soup, over the counters, and through the hair gel. The world is flitting.

When she yawns the sleep spills out and chokes her. Shadows ossify. The grime becomes her, stale shreds of eggs benedict and toast sticking to the skin, to the brain, to perception. They could be truckers or prophets, the men drinking coffee, and she wouldn't know. One in a mesh hat tries to light a cigarette in the corner. He won't go outside. A hoarse waitress rushes over and flaps her lips like sick little wings. He puts it out. And she still hasn't noticed.

The heads turn because no one enters Cal's Morning Shack in Copperfield, Colorado wearing a blazer and tie. No one. This is a world of Levi jeans, tobacco, toothpicks—a world fried and greased. Americana, if she existed, would spend her days here. And Americana doesn't dress up. He is utterly alone and proud. The tie is blazing red, beaming from the rusty backdrop, glowing above the 9 to 5 trifles. Loafers click easily off the floor. Why isn't he ordering anything? What does he want? Probably some rich developer. Probably from the east. Probably a son of a bitch. He smiles at them. A placating grin, a shiny enamel olive branch. He licks his finger and runs it through his young gelled hair. Maybe forty at most. They notice the gold ring on his left ring finger. They notice a clean face neither long nor short, soft nor hard, average nor grotesque. Unremarkable yet completely remarkable. He is the only one with this face, no other molds exist, no doppelgangers, no look-alikes. He isn't handsome, not in any traditional way. Magnolias could be flourishing beneath his skin. An odd hue, an odd man, struck like a flame from the roadside offal. In the right light he could be a god; in the wrong

ON 92 (A PROJECT FOREVER UPCOMING)

light, a roach.

When she sees the blazer moving across the floor, she knows where the next meal will come from. This man has the change. He will be willing to give it someone, especially a woman like Laurel. She knows the game. She hates playing it but knows it too well. The empty plates spur her on. She's on her feet, wheeling toward him, sprung like a marble to the edge of a cliff. He is smiling.

Their elbows brush, flesh flickering beneath cloth, pulses rapid and ready. She exhales.

"Excuse me."

"It's ok, miss."

She is turning away, feigning the escape. Almost there, almost to the door, and she stops. She is gambling. For the first time in countless hours and days, Laurel can experience the sensation of control. This is a situation she understands. She knows men. The beasts of Quillinger and the cop are beyond her grasp; the well-dressed man in Cal's Morning Shack is not. His calculus, from what she gathers, is simple. He has the face of a man who wants to lend a hand. As she pivots, she imagines he is the sort of lover who relishes a surprise to deliver him from the nebulous pre-dawn, from the morphing shadows. He likes to drink his lover in raw light without any surprise. Ah, the proverbial straight-shooter...

I have no basis to assume this—I can't just ask him for money. Why is he any different? Because he has a suit? That's dumb. No. I'll walk out of here.

Doubt wheedles through Laurel. Sunrises! She laughs at herself. Imagining that man naked—what an absurd idea, he's not even that handsome. Just a well-dressed stiff. She's met a thousand of those in college and beyond.

"But I need money, just a bit. I'll starve soon," she tells no one. She is near the threshold. The door is opening and the steam of morning is crawling over her. The quiet street waits, parking meters aslant, plywood piled oddly in the backs of revving trucks. She's almost out.

"Excuse me miss you dropped something."

He extends a hand with the dollar bill, a bill she didn't drop. Did she even have a dollar? Maybe. No, only change. Laurel only had change. Yet here he is, the starch angel, dangling

a veined hand in the old threshold. She doesn't know what to do. It's all working too perfectly. Not supposed to be this easy. When she squints she sees the one is a ten. Ten dollars out of the blue. He is coming closer, shattering all barriers.

"I, um, thanks," she says, taking the money. "I didn't even know I had this."

"I saw it come out of your pocket. It's yours."

"Thank-you again," and the idea blooms in her head, toxic and alluring. She promised not to trust anyone, not a damned soul. The truth, as hunger tells her, is that food and trust are intertwined. If only Laurel didn't have to eat, if only her stomach didn't shout, if only the acids didn't stir, she could truly be free. Freedom is for the immortals. To eat is to trust. She cannot feed herself and run, no matter how strong her convictions might be. Others will have to lend a hand from the shadows, extending their slimy tendrils into her sphere. They will have to destroy her silence so she can live. If anyone is going to be the destroyer, it might as well be the man in the suit with a timid smile and a readiness to dispense with ten dollars.

What's his game? Sex. If she has to...I won't. I won't touch him. I'll take his ten and get the hell out.

"Would you like to sit down for some coffee?" he asks. "I don't know anyone here and I would like to get a local feel."

"Oh I'm not really from around here, sorry."

"Neither am I. Ah, I guess I'll take breakfast alone."

"I suppose I could sit for a few minutes."

"You changed your mind pretty quickly. That's good. You're not too stubborn."

"Yeah," she mutters and follows him to a table. They take a tiny round table close to the counter and kitchen. Everything else is filled. The morning crowd is swelling, eager like exiled ants for contact with the colony, any contact at all, even if the brushes and chatter and clanking are meaningless, the words dead, riddled with holes. The slander against the weather or the mayor, the football chatter, and the child-rearing platitudes all go down easy, mixing like coffee and toast in their bellies. No one jumps. No one rushes. Lau-

rel notices that the twitch is replaced with the yawn. None of these people have anywhere else to go and aren't particularly perturbed; no one yearns for transcendence. Their eyes are milk toast and their breath is soft. Their hands are still, hearts loping to their next pre-destined beat. Unlike her, they have constructed warm niches to spend their lives in. They'll go to their graves wrapped in home-made blankets, sipping cider under the watchful eyes of their cousins and children. Laurel swings her head to the window—who the hell is going to mourn for me? The question kills every other thought. Her father's body hovers above, a new rope tied warmly around his throat like a ribbon...

Another fragment

When she enters her room, the nausea buzzes in. It jabs a greasy wing in her eye and laps at her skull, gnawing at the skin beneath her eyelids. Everything is heavy. She rolls into the bed's bosom, dropping senses along the way. She doesn't want to hear anything. The overhead fan won't comply, beating steam-choked air across the room. Rotors rattle from unseen crevices. A roach kicks at the carpet. She tears off all of her clothing until she is in nothing but a bra and panties. She'd like to tear off her skin.

The layers of the world are burying her. She is thrashing in a pocket, gasping beneath the moon, the sun, the ages laid upon her like fossils. Dreams dogfight for attention. There's one person she hasn't thought about yet. It might as well be his time. She doesn't want to—it's too sickening. What they did to little Schiller, big brother, the boy who could've been anything. He...he...lost. He's certainly alive, somewhere, and will soon be dead. She can feel it. He isn't someone who is meant to be without others. Even if he was alone, disturbed, fractured (as the doctors would say) he wasn't the brother who severed his ties. He craved a connection with others.

Why is she thinking about Schiller now? Yes...why? she screams through her bolted eyelids. Memory is an odd creature. It can drop characters from seemingly nowhere, brightening the stage like a deranged phantom and forcing the audience to watch as the scene is performed

with vague accuracy over and over again. The character can flub a line, run away, but the conclusion always remains. The blood.

Howling rhythms permeate all, descending like screaming static, building seas of torrential agony. Schiller Marquard has arrived on the stage. Alive, dead, or somewhere in between, he crawls over Jennifer's ruined figure and takes his place at the seat of the subconscious. She loves him. If he could stand here right now, even with his tattered mind and blood-streaked face, she could feel a little better.

Schiller wasn't made for this world. She knows this is a cliché notion—a person not "fitting in"—yet no one exemplified this more than he. He trod the land, too good for others, too holy, a figure sent from another age. No one knew what age. They'd call him wispy, sandy-haired—sand made the most sense. He blew across the scenery like golden sand, whirling, ever-changing, pouring into her life until a certain wind took him away. He was always around to pick her up from school, clean her wounds, buy her ice cream, and take her to the park. How many late afternoons did they spend on the mushy little fields playing softball? She plunges into the time

and steps out of the batter's box. Schiller is sixteen, a small thin boy with shoulders bathed in the breath of sunset, haunted fingers cradling the ball. She holds the bat up and readies for the pitch. The blades are still, the butterflies run, and liquid sun spills slowly through her eyes. He rocks back to throw...she drops the bat and races toward him. Ten years of glorious nothing is bounding to his waiting arms. I'm tired, Schiller, oh I'm tired, pick me up and carry me home. She doesn't yet understand the glory of nothing—empty, boundless purity is not an abstract notion for her to contemplate like a dead philosophy text. It is her. She flies to him. Ache doesn't exist. Suicide doesn't exist. The destruction of an ego and the erosion of a reality are unborn, not even half-thoughts. Carry me home, Schiller. I'm tired. To surrender into his ashen arms is a feeling she'll never know again. No one cares about her like he does. Dad is an apparition at dinner, dribbling on about work and the paychecks that

AURORA'S FLAME (CONTINUED)

might not come. Mom is drained, always drained. She has headaches. She cleans and sleeps. White tigers dance around

her toes and crackers crack in star bits, kites fleeing north, dirt caking toes, childhood reeling on, on, the sandbox with no bottom...carry me home, Schiller, I'm tired, and he does, he really does, dad won't carry her mom won't carry her he does Schiller who dad named after the poem he liked the one Beethoven put to music she's heard many times dozing on the living room carpet many...Ode to Joy...it surges through them their bodies warm Schiller's arms wrapped around her little waist whistling something, a tune that pops like bubbles in the shells of her ears and tingles her chest I'm tired Schiller I wanna sleep he doesn't say anything only dipping his neck away laughing one bit spit down the dirt she closes her eyes mauve dreams unfolding like the flowers she read about in library books long ago in another violet hour, snoring dust—

She chokes. The stream gags her, rolling the bare body across the bed. She is awake, completely awake, and the dreams are out of her throat. How many hours have past? She never gave him a phone number. He could've left already, taking his free meal and future free meals with him. What time is it? The lights are off, the shades are drawn. It could be anytime. The digital clock is dead and the wall clock is shrouded in too much shade for her to discern the

time. She wrestles out of the haze, slipping slowly off the bed. She stops in front of the full-length mirror. It extends to the floor, diving into the carpet like light through ice. Her body is bore in front of her like the sun, horrifyingly unavoidable. Though every man and woman she's ever slept with told her that her body is beautiful, gorgeous, and sublime, she hates the sight of it in a mirror. There is something startling and surreal about the complete body behind the wall of glass. Laurel pets her breasts and rubs her navel, trying to make sport out of this hushed reality. She jiggles her smooth buttocks, firm thighs, and imagines she is a tree in a glade, her skin loam, her eyes leaves. She tries everything to make it better. And then she springs back, uprooted, fleeing her own body. She catches a small black glimpse of what used to be trimmed. Quillinger insisted. He doesn't matter—I hope I killed him. No fate is bad enough for that man, who ruined me and ruined Jennifer...

She stares at the wall clock. It isn't even eight yet. Her damp palms rip the curtains apart. Raw sunlight blinds her. When the lids struggle free from the cresting, roaring light, she is transfixed. She is home.

Never has a sunset held her like this. She presses her hand to the window and beholds the mystical sun. Howling purples, savage oranges, and a sky utterly alien overpowers the petty civilization below. She forgets that she has a view of the interstate, the gas station, and the tepid

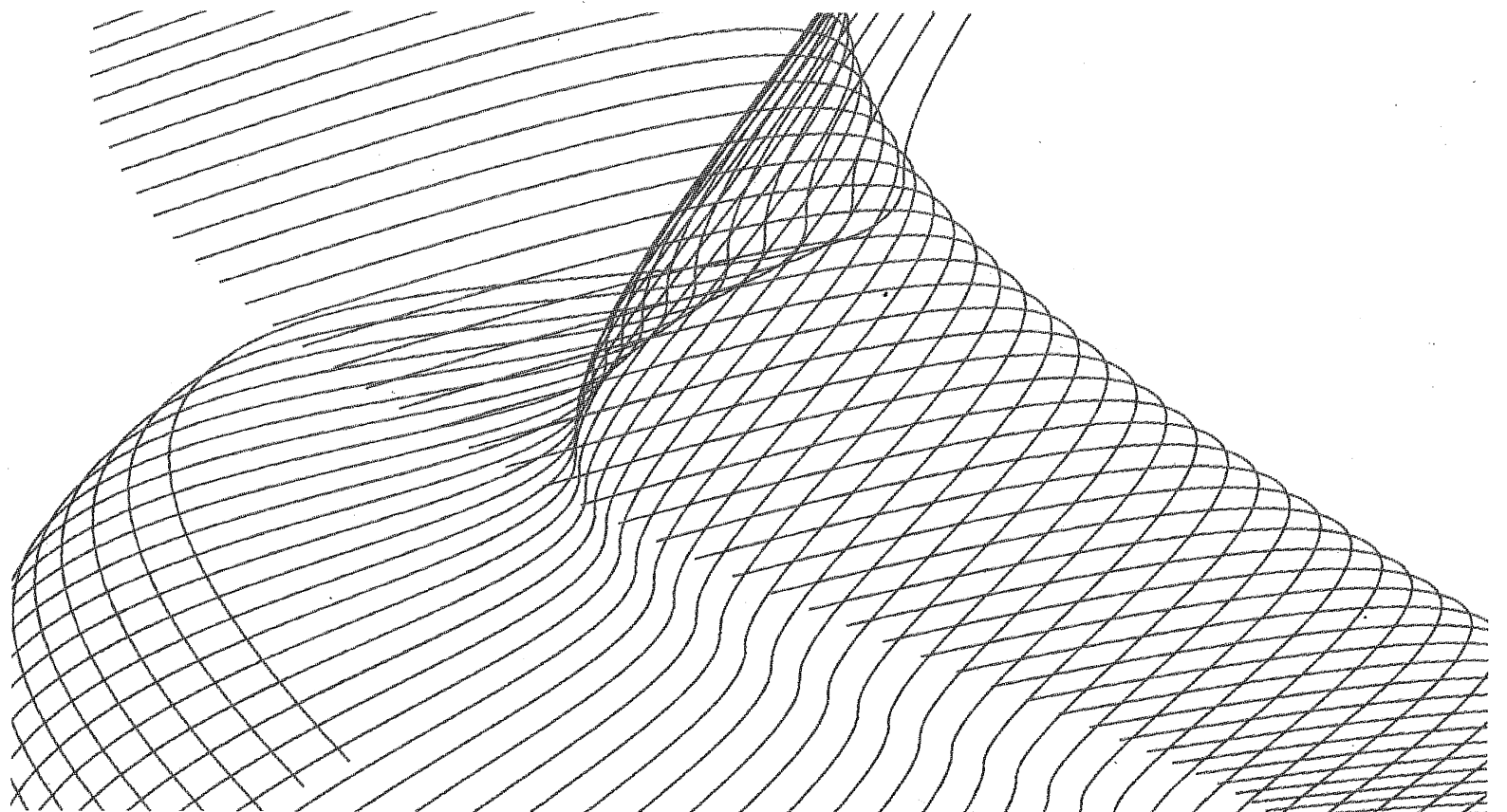
fast food joints. She forgets Quillinger, Jennifer, Schiller, and every other face that has sprung from her subconscious. She embraces the empty and the wordless, the awe beyond language and comprehension. She, like a vessel plunged into the mist, has nowhere else to look. Unlike the vessel, she doesn't want to look anywhere else. The sunset is a reason to divorce her mind and body, to leave the rotten organ—clogged with malodorous thought—on the window's ledge and walk into the world, free. The body walking alone is her icon, her sublime perch, the image and the place she strains to reach. To travel this lovely world completely alone...beyond memory, beyond passion, beyond even love...to look upon the sun a virgin in every sense of the word...to be newly born...to share her nights with the sky and the sky alone

is of course impossible. The moment flees, her lids fall, and the light dies behind mountaintops. She spits at the transitory. Skies have nothing else to offer. The room is stifling. It has even less to give. She falls on the bed, exhales, and picks up her discarded clothing. In her fingers they feel like dead skin. The nausea swarms again, descending upon the quaking body. She can't be inside anymore. Her clothes somehow find their way onto her skin and she bolts out of the room.

The afternoon is dust. Night is here and she frets on the curb, tapping the rental cars with her nails because it's simply something to do.

The chicken place next door spills its hideous neon everywhere, blanketing her back. The shadows are warping, electric. Insects waltz out of drainpipes. Insects crawl down the curb, slime in shadow. Insects are thoughts broken, itching, twittering through her skull at crashing intervals, thrashing antennae through the gloaming reveries. She hates the bloated sky, ash-purple, on the verge of total dark. Where is this idiot Congressman? He's probably a liar, a cheat, nothing worth thinking about. I should go to the bank and withdraw what little cash I have. There can't be much. I don't want to use it—that's my last ditch fund in there, what I need to start something...new?

She knows she's going east. East. What the hell is east? New York maybe. The city. She's never been there it doesn't matter. There's some opportunity there, a job maybe, she can work. Menial bullshit for a while, then maybe something better. Maybe—everything is a fucking maybe! I'm living on maybe, suckling it like a god damn calf. I'm wading in a nebulous...in nebula, running to nothing. I could open up a store. Grocery. That's what I used to do, I practically ran the place back in town. I could do it again, even in the bad economy. Why not? I drove the knife through his mouth—



AMERICAN CINEMA

JOEL MALER

Today I'm hoping for an electrical fire. This is nothing new to my employment here, though to be honest it's been weeks since I've expressly wished for such a demise. More commonly sought are hurricanes, blizzards, and the occasional armed robbery, but I suppose any old calamity would suffice. I chalk it up to my broken spirit, but every time some gold bricking bastard swipes his Master Card and spends an egregious amount on his ungrateful children, I wish that I had the courage to walk away from this place and find a new job.

But how could I, this job is the crown jewel of my hapless existence. The benefits are scant; the hours long and inconvenient; the customers rude and inconsiderate; and my coworkers each the personification of idiocy.

In short, I have inoperable cancer of the paycheck.

I'm in charge of a video store but not my life. Executor of late fees, distributor of paychecks, guarantor of the new releases to be in stock. Recipient of rudeness, lewdness, part-time excuses, and e-mails from corporate with the latest phone scripts. Thank you for calling Movie Mania, where we're crazy for new releases, how can I help you?

Kill me.

I loathe this place. It's a boil on the face of a town that could do the

world a favor by imploding. Row upon row of cheaply fabricated shelves from some impoverished nation packed with movies made by miscreants acting out poorly written scripts in order to fuel my discontent. I loathe this place, yet it confines me, defines me. It gives me a purpose and fills me with rage. A red-carpeted rectangle of pain, suffering, and obnoxious yellow wallpaper ugly enough to incite a riot, with plate glass windows facing the highway. Windows that I've shattered at least a dozen times in my mind's eye with tractor trailers, sport utility vehicles, and on one especially brutal night, a meteor.

Presently, a line of about a dozen people snakes its way around the previously viewed DVDs as I, the manager and lone cashier, slowly drag the night out. Becoming a manager seemed like a good idea at the time, but has since proven a costly mistake. I am now charged with opening and closing the store each day in the absence of any consistent supervision. Being fired, my only realistic chance of escape, is now a near impossibility. Gone are the days when I would simply move as slow as possible on the register and anticipate annihilation. Now I languish without a cause; a slave to repetition. It has long since ceased being a job to me, and has instead become fused to the very essence of my persona. I live to be miserable, misery loves company, and at work

I receive a steady supply of victims.

Wage labor is poison to even the modestly intuitive mind. If I had to restock the new releases, for example, I know this would take about fifteen minutes, fifteen minutes of my life costs Movie Mania \$3.25. One minute of my life is worth less than 22 cents (before tax). I try not to dwell on that, though. It's just a place for me to go, where I wither my life away an hour at a time, blandly serving the mindless multitudes filing in as if summoned here expressly to collect their drivel, load up on caramelized snacks, and shuttle themselves home in Armadas and Escalades, while gas prices rise like blood pressure, like adjustable rate mortgages, like everything but my spirits.

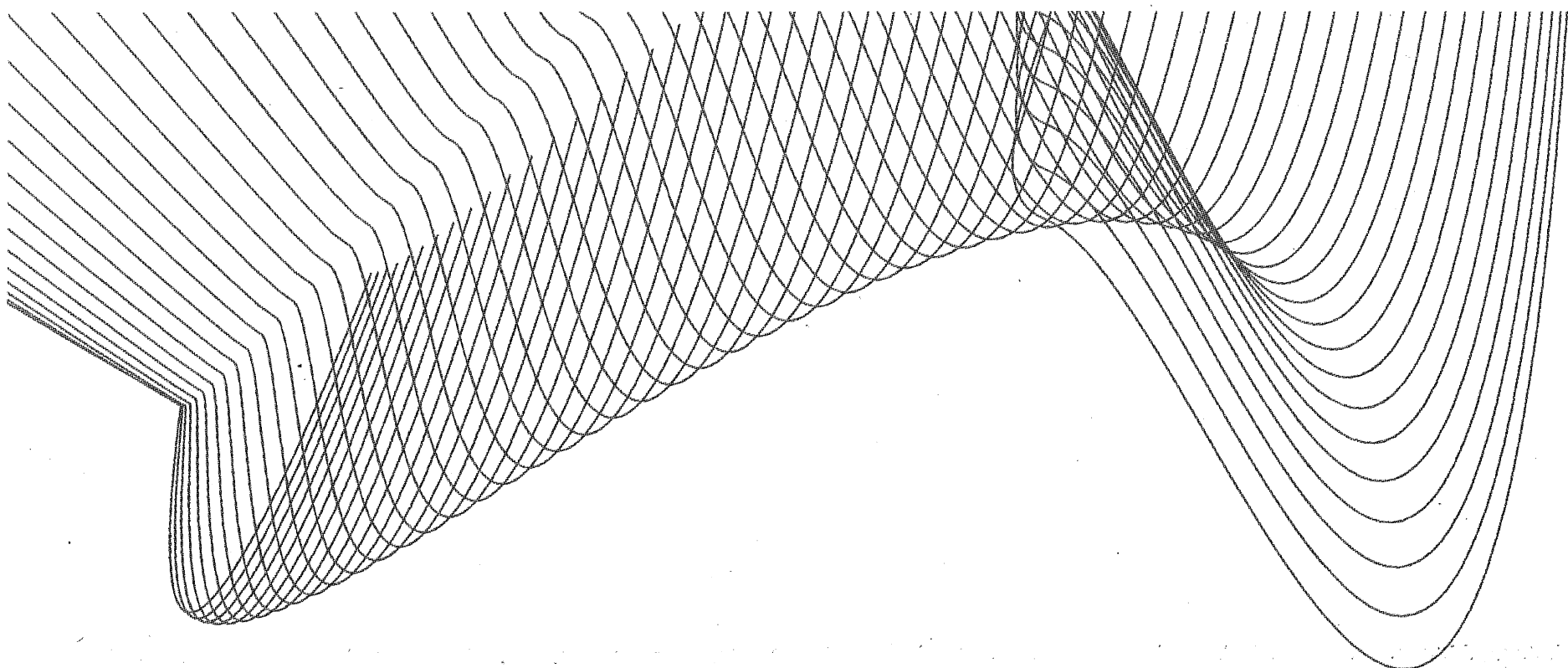
Sometimes work for me is like going to a human zoo. I see families, that which I never truly had, because such things are the sum of their parts and parts don't work when their incompatible, broken, or both. One day I help a mother find "The Little Mermaid" for her daughter and I see my mother holding my sister's hand, leading her along. Then I remember we were in a bar when that memory was made. Memories are troublesome in this way, and I am often jarred from them by the voices of customers or a passing ambulance, rushing to an emergency more apparent than mine.

I write little poems on the money in the cash register when no-

body is looking. Sometimes I forget about this and when I ring up a customer I open the drawer and see Washington, Lincoln, Hamilton and Jackson staring back at me, mouthing my own words to me, as if advocating the haikus I've written next to their faces. It's a guilty pleasure of mine, and each time I break a twenty I'm able to distribute a little piece of my sorrow into the economy. The first day I did this, the DOW Jones dropped 400 points. It had to do with the collapse of a major utility in the Midwest.

But I briefly felt empowered.

As another wasted night draws to a close I'm about to lock up when a man in a hooded sweatshirt pushes the door in. As this is happening I think of the dank stockroom in the back of the store. A cheap card table sagging from the weight of the security monitors with a tiny refrigerator wedged between file cabinets and a firing squad of folding chairs. The man reeks of sweat and in between steps he jabs me in between the shoulder blades with the gun. I wonder how this looks on closed circuit television, playing to an audience of empty chairs. My very own contribution to American Cinema. Where's the money the money I need the money, he says. The time release safe doesn't open until Friday, at which point I'll have already been dead for three days.



PRACTICE BEING BLIND

LIZ KAEMPF

But, really! Really! What if robots *did* take over the world?! What if someone built gianormous robots and they all went bananas?!"

"Maybe. I guess it could happen," Eileen mumbled distractedly.

"Mooommmooomm! You're not even listeninggg!"

"Huh? Oh geez, Sam!"

"What, Mom?" he asked with his arms outstretched.

"Oh, Sam, you got paint everywhere," she answered grabbing a towel from the counter and drizzling warm water from the faucet on to it. She took hold of the small boy and wiped furiously at his messy paws, then halted before attending to the red and blue streaks on his face. "You know, Sam? You almost look like an Indian."

"Really, Mom? Do I? Cooooo! Can I see? Please? Can I?"

Eileen laughed and grasped the handle of a stainless steel pot from the rack above the sink and held it up like a mirror in front of her son's face.

"Awesome!" he said in a gasp. He left his mouth gaping open as he turned his head from side to side. Eileen put the towel back on the counter, conceding that her son would be much happier to leave the war paint on for a little while longer. She stood up and walked to the refrigerator, gazing into the open doors she called out, "Apple juice or chocolate milk, Sammy?"

"Chocolate milk!" he shouted with exuberance.

Eileen laughed as she wrapped the fingers of her left hand around the handles of the Hershey's syrup and the half-gallon jug of 1% milk. She let the doors glide shut and seal themselves as she turned to the cabinet and picked out a tall, clear plastic cup with her free hand.

"Mom, what about my Batman cup?" Sammy whined.

"But I thought you like to see the chocolate swirl around in the cup?"

His mouth dropped open, "Mom, I forgot! I forgot about that!" and then a smile spread across his face faster than the milk flowed into the cup. His mother reached for the chocolate syrup next, but he stopped her. "Mom, can I pour it in? Please? Can I?"

Eileen frowned slightly, "You're going to put in too much."

"No, no, no! I won't! I promise! I just want to pour it in! Please, Mom, Please?!"

She sighed, but then handed over the bottle to her son who took it with both hands. "Just be careful and don't squeeze the syrup too hard, okay?"

But Sammy was already ignoring her, too busy watching the chocolate drizzle and spiral

into his milk. He made sure he didn't stay mesmerized for too long. He knew that if he put in too much his mother wouldn't let him do it himself ever again. So after a few seconds of magic, he eased the flow before stopping it entirely.

"See, Mom! I told you I wouldn't put in too much! I told you!"

His mother laughed appreciatively, "You're right, Sammy. I should have trusted you," then she stood up to get a straw from the kitchen drawer.

"Yep! You shoulda!" Sammy chirped gleefully.

Eileen put the straw in her son's cup and as he slurped the milk up happily she returned to her post at the kitchen sink to finish washing the dishes, every now and then turning her gaze to her son and his unbridled joy.

She sighed and internally reminisced about when chocolate milk used to be a luxury. Her father barely allowed anything that wasn't a necessity. "If we didn't need it, then we didn't have it," she always said. They only got chocolate syrup when Dad got a raise, or Grandma came to visit from South Carolina.

Both events rarely occurred.

Eileen awakened from her memories only when the sound of a slammed car door from the driveway reached her ears. "Shit," she hissed and grabbed the towel once again. "Sammy, I gotta wipe the paint off your face. Come here."

"But why Mom?"

"Because Daddy's home and he won't want to see you a mess like this."

"But Mom --,"

"No buts!" and she wiped off the paint from the disheartened boy's face and sent him to his room to change his shirt. She had the table shining when the key turned in the lock and had Sam's finger paintings drying by the window by the time Dan got up the steps to the kitchen.

"Hey Dan," Eileen said to the dirty water in the sink.

"Now that's no way for my lady to greet me when I come home!" he said tottering over to her. "Where's my kiss?" He nuzzled his unshaved face into her neck and she tried not to cringe at the touch.

"So, Dan, who did you meet up with on your way home from work today? Jim, Jack, or Jose?"

He stepped back and the flush of his cheeks darkened with an oncoming rage. "What the hell is that supposed to mean?!"

"It's 4 o'clock in the afternoon and you're already drunk. What kind of father are you?" she asked stepping away from the slovenly man she wished she had never married.

"Now that's no way to talk to your husband," he grunted grabbing her at the elbow and preventing her from getting away.

"Get off of me, Dan! I don't want you here if you're not sober!"

"Oh! So you can have some fancy pants wine

at dinner, but I can't get a drink with the boys after work? Sounds unfair to me."

"I don't get plastered around my son. That's the difference, you moron," she growled and tried to wrench her arm out of her husband's grip.

"You know," Dan started, "you could try being a little nicer to your dear husband."

"When pigs fly," she retorted.

"I don't see why you gotta be so damn unreasonable, baby." Dan pulled Eileen in aggressively closer to him and grazed his cheek against hers.

"Maybe it's because you're an alcoholic, Dan," she said straining to release herself from his grasp. "I've already mastered being deaf when it comes to you, I'm not going to be blind too."

"Mom, I changed my shirt. Can I have a grilled cheese sandwich for dinner, please? You make them the best," Sammy said on his way into the kitchen but looking down at the wrinkles in his shirt and trying to flatten them out.

"Sam! How's my little guy?" Dan asked enthusiastically and turned his attention from his wife to her son. He lifted him up from under his arms and hugged him.

"Hi Daddy. I'm great. I painted some evil robots and Mom even let me pour the chocolate syrup into my milk. I didn't even put in too much!"

"That's great, kiddo. Glad to hear it. You're shapin' up to be just like your old man, huh?"

"Sure am! Eww, Daddy, your breath smells gross!"

Eileen's teeth clenched through her lips. Dan laughed, "Sorry, kiddo. Musta been what I had for lunch." Eileen scoffed under her breath as he put her son down. He turned to her but she was already behind the refrigerator door pulling out the cheese and bread.

"Honey, why don't you go wash your hands before dinner?" Eileen asked.

"My hands are clean, El," Dan answered.

"I wasn't talking to you," she whispered with a maliciousness that went unnoticed by her son. "Sammy, your hands?"

"You got it, Mom! Be right back. Don't start cooking it without me!"

Eileen turned on the electric stove to heat it up and picked a small plate out of the cabinet and a frying pan off the hooks on the wall. Dan watched her with the eyes of a captive lion that had been fed vegetarian burgers for the last two weeks. She could feel his eyes on her body. "Can I help you with something?" she questioned condescendingly, not making eye contact with the beast.

"Yeah. How about you help me find a wife that's not so much of a cunt?"

Without a second's hesitation Eileen's hand whipped across her husband's face with the speed of a gazelle running from a lioness.

"You bit --!"

"Don't you dare ever speak to me like that," she

PRACTICE BEING BLIND

LIZ KAEMPF

hissed through her clenched teeth and came eye-to-eye with the-sorry-excuse-for-a-man for the first time since he stumbled through the door.

"THIS IS MY HOUSE, DAMMIT! YOU DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO IN MY HOUSE!"

He shoved her ruthlessly into the stove behind her, his face swollen with blood and anger. Her back smashed into the oven handle and her arms were sent flinging back to the stovetop helplessly.

"AHH!" Eileen cried, recoiling from the heat of the front burner and clutching her left hand in pain. Dan looked at Eileen without pity or remorse and walked out of the kitchen. Eileen heard the front door slam closed and Dan peel out of the driveway. She took a clean towel from the counter and soaked it in cold water while holding her crippled left hand up to her chest. She wrapped her hand in the towel and stared through the linen to trace out the burn scars that would appear along her formerly flawless skin. Tears trickled down her cheeks and Eileen crumpled onto the kitchen floor.

"Mom, sorry I took so long. I brushed my teeth too. Aren't you proud? Where's Daddy?" Sammy paused in the doorway. "Mommy?" he asked nervously. The boy walked slowly up to his mother and fell down to his knees next to her. "Mommy, are you okay?"

Eileen coughed a little, and choking on her words replied, "Yeah, Sammy. Mommy's fine. Don't worry about it." But Sammy wasn't convinced and he stood up and ran over to the pantry. He came back out and stooped down next to his mother with three chocolate chip cookies in his tiny hands.

"Here, Mommy. You always give me cookies when I get hurt and it always makes me feel better. It'll make you feel better too."

Eileen gave her son a half-smile and picked one of the cookies out of his hands and took a small bite. "You have the rest, Sammy."

The two of them stayed there quietly and chewed solemnly on the cookies Sammy brought over. Neither mother nor son made a sound other than that of their own breathing.

"Mommy, please don't cry anymore," Sammy whispered suddenly. Eileen looked up into the glassy, blue eyes of her son. "I know Daddy did this. I know Daddy makes you cry every night, but don't worry, Mommy. Because when he comes back I'm gonna beat him up, and he's never gonna make you cry ever again. Okay, Mommy? I promise."

Eileen laughed sheepishly. "I don't think that's necessary, Sammy." She placed her one delicate hand on the cheek of her son and then swept it through his messy hair. She gathered what was left of her strength and lifted herself up off the ground with Sammy's help. "How about that grilled cheese, huh?"

Sammy shook his head. "I'll make you dinner, Mommy."

"But you're not tall enough to reach the stove," she laughed.

"That's okay. I know you like ham and cheese sandwiches. I can make that. I don't need the stove for that,

Mommy."

Eileen smiled. "I think that will be perfect, Sammy. Thank you."

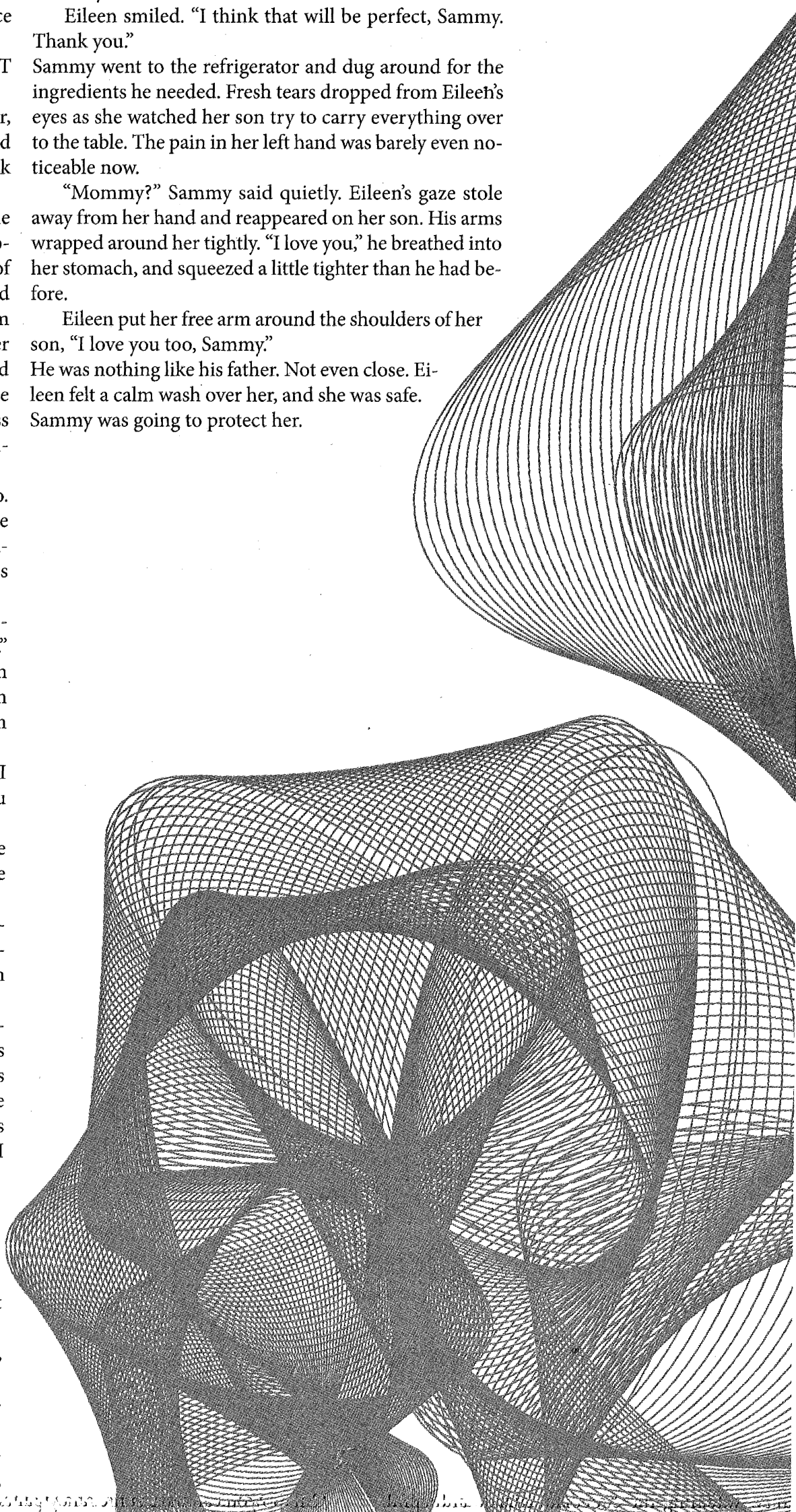
Sammy went to the refrigerator and dug around for the ingredients he needed. Fresh tears dropped from Eileen's eyes as she watched her son try to carry everything over to the table. The pain in her left hand was barely even noticeable now.

"Mommy?" Sammy said quietly. Eileen's gaze stole away from her hand and reappeared on her son. His arms wrapped around her tightly. "I love you," he breathed into her stomach, and squeezed a little tighter than he had before.

Eileen put her free arm around the shoulders of her son, "I love you too, Sammy."

He was nothing like his father. Not even close. Eileen felt a calm wash over her, and she was safe.

Sammy was going to protect her.



HOMECOMING

ERIC DIGIOVANNI

I was feeling pretty buzzed when I left my lodging in Port Jefferson; I stirred my coffee that morning with a leftover roach. Why did I bother with such a thing? I really don't know. Thought it would feel good, and if this was going to be a loose attempt at covering Homecoming, then I figured sobriety would be a hindrance. To get into the spirit I had to be in the same state of mind as the rest of them. Matched the weather, too. Cloudy in the sky, cloudy in my head.

I was starving by the time I got off the bus and headed to Wang for some free breakfast. All they had were bagels and muffins. Hardly substantial for a long day of photography and reporting, but fortunately, they had The Almighty Life Blood, coffee. It kept my head buzzing for another good hour. There was no one there really, which makes me question why The Statesman devoted a whole article to it that next Monday. Then again, if they dedicate a photo spread to a Farmer's Market, then nothing is too inane for them.

I did, however, talk for a while to a friend of mine, who's an editor for The Patriot and the VP of the College Republicans. I met him on the train home back to Bayside one weekend. He had a laptop chock full of Batman: The Animated Series and we shared in the nostalgia.

He noticed my camera. "Taking pictures 'I'm writing something for The Press,'" I said.

"Cool. Ever think of doing something for The Patriot? We're not as polarized as The Press. Or maybe we are. I'm not sure."

Seemed interesting, but not something I wanted to discuss right there. I had a job to do. I changed the subject. "Think we have a chance today?"

"Eh, I don't know."

He went back to his dorm to rest, as I considered his offer. Only problem is I wouldn't know what to write.

I was on my way to the ITS center to see if the Alumni Breakfast would have anything more substantial, when I saw the good old marching band. I used to play mellophone for

my first year. It's basically like a fat trumpet, and has a lower pitch, but not by much. The fingerings and such are still the same.

I was a geek in the band, but by no means a "band geek." The aspect of school spirit never appealed to me that much. It was a way for me to continue performing music, after playing the trumpet throughout high school. I still remember all the practices in the freezing cold, but it was worth it, because I got to see all the football and basketball games. It got me out, and was a bit of an ego boost when John Leddy, the manager of the band kept saying "Oh, they love you guys! You're doing so much!" This all took place during the inaugural year of the band, when it seemed like we were Stony Brook's sign that it has arrived.

One of the drummers I knew and I talked to a bit.

"Everyone still as gung ho about the band and spirit and all that since I left?"

"Oh yeah. Leddy still goes 'Everybody loves you!' But we're not really that good. I guess we're good at having spirit, I mean, if we wanted to be good we'd have auditions, but they want to be able to say we have the fastest growing band anywhere."

I went inside, and got right into the bustle, as everyone was getting ready for the parades and halftime show. Everyone was going in and out of doors, and the sounds of everyone practicing all resounded in to one single rush of noise. It was depressing, but it felt good to not have to be wrapped up in the hype. Some kids in the back of the auditorium were playing keep away with a balloon.

Luck was on my side, and Alumni breakfast was miles better; it actually had hot food. Only downside was that there weren't any alumni. There was a former employee, and this was her story (as transcribed through a crappy Olympus Digital Voice Recorder):

"I went to Illinois State for my Bachelor's and My Masters. I worked here for three years, and I still felt strong enough to still come back. They work your ass. By the time you're done here, you're ready to supervise an army, run for the presidency of the United States. They made you do everything. We ran the parade and

the parade was at nighttime. I also had experience teaching, mostly 101's. But the experience was awesome, once you're done you could do anything"

On my way to the parade grounds, I actually saw a guy wearing the official douche uniform: headband, pink polo with the collar popped and hair that actually needed work every morning. He wore it without a hint of irony, like he wasn't in on the joke. Or rather he was aware of it, but he's just brave. He was a cool guy and all, a little cocky about us winning, but it was just weird seeing someone wear that. Like the one time I saw a guy in one of those Involvement Fairs wearing fox ears and tail. I don't remember what club he was with, but even with that, everyone still ignored him.

I started taking some pictures of the floats as they were preparing for the parade. There was no middle ground with regards to quality. It was either so well done that you'd think the creators thought such a thing mattered to their futures as human beings, and some were being slapped together last minute with duct tape and spray paint, like a twisted version of the Roth Regatta. I got to talk to a couple of the Homecoming candidates while I was waiting for the parade to start.

"Do you guys really expect to do anything as Homecoming King or Queen?"

"Well, I mean, I'll probably have to come out to certain events. Boost school spirit," said one of the nominees for Home Coming King.

"You walk out onto the field, that's about it," said one of the queens.

"So then if that's all you do, then why bother running?"

"To get more involved, I guess." She said.

Neither of them was too sure about the actual duties. Hell, they just cared about winning. However, I now had the focus of my Homecoming article:

Why school spirit?

I went to the Homecoming Selection that Wednesday, where the candidates had to answer some questions and show off a talent. The entire thing can be summed up like so: The girls listed off all of their extracurricular activities, and the guys tried

to ham it up as much as possible, rather than show why they should be representing our school as the embodiment of spirit. It's not like it mattered anyway. Every candidate had their own cheering section/voting block, so it all boiled down to who brought the most people along. One of the candidates was someone I see in every one of classes, since we're both Senior year engineering majors. Now, he is a nice, easy going guy, and has something really good for his Senior design project. However, seeing him bounding around and trying to teach us cheers that night made me lose just a bit of respect for him. Nothing serious, more like "I saw you piss drunk singing 'Dayman' with your pants off". It's harmless, he was having fun, but still, you know?

One of the drum majors for the marching band rushed over to me, jumping up and down. We used to play mellophone back when I was still in the band. "Hey!" he yelled, running up to me, shaking my hand, "How are ya, man?" If he weren't part of the marching band and just excited for the halftime show, you'd swear he was on something. "You taking pictures?"

"Yeah, for The Press," I replied, looking for more photo-ops. "So, what's the half-time show like this year?"

"Oh, you're going to be surprised, man. You'll like it."

The parade started and the familiar cadences of the marching band—Sorry, I mean, the familiar cadences of The Spirit Of Stony Brook Red Hot Marching Band DS 64 2000 echoed amongst the buildings. It was a nostalgic sight, but it wasn't what I was looking for. I met up with the new photographer, Ezra, who I e-mailed about covering the event. He was taking pictures of floats.

"So glad you e-mailed me," he said. I then ditched him for the WUSB table, where they were holding a trivia contest. I won a Stone Roses CD. I went back to find Ezra, but to no avail. I wanted to show him the real story of the hour: the tailgate parties. Here was where I would find my answer: These people didn't have to be here. They didn't build a float, or paint a banner, or were part of the band. Given the choice, they came out of their dorms and got psyched

HOMECOMING

for the game in style. The smell of fermented hops and charred meat filled the air, and didn't care about being healthy, just about being good. Lots of little canopies were scattered throughout the parking lot. However the one thing that caught my eye was a giant silver painted school bus. It was some project where they drove from Connecticut to Stony Brook all on vegetable oil. One of the crew members was eating Wendy's. I guess that's where they refueled.

Going from tailgate to tailgate, I noticed they all had one thing in common: a PR guy. He's the one of the group responsible for introductions and asking you if you want a beer. I always accepted. He was also able to recommend similar parties going on later that you might also enjoy.

There are two sorts of responses people give when they see you with a camera: pose or get suspicious. If I had Ezra with me, my journalistic outfit would look more official, but since I was alone at the time, I had trouble getting anywhere. One guy actually called me a "narc."

"Oh no, I'm not one, but there are guys snooping around."

"Yeah? Fuck him!"

"I'm serious! I talked to one of the officers before I came back here, said he was on the lookout. He then changed his shirt and left."

"Yeah, uh..." He spoke lower. "Any idea what he looks like?"

"Bah, I don't know. It was one of the fraternities, I don't remember which."

He gave an apprehensive look around before shrugging me off, but his drinking became more discrete.

Everyone else however, was more than happy to welcome me. Once they heard I worked for The Press, they wanted pictures to be taken. One group wanted me to take a picture of the steak they were cooking later. I also took the "family photo" for the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity. "Brothers! Brothers!" the PR guy yelled as he rallied the troops to take the photo.

"Say, are we gonna be in The Press now?"

"Not up to me. It's up to the layout editor."

He made a reminder to e-mail him the picture.

The game was starting soon. I knew I had a job to do, but most of the people at the parties stayed. I headed toward the stadium and tried to get into the press box.

"Hello, I'm from The Stony Brook Press."

A confused looking kid was holding down the gate.

"Uhh..."

"It's one of the school newspapers..."

"Oh, right." He got on his radio.

"Yeah, I've got a guy from the Stony Brook Press here."

Then another man came down. "Yes, do you have your press credentials?"

"What?"

"You need to talk to us 24 hours in advance."

"I got them, but the thing is, I was supposed to pick them up this morning at the office, but the office is locked right now and I can't find them."

"We don't have a pass back here for—"

"Damn it, I am a journalist!" I was about to go Spider Jerusalem on his ass and headbutt him, but he caved in.

"All right, I'll let you up now, but for future reference, call 24 hours in advance."

"Got it. Thanks"

I've only been up once before for something with the marching band. Once I got up there, I could see why people became sports writers. They had a spread of sandwiches and sodas, and separate rooms for radio people, TV people, and us print jockeys. I sat down next to someone

from The Stony Brook Independent. We were the only young guys up there. The other was from some football specific publication and the other guy was from Newsday, if I remember correctly. One day, I thought to myself, one day these people would know me, and bow in my presence. The marching band came out for their pre-game show, a rendition of The Who's "Pinball Wizard". I always feel a little tingle in my chest when one of my favorite rock songs is blared through horns in a 100 piece band. Thank God they didn't play "Freebird" or I would have broke down and cried. Only problem was that everything was muffled due to the glass and the height. I looked out the back as the game was starting, and saw that there were still throngs of people at the tailgate parties, living it up. If I didn't have to cover the game, I'd go back and try that steak. The Seawolves faced off against the Presbyterian College Blue Hose, a team that virtually no one has heard of. That makes them "indie." All the hipsters will inevitably root for them, and ironically follow them, like my editor Andrew Fraley follows the Colorado Rockies. From

IT'S JUST INFERIOR MAN

DANIEL LUKASCZYK

So there came a question: where do we go from here? After one has reached this point what direction should he move? When will it all come to an end? When does everything stop turning? When... when... can I get off? At the moment this point is reached a magnificent realization begins to take place.

That moment had been filled with the sounds of fists crunching, knuckles splintering, and the wonderful feeling of skin being torn off of the body piece by piece. It seemed that everything was leaving his body. Sinew, blood, life, all of it was leaking, and what was the reason?

It could look to experienced eyes that there seems to be none anymore. Maybe there was just something built inside of the human race. It would be something that exists inside the deepest part of our minds, sitting and waiting to come into full view. It would be something that should someone be scouring his mind and come upon it darkness would fall. But maybe it's the oldest part of us. So when darkness falls and one sits and dwells in that part of his mind the question comes up: so where do we go? Men go back to the original state of animals, but still we come out on top.

Sometimes it isn't just out of fear. Sometimes it all went so much deeper. It can all be played down in the simplest of scenarios.

The feral cat keeps its distance at the first sight of a human. The cat does not understand that which stands in front of it, so it gains a feeling of anticipation; what will the next move be? The towering giant stands over the cat with a complete understanding of what a cat is. Maybe the claws won't come out. Or maybe the cat will advance in full stance and go for the strike. Fear sometimes gives reason to attack. No understanding, fear, attack; that's how the chain goes. But then it all went on in nothing but a blur. So maybe the fearful will conquer the feared and the feared plants the hate for that which it cannot conquer.

But let us pause. Let's rewrite the screenplay. Let death ring as fury builds. It has become evident that man's cycle never stops. Destroy in fear, destroy in hate for not knowing and for not controlling, and then let us bless this time.

But it is in Casimir to transcend through those wounds and move through those memories to see where it all went wrong. He sat there by himself in the darkness and spoke out loud, "Don't try to hide it, I know."

He had been moving deep through those flashing lights with not one minute to stop. He had to be prepared because everything that made his essence was held close to him, so he had to grasp it tight. He had to let the world know who he was and what he was. He had to have the light flashing on him. He had everything that does not last in life, so he had to keep it close to him.

There were others who observed him and saw what he was to them. They sat there and made their statements. So they had to let him know the way the game is played. They had to tell him who's on top. They had watched for long enough.

Afterwards Casimir came to a new conclusion: this can't be conquered, then let them hate me. Let them see a monster.

He walked alone that night. The small entourage that normally followed him had dispersed in its own direction. They had been among him all night and added to the show of whom they were and who he was. They passed items amongst each other and traded ciphers as the tradition went.

Down the street the others had been watching. They had seen everything and knew that they had the power to stop it. But they didn't like the scene. They didn't want to be a part of that act. The ratio of people in the two groups greatly favored Casimir. They had no way of getting to him, because they knew they would wind up dead. They needed him to be alone. They had to corner him to get those scratches in. So they waited.

Casimir spent the time enjoying everything that was around. He had no fear at that time. There was only one thing that could change that atmosphere, but it seemed that the coast was clear. So they relaxed and took

plenty of their own time. Casimir allowed his eyes to become blurred, dark, and cloudy.

They watched as the group dispersed and carefully followed behind Casimir.

Casimir walked alone through the streets without a fear. He was walking on a cloud. Then in front of him he saw the signs. These were new flashing lights. These were the flashing lights that no man wanted to see in front of him. They were coming for him.

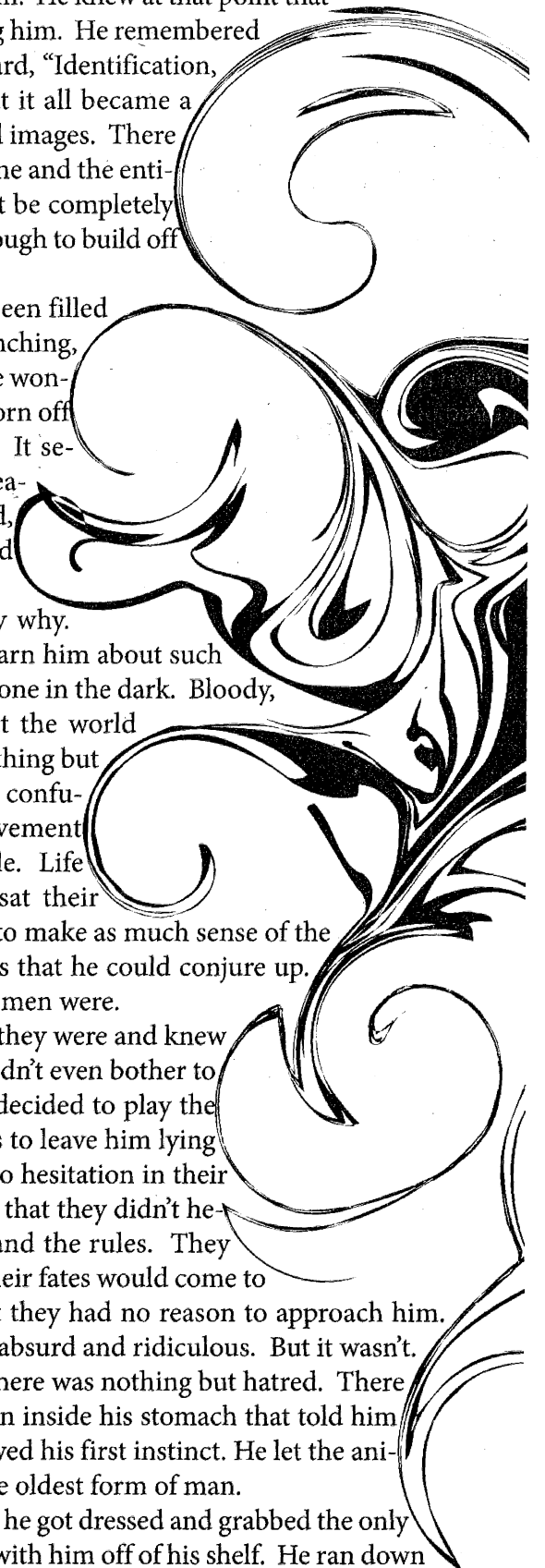
The doors to the car opened and the men walked up to Casimir. Two new lights were now being shone in his face. Blinded and confused he saw the predicament he was in. He knew at that point that there was nothing protecting him. He remembered the last sentence that he heard, "Identification, please." After he heard that it all became a gushing stream of misplaced images. There were skips between each scene and the entirety of the footage could not be completely registered. But there was enough to build off of.

That moment had been filled with the sounds of fists crunching, knuckles splintering, and the wonderful feeling of skin being torn off of the body piece by piece. It seemed that everything was leaving his body. Sinew, blood, life, all of it was leaking, and what was the reason?

He knew exactly why. Other people had tried to warn him about such situations. But now he sat alone in the dark. Bloody, half naked, and feeling that the world around him was made of nothing but dusty coal. There was utter confusion and a sense that movement from that point on was futile. Life had been desecrated. He sat their nursing his knuckles trying to make as much sense of the broken sections of memories that he could conjure up. He thought back to who the men were. He understood exactly who they were and knew what they stood for. They didn't even bother to say anything to him. They decided to play the game and take the first shots to leave him lying on the ground. There was no hesitation in their eyes. But what he knew was that they didn't hesitate because they understand the rules. They knew that if they hesitated their fates would come to a quick and abrupt cut. But they had no reason to approach him. The entire situation seemed absurd and ridiculous. But it wasn't.

From that point on there was nothing but hatred. There was nothing but a rising burn inside his stomach that told him what he had to do. He followed his first instinct. He let the animal out. He went back to the oldest form of man.

As quickly as he could he got dressed and grabbed the only thing he would need to take with him off of his shelf. He ran down the stairs and exited the house. He took the final steps that led to the dense darkness of the frozen streets of Eluna City. Casimir had stepped into Saq-qara with a voice bouncing back and forth through his head saying, "They'll say shame on me." But then another voice came in that repeated, "Never discriminate, but this is only in vengeance." Casimir continued his trek.



HOMECOMING (CONTINUED)

the looks of it, they weren't a strong team either, coming into this game with a 0-4 record.

Kickoff went off to the side at 50 yard line, and the Hose scooped it up, but out of bounds. Not even five minutes into the game, the Seawolves scored on a big drive, led by a 30 yard rush by running back Edwin Gowins, and finished with a 5 yard carry by Conte Cuttino into the endzone.

On their second drive, Presbyterian answered the touchdown on a 91-yard, 7 play drive, finished by a mini-rush by Trenton Dendy.

Yet, with all this action, it was eerily silent inside the press box. Everyone else was pecking away at their laptops and iPhones, and all I had was an on-loan camera, a notepad, and an fuzzy memory. The Stony Brook Independent guy was online waiting for a live stream play-by-play of the game to boot up, and instead had settled for the machines in the press box that give all the stats.

I didn't belong up there on any sense. If I needed to write about Homecoming, I couldn't be cooped up in here, no matter how much free food they had. I needed to be with the cheering, screaming throngs, covered in body paint and "Woo!"ing their asses off.

At the end of the first quarter, (14-7, Stony Brook) I took my leave.

"I needed to be with my people" I said. "The walls are closing in on me!" The weed was starting to take effect. I rushed downstairs, and came out to the field. The air was crisper, the horns were louder, and you could smell the fresh cut grass. The clouds had parted, and you just barely see the sunset over the walls.

Halfway through the second quarter, quarterback Michael Coulter hit Donald Porter for a 59 yard touchdown. Presbyterian managed to score another touchdown and a recovered fumble brought Stony Brook within range to score a field goal before the half went out.

With the score 23-14, Presbyterian was feeling the hurt. The crowd added insult to injury. As I was taking a picture of the Blue Hose heading back into the locker room, a kid next to me yelled with a booming voice "Boooo! Presbyterian, you suck!" Then he singled out individual players, like Oprah was giving away cars: "You suck! And you suck! And you suck! You, you're OK, but you suck!"

The marching band came on the field. The show started off great, with

"White Rabbit" and "Don't Fear The Reaper." The music selection has gotten better, but the talent is still of variable quality. Then they went into "Thriller," and actually did the zombie dance. Just when you've thought something could never happen, there it is. The drum major was right, I was very surprised. Then they ended with "Disturbia." Interesting to hear from a marching band, but sadly, having it played at least three times at every social gathering had already ruined the song for me.

The second half started up again, but there was no conflict, no dramatic nail-biting tension like the 2007 Homecoming game, where they scored a last minute field goal to go into over time, then won.

In fact, the most impressive touchdown of the day was on a fake pass to QB sneak by Coulter was when he was flipped head over heels into the end zone by an incoming tackle. Then some men in red full body suits came along and danced for the crowd. Unfortunately, none of them were aware of how much those things showed off. After the game was over, everyone rushed the field in a roaring sea of red and flesh. I thought I saw one guy almost get trampled. Despite that, he still had a big smile on his face, got up and kept running.

The Seawolves plowed through the Blue Hose's piss-poor defense to win 52-14. You can tell a team is bad when the quarterback gets just as much rushing yards as the running backs. It was a slaughter for the sake of school spirit. "If our football team kicks this much ass, then that means this school does, too!"

The notion of "school spirit" is bull. There is no such thing, and to love a bunch of buildings is just foolish. There is nothing inherently special about Stony Brook University. All the discoveries in medicine, all the friends we make, all the wins the sports teams get are due to the people themselves. All the school can provide are opportunities.

Homecoming is nothing more than an opportunity, and it's not exclusive to Stony Brook. It's an opportunity to catch up with old friends. It's an opportunity for free food. It's an opportunity to party. It's not "school spirit" we should be celebrating on this day, but human spirit. Human spirit is what gives us a reason to wake up in the morning, and keeps us going. That spirit can't be created or boosted by a staged event, it's the little things, like actually giving a damn about others, sharing and just being together.

I crashed on my bed when I got back home. I'd crash for about an hour, wake up, and fiddle around on my laptop for a few minutes, then crash again. I had the earphones plugged in when my RSS Feed program gave its loud DING!

I saw the headlines:

"1000 dead in Indonesia Quake"

"China Celebrates 60th Anniversary of Communist Rule"

"Walruses Suffer Substantial Losses as Sea Ice Erodes"

Suddenly, the event felt pretty small.

IT'S JUST INFERIOR MAN (CONTINUED)

He searched through the darkness until he found them. He could see them so clearly when everything else around them was blurred and contorted. They were in perfect sight. Casimir moved quickly in a straight line towards the door of the corner store where they were stirring their coffees. They weren't the same two who ripped apart Casimir, but they might as well have been.

He stood there in front of them with his eyes firing directly at them. They stared back at him with their eyes shaking strangely. At that moment they realized that all exits are final. Casimir lifted his right arm and the action was complete.

The next day it was all available to the general public to view and entertain those around them by retelling the story. Some of them saw Ca-

simir's picture and knew the monster that he was, others knew the hero that he was. The newspapers were filled with all the information that eager readers wanted to know. So they read and rejoiced singing, "If the past be known at last we know." Now they knew that they could sit there and recite the fact that the fatality shot had entered through the right temple.

Others could sit back and see the event as something completely different and have complete understanding of the archetype that built the situation. They look back at an old prophet who in passing told us, "Nig-gas fear what they don't understand, hate what they can't conquer. I guess it's just inferior man. Became a monster."

Amen.

THE TRUMPET PLAYER

JON PLAISTED

That day in November, Jack had already welcomed in eight autumns, and clocks and dates and deadlines had not yet marked his life. Memories grow sparser with every year and heartbreaks and aspirations, our very souls a thousand miles long, start to fade. We forget the meaning of what happened. Young Jack was learning about life without intention as his tiny transistor radio blurted the ballad "You'll Never Know," by Harry James and his Orchestra. It might have been unusual for a young boy in 1963 to be listening to big band tunes, but he had been weaned on the sounds of jazz and swing his short life.

Jack was humming in the attic over old photo albums and athletic equipment, boxes and chests, pages of large unread books, Christmas lights and tin canisters, when he stumbled over an old trumpet laying secretly muffled beneath some old briefcases. His father had played in a big band as a teenager and had spied a lady's legs out on the dance floor. The story goes...that in the middle of a song, his father hopped down from the stage to cut in on a dance with her. The rest becomes history. The lady became Jack's mother. Jack wondered if this was the trumpet that his father had played that night.

What Jack picked up in his hands was rusty and tarnished and the mouthpiece was stuck in so hard that he couldn't pull it out. He crawled down from the attic to find the owner, who had just that second pulled into the driveway and was pulling work samples out of the trunk. Jack didn't know what his father did for a living. Jack just knew he was a salesman and was gone for days at a time. He drove a nice car and wore a fancy suit to work and he recalled being proud of him just for that. He ran to his car and thrust the trumpet into his chest shouting,

"Play something Dad!"

He looked at Jack and then the trumpet, and said, "Where'd you get this?" and "Not now."

As Jack moped away, he turned to watch as his old man grabbed the horn in his strong left hand and extend it to inspect the instrument suspiciously, as if it were some foreign object. He brought it back to his chest, closer this time to his heart, then fingered the three keys, extending it again from his body and admired it as a smile played across his face. His breath started to become fast as he yelled,

"What do you want me to play?"

"Play anything," Jack demanded.

"I don't know anything," he replied,

Jack thought for a second, "Play 'You'll Never Know.'"

He looked surprised that his son knew the old tune and asked him, with a wink, to hum the melody. As Jack accommodated him in a hurried but accurate rendition, the father looked down and smiled right through the young boy and pulled

the twisted brass to his face; his mouth by this time was set and red, for as Jack started humming the tune, his father had been preparing a ritual with his lips, which now disappeared into the mouthpiece. Something heaved within him and notes came out with a lugubrious wail, as the booze and hate, sweat and drone went into every major note he played.

Thump, thump, thump went his foot on the driveway while three strong fingers moved up and down on golden keys. Jack stood there with eyes wide open as his father, who rarely even spoke to him, was playing some old piece of magic discovered in the attic just moments ago. He was droning syncopation to a song and was making it his own as each tone moaned with melody. The man looked drowsy as he played, his foot thumping and his fingers straight as they fluttered on the keys. Jack watched and listened as his father's eyes grew red and seemed to open and close, while soft but strident notes of an old Harry James ballad came one by one from an instrument that seemed to grow out of his hand. Jack was so proud, that that became *his* proudest moment.

It was the first and last time Jack ever heard him play. The family kept nothing the boy had stepped over in the attic that day. Nothing remains. Not the trumpet, not anything. Keeping things and not throwing things away, is not quite the same thing. Memories work the same way, because like lost possessions, sometimes the past, the days of the week lose their meaning, as do the weeks of the month and the months of the year.

Jack visited his parents many years later. His father was working in Florida at the time, and Jack was just drifting, so he stopped down to see his old man and to look for work. It was one of those Saturdays again, in autumn, middle of the afternoon. This time the two were sitting around a pool side,

"You want to head over to press an eye on Disney World and have a drink with the ol' man at the Polynesian?"

Jack was twenty two and there was nothing he'd rather have done, so both of them hurried to the amusement park early that evening. After a couple of drinks, father and son entered the Magic Kingdom, deep into the heart of Saturday night. Both heads jolted when they heard the soul of a trumpet playing off in the reappearing shades of people and night.

Serendipity.

There was a sign next to the entrance to the dance floor that read, "Harry James and his Orchestra."

Jack said, "Dad, It's Harry James! Is it really Harry James, the trumpet player!?"

He didn't seem to hear, he was just looking at the frail old man in the white suit who somehow

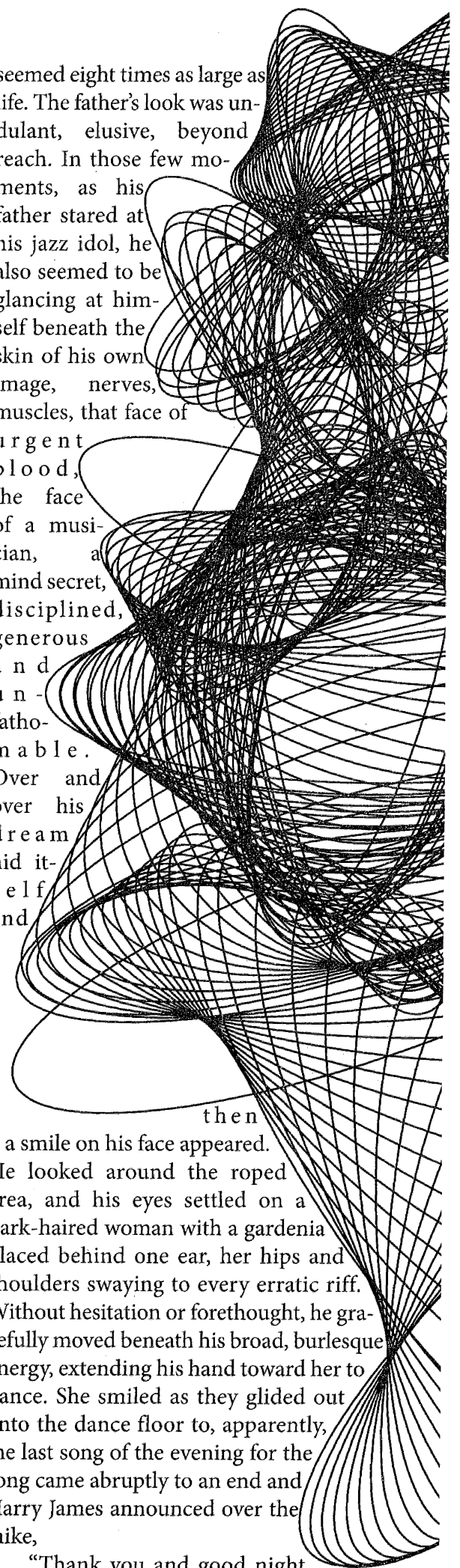
seemed eight times as large as life. The father's look was undulant, elusive, beyond reach. In those few moments, as his father stared at his jazz idol, he also seemed to be glancing at himself beneath the skin of his own image, nerves, muscles, that face of urgent blood, the face of a musician, a mind secret, disciplined, generous and unfathomable. Over and over his dream hid itself, and

then
— a smile on his face appeared.

He looked around the roped area, and his eyes settled on a dark-haired woman with a gardenia placed behind one ear, her hips and shoulders swaying to every erratic riff. Without hesitation or forethought, he gracefully moved beneath his broad, burlesque energy, extending his hand toward her to dance. She smiled as they glided out onto the dance floor to, apparently, the last song of the evening for the song came abruptly to an end and Harry James announced over the mike,

"Thank you and good night, everyone."

Jack's father whispered something in the lady's ear, then hopped up on the stage like a teenager and spoke a few words to the frail old jazz great. His dance partner in the meantime had taken out a little mirror from somewhere and hurried a comb through her hair and a lipstick across her lips. He came back to her just as she was



(CONTINUED)

finishing and took her hand on the spot, whisking her away across the dance floor, both willing to submit to the night and the music as all the other couples joined in. Jack recognized the tune right away. His dad had requested "You'll Never Know," the song he had played fourteen years ago, the day Jack had found his trumpet in the attic. It was Harry James's signature song and the old trumpeter was accompanied that night by an up and coming female vocalist named Etta. She was a large black woman with a voice a half an acre in size and a heart like a lost boat.

The song did not seem to last very long. But like a sad musical fool, Harry James played a raggedy tune in the depths of that night. His father was dancing with a beautiful woman and James was playing *their* favorite song. The beautiful woman was smiling broadly and his father was fox trotting like nobody's business.

And Jack stood there watching in the chilly winds that rose and realized that he had never known his father, nor his father - him, as all the sadness of that realization poured out in one melanc-

holy moment. And Etta, the blues singer, whose mouth was like the shining moon, remembered too:

You went away and my heart went with you, I speak your name in my every prayer,

If there is some other way to prove that I love you, I swear I don't know how,

You'll never know if you don't know now.

When the song was over, the woman did not speak and neither did Jack's father. She took the gardenia from behind her ear and placed it in his coat pocket. He just bowed and she smiled again, and they glanced secretly at each other's hands. Then he scratched his nose and mumbled some moist words and turned away, the words melting on the tip of his tongue, forever. As he headed back to his life and his son, Jack turned his cramped face away.

The night became a blur. The father asked Jack to drive home. Not a whisper, not a thought was spoken. He had two fingers draped over his coat pocket. But not a look was lost upon his son either. Once or twice Jack looked over at the reflection of his father's face in the passenger side window to see it staring blankly into the night, at some inexplicable time and place where dreams were not dreams. And as he looked over at him this night, and as a white ooze seemed to begin seeping, spreading darkly, thickly, slowly down one of his cheeks, he realized his father was so-

something about love and night and intention.

The next day Jack didn't linger long; for some reason, he had decided to look elsewhere for a job. He knew it was his turn to make a living just like his father probably had done when he was Jack's age years ago. No hugs, no sad good-byes. It wasn't their style. And the young man didn't see his father for many years after that as his old man's drinking got worse and, in ten thousand shades of blue, so did his health and happiness. Jack's father is gone forever now, except of course in Jack's reveries when he call him back to answer some questions, to talk jazz, to play that trumpet one more time.

They had made a silent pact that night in the Magic Kingdom. Jack had come to him that night in Florida as a grown child, old enough to make friends, from which struggles music and memory. The same weary jazz echoed through both heads that night. Father and son.

Now, every fall, Jack pulls those memories out of storage. They circle and blow past like so many autumn leaves, like notes from an old horn. Jack sees him in broad daylight as his father holds that trumpet to his lips to play his heart out for him. He sees him as he dances with a dark-haired lady in a pale moonlight.

But the song never ends.

ELVIS SIGHTING AT SBU!

JON PLAISTED

Around the campus, it is strange and rare to encounter beings like Elvis. Drunk vagabonds rarely haunt the prison-like buildings and grounds. You won't find them sleeping behind bushes either. You won't find anyone passed out in front of the Student Union, waiting for security or oblivion to take them away.

Whichever comes first.

Yet....Elvis, fat and gold-plated, diamonds in this belt and on his fingers, appeared suddenly, asking which streets he should take to get back to his penthouse in Las Vegas. Poor guy, he didn't know the show was over. *This is the End, My Only Friend, The End*, Jim Morrison once said. Elvis approached a student and said, "I've been so lonely, I've been so lonely I could die." But she continued her walk along the Zebra Path without responding...

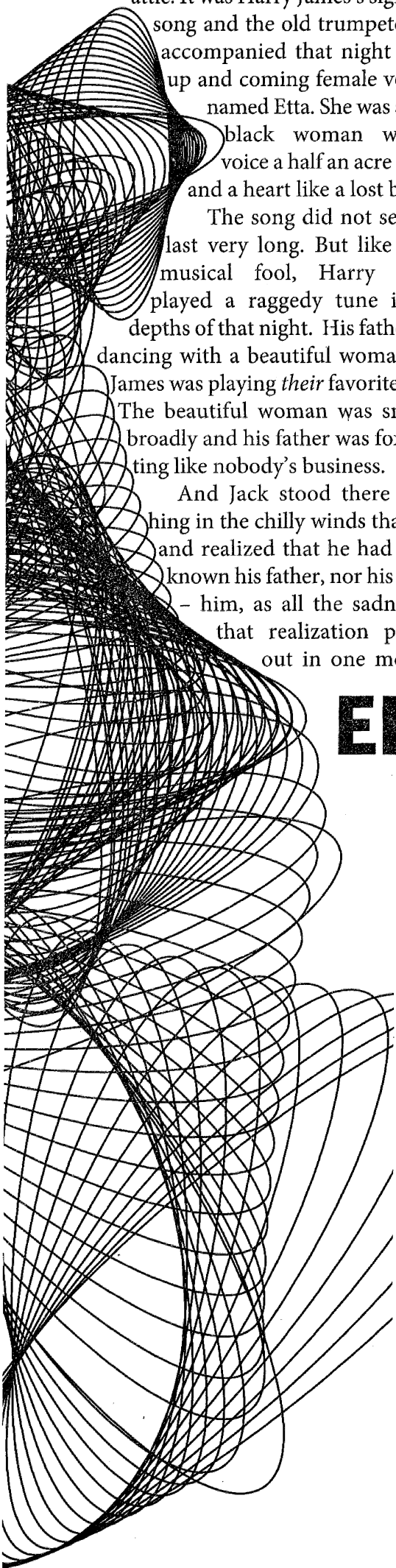
Then Elvis spotted a Security Officer. He shouted, "Oh, let me be (Oh, let me be) your teddy bear." The policeman did not appear moved or amused. So poor EP was thrown in the campus clink and stripped of the diamonds which adorned his clothing and fingers (taken to cover his bail), and was then thrown back on the street with a few bucks in change.

Though already fortyish, Elvis wasn't embarrass-

sed about looking for work. And he tried to find it, but why deny it? Work was hard to come by on the north shore. There were few places that still used live music, and one of them, Tuts (named for the boy pharaoh), had just that day hired a female rock singer, "and this chick is heavy dude. Sorry." In fact, none of the clubs were interested. They all said to EP, "You look too much like the King." His attempts at explaining were useless.

He thought of singing on the LIRR but was silenced on the first train he tried it on. The passengers preferred their own cell phones or IPODS over fat guys with sideburns singing rock-and-roll. What did they know? Furthermore, his bad luck led him to take the Jamaica-Brooklyn route, where the riding public tends to be more hard-assed than is customary. Maybe on other routes. Who knows?

Due to so much disillusionment, Elvis slipped back onto Stony Brook's campus where the trees and flowers had grown more abundant since he had last passed through. He stopped combing his hair and lost weight to a grotesque degree, while his clothes turned to rags. And it was in this state that—someone said that he had no other choice—he began to panhandle the students as they walked around Roth Pond to get to their classes. That didn't work



ELVIS SIGHTING (CONTINUED)

out either.

You and I know the King was born to sing.

Nothing more.

Elvis had already given up on explanations; he was too lonely for that. One day Elvis walked into the filth which is Roth Pond and remained there for hours, baptizing himself, it seemed. When he got out, his appearance was still disagreeable, but his smell was like that of a fishing port, sweet to this writer, but unpleasant to most of the students passing by. A solitary student was spending her time on a park bench, contemplating Elvis with neither sadness nor joy. They were the only two people at the pond now. The sun moved a few fractions of an inch closer. Her name was Ann.

She's had a cat in high school, her only companion, but now she's alone again. She has a dorm roomy, but they don't speak to each other. She has the room to herself every weekend, and never leaves. She speaks to no one in class.

Nobody greets her.

Nobody says, "Who you got for Psych?" or just "What's up?"

Rock-and-roll never got to her. Nobody invites her for a coffee at SAC, or a drink at night, nor takes her to dance, not to have dinner, nor see a movie. Her life has come to be one, two, three...she awakens, takes a shower, gets dressed...She hasn't understood that variations exist: one, three, two, two, three, one...

Ann was eighteen years old, and little by little

the winds are already carrying her away. She was the only one in the dorm who watches soap operas and finds consolation when one of the protagonists was named Ann and lived in happiness with her boyfriend. It was the other students' indifference that made her stop caring about them. Nobody was saying, "How ya doin'?" to her, so she decided that she, too, would say it to no one. And that was fine.

Due to the circumstances (Ann always ill-humored), her roommate opted for another roommate and left Ann alone again and happy as a street cat. Amen, to scorn people also was good once in a while. She discovered that many of the students who wander by are actually a lot like her. She grows accustomed to watching them. All with their own style and at the same time identical.

Like Ann.

Amazing.

It was on one of these days that she saw the King for the first time. One could watch lots of guys like Elvis passed along Roth Pond, maybe talking to themselves about a possible date or homework, or shouting out that they were the King, each one a distinct king. Strangely she seemed to understand him as he began bathing himself in the black water. He reached his hand out naturally to Ann, and filled with emotion, the King told her about Buddy Holly, Priscilla, and the natural rhythm that just might exist in all human hips (he didn't say Pelvis). He told her about drug

addiction, about how to win at Blackjack in certain casinos in Vegas, and about making movies.

She told him about her classes, her old cat at home, about her grades and how she had a dorm room to herself. Then she also gave him an intensive course in shorthand, using some dirt as a blackboard. They fell immediately in love. That Elvis had been divorced, was a fact that did not interest her. Together they began a journey through the campus and over to Kelly Quad where a storm had left the sidewalks soaked and bitten like a big fried banana and peanut butter sandwich, and the Quad in pieces, instantly decayed as though victims of time and not of the heavy rains and high winds.

The sun had gone down and helicopters were hovering around the campus everywhere. Elvis and Ann looked up and wondered what all the fuss was about. All the stop lights were down. The quads had no corners. Reporters and television crews arrived as University Police and Suffolk County authorities were shouting for the two to halt. Elvis felt on stage again!

Soon... the officers just began shooting. Elvis and Ann went on walking. She experienced rock-and-roll for the first time. He sang his greatest hits beneath the intense light of the choppers. There was in all of it, something much better than Las Vegas. The fools never understood that neither they nor their guns existed for Elvis and his friend. You see, these two had disappeared a long time ago.

LABYRINTH

T

he sky was overcast when I was sober last."

-Black Thought

"Clock With No Hands"

Lis'nin?

Ite. Put in yo work. Buh dare's dangs been bodrin' me. I seen it all clarly. I seen dangs. Buh mah mine dun unnastand. Dare's too much hea. Dis swam' done got the bes'ome. Is lie a trap. Fell lie I cand move down hea. Dis maze worked me 'round. I wan leave buh I cand. I wan see dangs difrin. Is lie dare's somethan' hea. Someone dun wan Gabriel to move nowhea. Eyes kna tha not erboby see da way I do. Na erboby kin look out ta dem streets an' vis'un dangs lie me. Is a curse. Is lie I kin look ot dare an see dat man wokin' ta me, black robe an' all: Death. I seen 'im ot dare. He wadin'! Dare's some ole mashick o'er hea. Some ole sorsa'ah lay 'is wand down on dese blocks. Bu' is wha' he ralase that mo' impo'tant.

Rah in da middle he put it. Thi' grea' beast. Rah dare in da centa he let ou' the beast. A monsta. Buh wha we do fo' it. We's movin' in salence 'round 'im. We gots are dings ta ge' 'round an' ge' by. We gets are on mashick. So lot it up. Do wha' chu gots ta do. Cuz ah unnastand dat. Buh da dang be dat we got dese pi'tus of wha's 'round us.

DANIEL LUKASCZYK

Truth be dat we's fucked up. An' wha' we doin'? Tain't nuffin'! People be ot dare tokin' lie dis da way ta be. People thank dat dis be sumthin' worth godin'. Why god dis. Ain't nuffin' hea worth protecin' lie dat. Da mo' eyes look at it da mo' eyes fea it. Da mo' eyes wan ge' 'way from it. Is lie, why? Why put muhsef up dare on top to protec sumthin' dat ain't dat impo'tant ta me? Why shou' ah pu' mahsef in da line to protec Hell?

Buh ya gotta thank ta yasef 'bout dis hea really Hell. Eyes dunno if dare cou' really be somethan' lie Hell. Wit da ways dey splain it all it don' make no sense. Dare really ain't no need fo' it. Seem lie all dat we need is dis hea itself. Afta all dis, wha' the sense in Hell? Even if dare cou' be such a dang as dat eyes don' alieve dat it is wha' dey says it is. Gotta be somethan' complatly difrin. 'Cause wha' it is befo' da fall of man? Dare's wha'? That great War. The war between God and Lucifa. Dat gotta show somethan' to someone. Is all 'bout powa. Who got da powa? Who in control? All dat we's gots ta folla is da word of God. Dat's wha' we's got. Buh den ya thank 'bout who da one in control. Maybe is dat God ain't nuffin' mo' than a tyrant. From da way dat eyes kin see it, dat's how it is. Buh if someone kin brang war to God... then he mussa been pow'fa. 'Most pow'fa as God 'imself. Buh dare comes a time when doze wit da

powa kin be 'feated by doze in control. Revolution. Dat be it: Revolution. Buh no madda who in control it gone come down ta da same dangs. It all fall down ta da fact tha' ya got freedom.

Buh wha' is freedom then? Wha' gone seprate da freedom from asepted akshuns dat one takes. Move 'long ta anofa name... sin.

Jus' pass tha' ta me. Won't be long.

An' than ya gots ta continya wit' da idea dat dare's an angel. An' dat angel kin sin. Dat angel kin sin, an' fall to earth. So den wha' earth? God's gabage dump. Whea he drop da sinnas. Buh it all becomes pat da worl' nonedaless. Dare's gotta be somethan' lef' afta all dis. Deys give us heaven. Dat's wha deys give us. Deys promise us dat if we's live goo' hea an' folla da rules dat we get ta heaven. Buh we gotta die first. Neva knowin' if it rally dare. Dese da dangs the worl' don' need. Loo' a' it all. Dis hea is wicked. Dis hea is all evil. Dis hea is da expearence of da worl'. Dis rah hea... dis breath.

An' the focus of all dis hea is from one thang: sight. Open yo eyes an' vis'un da beast. Behold the beast. Buh dare still people dat gots dey eyes close. Dey ignare da beast. Dey see it. Dey speak ta it. Dey move wit' it buh neva along sod it. Dey don' agree wit it, or praise it, or do nuffin' fo' it. Dey jus' move on wit' life. Den life's good. Buh

FOR THE LOVE

DANIEL LUKASCZYK

The television had been on for hours, entertaining an audience that had no interest in it. The glow from the screen was the only light left in the room. The voices that came out of the speakers might as well have been muted. There was no space for the show in Angela's mind. She stared blankly at the T.V. All she knew about the show was that some guy did something to somebody's house. After that her mind left the room.

Angela's eyes were wide open and shining. She was lying on her side in her bed with half of her face dug into her pillow. She held her cell phone in her hand. After a few minutes she lifted the phone and made sure that the ringer was turned on. She put it back down for a second and then checked again.

Her eyes weren't even focused on the T.V. anymore. She was staring at the floor while rubbing her phone with her thumb. The last time she checked the clock it was 3:17 A.M., now it was 3:19. The night was eternal for Angela. Those two minutes that had passed could have easily been a week to her and it would not have made a difference. She just would have kept waiting. Now and then she would look at the clock and see the same time that she saw only a few seconds ago. She would curse the clock, ordering it to move forward faster. She wanted that night to be over. She wanted the day to return so that the waiting would stop, because if the waiting didn't

LABYRINTH (CONTINUED)

den dats why life so bad hea. Dat's why life so bad fo' me, 'cause eyes see it. An' eyes scared of it. Thankin' dat life's gotta change. Need ta relax now an' then from it all. So eyes come back wit lungs blackened, eyes red. So I need dem stacks to go an' wok dis maze an' gets mo'. Eventaly eyes kna dis maze, an' kna da turns. Dats when I gain da powa. Conqa da maze an' move above da streets.

You hea' da crickets.

Ya hea' dat noise? Buh wha' brings dat noise? Salence.

Ya feel dat? Ain't it a way ta thank? It jus' depresses ya. Ta thank that ya stuck somewhea whea da loudest noise at nigh' is only thea 'cause ain't nuffin' else makin' noise. The crickets.

Na one 'round.

Nuffin'ness. Dare ain't nuffin' 'round ya. Dare comes da need to have othas 'round you. Buh ya gotta thank dat thru dis swam' dares so many people. Deys all so close, buh dey so distant. So close ta ya, buh so fa' away dat is quiet. An' da crickets come out.

An' in the depths uh da nigh', wit' no ligh' a'all dare's still shadows. Still darkness darived from darkness. An' wha's insod dare? Look lie

stop that night it would certainly stop during the day.

Would it?

The phone that she held in her hand became a piece of her. Angela never let it go, and when it wasn't in her hand it was somewhere on her. Her eyes moved to the phone in her hand. She focused on the phone with a look of power, a look that commanded the phone to ring and answer her questions for the night. But there was no ring. She held no power over it.

He had told her that he wouldn't be out too late. She thought that maybe she should call him. No.

She knew that if she called him and disturbed him he would get mad and yell at her.

Maybe he had gotten home earlier and simply forgot to call. Maybe he was sleeping.

No.

She knew where he was.

"I love you," repeated a voice in her head. She rewound and played that clip as many times as she could; it kept the bad thoughts from getting in. Each time her eyes began to fill she would remember that and everything would wash away.

The phone rang. It only took half a second for her to throw her arm to her ear and answer. "Hello," she said frantically.

"Wow!" came a girl's voice from the other end of the phone. "What the hell is the matter with you?" she asked.

Angela grew disappointed. It wasn't him.

eternity shoved inta da darkness. An' when insod da darkness I can hea everythin'. Is when eyes kin hea da clock tickin'. I kin hea da gears movin' 'round. Eyes kin feel da movement.

An' wha' insod dat movement?

HA!

Da loss, da hope, da sight, da ligh', da nigh', an' ev'rithan' else. Buh da mos' impotant is da hope. Thank 'bout it. Wit'out hope wha' you got? Nuffin'. Buh we abandond her. We left her whea she was: blinded an' wokin' da same path in one big circle while we toss rocks at her. Left her blind. No sigh' wah so eva. Buh even she still hope. An' dat's wha we can't believe. We only believe da loneliness an' da darkness. Da beast. An' I can hea da tickin'. Stop da tickin'.

Is so cold. Da flame's burnin' me tha' is cold. Da cold burn. It hurts. Buh it feels so good. Buh is all so close. People all so close. Buh we all trapped. We in dis maze hea foreva it seems. An' the funny thang is dat I kna how to get out. HA! I kna it all. Ev'rithan' connected. Ev'rithan' is seprated buh connected. Dey all lead ta da same point. We jus' don' wan' ta go dare.

Migh' as well go back ta da dark from da dark.

"Nothing, Lisa," Angela answered. "What's up?"

"Just calling to check up on you. You freak me out sometimes," Lisa said to her.

"Sorry," Angela replied, "I'm just waiting for him to call."

"At three o'clock in the morning?" Lisa asked.

"Yeah. He said he would call."

"Angie," Lisa said, "Why do you torture yourself?"

"I don't. I just need to talk to him about something," Angela said.

"About what? Did you guys get into another fight?" Lisa asked.

Angela sat up on her bed and sighed. "Yeah, we did."

"What happened?"

"Nothing," Angela answered, "It was my fault. Don't worry about it. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Fine," Lisa said to her. "Just try to get some sleep tonight. You know Erica's going to kick you out if you nod out at work again."

"Yeah, I know," Angela said and then hung up the phone. She lay back down on her bed and dug her face back into the pillows. She couldn't sleep. There was no time for sleep. What if she fell asleep and he called? He would be expecting her to pick up the phone. He would question her as to why she didn't pick up. He would blame it on her.

Blame what on her?

Something. It would all be her fault.

But then when was there time to sleep?

Da crickets...

Da crickets...

Too much smoke.

It burns. So Cold.

Cold breath, huh. HA!

Look up tho. No sigh'. Nuffin' fo' Gabriel.

Buh den I look out in da mornin', 'an wha' I see. Dey live. Not me.

Dey live. Eyes lay. Dey live. Eyes lost. Dey live. Eyes see da beast.

Eyes no live. Gabriel... who dat. No man....

....

.....

.....

.....huh.....

.....hm...

.....dare....

.....

.....humph....

..... Le's go

insod.

...Ite.....

x

...x

UNINTENDED GRACE: AN UNEXPECTED SEQUEL

PAUL CALHOUN

Dear reader:

By popular (ie. 1) request, I continue this series with a separate idea I had that could easily be integrated.

Chapter 1: Getting Out the Door

Nora watched Victor pack, her stance showing her disapproval as much as her words. "I just don't think he's ready."

Victor continued to stuff the orange fur into its case. "He's more than twice as old as I was when I first went to a con."

Nora smiled softly. "Your parents were strange."

"Parent." Victor corrected. "Only one ever took me."

Nora continued the argument. "I didn't mean age, I meant in maturity. Mike's too innocent. You'll scandalize him."

Victor did look up at that, his expression registering his incredulosity. "Innocent? Our son? He's fifteen. At age ten, he was already giving me a run for my moral money. Accepting? Yes. Innocent? Not at all."

Nora put her hands on her hips in only partially manufactured outrage. "Mike is a sweet, darling little boy and I'll not hear you speak of him like he's some sort of—"

"Adult?" Victor asked. "He's your little boy, but he learned adult behavior earlier than most. Besides, it's not like everyone there will be as strange as me."

"As if that kind of concentration of odd is even possible." Nora muttered.

"Most of them are weirder."

"Thank you very much," Nora replied, "that *really* sets my mind at rest. I note that the only suit you've packed so far is Jamina."

"Oh, that's not for me." Victor smiled mischievously. "I'm taking Saliaven. No, that's for Mike."

Nora sighed. "If you get my little man knocked up—"

Victor's smile widened. "You're learning."

"Five years with you is a true education. In all seriousness, you will keep an eye on him?"

"Inasmuch as I need to. This isn't like some cons, you know, it's very quiet. Panels, the masquerade, maybe some low-key parties. He'll be fine. I wouldn't take him to a really off-the-wall con first. Haven't I always been trustworthy?"

Nora kissed him on the cheek. "Mostly." She rolled her eyes for his benefit. "I guess since I'd already told Mike he could go, I can't take it back. Even if he does decide he'd rather go as a girl than as a boy. I wonder sometimes if I should have been more involved in teaching him values. Five years with you and he's a crossdressing furry who goes to conventions and has his *father*," she gave Victor a dirty look, "show up at a party dressed as a teenage vixen and claim she's his date. Mostly

trustworthy may be too much."

Victor grinned and shrugged modestly. "It did wonders for his social life. They never found out."

"Yes," Nora replied flatly. "He's almost as good at acting normal when he has to as you are. If I didn't love you, I think I'd have to consider you a bad influence."

It was Victor's turn to kiss his wife on the cheek. "See you in a couple of days."

Nora put her hand on his chest. "Not before I give my son a few words of warning. Going to a con as a teenage boy with only a few females is one thing. Going as a girl in a sea of sex-starved men is another."

"You're going to give him a stern talking to?" "At least as stern as you did when he asked for Jamina. I may not have experience as a transvestite fursuiter, but I do have experience as a teenage girl. I think some wisdom from both sides is required."

Victor replied, "You know me too well."

Nora's lips met his as she said, "I do indeed."

Victor smiled as Nora pulled back a moment. "Are you sure you don't want me to get you a suit? You could come to cons with us."

Nora embraced him again. "I think I like the feel of warm fur on my skin more than I'd like the feeling of having the fur."

"There's where we differ."

Nora whispered, "I prefer to think of it as not having to compromise."

"What about talking to Mike?"

Nora pushed Victor onto the bed. "I'd prefer to do that alone, and if I delay you packing for a few minutes, you'll be too busy catching up to try to follow me."

Mike sat quietly as his mother tried to find the right words. After a few seconds of silence as she attempted to think of a way to begin properly he said, "You're worried about me going to the con as Jamina."

Nora's smile was wry. "I thought you'd be embarrassed to talk to me about it."

Mike shrugged. "I'm trying a new tactic. I'm going to try to understand your position and be reasonable, frank and open. After all, it doesn't serve either of us for me to get indignant or you to get flustered."

Nora replied, "Sometimes I worry that you're growing up too fast."

Mike smiled, "Of course you are, mom. All parents to, and I *am* growing up faster. Living in such an enlightened household does that. Is it so wrong? It's only a recent historical development that kids of my age are still considered real children. In any period prior to this one, I'd already be doing something productive. Even the nobility, well, especially the nobility, tended to marry their kids off by sixteen."

Nora choked. "I'm not sure I want to think

about that."

Mike said, "It's just a con. A quiet one at that. I won't be Jamina the entire time, and I have no interest in doing anything that would worry you apart from what you already know about." He colored. "I just... well... I thought a girl would be accepted more quickly."

Nora got up and hugged Mike. "I don't think you have to worry about that."

Mike smiled as Nora went back to her seat. "I know, but it'll still be fun. If it makes you feel better, I'll slip a metal plate into one knee. If any boy gets too fresh, he'll spend the rest of the con bent over."

Nora laughed. "That's all I can ask. Fine. Don't spend too much time as someone else, though. You'd do well to have people know you as well as Jamina. I'm glad I can trust you, kiddo. Your dad's responsible enough on his own, but you know he's a scatterbrain and has a short attention span. I'd rather know that you'll keep an eye on yourself. Not that he won't be doing the same."

Mike got up and kissed his mother on the head. "I'll be good and virtuous and knee in the nadders anyone who tries to do anything you'd disapprove of."

Mike walked into his parents' room to find Victor just finishing putting Saliaven into the suitcase. "Almost finished?"

Victor snapped the case closed. "Please. I've only done the fursuits. Unless you want to be full-suited for three days straight, I'm not done."

Mike laughed. "As tempting as the idea is, I think I'll pass. Mom was slowing you down?"

Victor smiled lazily. "Yeah."

Mike threw a pair of rolled-up socks at Victor. "Ew! I may be enlightened, but don't push it. I meant holding you up by giving you some last minute advice."

Victor's smile softened. "That too. She's very concerned about you." He changed to a mock-whisper, "Just between you and me, I don't think she entirely trusts me to keep you from going to bed with the first good looking tomcat that catches your eye."

Mike replied, "Only marginally further than she can throw you. Luckily she trusts me."

"Good. It saves me having to be the one who gets eviscerated if something goes wrong."

Mike helped him fold shirts. "Oh, I don't think you're off the hook. More likely she'd turn us both into haggis."

Victor sighed dramatically. "Minced up and stuffed into my own stomach. If only I was that kind of masochist."

"The suicidal kind?"

"I could go dirty, but since I'm your father and that would be wrong, I'll just admit defeat."

Mike tossed him some more clothes. "Here is de sock. Let it admit de feet."

Victor zipped closed a suitcase. "Ah, puns.

The con will teach you much, cricket.”

“What happened to grasshopper?”

“You make too much noise to be a grasshopper. Watch it or I’ll call you locust. You eat enough.”

Mike laughed, “I’m a teenager!”

Victor put the second suitcase next to the first. “A likely story.” He looked around. “I think we’ve got everything. Let’s get going.”

Mike took the big case with the fursuits while Victor took the small one with their clothes. “Don’t pretend I didn’t see you slip in some clothes for Jamina. Thanks.”

“Just making sure, son. Jamina was never a nudist.”

Mike replied, “Thanks again for letting me borrow her.”

Victor said, “It’s a good thing you’re a little smaller than I am. Too big and nothing can be done. Too small—”

“And I can always stick something in to fill the gap.” Mike laughed. “I know, I know. Mom may not let me go out wearing Jamina, but I’ve borrowed some of the others, you know.”

Victor smiled, nostalgia in his eyes. “Oh the Halloween parties. I wish I’d had the times you did.”

Nora met them at the door. “Have a good time now, but not too good.”

Victor pecked her on the cheek. “Any last words of wisdom?”

Nora’s tongue probed one cheek. “Always read the fine print, and beware of cheap imitations.”

“Ah, an obscure reference,” Victor called. “An auspicious start to a fun weekend.”

Chapter 2: Friday Afternoon

For Victor, there was an ineffable quality to a convention that started during packing and got stronger as he got closer to the hotel. The first jolt of that feeling came as he tried to find a parking space and read the bumper stickers and custom plates. Where else would a car van with a plate reading DRGNLDY be parked next sedan with a sticker claiming that the owner’s other vehicle is a TARDIS?

Victor could see that unique aura sinking into Mike as they walked into the lobby of the hotel. Victor had stayed here at times other than con weekend, but it had seemed almost like a shell or a ghost of what it was when the con happening. For one thing, the people inhabiting the lobby were either nonexistent or certainly nothing like those that were there now. The big men with bigger beards and all manner of hats. Large women in gowns and corsets, small women in even tighter corsets. Buttons everywhere and if someone wasn’t wearing glasses it was ten to one they had contacts. Already there were fantasists with cloaks and staves, furies with ears and tails, steampunkers covered in brass and cyberpunkers with scouters and black tubes. There were even one or two otaku with their bright hair and almost unreal colored clothing. They were stan-

ding in groups or alone waiting for later arrivals or sitting on the chairs and couches that were spread out in the lobby and along the halls leading out towards the con rooms and guest rooms. Compared to them, Victor and Mike in their T-shirts and shorts looked positively mundane. Not for long, though.

Victor took a deep breath of fandom and took Mike to stand in line to check in. They were behind a guy in giant goggles and a red cape. “Cory Doctorow, I presume,” Victor said.

“To the blogosphere!” The red-caped man called gamely.

Mike was still looking around with awe that he was attempting to disguise behind a veneer of nochalance. Victor said, “You’ll be learning about true punning soon.” He held up five fingers and counted down silently. When his thumb hit his palm, someone said, “I always celebrate Fox Guy day by wearing a tail. Why?”

“Every one minute, forty-seven seconds. The shortest time between puns that is safe. Otherwise a pungularity forms and we end up with pundark everywhere.”

Mike looked askance at his father. “Pundark? You’re making all of this up.”

“Oh yeah?” Victor said. “One moment.” He started counting down on his fingers again and at the end someone said, “Fear my awesome electrical power. It is useless to be a resistor.”

Victor sighed, “Electrical puns. This is going to cause a chain reaction but—” he shouted back across the room, “Some people don’t have the capacitor for that kind of pun!”

“Then they should be more current!”

“There’s certainly the potential for difference!”

“Wire we arguing?”

“Because someone has to provide impedance of this horrible conversation!”

“Socket to me!”

As the last pun was thrown, the lights dimmed, almost going out. “Pundark!” Victor shouted.

When the lights flared back to their proper luminescence, Mike asked, “What was that?”

Victor replied, “That was a pungularity. It produced the pundark effect you just saw. You see, when too many puns are thrown all at once, they collapse the pun field into a pungularity. This produces the effect of pundark, which causes all the puns involved to cease to be funny. A lot of puns were lost to produce the minute and forty-seven second rule. Anyway, it’s our turn to check in and hopefully there won’t be too many more incidents like that.”

After getting their key cards, picking up their badges and materials, they went up to their room to get settled. Victor sat down in the armchair in the corner and opened the program booklet. “Usually the really interesting stuff happens on Saturday, but I’ve rarely had an hour slot with nothing I wanted to see. Yup. Next slot has a discussion on the construction and proper use of doomsday weapons. That’s my afternoon right

there. You?”

Mike looked at his schedule grid. “There’s a welcoming session in one of the ballrooms for new furs and a place for previous members to catch up with each other. I think I’ll take Jamina down and see who’s here.”

“Not wasting any time, I see. It’s a good thing I set things up so your badge wouldn’t have your real name on it. Well, have fun. I actually think I’ll skip Saliaven for the weekend. I’m feeling like this is going to be more of a fen sort of con for me.” He stayed long enough to help Mike into the suit, then hurried to his panel while his son was still trying to find the right dress or skirt for the occasion.

Jamina floated down the hallway, luxuriating in the feeling of her multilayered skirts swishing about her legs as her large fluffy tail bounced. The dress she’d chosen had been intended for this use and had a hole in the rear that allowed her tail to bob freely behind her. She’d brushed her black tresses and light ochre body fur until she was sure that she looked as good as possible for this first appearance. The voice modulator turned Mike’s quiet chuckles into a light giggle as Jamina thought about how she’d wow everyone there. She’d thought about using the braced tail with elastic spine, but since she didn’t know how much room there would be or whether she’d have to sit, she’d gone with the large one that hung all the way down. Besides, Mike didn’t quite trust the padding on his butt to hide the necessary support for the tail, and he wanted Jamina to look as real as possible.

Despite knowing that she’d done everything possible to make herself presentable, Jamina still found herself checking in every mirror she passed, and the hotel had many. She never stopped, but she did slow down a couple of times when she noticed some of her raven-colored hair falling over her eyes and muzzle. She’d brush it back self-consciously and wonder if she should go back for a hairbar. Then the still-active core of Mike would smile inside the shy-eyed Jamina and keep going. His confidence wasn’t entirely in character for the young vixen, but it was necessary if she was going to meet anyone.

Jamina’s first reaction when she walked into the ballroom was the thought that perhaps she was overdressed. There were very few people suited and those who were weren’t wearing clothes. Well, except for that dashing wolf near the snack table who was wearing a leather vest and a wide-brimmed hat. Yum!

The lustful reaction made Mike flush inside of Jamina, who felt pretty embarrassed herself. Still, the grey-furred, yellow-eyed dish seemed to be the most animate person there. Though Jamina’s innocent green eyes were made to look at whoever looked back, the blue irises behind them kept glancing at the wolf even as Jamina went over to the welcome table.

The girl behind the table, wearing only a pair of ears for comfort’s sake, gave Jamina a warm

UNINTENDED GRACE: AN UNEXPECTED SEQUEL

welcome and complimented her on her suit. "One of the best constructions I've seen at this con." She said.

Jamina inclined her head, brushing her black hair back before it could fall too far. "Thanks!" She said brightly. "I wish I could tell you who made it, but it's not mine originally and I've forgotten. My dad made some alterations, though. Victor Falkner?"

The girl smiled. "I didn't know Victor had a daughter. Tall? Tends to have odd equipment on his person at all times?"

Jamina laughed. "That's dad, alright."

The girl said, "He doesn't show up at our functions too often, but he's big on felines as I recall, and the Chronicle." She looked at Jamina's nametag. "You too? Well, it is a favorite in the fandom. I'm sure you'll be recognized by plenty of people."

Jamina turned as if to leave, but decided she had to ask. "Do you know who that wolf is?" She asked, pointing with a short black claw.

The girl leaned to the side to look. "Him? New as far as I know, or at least the fursona is. He didn't come over here, so perhaps it's one of our regulars with a new aspect."

"Thanks." Jamina talked with a few of the other new members, and one or two regulars who were there to help welcome them, but she continued to be drawn towards the wolf, who was still tal-

king animatedly to anyone who approached him near the food table. No one seemed to know who he was, though, and eventually Jamina decided she'd had enough. Though such presumption wasn't exactly in character, she reminded herself she was a Resonating Node, a Mage First Class in rank and no lupine with a hat was going to cow her.

She crossed the room over to where the wolf was drinking a soda through a long straw. Jamina picked one up for herself and said, "Hello."

The wolf, who was taller than she'd realized replied, "Hi." In a voice that seemed artificially deep. Like someone with a higher pitched voice who was trying to seem throaty. Considering his choice in suit, it seemed likely to Jamina that he was trying to go for the kind of voice his fursona would have.

Jamina tried to think of a way to continue when the wolf said, "I see from your badge that you're Jamina. From the crossed-staves on bronze sticker, would it be too presumptuous to guess your last name to be Karia'tur?"

Jamina leapt at the opening. "Not at all," she replied. "Your name, however, seems more of a mystery. Your badge is flipped the wrong way and so you have the advantage of me."

The wolf bowed. "If only I could keep such an advantage. But for such a lovely young lady, I could hardly be so rude as not to identify myself.

I am Wortag. Big Mad Wortag."

Jamina stifled a laugh. This reference she knew. "Big...Mad...Wortag." She replied with exaggerated skepticism. "Is that what's sewn on your vest?"

"As a matter of fact," Wortag said, his voice showing the rakish grin that must lie under his suit. "It is." He pulled back one side of the vest to show 'BMW' on the side.

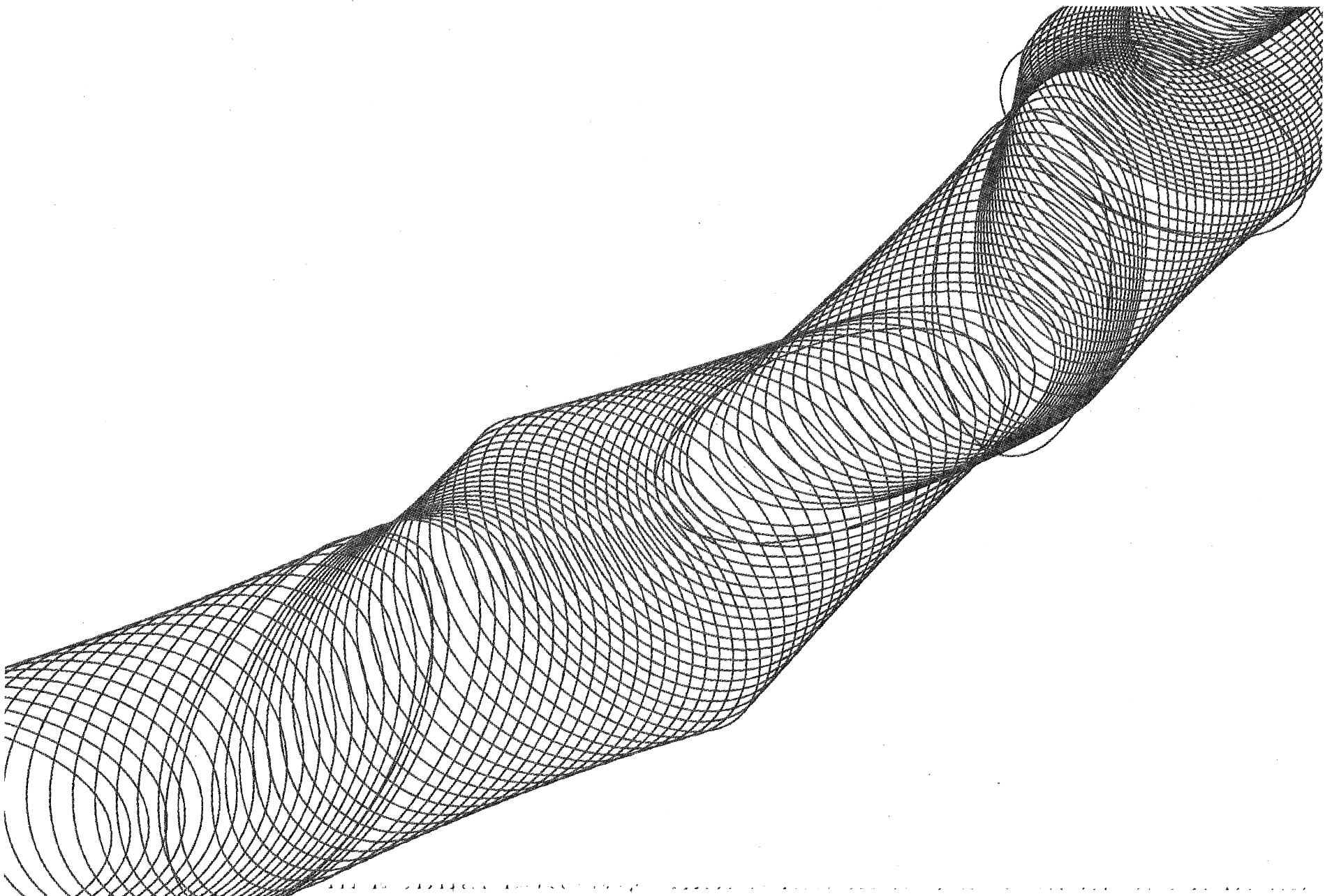
Jamina countered, "And how do I know you're not just a car lover?"

"Ah, a wit to match my own!" The wolf cried.

Jamina did laugh at that. "I see that we have similar tastes. Perhaps I'll be seeing more of you at the con."

The wolf bowed again, sweeping his hat off. "I can only hope so, and that I'll see more of you as well."

Jamina knew that no one else in the room was going to top that introduction, and she felt justified in leaving to let Mike see a panel or two before dinner. As for Saturday... Well, Jamina fully intended to seek Wortag out if she didn't run into him by lunch. This looked to be an interesting weekend for both her and Mike. She thought about Wortag's over-the-top behavior as she walked back to the room and giggled to herself. She didn't look once at the mirrors as she went.



YE OLDE ZOMBESE *DAN DEPUY*

Loose!" The archers responded to the command and released their arrows, the shafts soaring skyward with a mighty roar. Reaching a forward point against the clear night sky they turned menacingly toward the earth, plummeting in a rain upon the forthcoming mob. The missiles fell like hailstones, piercing flesh and mail. Some of the intruders fell, others stood protected by heavy plate.

The troops looked down from the battlements at the horde that was shuffling forward. The throng seemed unaware. They moved without urgency, dragging their feet toward the city walls. As the mass clambered forward they left the scattered bodies of their dead behind them.

"Knock!" shouted the commander. Archers took arrows from their quivers or from the ground around them. Lined up two men deep they knocked their arrows, pointing them toward the ground. Each man handled his longbow as though it were an extension of his arm. In uniform, they raised their bows and pointed them toward the shining silver moon.

"Pull!" the commander shouted again, and each man drew back his arrow to the corner of his mouth. They focused their tips on points in the sky above them, measuring the distance from the walls to where the enemy was moving. Upon hearing the loose command, the archers released the hold on their bowstrings. A great sound of arrow heads cutting air rose up high over the city, the broad points slicing a line into the sky and coming down in a storm of wood and metal.

The lookouts, posted on the end of each battlement, watched as more enemies fell. Still they moved at a shuffling walk. It was not a charge, but a steady march. Among them were not just soldiers, but peasants as well, many unarmed. After the last volley came cascading down upon the great

moving body of people the lookouts observed the most curious thing yet. Those dead that were left behind picked themselves up and with a great effort pushed themselves back to their feet.

When this news reached the Captain Carwen he furrowed his brow and glared at the lookout, a poorly armed conscript. His brigandine was in tatters and the spear he carried was knicked about the head. His beard was patchy and his graying hair hung shaggy about his thin and angled face.

"What are you on about, yeoman?" He asked. "Have you gone mad with fear? We have no room in our ranks for those who would become so delirious. The enemy comes over the border poorly armed, poorly organized and clearly fatigued. You would have me believe our volleys have had no effect on them at all?"

The tall and broad-shouldered captain gazed over the high stone battlements down to the great breadth of lands in front of the city walls. He could see almost to the spot where the forest began, where the enemy was first spotted. He could see the path they had taken toward the city, leaving farms and villages deserted and ruined. His jaw hung slack when he followed the path with his eyes. Behind the oncoming waves of enemies were no bodies laying dead. A few shafts peppered the landscape, but the arrows had claimed no man.

The purpose of the archer's volley has always been to thin the enemy's rank, weakening their forces and giving one's own cavalry and infantry units a battlefield advantage. In the case of a siege like this one the volleys would be used to harass the enemy, to disrupt their march and to demoralize them. Under these circumstances he had been certain that the volleys would yield sufficient casualties to cause a retreat. He could only stand aghast as he watched the slow-moving crowd shrug off volley after volley, their fallen get up again, shafts sticking out of them, continuing their march.

OCCUPATO

The following incident may or may not have actually happened. To protect the identities of those who might have been involved, all names are changed.

There I was, standing there on the roof and being told to unfurl our banner. The students who had been entering and exiting the building completely unaware of our activities finally looked up when they heard the fwhoosh of fabric being unfurled. With sixty pairs of confused eyes on me, I gripped the megaphone we had unearthed in a supply closet and introduced those observing us to the movement.

"My fellow students! We are the SLF, Student Liberation Front! We occupy this building in our name and in your interests to protest the gross injustices done to us by this university! We are now in control of this building and will not cede our hold until our demands are met. We shall release a list shortly. Viva la SLF!"

Those below us were confused and partially indifferent. They continued on their way, unaware that

they had witnessed the announcement of the first student occupation of a building since the 1980's. Soon, they would all be witness to our occupation. We would broadcast our message over the airwaves, siege the television studio, and blanket the campus with our leaflets declaring who we were and what we demanded.

Those working with me were excited that the occupation had formally been declared. We knew this building held enough food in its storerooms to see us fed for a month. There were areas we could use for sleep, full bathrooms, and access to both Internet and TV. In short, the building was perfect.

Now, if only we could get everyone else to realize we were occupying it.

Classes held in our occupied building continued as usual. The dining hall, which utilized the storeroom of food, operated at full functional capacity. Despite the fact that we had turned the television studio into a 24-hour loop of our propaganda films and were regularly making broadcasted demands from the radio station, no one seemed to notice any difference from the regu-

lar things they did. Our seizing of the most frequently published newspaper was actually seen as a positive thing by everything but the advertisers, who were upset that their ads weren't being run. No one other than the SLF realized the SLF was now in control of this building.

Even our attempts to gain attention weren't notice. We refreshed the slogan on the massive banner outside the building daily. Some people assumed it was in regards to a football game or a study abroad program. The fire that was supposed to engulf a truck instead burnt a tree, and people assumed it to be a bonfire. The subsequently made smores were delicious.

Finally, we took drastic measures. A week into our occupation, we called the administration with our demands.

"We are the SLF! For the past week, we have occupied a building on campus to ensure that our demands are met. That has, to this point, failed. We now call on you, the Gestapo of an administration to meet our demands or there will be consequences. For every hour that goes by between this phone call and

our demands being met, we will trash a classroom."

We were put on hold and transferred between five different departments before finally being hung up on by someone in the bursar's office. We trashed a classroom in retaliation, but an hour later, custodial had restored it to its pre-trashing status.

Three days later, we called the media to inform them of the fact that this building was under siege and that our demands had yet to be met. They sent a reporter to cover our strife, but his editor didn't seem interested in our plight. Further requests for media were denied.

The next day, everything changed. Our demands had been met! The occupation was successful! Our objective had been met and we were able to proudly remove our banner from the roof of the building and knew we had done our job. We returned the building to the authorities and released a press release announcing the victory of the SLF over its oppressors and our successful endeavor.

The occupation was over. We had won. Chicken Caesar salad was back on the menu.

ALEX H. NAGLER



**THANK
YOU**

ANYTHING TO SAY
ABOUT WHAT
YOU'VE SEEN?

EDITORS@SBPRESS.COM
SEE YOU NEXT SEMESTER.

