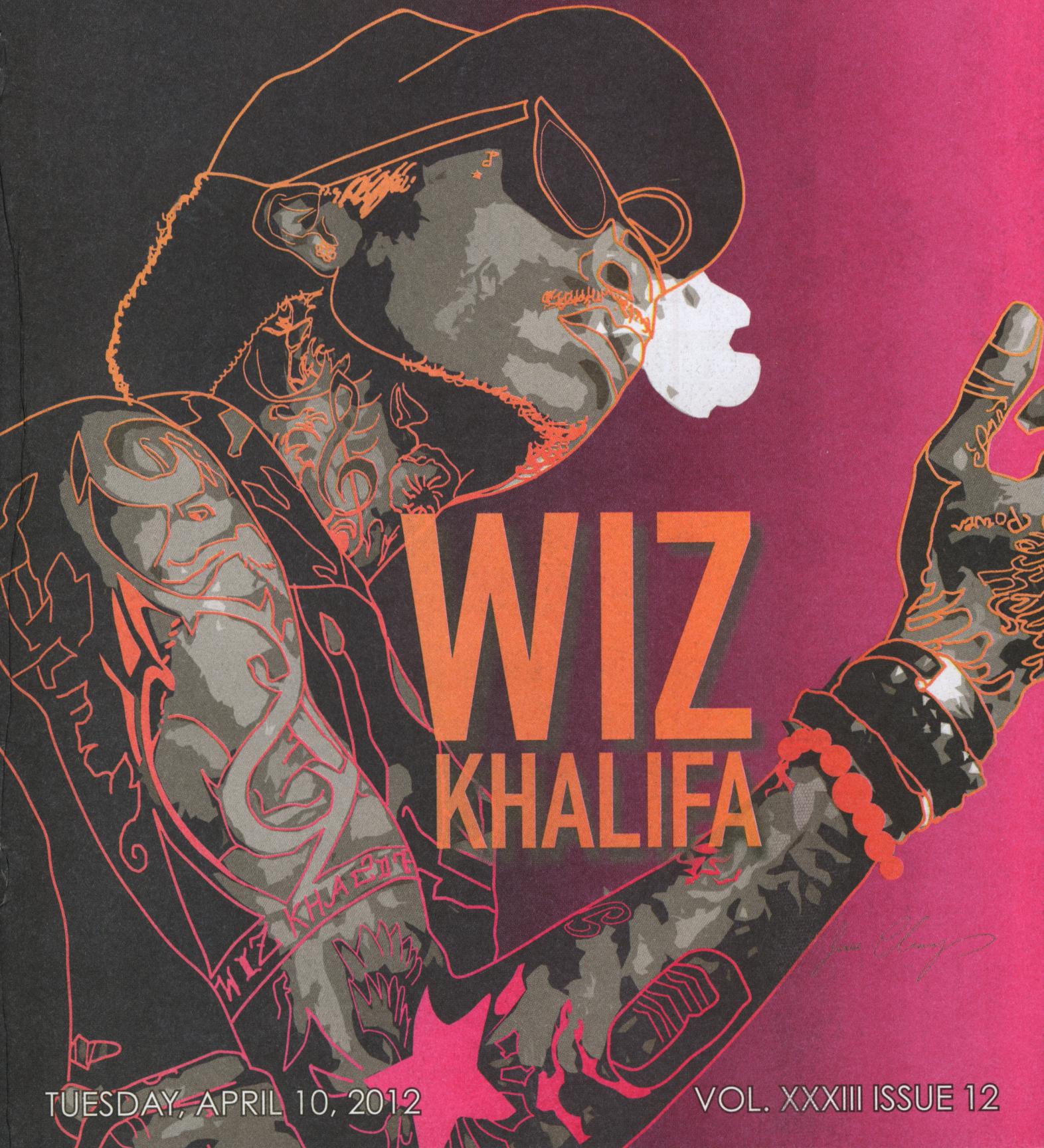


THE STONY BROOK
PRESS



WIZ KHALIFA

TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2012

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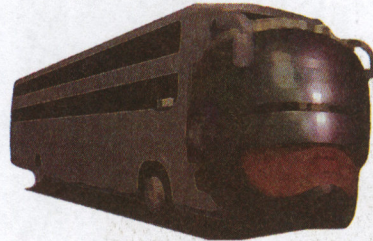
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THE STONY BROOK PRESS

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MOVE OVER BRUNO MARS, WIZ KHALIFA IS COMING

Wiz Khalifa, the blunt-loving hip-hop artist leading the current generation of post-Kanye West rappers, is currently set to perform at Stony Brook University's end-of-the-year concert on April 27. The Undergraduate Student Government, under its event-planning wing, the Student Activities Board, has confirmed a bid contract with Wiz for \$85,000 and is in the negotiating stages of finalizing a confirmed contract, according to Special Programming Agency Director Jackie Cowles and USG President Mark Maloof. Opening for Wiz will be R&B artist Miguel Jontel, who is set to perform for \$15,000, as well as a currently undisclosed opener of Wiz's choosing for roughly \$1,500. The entire show is projected to cost SAB around \$215,000, with \$100,000 going to production.

The pick of Wiz for the yearly spring show is a very welcome shift from the divisive artists that have filled the slot in previous years to a musician with one of the broadest appeals of any pop star today. In the past four years, USG has brought big-name artists, but never without accusations of having wasted money with intentions driven by misguided tastes and expectations, resulting in disappointing concerts that only remind those students well-versed in the history of the Stony Brook Concert Series that we are failing to live up to a once-glorious musical legacy.

For instance, in 2009 we saw Hellogoodbye, a not-so-relevant indie pop band, and the rapper, Fabolous. It was a failed effort at pulling together two polar opposite artists in the hopes of appealing to the tastes of a vast student body that, in the eyes of the old SAB, was comprised of either rap fans or rock fans—perhaps a racially charged notion. The following year's Brookfest featured a similar combination of rapper Wale and indie pop duo Matt & Kim. Though they are both college-oriented, they reflect—again—SAB's catering to vastly different audiences, and the result was an even more discomfiting clash of styles and an event that drew a small fraction of what the audience could have been.

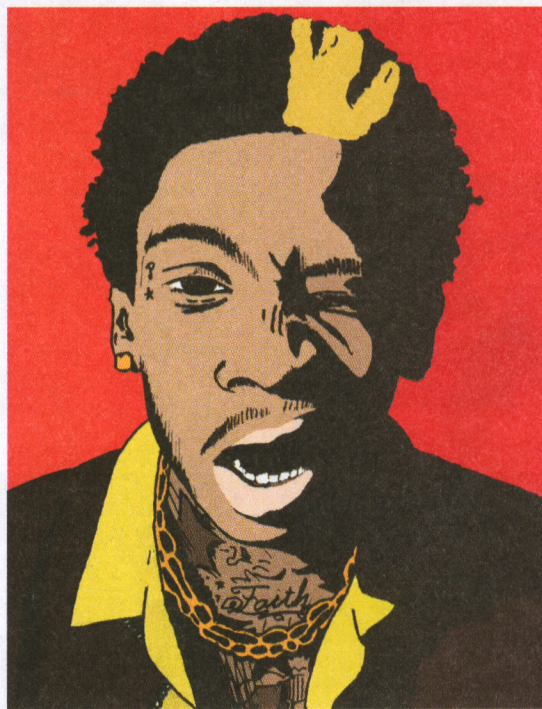
Last year's concert could be—and should be—considered a success, if assessed on attendance alone. Grammy-nominated Bruno Mars and R&B soul musician Janelle Monáe drew lines hours before tickets went on sale, and the show sold out easily. Those chart-topping artists were consistent in genre, and appealed to what is probably the largest demographic of Stony Brook students, if that demographic is simply a generalized

group of people that have turned on the radio in the past year and have some semblance of an idea of what modern pop music sounds like. Both artists receive consistent airplay and are, to the average listener, famous enough to warrant a "Wow, we got him?" or "Hey, I've heard that 'Grenade' song." But they were not college acts. College acts do not stand in front of the Grammy crowd dressed like an absolute clown—one who is shamelessly bastardizing '50s rock n' roll—and dance back and forth while showcasing a doctored smile and a Jimmy Neutron haircut.

It may have sold out the Sports Arena in record-breaking time, and everyone who attended undoubtedly had one of the more memorable experiences Stony

Brook has offered him or her, but judging Stony Brook's fun capabilities in a broader context would illustrate how limited our campus experience has been. And because Bruno Mars is by no stretch of the imagination a "college act," last year's concert left many students—including those who were led to believe that acts like Best Coast and Immortal Technique were setting an appropriate college-gear trend—tremendously disappointed.

But Wiz Khalifa is absolutely and undeniably a college-oriented artist. His appeal begins—not surprisingly—in the rap community and continues into Top 40 territory (see the chart-topping "Black and Yellow") before settling into the college rap scene. He is also easily one of the most accessible hip-hop artists out there, in that he consistently outshines fame-bathing imitators like Big Sean, stylishly and effortlessly out-rhymes lyrical heavyweights like



EVALUATING THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES BOARD

The Undergraduate Student Government's event planning organization, the Student Activities Board, is responsible for roughly \$534,000 of student money, and yet it has proven for the second year in a row that it is fiscally irresponsible. Last year's SAB grossly overspent on the Bruno Mars concert, and yet the organization still received its \$134,000 budget increase.

Now this year, SAB has a \$125,000 surplus of money that they will likely only spend a small fraction of before the end of the year. Punctuating this slew of numbers is the fact that SAB is crippled by disorganization and legally and financially at risk. This is due to its members' disregard for the democratic process and their audacity to think themselves above the very laws that bind other campus clubs, from trying to use emails to allocate funds instead of doing so at open meetings to losing receipts that now place SAB at risk of having its budget frozen. All of this is detailed in depth in the page 19 article titled "A SAB Story."

Members of SAB and USG have claimed that the difficulty of booking on-campus venues, like the sports complex and SAC ballrooms, due to not having reserved them last year is the biggest hurdle to spending their increased budget. They have also utilized a defense that forces administration to shoulder some of the blame, claiming that increased security bureaucracy and stricter oversight has made it difficult to freely plan and execute the popular on-campus events that popped up nearly every month of last year, but which have been noticeably absent this spring.

Despite those obstacles, no amount of annoying circumstance diminishes the need for the most heavily funded campus organization, one directly associated with the student government itself, to uphold the law without simultaneously falling victim to rampant disorganization. Members of SAB and USG simply think that because they

are running out of time to efficiently prepare for the only two events they cannot forgo—the Roth Regatta and the end-of-the-year concert—that that warrants the use of loopholes and behind-the-scenes maneuvering.

If the members of SAB and the USG officers that oversee its operations have any respect for the campus clubs that productively and responsibly use their student money, they should leave their surplus alone and let it fall into the rollover fund for next year. That would effectively give the money over to campus clubs because, as USG President Mark Maloof explains, excess rollover money becomes part of the event grant fund for clubs to use.

And if the University Senate had enough spine to represent the student body rather than pander to the student government higher-ups, they would send a signal to SAB. They would, at the very least, question on the Senate floor the fact that the organization is receiving the same amount of money despite two years of fiscal irresponsibility, if not actively try to lower SAB's budget and move some of its funds over to the clubs who so desperately need it to continue fostering the diverse campus life that truly makes thousands of students' experience at Stony Brook worthwhile.

SAB's decision to bring Wiz Khalifa for the end-of-the-year concert is undoubtedly a good one, and a choice we at *The Press* support as the alternate editorial on page four expresses. But no single right, no matter how grand the veiled success of that end result may be, makes up for a series of wrongs. So Wiz Khalifa or not, SAB needs to reform how it operates and hold itself to a higher standard because as an organization that has access to more than one sixth of the entire \$3.1 million USG annual budget, it owes it to the students that pay the activity fee to constantly strive to be better.

Lupe Fiasco and stands tall against the hip-hop goliaths of Degraasi and Young Money fame who dominate the airwaves. His lyrical themes, which revolve around an obsessive love of weed and an introspective reflection on fame, simultaneously influence and draw strength from the lifestyle of lackadaisical college students, on top of effectively evolving a hip-hop aesthetic dominated by late teenagers and early 20-somethings.

It would be hard for anyone, even those not well-versed

in modern hip-hop, to not appreciate the insight and desire for change exhibited by this year's USG in making this decision. While the contract is not officially set in stone until Wiz gives his final sign-off in the coming weeks, it is unlikely he will pull out of a confirmed bid contract pending unforeseen circumstances outside USG's control. That said, April 27 is a day that may finally wear the Stony Brook Concert Series title with pride, and see record-breaking lines weaving through the Academic Mall.

90 PERCENT OF POLITICIANS GIVE THE OTHER 10 PERCENT A BAD REPUTATION

by Deborah Machalow

For the better part of three years, I have served as an elected official of the student body; I have always done what I believed was right and served the students faithfully, providing them with the government and representation they deserve. I cannot in good conscience sit this election entirely on the sidelines as that would be doing my constituents a disservice, despite the negative repercussions intervention will cause me. As a retiring elder stateswoman, I offer the following thoughts to the student body as it evaluates the candidates and determines for whom it will cast its ballots.

I advise you that picking a presidential candidate is a decision to be made between you and your gut. Remember, the biggest and most important task of the USG President is to be the face of the organization and thus represent the students to administration. Pick someone to whom you would feel comfortable entrusting your voice. At present, I would not trust any of the candidates, and therefore I am electing not to vote for any.

As for the Vice Presidency, here's where I can provide you with true insight! This is the most involved and intricate position in USG; the EVP obviously runs the Senate, but he also is responsible for the internal operations of the organization. It is therefore necessary to have someone in this position who is loyal first and foremost to the students and to the organization/president second. A bit of conflict should be expected and is a good thing as compromise is more likely to favor the students. As far as I'm concerned, there is one qualified candidate running, and the other two, if elected, would disserve the students by not providing independent thought, not having the necessary experience, and by being personally loyal to their selected presidents, not the student body.

As someone who has served in this position for over a year, I can definitively tell you that in order for someone to be successful, he needs to have been in the Senate first. If you look at the experience of the three candidates, only one, Jason Sockin, has been a voting member of the Senate. Of the other two, one has proxied (after which she reportedly said she never wanted to attend another Senate meeting), and the other has not attended a single meeting. The fact that two of the candidates have not been attending Senate meetings is disturbing; further proof that these two ladies would disserve the students.

Turning to the Treasury, again, it is a competition between experience and naivety. Despite his past, Allen Abraham is clearly the better choice. As a Senator, he had great organizational vision. After almost a semester away, he has had the time necessary to step back and examine the Government and now he has many ideas about how to

modify processes and have USG better serve the students. I know questions will be raised about his resignation, but he has truly matured from the experience and has learned a valuable lesson. He will be of even greater value to the students now. Also, after hearing his opposition speak at a recent LegReview meeting, it is clear that Cyril has a dearth of organizational knowledge and a disturbing bias which could disenfranchise a large number of students on campus.

As for the other vice presidents, I'm thrilled that Amanda Cohen is running unopposed. She is truly doing an amazing job as VP of Clubs and Organizations and the students have acknowledged her dedication, sincerity, and helpfulness. She has excelled since taking office and I'm thrilled the students will continue to have her serving them next year. She truly is the best woman for the job and I wish her well. The students are really lucky to have her.

The only other vice presidency I will discuss is the Vice President of Student Life. The VP of Student Life is primarily responsible for the activities of the USG SAB. It is no secret that this agency is the one that causes the most grief and the most drama for USG, and it is the most expensive. It is therefore important to have an engaged and competent man in this position. Current RHA President Nick Ela is the right choice. In contrast to the drama and insanity of the agency, he is level-headed, calm and constantly brainstorming ideas about how to improve student life and USG as a whole. It is obvious from his time spent giving out free hugs in the SAC to attending USG SAB meetings, that improving student life is a priority for him. His candidacy is not an intended stepping stone to the presidency, but truly an attempt to improve the student experience.

I won't address the other positions, but I will leave you with a thought on the Senate: pick wisely. You do not want a collegial Senate. A friendly Senate allows the Executive Council to metaphorically get away with murder. The Students need active and involved Senators to keep the power-hungry Executive Council in check. Having a variety of ideas, experiences, and voices in the Senate will promote lengthy debate and, as pointed out by James Madison in Federalist #10, create the best legislation. Elect Senators who are not afraid to ask questions, state their opinions, and challenge things that look wrong.

Only you will be with you when you make your decisions about whom to vote. I'm only providing my opinions as someone who has put her blood, sweat and tears into USG. Remember, whoever gets your vote gets your voice. Pick only the people who you believe will represent you effectively. Choose wisely.

NATIONAL TOURNEY GRANTS DEEMED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

by Carol Moran

Over 50 students crowded into a small conference room on the third floor of the SAC on March 28 to protest the removal of the act that allows sports clubs to receive grants that cover the costs of participating in national tournaments.

Undergraduate Student Government Treasurer Thomas Kirnbauer brought the matter before the Legislative Review Committee because the National Tournament Grant Act, as it is called, violates the USG constitution, he said. Under the constitution, USG may not make any law or policy that creates separate criteria for certain clubs to receive funding. The act in question allows sports clubs eligible to compete in national tournaments to receive grants that would cover the costs of attending.

Students from a number of clubs, including men's rugby, women's soccer, the pre-law society, the mock trial club and the crew club said they fear that if the act is removed, they would be deprived of the opportunity to compete at the highest level.

"Don't let all of us work for nothing," Kyle Geoghan, former president of the men's rugby team, said during the meeting. The team has competed in three national tournaments already this year, and members say it would have been impossible to afford without the grants.

The students also argued that allowing teams to travel to national tournaments puts Stony Brook's name out there, and brings the school recognition.

The committee ultimately decided to table the legislation, formally called Revision #4 to the Financial Bylaws Act, until it could be discussed further and USG could come up with a solution that also pleased students. On Thursday, March 29, the USG Senate approved a resolution to create a temporary committee, facilitated by Executive Vice President Deborah Machalow, to examine the necessary changes and propose amendments to existing procedures, according to the USG website. The committee will meet with concerned students and report back to the Senate during its April 19 meeting.

Though the revision, if passed by both the Legislative Review Committee and the Senate, and signed by USG President Mark Maloof, would have taken effect at the conclusion of this semester, students said they fear it would take USG too long to reinstate a reworded national tournament grant act that fell within the guidelines of the constitution, and they would be barred from participating in those tournaments next semester.

Earlier this semester, the roller hockey club was forced to pull its bid to a tournament in Salt Lake City because the Senate failed to pass legislation in time to allow the club to use its funding for flights. Under the

current USG Financial Bylaws, clubs may only use their budgets for ground transportation. The club members couldn't afford to pay for the flights out of pocket.

"Based on precedent, there's not much faith that we can have," CJ Kattuppallil, a member of the men's rugby team, said.

USG Vice President of Communications Stephanie Berlin said she wanted students to know that USG is willing to hear student concerns. She said she spends plenty of time in her office, but students rarely come to talk with her.

"It's heartbreaking to see a club not be able to do something because of the way legislation is written," Berlin said.

The students protesting said they would rather see the act amended to allow all clubs to be eligible for national grants, rather than just sports clubs. But Senator David

"Don't let all of us
work for nothing."

Adams, who sits on the Legislative Review Committee, said during the meeting that the small amount of money available for the grants would be depleted before sports teams made it far enough in the season to even qualify for national tournaments.

"I'm leaning towards wanting to keep more money on campus," Adams said. "I don't want USG to be a travel agency. I want us to be fostering things on campus—whether it be a nice pick-up game of rugby out on the fields or some folks in the basement discussing Sartre.

Whatever you want to do, we should be funding that to an appropriate level and it should be really building events and activities on campus."

He said that somewhere between 30 to 40 percent of USG's budget goes to competitive clubs. "Our job is to have activities on this campus for students to enjoy, and to spend our money on something only a few students can enjoy...that's what I have a problem with," he said.

However, he added that the National Tournaments Grant Act is unconstitutional, and it is his therefore his responsibility as an elected official—and the responsibility of USG—to repeal it, regardless of his opinion on the law.

USG ELECTIONS 2012

Editors' Note: The Press reached out to all candidates running for USG officer positions this Spring via the emails made available by the USG Elections Board. The ensuing compilation of responses are of those candidates who responded. The Press has not edited or altered any of the responses and randomly chose which responses to publish due to

space constraints and to provide diversity in candidate responses. For candidates that were running unopposed, we omitted their responses when necessary due to space constraints. It should also be noted that The Press is a USG funded organization that received \$34,700 for the 2011-12 academic year.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

1. Out of all the 16,000 students on campus, what makes you the most deserving student to influence the more \$3.1 million budget funded by our student activity fee?
2. What experience do you bring to the position you are running for? Why are you qualified?
3. Is this your first time getting involved in USG? If so, why are you interested in getting involved? If not, why do you wish to be involved again?
4. What do you think is the best thing about USG and if elected, how do you plan to continue that?
5. On a scale of 9-10* (10 being the highest) how successful were the past two semesters for USG?
6. What are USG's biggest flaws, and how do you plan to correct

- those? For those currently in USG, what have you done to try to correct those flaws?
7. Do you think it's right for USG to give SAB the same budget next year despite a surplus of over \$100,000 for this year?
8. Do you think that putting on successful campus events should be prioritized over increasing clubs' budgets?
9. Representing the student body sometimes means taking a firm stance against administrative policies. How willing are you to speak up on behalf of the student body, even when it means conflicting with administrators?

*Please note we intentionally asked for a scale of 9-10.

FOR USG PRESIDENT

Adil Hussain

Political Science Major,
Business Management,
Pre-Nursing Minors
Sophomore
Age: 19



1. All students who pay the student activity fee are given the right to influence the \$3.1 million budget. If the question is who is most qualified to manage the budget and distribute it equally among students in order to improve campus life? Then I am the candidate to serve the student body best.

2. As the Vice President of Academic Affairs of USG, I have successfully managed my agency by providing a free tutoring service to students and advertising other academic resources that would allow them to excel in their classes. I have also gone above and beyond my duties to coordinate events such as Roth Regatta successfully, twice. Thus my leadership and management skills are unquestionable. With my experience in graphic design and marketing, I have helped advertise for many clubs across campus including The Statesman "Sex Issue" and Stony Brook Secrets.

3. As a current member of the executive council, it is clear that there are many issues with the structure of USG and their attitude toward students. USG has lost focus of their purpose to "serve" the student body and many candidates are motivated by a paycheck and their own advancement.

4. This is a difficult question to answer because almost all things in USG can and should be improved.

5. -- omit --

6. USG lacks the necessary management skills to remain effective and efficient. When elected as the Vice President of Academic Affairs in the FALL of 2011, my predecessor had over-spent my yearly budget prior to my election and not kept any paperwork on where the money had gone. Thus, I reformed the program to ensure it would run efficiently and effectively in the future and under their given budget. Furthermore, I created a manual and database for my successor which was not provided to me when I had been "trained". SAB/SPA departments need complete restructuring which I have already proposed a plan for. The ineffectiveness of the Office of Communications within and outside of USG must be evaluated and corrected for many people do not know what USG is or that they pay for it. I have and continue to address this issue and have already devised a plan to increase efficiency.

7. SAB's budget should not have been allowed to deprive clubs and other organizations of their funding and opportunity to put on events.

Anna Lubitz

Biology Major, Music Minor
Sophomore
Age: 20



1. I am running for the position of USG President. This role entails being in charge and overseeing the approximate \$3.1 million dollar budget funded by the student activity fee. As a presidential candidate, I would like my constituents to know that the influence over this budget is an important responsibility. If elected President, I want voters to know that they elected a competent, determined, and passionate student, who is willing to take on that responsibility and influence the \$3.1 million dollar budget in the best interest of the student body. It is ultimately the students' money and they deserve the right to see that money be put towards on campus events/activities that they want in order to enhance their college experience and connect the campus community. What makes me the most deserving student to influence this budget? The answer: my dedication, commitment, passion and true desire to listen and act in the best interest of the students at Stony Brook University while acting as an agent of beneficial change for the student body. If elected President, I will listen to the needs and wants of the students and incorporate the budget in the best way in order to make the SBU campus a closer community, implementing fun and memorable on campus events (concerts, notable speakers, etc.) and benefiting/supporting the efforts of clubs and organizations on campus.

2. I have been involved and have held many leadership positions in various clubs and organizations, including USG, ever since my freshman year. I have experience working with administration as

8. Campus life should be a priority for USG. It is evident that USG events have attracted attention of many but have not served our wide demographic of students. Clubs help promote diversity and influence campus life and therefore should be prioritized in regards to the improvement of campus life.

9. During my time in office, I have successfully taken a firm stance against administration policies. On the issue of the academic calendar, I had requested that the student government be in shared governance in the eyes of the administration and successfully mandated that students be given reading days during finals week and no finals on weekends. In addition to this, I asked administration to address the students directly to answer any questions that they may have. I have also coordinated events that were successful among students but questioned by administration. With research to support my actions and rhetoric, I excelled in my negotiations with administration and continue to do so.

the Commuter Representative on the Student Life Committee, I have extensive communication, time management and organizational skills reaching out to other students via my positions as the Secretary of Commuter Student Association, Events Coordinator in the Pre-Vet Society, a Commuter Assistant, a UGC Fellow for LDS, and the Volunteer Coordinator for the 2012 Earthstock Committee. Moreover, I work on the Weekend Life Council for Student Activities and have established events that help increase student connection over the weekends. Ultimately in USG, I have represented the student body as Senator for the College of Arts and Sciences, in which I wrote the resolution to increase field space for student groups/clubs/sports on campus- this resolution made its way to administration and was passed. Additionally, I worked with the Dean of Students office as the student liaison to implement the Elect Her training session on campus which encouraged women to run for elected positions. But why choose me? There are numerous candidates that you have the choice to choose from...I follow the path of professionalism and I am motivated to get set goals accomplished. When I was accepted into SBU, I immediately wanted to become a member of the Undergraduate Student Government. I believe that if I am elected President of USG, I will be able to make a beneficial difference by representing my fellow classmates and peers by listening to the voices of the majority on a legislative level! I also want to enhance the college experience for students in SBU and the broader SBU community.

Throughout my previous leadership experiences, I have gained invaluable knowledge and I have developed a skill for getting things done successfully and proficiently. I believe that consensus, communication, and collaboration, among students, are important facets to effectively carry out and accomplish tasks/events/goals successfully. I will contact and reach through administration so that the voices of the students can be represented and heard! I believe in volunteer action for the betterment of another cause. WE, as students can make a difference in our school for the better. We are leaders!

I know that if I am elected as the President of USG, I will provide the leadership and focus in the role as an agent of change and improvement so that students will feel connected and involved. If elected USG President, I promise that I will accomplish goals,

voice the thoughts and opinions of students, and plan beneficial and fun events leading to an exciting, memorable, enjoyable and successful year. Overall, if elected President, I promise to serve the undergraduate student body with full dedication and intent for bettering campus life and community; I aspire to engage in issues concerning students and contribute to the overall goals of the Undergraduate Student Government representing the entire SBU student body! I encourage the beneficial change that you want to see happen on SBU's campus!

3. No, this is not my first time getting involved in USG. I have been involved in and dedicated to USG since my freshman year at SBU. During my freshman year, I was appointed as the Assistant to the VP of Communications and Public Relations and during the Spring 2011-2012 elections, I was elected as Senator for the College of Arts and Sciences. I have a true passion to make a beneficial difference on campus and represent the student body with the highest respect. I want to be involved in USG again because I want the student voices to be well represented, and if elected USG President, I feel that I can meet that challenge- I want to be the agent of change that acts in the betterment of student life activities, representing the students as the highest priority.

4. I think that the best thing about USG is the overall mission aimed to represent the students of SBU, in addition to recognizing and regulating student clubs and organizations. If elected USG President, I plan to continue and uphold the mission of USG by increasing communication efforts amongst students, building awareness about USG outreaching to the student body and holding more townhall meetings that would allow clubs and organizations to meet with executive council to ask questions and voice

concerns.

5. 9.25

6. I think USG's biggest flaws, especially from hearing from many clubs/organizations and students as a whole, is outreach and communication to the campus community. As a Senator, I have become involved with more committees, such as the Student Life Committee, and I have also spoke to clubs and organizations about what they would like to see change in USG- by becoming involved with committees such as Student Life, and talking to undergraduate students, I have increased communication through USG as a Senator. If elected USG President, I intend to better and communication and outreach on a grander scale.

7. *Provided no answer.*

8. I think that building a strong campus community should be the ultimate goal. By increasing the sense of community amongst students, there needs to be an appropriate balance between successful campus wide events and club/organization budget increases.

9. Representing the student body sometimes means taking a firm stance against administration policies. How willing are you to speak up on behalf of the student body, even when it means conflicting with administrators?

I am very willing to speak up on behalf of the student body, even when talking with administrators. I believe that we all have to find a common ground, voice the needs of the students, and work together in order to ensure success.

*Please note we intentionally asked for a scale of 9-10.

**LIST OF CANDIDATES
WHO DID NOT RESPOND TO SURVEY:**

PRESIDENT:
Juan Pablo Cordon

VP OF CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS:
Amanda Cohen

VICE PRESIDENT:
Aimee Pomeroy
Kia Valkonen

VP OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS:
Derek Cope

TREASURER:
Cyril Kattuppallil

VP OF STUDENT LIFE:
Patrick John Abelein

**POLLS OPEN AT
NOON ON MONDAY,
APRIL 16 AND
CLOSE AT NOON ON
FRIDAY, APRIL 20.
VOTE (ON SOLAR)
OR DIE!**

FOR EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Jason Sockin

Mathematics,
Economics Major
Junior
Age: 20



1. Although the Executive Vice President does not have a significant influence on managing the budget, I feel qualified to influence the budget because I am currently a Senator and currently a member of the Budget Committee which directly manages the budget. Of the candidates running, I know and understand the internal processes best. Moreover, in being a member of the Budget Committee, I have already contributed greatly to the formation of next year's budget.

2. As a current USG Senator, I partake in the weekly Senate meetings. The Executive Vice President, chairs these meetings and I feel having the experience of attending and participating in these meetings has adequately prepared me to chair them in the future. Moreover, I have been studying the USG Code, USG's Financial Bylaws, and the parliamentary procedure by which the Senate meetings are conducted. I am fully confident that I would be able to properly chair the meetings in the future and fulfill the other duties of the position effectively, ethically, and

enthusiastically, providing the student body with a responsive, responsible student government.

6. The biggest flaw with USG is simply its efficiency. I believe it does great work; however, I believe that its operations could be done using less time and fewer resources. To correct this flaw, I hope to cut down on resources, especially paper usage (i.e. potentially use electronic agendas for Senate meetings), and ensure that every member of USG is well-prepared for meetings and fully aware of the current issues. To correct this flaw, I myself have taken steps towards being more efficient, including recycling all of the paper I use, and I have discussed issues with my peers to ensure that we are all prepared for our meetings.

7. I believe that USG SAB has quite a few flaws, including its operations and exclusive membership, and that we should not give it the same budget, until these flaws are properly rectified. This year's USG SAB budget was not used efficiently and effectively, and so, it should only be given a budget that it can prove will be used properly.

8. I believe that these two are not mutually exclusive because clubs host successful campus events, and in increasing their budgets, we can increase the total number of successful campus events. In saying that, I believe that executing on-campus events in general should be the priority because it is the students who pay the Student Activity Fee, and in doing so, they should be allowed to partake in the events for which they are funding. If an event is on campus, then every student can attend the event. So, it is my belief that the more campus events there are, the more student life will benefit and the happier the student body will be.

FOR TREASURER

Allen Abraham

Information Systems
Major
Junior
Age: 20



1. I have previously served in USG as an active Senator on the Budget Committee. I have written legislation that benefited campus life, including one to create a competitive event grant. An event grant is a grant that specifically set aside for student clubs for creative event ideas. I believe I have the experience necessary to do the job required of the Treasurer and much more. I would ensure that all student clubs are fairly funded and properly heard by USG. I will create a fair process for appropriating funds to the various student clubs. I will do my best to

cut administrative expenses within USG and redirect those funds back to clubs. I will always represent the views of the student body!

2. As stated earlier I was part of the Budget Committee as a Senator so I was able to aid in the budget process. During my time out of USG I was able to see the needs of the campus community, specifically the various clubs on campus. I attended various events in which club leaders were paying out of pocket for things USG didn't cover the expenses for.

6. I think the biggest flaw about USG is their communication with clubs. While I was petitioning many have complained how they would try to get in touch with certain members in USG and they would never get a response or they would get a response way too late. This is wrong and this has to be changed. The students elect us, so USG has a responsibility to promptly respond to the students. We should have better communication with all members of the student body. For myself I have this rule of 24 hours, where I try to respond to all emails and calls within 24 hours. If I don't know the answer to something I will update them quickly and I will then find the answer. Communication is key!

7. Again while petitioning I have stated that I would cut about \$100,000 from the SAB budget and put that back towards clubs during the fall budgeting process. Any money saved in the budget will be given directly back to the clubs!

8. I think both should be given equal weight. If you look at the campus community you have students who just attend major

events and then you have students that attend club meetings to get involved. In order to cater to both groups, one should give equal weight to both club budgets and campus events.

Again the event grants was instituted to give clubs more opportunities to put on successful campus events however they were restricted by the caps put on the funding limit. If elected I will increase the cap to allow for more flexibility.

FOR VP OF STUDENT LIFE

Nicholas Ela

Computer Science Major
Junior
Age: 20



1. I believe that the knowledge I've gained both inside and outside of the USG is perfect for this position. The Vice President of Student Life represents the student body in several different areas, including on SAB and campus wide Student Life oriented committees. As a heavily involved member of campus life I know what the clubs, Student Activities, and the USG itself do and I can bring my experiences from being involved in all three to the table.

2. I have spent the last year as a senator in the USG Senate. With this background within the organization I have seen how it works and what needs to change in order to improve it. Anyone who has ever met me knows I try to be as involved as possible in student

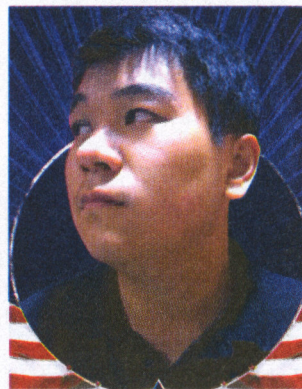
life, which can be seen through the various clubs I am a part of and the events I attend. I also have had experience working with the Residence Hall Association over the years and have worked on major programs with RHA. This last year as RHA President I have gained the experience necessary to bring a different perspective to the USG.

7. I do not think it is right and I believe SAB has too much money even if they did spend it all. I believe SAB's budget should be cut and the amount taken out should be given back to the student run clubs. I would rather give the students of this campus the opportunity to put on more programs in their clubs for other students than have a group of half a dozen people struggle to use the large sum of money given to them.

8. I think it is entirely possible to do both. This year SAB saw a large increase in their budget while almost every club's budget was decreased. As a possible future Student Activities Board member I am in full support of reducing SAB's budget and distributing it back to the clubs. SAB will still be able to put on successful campus events and clubs can regain a lot of what was cut from their budget.

Tyrik Jiang

Computer Science Major
Junior
Age: 20



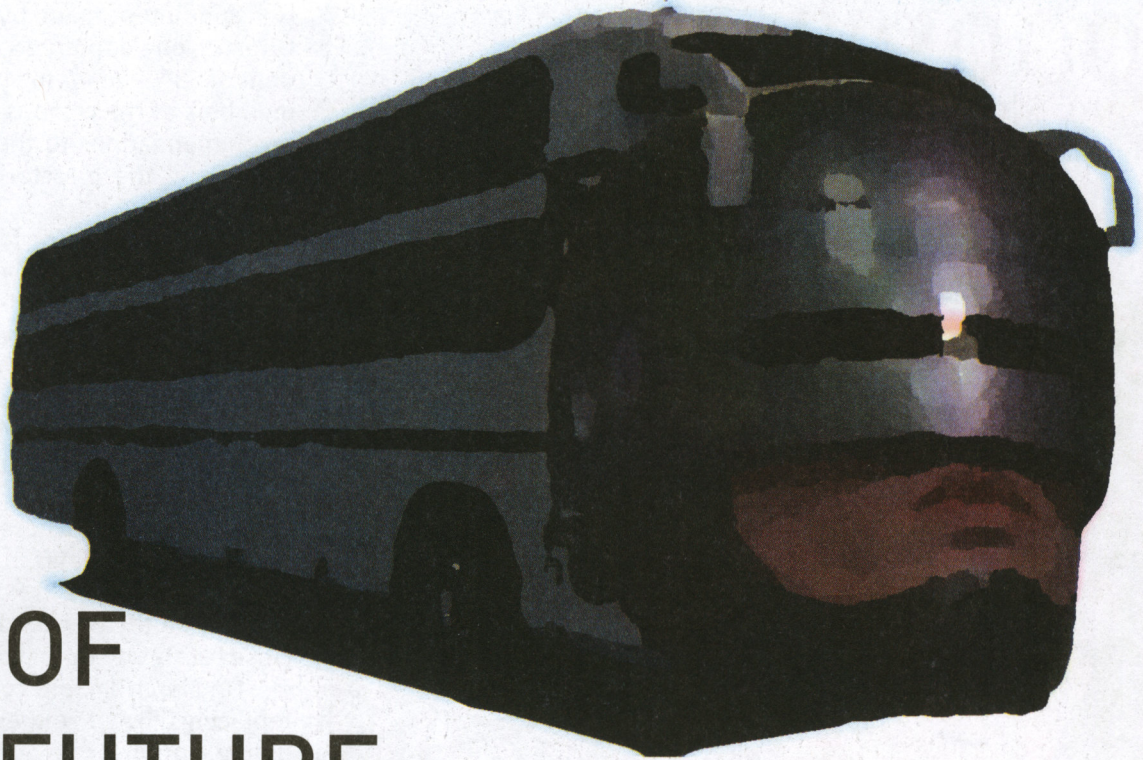
1. I do believe that through my experience with USG, my experience with student government from high school all the way to college, and the fact that I have worked with many clubs and organizations and assisted many students on campus with their needs, that makes me very qualified to represent all students of Stony brook university. I am also familiar with the financial records and allocation system used by the USG, so I am well acquainted with our budget and even our internal expenses and thus will be able to better understand how to use the money more efficiently in the future.

2. I am currently serving as a class representative in the Stony Brook USG, and I am also a member of the USG Executive council. I am also a non-voting member of the USG Senate. I have been in

Student Government positions from freshman year of high school all the way to college so I can say that I am a veteran of student government politics and with working with administration.

6. The major flaw of USG is their lack of recognition by the students. Many students fail to recognize or understand what USG is or does. During my time in office, I have worked on a presentation that will be presented at orientations for incoming freshman so that they may understand who and what USG is. After 4 academic years, every single person who attends Stony Brook shall be aware of USG. In addition to this, I am working on a massive advertising if elected because I believe that there is no point of doing anything if no one knows what is going on and how does it affect them.

7. As a candidate for the VP of Student Life position and as a potential chair of SAB, I believe that if SAB were given the same budget next year, I shall ensure that the money shall be invested in the best interest of students and is utilized efficiently. I shall also ensure that all money is accounted for and any allocations shall be presented to all students to see. If however, there is a decrease in SAB's budget, I shall ensure that we stay within our budget to provide campus entertainment to all students on campus to promote campus and weekend life.



BUS OF THE FUTURE

by Priscila Korb

Waiting for a Stony Brook bus for 15 minutes can seem like a century to someone on their way to class. There could be many reasons for public transportation being late, and not knowing where the bus is or how long it will take can drive the waiting passengers crazy.

However, that can all change with the new GPS tracking system created by a group of students and faculty from the Center of Excellence in Wireless and Information Technology.

According to James O'Connor, director of the Sustainability and Transit Operations, the student-developed project was based on feedback from an advisory group of students. CEWIT formed a partnership with students and faculty from the computer science department to give the Stony Brook community what they wanted.

"It's a win-win. It gives students opportunities for real world experience and it's cost effective," said O'Connor.

The program consists of a GPS router, a tablet for driver interface and a card reader to keep track of the amount of passengers on the bus. All of the information comes together in software that communicates the capacity of the bus and the estimated arrival time to those waiting.

The system, which was developed at Stony Brook as part of the curriculum for students in the computer science department, is currently running on two different routes—Hospital/Chapin and the Railroad routes—as part of a pilot program. In the fall 2012 semester, the program will be

expanded to the Express, Inner Loop and R&D routes. The project will be completed by spring 2013 when the system will be added to the Shopping, Southampton and Outer Loop routes. Tests on the system will be ongoing from late April until May, according to O'Connor.

The only cost of this new system is that it might increase the transportation fee for students. Since the cost of fuel has increased and the cost of fringe benefits is always changing, the fee did change. However, the software was developed in-house, and it is cost effective, according to O'Connor.

"We have received positive feedback from the advisory group," he said.

The main outcome of the GPS system, according to O'Connor, is to bring back the bike share program.

"Our goal is that you don't have to wait for a bus, you can hop on one of the bikes if the bus is taking too long," O'Connor said.

Of course, this doesn't mean that buses will not be changing as well.

"There are always plans to buy new buses," said O'Connor. They lower the main cost and increase efficiency. "We purchase two new buses every year to replace two old buses," he added.

O'Connor says that the project also includes a downloadable phone app that will be available in the future.

GOODBYE CPK

by Carol Moran & John Fischer



California Pizza Kitchen in Roth Cafe will close at the end of this semester, and the Faculty Student Association committee that recommends changes to campus dining is considering Red Mango to replace it, and Starbucks to replace Pura Vida downstairs, according to the minutes of the committee's March 14 meeting.

California Pizza Kitchen is closing all its college locations, though the company did not give any reason for doing so, according to Angela Agnello, Director of Marketing and Communications for the Faculty Student Association. Agnello said CPK had the lowest number of transactions in the fall 2011 semester, compared to the Student Activities Center, Kelly, the Union, Wendy's and Jasmine.

"Although fans of California Pizza Kitchen may be disappointed, this will give Roth Dining Center the opportunity to undergo a summer renovation, bringing an exciting new food concept for Fall 2012," Agnello said in an email.

The Meal Plan Resolution Committee, which is made up of three appointees from Lackmann Culinary Services,

two appointees made by the FSA Executive Director, one appointee made by the president of FSA, and up to six students or other members of the campus community, makes recommendations to the FSA executive director and the director of campus dining services.

"You live here for four years, you have to survive with the food on campus," Jessica Fellows, a student cashier at CPK, said. "It's nice when things change."

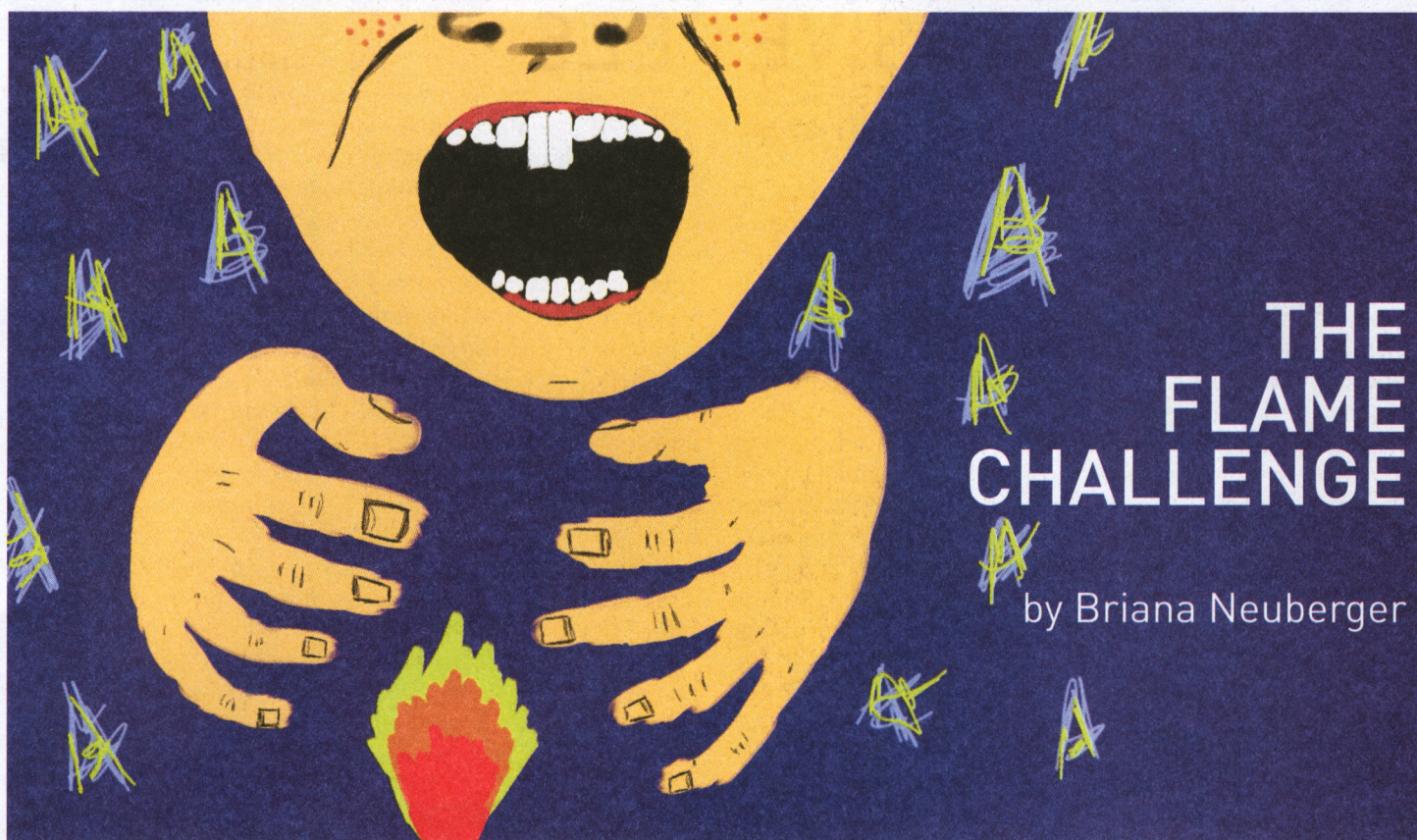
But other students expressed concern that CPK's closing would reduce the variety of food available on campus, and students may be forced to eat at the healthier option of Wendy's.

"I don't know where I would eat if CPK closed," Emily Tobias, a student who lives in Cardozo College in Roth Quad, said. "Especially on the weekends, because the SAC closes at six and this is the only thing open."

On March 14, the committee discussed replacing CPK with either a Mexican-themed dining option or an Asian fusion concept with Chinese, Korean, Malaysian and Thai food, but student committee members said they were concerned that those options would not draw enough students, according to the minutes available on FSA's website. The committee said there is a possibility of adding a frozen yogurt kiosk, such as Red Mango, upstairs, and a name brand coffee option, such as Starbucks, to replace Pura Vida downstairs. The new dining option is expected to be open for the Fall 2012 semester, Agnello said.

"You live here for four years, you have to survive with the food on campus."

Diane Poon, a student at Stony Brook who lives in Roth, said she eats at CPK at least once a day. "I feel like its one of the best food places in Roth," she said. "But if it's replaced by something better, it won't be a tragedy."



THE FLAME CHALLENGE

by Briana Neuberger

Alan Alda, six-time Emmy Award and Golden Globe winner and board member for the Stony Brook University Center for Communicating Science, is conducting a nationwide contest for scientists to explain what a flame is to an 11-year-old.

The idea for the contest comes from Alda's own experience. When he was 11 he asked his teacher, "What is a flame?" She responded with, "It's oxidation." Alda was still perplexed.

To put it simply, an atom can be positive, negative or neutral. If an atom loses electrons, it oxidizes, but if it gains electrons, it reduces. So a flame is created when oxygen atoms are reduced or oxidized. A flame that isn't positive or negative is neutral, which means it hasn't lost or gained any electrons.

Even though Alda is best known for playing Hawkeye Pierce on the hit television show *M*A*S*H*, he has always had science in the back of his brain. Decades later, Alda still saw a problem with scientists and how they talk to normal people and how they communicate with each other. Their discussions are filled with jargon, making it hard to connect science with society.

Alda's experience interviewing scientists on *Scientific American Frontiers*, which was aired on PBS, brought the issue to his attention once again. By continually asking the scientists questions and making them explain themselves in simpler ways, he cracked their scientific language. He

gave the audience an opportunity to see the scientists in the white lab coats were people too.

Alda took this idea and brought it to Stony Brook's newly born CCS graduate program. He is now part of the teacher faculty.

"Being a non-scientist, I really have to work to understand some of the more complex topics that I write about," said Matt Gerardi, a CCS student. "That has a lot of advantages when you're trying to communicate with your fellow laypeople. Basically, if I don't understand what something is or how it works, it doesn't go into the article."

The students are learning to say what they want to say, without using jargon. They learn how to improvise and communicate with a live audience. The CCS discourages "dumbing down" science—they want to teach students how to be unambiguous and vivid with their words.

"One common piece of advice you'll hear often is to write like you're explaining something to your grandmother, but I tend to write like I'm trying to explain something to myself," Gerardi said.

Alda's contest has sparked national media attention. Diane Sawyer called it the "most inspired contest on the planet."

The deadline was midnight April 2, 2012, and the winner will be announced in New York at the World Science Festival in June.

COMPREHENSIVE FEES

by Arielle Dollinger

Students may have to pay five broad based fees come the fall semester—the Intercollegiate Athletics Fee, Recreation Center and Fields Fee, Infirmary Fee, Technology Fee and Transportation Fee—in addition to the cost of tuition, campus officials announced at a media conference on March 21.

The 2012/2013 Broad Based Fees Proposal motions for an additional \$75 Recreation and Fields Fee to be put towards the building and maintenance of the university's new Recreation Center, and increases to all broad based fees except the Infirmary Fee.

Among those in attendance were representatives from each of the departments that have a stake in the proposal—James O'Connor, director of sustainability and transportation operations, Matt Larsen, senior associate director of athletics, Susan DiMonda, associate dean and director of student life, Dr. Rachel Bergeson, director of student health services, Chuck Powell, assistant provost for teaching and learning with technology, and Lyle Gomes, interim vice president for finance. Each representative spoke about the proposed increases for their respective departments.

The athletics department has requested an increase of \$7.50 per semester, or 3.3 percent of the current fee. The proposed increase to the technology fee is \$7.50 per semester as well, a 3.8 percent change. The transportation department has asked for a \$5-per-semester increase—a difference of 4.1 percent.

Students saw increases of the athletics and transportation fees last year as well, but Larsen and O'Connor said the proposed increases for the 2012-2013 school year are still necessary.

"The fee increase that was approved last year really wasn't enough to bring us out of where we are," O'Connor said.

According to O'Connor, the fee increase will cover costs that have changed since last year, including rising fuel costs and a changed fringe benefit rate for the university's bus drivers.

Larsen said the athletics fee increase would be used to cover some Title IX compliance concerns, as well as operational costs and increases to transportation costs that were not covered by last year's increase.

Susan DiMonda discussed the \$75 Recreation Center Fee, the largest of the proposed fees, which would affect only undergraduate students.

According to DiMonda, a survey of Stony Brook students in the year 2000 showed student willingness to pay for a new recreational center. Tuition and economic conditions have changed drastically over the past 12 years, but DiMonda does not think public sentiment has changed with regard to the center's creation.

"Students join gyms right now, they probably pay more than \$75 a semester, and with this facility they're gonna get much more than they get in the local gym," DiMonda said. The second floor alone will be home to about 112 pieces of cardio equipment, she added.

Though she has not received any complaints from students, DiMonda admitted she does not know how aware students are of the fee, noting that she has only spoken to students who are on the center's advisory board.

Mallory Rothstein, a freshman on the recreation center advisory committee, said she feels the fee is reasonable and appropriate.

"I believe that what the center is going to offer the students is worth the price," Rothstein said in a Facebook message. "I do feel that all students will initially be upset just because no one wants to pay any more than they already do, but once they understand what the facility will offer, I think they will be okay with it."

Rothstein said she has not heard any complaints yet, and that she does her best to explain to any student she speaks to exactly what they are paying for and why.

Meanwhile, the Infirmary Fee, which covers all programs



Photo by Tom Johnson

that fall under the umbrella of Student Health Services, will remain the same, Bergeson proudly announced.

"We're content to stay where we are for the time being," she said, noting that no major changes are set to be made to health services operations at this time.

Campus officials stressed the idea that they are making an effort to obtain student feedback. The media conference, facilitated by Media Relations Officer Lauren Sheprow, was part of an on-going student consultation process for the proposed increases, said Gomes.

A letter informing students of the increases was sent out on March 28, and an open information session for all undergraduate students will be held April 11 during Campus Lifetime in the Student Activity Center. Graduate students can attend a forum discussion to be held on April 12 from 4:30-6:00p.m. in room 302 of the Student Activity Center.

REC CENTER ADVENTURE

by Arielle Dollinger



Photo by Tom Johnson

The new campus Recreation Center, set to open in the fall, will not only create a place for students to work out and spend their time, but also a place for student employment, said Susan DiMonda, associate dean and director of student life.

The \$37.5 million project, which DiMonda and her team began working on in 1999, will be fully air-conditioned and heated, and create a new place for students to gather, as well as create new job opportunities for students, DiMonda said.

The facility will feature a full floor of cardio equipment, a tenth of a mile-long track, and an interactive spinning studio with 30 participant bikes, one instructor bike and a screen that will virtually transport students to different locations while they ride.

DiMonda hopes that each piece of cardio equipment will have its own individual screen with cable access, places to plug in an iPod, and other technological accommodations.

Fitness classes that are now held in the basement of the Student Activities Center will instead be held in the recreation center. Studios with wood floors and built-in audio systems are being made with the capacity to hold classes of up to 49 people.

A wellness resource room in the building, complete with computer kiosks, reception desks and exam rooms, will be used for health screenings, including depression screenings, and consultations with personal trainers.

According to DiMonda, the center will be "the place to be" on campus, and will likely bring in people who do not normally work out.

"This is going to create a healthy environment for our students," she said.

The center's creation doubles as an employment

opportunity—it will employ over 75 students to operate the facility and others to run fitness classes. Interviews will be held on for those who have already applied on April 21. The new employees will attend training when the fall semester begins.

The center will be open to Stony Brook students only by key card access, having to scan their ID cards to get in. Students can, however, obtain guest passes. The guest pass policy is undergoing debate, and any decision made now is preliminary. The policy will be finalized after the center's opening, once administrators have seen how many students frequent the center and how often, DiMonda said.

Matt Larsen, senior associate director of athletics, said the center would be a huge benefit to athletics from a recruiting standpoint. DiMonda agreed, noting that the first place recruiters take prospective student athletes is the school's recreational facility.

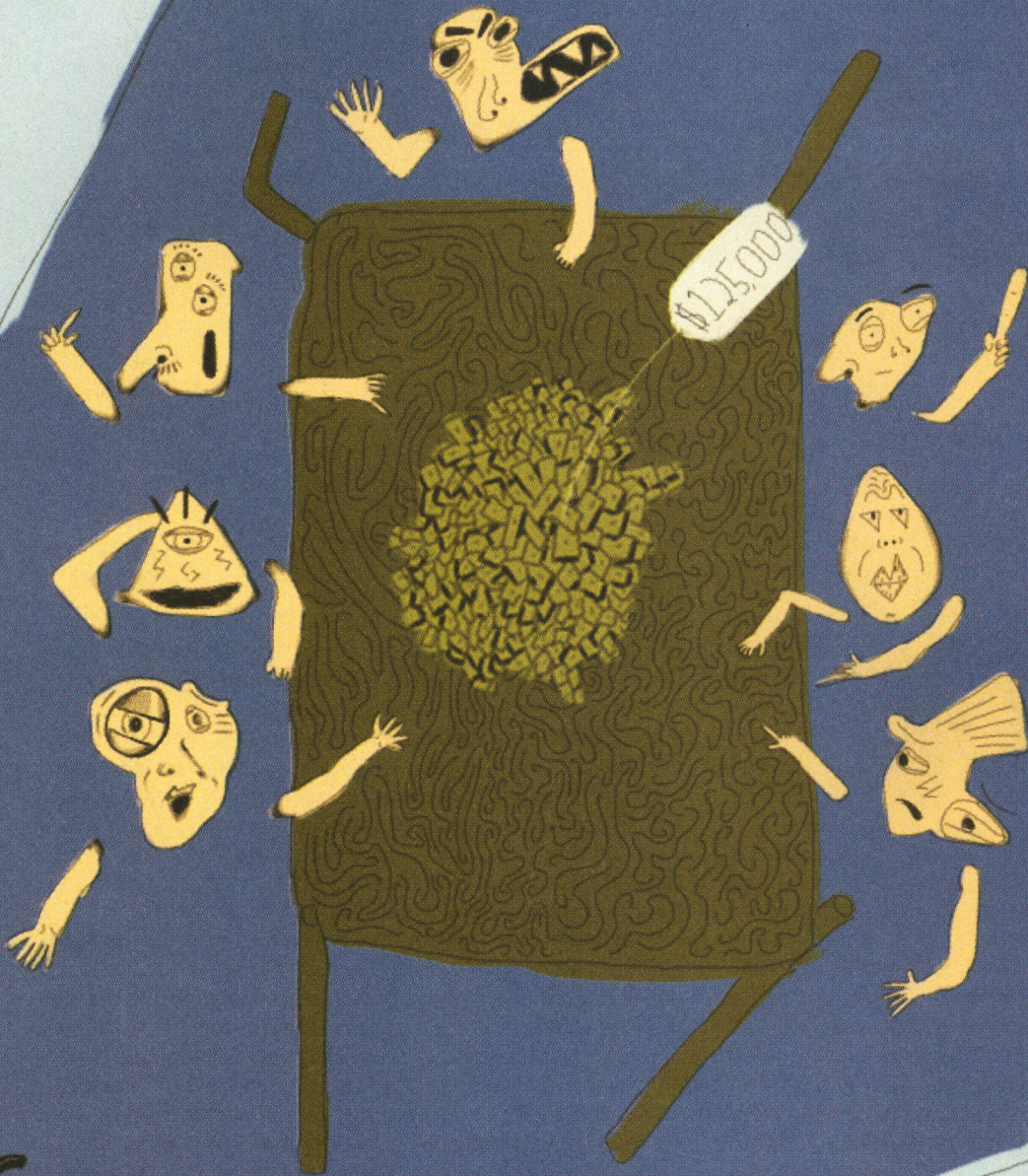
But the space will not just work to serve sports teams. Clubs such as Puso and ballroom dance are constantly in need of practice and rehearsal space, DiMonda said, and often have to use inadequate spaces around campus.

"They go in the Benedict atrium and use the windows at night to practice. Is that appropriate at an institution of our caliber? I don't think so," DiMonda said.

Sports clubs will have first priority to reserve rooms in the facility for practices and events, but all clubs will have the opportunity to do so if the rooms have not been booked.

Mallory Rothstein, a freshman on the advisory board for the creation of the recreation center said, "the \$75 fee was determined years ago and since then has not been increased," adding that she thinks that what the center will offer students is worth the price.

S. A. B.



So... About all this money...

A SAB STORY

by Nick Statt & Carol Moran

The Student Activities Board, the Undergraduate Student Government agency responsible for putting on large-scale campus events, has approximately \$110,000 still unspent this year - even after the \$215,000 allocated for the end of the year concert and \$40,000 to the Roth Regatta. Despite that surplus, the USG Budget Committee has awarded the agency a draft budget of \$530,000 for next year, a one percent decrease from its current budget.

Complicating that decision is SAB's history of fiscal irresponsibility—it significantly overspent its 2010-2011 budget mainly because of mounting costs from last year's Bruno Mars concert—and that pattern has continued this semester, but in the opposite way, as SAB seems unable to use its entire budget. This underspending is highlighted by the fact that SAB was awarded a 34 percent increase, from roughly \$404,000 to its current \$534,886, while many USG-funded clubs and organizations took budget cuts. None of that apparently factored into the Budget Committee's decision a few weeks ago to award nearly the same amount of money to the most heavily funded and internal USG club on campus, while many USG officers and SAB members declared that venue booking and contract obstacles have kept SAB from using its increased budget.

To make matters worse, SAB's budget is currently in danger of being frozen by the USG Accounting Office if it fails to turn in five of its seven missing receipts that document where funds have been spent, an issue that is due mostly to disorganization. Any club, regardless of how tightly they work alongside USG officers, is only allowed up to two missing receipts per year. This is but one of the many reasons that Assistant Treasurer Kenneth Myers, who oversaw SAB's budget, announced his resignation in an email last Wednesday. The other issues involve members of SAB bypassing the democratic process, creating an overall air of disorganization that Myers feels has disenchanted him from his position and his role in USG. For an organization that was, only last year, the "one-man show" of Former Special Programming Agency Director Moiz Khan, this year's SAB run is proving as convoluted a test of USG's solidarity as anyone could have imagined.

What Would You Do if You Had Over \$100,000 You Couldn't Spend?

USG Treasurer Thomas Kirnbauer said SAB would try to use as much of its budget as it can before the end of the semester, and it will probably be left with less than \$100,000 after the end-of-the-year concert.

"It's unfortunate that this is the last concert of the year

so if something were to fall through, it leaves extra budget at the end because we're only planning up to the budget, not beyond the budget," Kirnbauer said. He added that administrators have been "hounding" the agency to make sure they don't go over budget like last year, making it difficult to come close to using all their available funds.

"We really were under a lot of pressure this year in terms of how we spend our money," said USG President Mark Maloof of the excess funds. He added that unspent money would be funneled into next year's event grant pool, which would benefit clubs in the future.

A budget given to *The Press* on March 7 indicated that SAB had \$125,000 dollars left in its budget after taking into account the Roth Regatta's \$40,000 and the end-of-the-year concert's \$215,000. But there are some expenses lined up to bring that surplus down. For one, Kirnbauer has planned an "undie run" and waterpark extravaganza to take place between the Roth Regatta and the end-of-the-year concert, which is estimated to cost \$15,000 due to security expenses and waterpark activities. Maloof also added that the end-of-the-year concert has unknown increases in security expenses due to pay raises, meaning the overall production cost of the concert is likely to be higher than the estimated \$100,000 listed in the March budget.

"Everything they did in the draft budget was right," Kirnbauer said, referring to the members of SAB. "They allocated for certain events, they left some extra money as kind of a buffer to ensure that we don't go over, kind of like a contingency fund, so you know they are allocating as much as they can."

At an SAB meeting earlier this semester, Patrice Zapiti, the event programming associate for SAB who works under current SPA Director Jackie Cowles, explained that the agency has run into difficulty putting on concerts this year because last year's SAB members did not reserve venues as they should have. That means SAB was last on the list this year to book venues, such as the sports arena, Staller and the SAC auditorium, and was limited to the artists available on the few dates they could get.

"That's why Chiddy Bang was on a Sunday night," Myers said. He added that they had originally planned to have a bigger end-of-year concert, but more than one attempt to book big-name artists fell through, and the members of SAB were split on which artists they should bring. The agency tossed around names like Nicki Minaj—who is far too expensive to book, and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, who aren't as popular, but would still have cost significantly more than Bruno Mars, who performed last year. SAB had also talked about bringing Major Laser, Jessie J and Childish Gambino, though those three were knocked off the list.

"And then all of a sudden we were talking about Tyga," said Myers of the proposed second act for the end-of-the-year concert. Tyga would have cost almost as much as Wiz Khalifa, who is set to come for an estimated \$85,000, which would have comfortably used up much of the remaining SAB funds with enough left over to act as the buffer Kirnbauer explained was necessary. But that ideal situation also fell through because Tyga was unavailable on April 27, the only day SAB was able to book the sports complex, the only venue on campus capable of putting on a concert of the same magnitude as the Bruno Mars concert. "Tyga was going to cost about \$80 grand or something. And so that's why, when he didn't sign off, we ended up with an excess of money," explained Myers.

But despite having a draft budget of \$530,000, SAB funds for next year are not set in stone. It is unlikely that the draft budget will decrease given the obvious fact that SAB is not an entirely independent club; it is run internally by USG through appointed positions voted on by USG. But any club budget can go up or down on the Senate floor when budgets are approved, according to Myers.

It only takes one member of the 22-person Undergraduate Senate to propose a budget change, and if more than half of the present members agree to propose the change, it goes to a second vote in which a two thirds majority is required to actually pass the change. The voting takes place regardless of how many members of the Senate are present on April 12, but there are USG rules capping the amount of times a Senator may miss meetings or use a proxy to avoid an absence.

SAB's Inner Turmoil: Missing Receipts & The Graphic Designer Debacle

"My moral compass tells me that I cannot be a part of this anymore," Myers said in his resignation email. "I do not agree with our conduct."

During spring break, SPA Director Jackie Cowles, the organizational head of SAB, sent an email to the other members of the organization asking for their approval to pay graphic designer, Roman Belopolsky, \$2,000 to create poster advertisements and t-shirts for Roth Regatta and the end-of-the-year concert. SAB had previously hired a student to create the designs, but he notified the agency days before the designs were due that he would not be able to complete them because the theme for the Roth Regatta—'90's pop culture—was something he was not familiar with, having not grown up in America during that period. This left SAB in a bind, forcing them to turn to Belopolsky because of his having been hired the previous year, as well as his having produced such high-quality work that USG could trust that the designs would be done adequately despite the short notice.

But the choice of Belopolsky carried a significant amount of baggage, making this email request, which would have involved Myers giving written consent that the money would be paid, that much more controversial. For one, Belopolsky was already rejected by the Senate last Fall on the grounds that he was not an official undergraduate student; he was, according to Myers, not taking classes and hiring him would have gone against the revised bylaw restriction that USG may only hire a contracted graphic designer that is a fully matriculated undergraduate student.

Not only did the Senate's rejection of Belopolsky come into play immediately upon Cowles' email request, but the fact that she was going through email and not presenting the decision in an official meeting was against the law. It's also something Myers said happened quite frequently in the past. "Telling SAB that something urgently needs approval is an excuse that has been used too many times. As far as I know, SAB cannot approve allocations via private emails as they are not open meetings," said Myers in an email in which he refused to give Cowles the written consent to pay Belopolsky.

Myers, and USG Executive Vice President Deborah Machalow, said approving the allocation of funds through email is a violation of the New York State Open Meetings Law, and should only happen in meetings that are recorded and open to the students, so they may monitor how their money is being used.

"These are public monies you are charged with dispensing," Machalow said in an email to other SAB and USG members. "The students, who originally paid the fee used to create your budget, have every right to know where the money is going and should have every right to observe the decision-making process." Machalow also brought up the fact that utilizing Belopolsky was effectively going behind the backs of the Senate, "Further, as Mark pointed out when this insipid conversation about the advertising of Roth Regatta began, it is undemocratic to go ahead and hire an individual whom the Senate clearly rejected for basically the same job," she said in the email exchange.

The other members of SAB and USG said they had no other option, as the t-shirt designs had to be in by Friday and the posters up by Monday, and the next SAB meeting wouldn't be held until after spring break. But Machalow said that is not a good enough excuse for violating the law. Despite the controversy, the hiring of Belopolsky was shifted over to the office of Vice President of Communications Stephanie Berlin, who was given an annual budget of \$15,000 to spend at the beginning of the year. That budget does not carry the same restrictions as a USG contracted service and therefore could be done without the Senate's consent. Berlin provided no comment on the matter when asked and Cowles did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

In the email announcing his resignation, Myers said he was displeased with the conduct of SAB, but he also attrib-

uted his resignation to having to take partial responsibility for missing receipts.

"My performance as Treasurer of SAB has been insufficient (with regards to the receipts issue) and I now realize that it is more difficult than I originally thought to keep track of one of the largest budgets on campus without losing track of anything," Myers wrote. "I apologize to all of you for my failure and I only hope that it works out in the future."

Under the USG Financial Bylaws, "Only signatory members of club/organizations may collect a check or purchase." Myers said SAB has violated that law, as Cowles and others have picked up checks while not being signatory members, making it difficult to keep track of receipts. SAB's signatory members include Myers, Berlin and Vice President of Student Life Deron Hill.

But the missing receipts pose a greater risk to SAB in that the organization has until Friday, April 13 to bring its missing receipt count down to two or lower or its budget will be frozen. Myers brought up an even more delicate matter: if he had given Cowles the written consent that

Belopolsky could be paid the agreed upon \$2,000 and the budget was frozen or the allocation wasn't approved at that Wednesday's meeting, Belopolsky would have grounds to sue USG. "I think the rules are there to prevent us from being sued," Myers said.

Maloof and Myers are both confident that the budget will not be frozen and that the receipts will be easily collected by next Friday. Myers claims that between him and Cowles, he knows of at least six receipts that can be scrapped together immediately. "If my understanding is correct, [the receipts] are just in her office," said Maloof of the specific receipts Cowles has not submitted.

But until then, SAB will be scrambling to both roll out advertising for inarguably the two most important events of the year while collecting its missing receipts. But no matter what happens in the coming weeks, Kirnbauer is still down an assistant treasurer, despite Myers' claim that he will continue to help out despite having no voting power, and SAB's money is rife with ever-increasing controversy that has made this year's USG a record convolution.

SPA VS. SPA

by Nick Batson & Jodie Mann

A huge challenge faced by any event planner, like the director of Stony Brook University's Special Programming Agency, is managing to find the time and space appropriate for any event.

Jackie Cowles, this year's SPA director seemed well prepared for the challenge. After working with RockYoFaceCase for several semesters, Cowles knew the amount of work required for successful events on a college campus. The SPA director is the one and only organizational position in the Student Activities Board, and is responsible for pitching and planning large, expensive campus events, like last year's Bruno Mars concert. The position also involves coordinating relationships with other campus clubs that want to plan events on campus but need funding assistance from SAB's roughly \$530,000 budget.

"I chose to apply for the job in SAB because it was event planning, much like the work [I had] experience with," Cowles said.

While her event planning skills lined up with what the USG job would involve, Cowles was still hesitant to apply.

"With RockYoFace, it's a very organic, natural and raw environment," Cowles said. "I never pictured myself working for USG, because it's so different."

The challenges associated with planning events on campus often mean dealing with an administration that has a history of imposing difficulties on student event organizations, like forcing expensive and excessive security

measures that USG has no control over.

Former SPA Director Moiz Khan can testify to this.

"Our biggest challenge was a bunch of people in administration who weren't very fond of taking risks," said Khan. "My approach has always been slash and burn, and if someone gets in your way, then you steamroll them." This ideology feeds into Khan's reputation and career with USG. Along with others—like former USG Executive Vice President Alexander Dimitriyadi—Khan advocated for the controversial 2010 Establishment of Student Life Act that completely restructured SAB and created the SPA Director position. Khan himself would later serve as the first SPA Director.

He is quick to highlight that administration's adversarial stance is nothing new. "I met some people at an event last semester who worked on the concert series back in the 70s and 80s, and the first thing they told me was how difficult it was working with the administration."

Cowles found herself in for an even more complicated situation when she learned the spaces and dates reserved by SAB for the fall and spring semesters did not match with the events the student body would be most interested in.

"We had one concert on a Sunday night because it

CONT. ON PG 23

ATTACK OF THE I-CON 31

by Evan Goldaper



Talk about gonzo journalism! In the style of Hunter S. Thompson, I prepared to cover I-CON 31 by fully engrossing myself in the world of nerd culture, and after fifteen some-odd years of reading comic books, playing video games and obsessing over old sci-fi movies, not to mention attending five previous I-CONs, I was ready to write this article. See what I'll do for you?

For those unfamiliar, I-CON stands for Island Convention, and it's Stony Brook's very own science fiction and fantasy convention. I usually tell people to picture Comic-Con, except smaller and focused more heavily on classic sci-fi. It's a magical time: a weekend when, instead of emptying out, Stony Brook fills up with nerds, geeks and teenagers dressed as their favorite anime protagonists. On most days, when I choose to dress up as Green Lantern villain Sinestro, people stare at me funny. At I-CON, people ask me if I'm classic Sinestro or Aaron Diaz's Sinestro reboot. And it's that wonderful piece of pure magic that keeps me going, year after year.

Some years can be slightly disappointing, some are okay, but this year was pretty great. The convention, which took place March 30 through April 1, was headlined by Paul McGann, who played the eighth incarnation of the Doctor on *Doctor Who*. Ask your Whovian friends; they'll inform you he's "the guy who played the Doctor right before we started watching." Other big names in attendance were Nana Visitor and Daphne Ashbrook of *Deep Space Nine*, Paul Blake, who famously shot second in his role as Greedo in the first *Star Wars*, Jeremy Bulloch, who shot Han Solo in his role as Boba Fett, and Sarah Douglas, who escaped from the Phantom Zone in *Superman II*. And of course, as usual, Bill Rogers was there, still trying to remind me that he's been voicing Brock for a very long time now and I should get over the fact that Eric Stuart is never coming back.

Presumably, these guests had exciting panels, but I seem to have missed them. Frankly, the weekend was a bit of a blur. I remember seeing Steve Gostelow, the man who built the Daleks for the *Doctor Who* film and appeared as Cybercontroller and the Dalek Emperor. I also got to help a bunch of comic book geeks duke it out over the DC relaunch and the merits of *The Dark Knight*. Because really, I-CON is about doing what you want, and I genuinely love hearing people tell each other that new the Starfire is stupid and that the Cybermen were better in the 80s.

Mostly, however, I was far too busy just taking in the madcap zaniness that passes for normalcy at I-CON to get anywhere. The best part of the convention is just wandering around the vendors' floor, checking out the wares and talking to fellow attendees. Where else are you going to see boxes and boxes of sonic screwdrivers, vintage Geordi La Forge action figures, replica Tesla guns and enough steampunk hats to sink a gear-covered airship? Nowhere else. And of course, I-CON is the place where I can chat with Princess Bubblegum, take a photo of a giant balloon Voltron and overhear Batman and Dog the Bounty Hunter debating what to do about the Joker and Harley Quinn.

My original plan was to go around asking these guys who they were supporting in the upcoming presidential election, figuring that information would be interesting for my political blog, but Arthur Dent told me he imagined Zaphod Beeblebrox would take it, Toothless the Dragon screamed in my face and Aquaman appeared far too busy protecting the ocean to respond at all. It's safe to say that there is no seriousness allowed at I-CON. For three days, politics, responsibility, being "cool," schoolwork...none of that mattered. I-CON is just a completely different world than the one I live in every other day, and one I was happy to be a part of for a while.

Photo by Mike Pedersen



SPA VS. SPA cont.

was the best we could do," Cowles said of last semester's Chiddy Bang concert. "It was out of my hands."

Another potential concert featuring Manchester Orchestra had to be completely scrapped because the only available space was the Student Activities Center auditorium, where students would have to remain seated throughout the show.

"That's not the kind of show I would want to go to, so I wouldn't have expected students to want to go either," Cowles said. "It's not a good concert atmosphere."

Khan offered an explanation for this, stating that the system in which events are booked on campus is to blame.

"You don't book a room for a concert, and then try to book the artist. That's not how it works," said Khan. "What you do is you find an artist that people want, and then you find a date that works for them, not the other way around."

According to current policy, the SPA Director will book venues on campus and dates for events a year ahead of time. This leaves the next SPA Director with the task of finding artists to fill those spaces during those pre-determined times, which can be difficult. SAB, despite being an arm of USG, is still technically a university club and is allowed no preference when it comes to booking venues like the SAC Ballroom or the Sports Complex.

While Cowles is proud of the events she helped coordinate, her biggest regret is that she could not secure an alternative rock band for any date. As a big fan of the genre, Cowles said she would have loved to host an event that featured one of her personal favorites, like the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. But divisions within USG over the band's relevancy, and their massive \$150,000 price tag, kept them off the table.

"I'd rather have a sold-out show than a band that I love," she said. "There's so much diversity among music tastes so it's really hard."

Cowles hopes that whoever takes over her job in the future has fewer issues with planning. Cowles secured as many dates as she could for next year to make it much easier for her successor. She also hopes they will have an actual agency to assist them because, as it stands now, the SPA Director has only a contracted assistant to help with all of the organizational duties, alongside the planning and carrying out of concert ideas. The contracted assistant position, currently held by graduate student and co-founder of RockYoFaceCase Patrice Zapiti, will only exist next year if USG decides to extend the contract.

"I wish I had more people working with me," Cowles said. "Hopefully that'll happen in the future."



THE FREAKS COME OUT AT NIGHT

by Tom Johnson & Liz Kaempf

Unlike Comic-Con, during which stars of current television shows appear and hotter chicks show up in cosplay, I-CON likes to forego most of that classy stuff and replace it with lots of porn. Panels that feature hentai, advice for furies and screenings of pornographic animes all took place after the sun went down and only admitted those mature enough to handle the content. Clearly, that means anyone who is legally allowed to buy cigarettes is allowed into these raucous and raunchy events. I-CON brings out all the freaks.

Disappointed that there were less than 20 furry panels this year, a select few ventured to the late screenings of anime pornos like *Cosplay Sex Machine* and *Panty Flash Teacher*. Even walking into the *Sex Machine* late meant you didn't miss anything. All you needed to see was the "sexaroid" transform like a slutty Sailor Moon to have a good idea of what you were getting yourself into. But even then, you had no idea what you were getting yourself into.

Seri is a shape-changing sex robot that a young and hormonal boy finds himself in possession of, with which he goes on to have first-time sexual encounters with. The first thing Seris does is pull up the top of her schoolgirl uniform to show her "master" her shiny, perky breasts. He gropes her, sucks on her boobs and bites them. His hands travel south and finger the flesh inside her panties. The audience clapped each time our young hero tried something new.

Then things get more intense. Seris asks if her master

would like to see more of her, and then slips off her panties and invites the boy to—um...well...he performs cunnilingus while she asks him if it's "tasty." Then she tells him to pull out his penis and put it inside of her. The audience is not clapping as much now. And after he penetrates her for less than two seconds and orgasms (which you, for some unknown reason, get an x-ray vision of so you can see him come inside of his sexaroid) the audience is thoroughly uncomfortable. It's possible no one expected this amount of sexually explicit animation.

Things only get more upsetting from there as the majority of the hour in Javits 109 is spent watching a cartoon rape scene gangbang, complete with a girl-on-guy-on-girl-with-both-a-penis-and-vagina threesome. For those of you playing at home, it means that the sex robot decided it felt left out from the human sex and decided it would grow a penis out of its cyborg vagina and anally penetrate the unsuspecting girl involved.

But wait, there's more! *Cosplay Sex Machine* sets out to cater to even more of your most depraved fantasies, no matter how weird or unrealistic. A notable scene combining a lactation fetish and male rape fantasy plays out when our intrepid young hero has his trusty sexaroid impersonate his store manager. Among the other oddities present were a scene wherein Seris shrinks down to doll-like proportions and latches on to the young master's ever-growing phallus like a monkey on a tree and a giant-sized girl next door who felates and is fisted by the end of their rendezvous. And

lest we forget, in anime porn, a female's orgasm is indicated by a stream of urine shooting up like the Bellagio fountain in Las Vegas. Last time I checked, that's not how a woman orgasms—at least not in the good ol' U-S-of-A.

Those not satisfied with screenings alone were welcome to indulge in such panels as "Harry Potter and the Magical World of Hentai," a look at some of the pornographic material made by fans who really, really want to see what it would look like if the Dark Lord, Ginny Weasley and Dobby the house elf had a hot, nasty threeway. If that weren't enough, the panel also delved into what the panelists presented as "dramatic readings" of fanfiction found online or written by audience members in bad costumes.

Much to the chagrin of attendees, the Harry Potter hentai panel was lacking in intimate and theatrical magic. The desperately sex-deprived panelists spent the first 15 minutes passing around poorly printed, animated Harry Potter fanfic porn. Some images included lesbian foreplay between supporting characters, sex scenes enacted by good and evil wizards and a 13-year-old Hermione in most of her Hogwarts uniform—her skirt and underwear were mysteriously missing, making viewers feel like pedophiles.

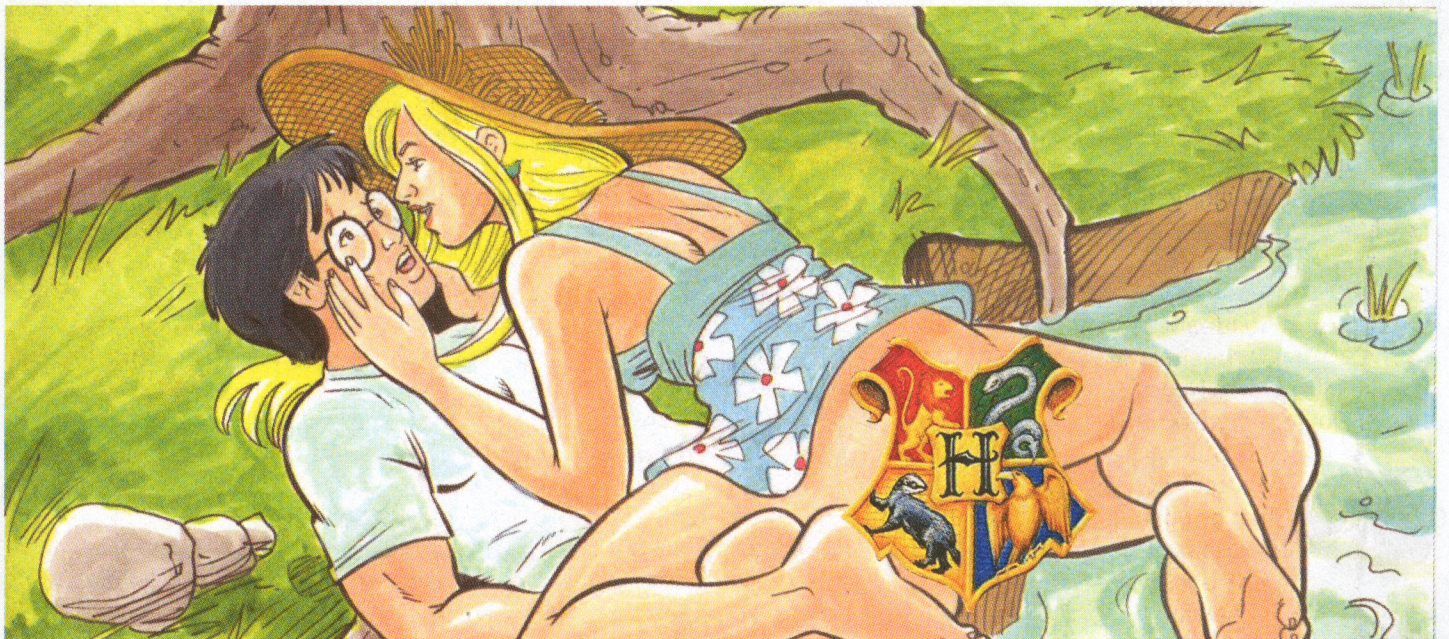
If it were a gallery of porn allowing the attendees to interact with one another and enjoy the deviant experience together, it would have been much better off. Unfortunately, the panelists went on to orate "dramatic" readings of popular *Harry Potter* fanfiction, inevitably including explicit sex scenes between Harry and Draco. But the storytellers were clearly not leadership majors here at Stony Brook, and are in immense need of public speaking classes. How does a person enjoy dirty, steamy Hogwarts fantasies if the voice of the reader resembles that of a 12-year-old girl high on Pixy Stix? While the sexually curious abruptly left the room, surely they were left to ponder if there would be anything at this I-CON to stimulate the senses.

The 18+ programming appeared to be few and far between this year, which could be directly attributed to screenings and panels not being scheduled past 11:00p.m., whereas previous years' conventions had programming that ran until 3:00a.m. This is an unfortunate change for

"The anime pornos certainly did not leave much to the imagination, but they shocked and disturbed more than they enticed and stimulated."

I-CON, as the raunchier, more adult-oriented content has traditionally taken place in the wee hours of the night when all the children go home to snuggle in their racecar beds with their fuzzy teddy bears.

While it's likely that next year's festivities would operate under the same scheduling restrictions, one can only hope for the return of more deviant fare like the "Super Hero S&M" of year's past and a greater number of 18+ screenings. The anime pornos certainly did not leave much to the imagination, but they shocked and disturbed more than they enticed and stimulated. Perhaps this is why furies stick to their own packs—everything else must seem tame in comparison.





THE HUNGER GAMES

by Beatrice Vantapool

Up against books-turned-movies like *Harry Potter* and the *Twilight* series, *The Hunger Games* had its work cut out, especially with the added skepticism that the movie wouldn't live up to the book. If Haymitch Abernathy (Woody Harrelson) were around, he'd have two words of advice: Stay alive.

Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) and Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson), are two out of the 24 tributes thrown into a brutal arena to battle to the death for the entertainment of the wealthier Capitol citizens. After volunteering in place of her 12-year-old sister Prim, Katniss' future is one she can no longer see clearly, if she even has a future at all. Leaving her family and best friend behind, she and Peeta travel to the Capitol where they are stuffed with foods they had never imagined and pampered by the best stylists the country of Panem has to offer, including Lenny Kravitz as Cinna.

The two made quite an entrance in the parade of tributes and were literally ablaze representing their coal district and branding Katniss as the "girl on fire." She later makes herself the one to beat, and at the same time puts a target on her head, when she receives an unbelievable combat score from the game-makers. After their two-week period at the Capitol is up, Katniss and Peeta are thrown into the arena amidst fellow tributes, ranging in age from 12 to 18. Immediately bodies scatter and weapons fly, and the two teens run their separate ways hoping they won't

have to kill one another.

The Hunger Games arena was much like it was described in the novel: woodsy, gory and filled with teenagers tearing each other apart. Many of the tributes were played by relatively unknown actors, who were surprisingly refreshing, unlike the horror that was the acting in the *Twilight* saga. The Capitol, in comparison, was rather star-studded, featuring acting veterans such as Stanley Tucci, Donald Sutherland and Elizabeth Banks.

The film makes the dystopian future it portrays look like something anyone would want to be present for. Its mixture of violence, desperation and the little sprinkle of romance keeps the action fast paced right until the very end, leaving you begging for the sequel. Everything from the script to the characters gets you hooked and feeling for these people you've never met. Even the score will give you chills; it seemed like every moment had the perfect musical accompaniment. *The Hunger Games* even made one of the most ridiculous aspects of the book seem normal: the Capitol citizens with their multi-colored skin, hair and men's eyeliner.

The sci-fi action drama was filled with somber moments, violence and gore, and a touch of Katniss-Peeta action that kept everyone on the edge of their seats.

It's just the beginning of a film trilogy that will define a generation. It's safe to say that the odds are in its favor.

AMERICAN REUNION

by Nicole Kohn



It's been almost a decade since the *American Pie* franchise first came out, and its fourth main series film *American Reunion*, is just like all the rest. The original cast, which started off 13 years ago with five sex-obsessed teenagers and one well-known tasty pastry, has returned to East Great Falls for their high-school reunion. In one weekend, these five friends discover what has changed and how time and distance is never strong enough to break the bonds of true friendship.

In the years that have passed since we last saw this raunchy bunch, Jim (Jason Biggs) and Michelle (Alyson Hannigan) got married, are raising a toddler and are too exhausted to get even a little intimate under the covers. Kevin (Thomas Ian Nicholas) is the house husband of the group, while Oz (Chris Klein) is a sportscaster in L.A. with a wild youngster of a girlfriend. Finch (Eddie Kaye Thomas) is a daredevil explorer with a secret and Stifler (Seann William Scott) remains an annoying jerk, who is stuck in his high school days. So, they haven't changed a bit.

The film consisted of pranks and jokes like stealing jet skis and defecating in beer coolers, cheating on current girlfriends with previous ones and lying to their best buds. But honestly, what more did you expect from an *American Pie* film?

There was a bittersweet feeling about seeing these actors, who have mostly vanished from the big screen since the last *American Pie*, come back to play their

youthful roles again. The only one who seemed to be able to get right back into the swing of things was Biggs. That could be because he still has the same baby face he had 13 years ago, making it easy to believe that his 18-year-old neighbor would strip down to her skivvies trying seduce him. As expected, Scott, as the sex-crazed party animal, brought some laughs, but he became too annoying and got under your skin, making you hope someone would shut him up.

It was Eugene Levy and Jennifer Coolidge, who play Jim's widowed dad and Stifler's mom, that walked away with the most laughs. The scenes between Levy and Biggs show the movie's heartfelt side, with an added twist. Levy's nervous ramblings become too awkward, even for the audience, as he shares uncomfortable information with his son. Levy and Coolidge have awesome chemistry and their scenes together give the audience a fresh new look on how parents can be just as cool as their kids.

But don't leave the second the credits start rolling and the lights come back on. While everyone is making their way to the door, sit back in your seat and wait, because afterward you will be wiping the tears from your eyes as you make your way out of the theatre.

Even though the laughter doesn't always hold up, the adults in *American Reunion* reliving their high school days still make it worth it to take a slice.



THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

by Evan Goldaper

On Saturday, March 31, the Staller Center presented a screening of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* through National Theatre Live. This British theater company specializes in streaming high-quality British plays to cinemas across the world: *The Comedy of Errors* was being shown in 700 other theaters that evening.

The Comedy of Errors is not one of Shakespeare's best-known plays. As one of Shakespeare's earliest comedies, it's often thought of as little more than training ground for his innumerable other mistaken identity ventures. As director Dominic Cooke said in a brief interview aired before the play, many think *The Comedy of Errors* is juvenile, generic and not worth their attention.

Despite this, Cooke's interpretation was designed to get the audience thinking about some important themes. He mentioned that he had hoped to discuss "what happens when we lose connection with who we really are" and "what it feels like to be a foreigner," two big ideas that fit well with the play's story of two sets of twins lost in a strange, seemingly-bewitched city. By choosing to set it in a seedy section of London, Cooke gave his audience the sense that they were foreigners in their own home.

However, Cooke wisely chose not to eliminate the play's basic comedic overtones in favor of these heavier ideas. He cast Lenny Henry, a popular British comedian, in the role of Antipholus. Well, one of the Antipholuses, at least. Henry,

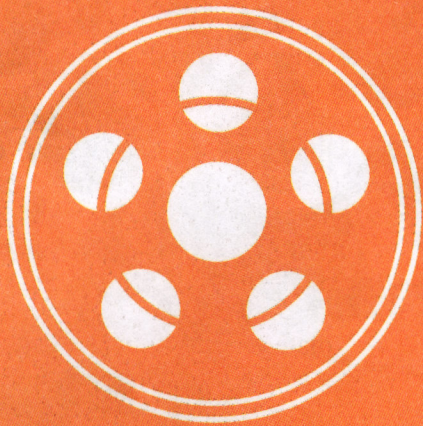
along with his costar Lucian Msamati, who appeared as the first Dromio, brought incredible slapstick performances to the show. The duo quickly smacked and crotch-kicked their way into the audience's hearts, and received raucous laughs and applause after most jokes. Even Henry's facial expressions were funny; his surprised face was repeatedly one of the play's biggest laugh lines. Claudie Blakley and Michelle Terry, the play's two female leads, were also great. Terry in particular delivered her lines in the style of Catherine Tate, and as all *Doctor Who* fans know, that's very funny. Though the other Antipholus and Dromio were not as zany, they were still fabulous comedic actors in their own right.

Sure, the play's dialogue subtleties and general plot seemed to sometimes go over the heads of the audience. I mean, this is a play with two Antipholuses and two Dromios that centers heavily around them all being mistaken for one another and constantly puts characters in the wrong place at the wrong time. During intermission, I overheard such discussion as, "So wait. There are two servants?", "Do any of the twins know each other?", "I'm having a difficult time understanding," and that question every director dreams of, "What is this play called?" Understanding Shakespearean English isn't a large problem for me, but combining that with cockney accents meant that plot details would often get lost. I followed most of the play, but I can't help but feel that odds and ends were lost. I mean, English majors usually re-read things, and I couldn't do that live.

But knowing every detail wasn't necessary for enjoying the show. We're talking about a play with a fart war and a massive "your-mama's-so-fat" joke about an ugly maid. This is an adventure where the cast get on Razor scooters and chase each other across the stage, Benny Hill-style, and beat each other senseless in ways that The Three Stooges would respect. Top that off with a heaping portion of Shakespeare's classic puns and insults, and you've got a play that I laughed at more than most comedies in cinemas these days.

As far as presentation goes, the streaming was flawless. The image and audio quality were both terrific, and the video never skipped or seemed unsynced from the speech. It feels strange to say, but I think seeing this on a screen may have been better than seeing it live, as I got to see Henry's ridiculous faces up close. Missing that would have ruined some of the play's best jokes.

All in all, I found *The Comedy of Errors* a massive success, and I'm interested to see some of the other plays National Theatre Live will be broadcasting. Other intrigued parties can find their last smash-hit version of *Frankenstein* starring Tumblr's heartthrob of choice, Benedict Cumberbatch, in theaters this summer. And of course, the Staller Center regularly has screenings of drama, usually through the Met Opera. Don't discount seeing theater screenings like this: at the very least, you don't have to worry about offending the actors by not clapping.



ON THE REEL



The Staller Center was packed the night it screened *My Week With Marilyn*—only a handful of seats were empty. At first I was surprised at the turnout, but as I watched the movie I began to understand why so many people wanted to see it.

The film is based off the diary of Colin Clark (Eddie Redmayne), who, at the time, was working as an assistant director for the movie *The Prince and the Showgirl*. Clark documented its film production and his weeklong fling with the leading actress, newlywed Marilyn Monroe (Michelle Williams). Clark's experience shows the starlet in a whole new light.

My Week With Marilyn strips the deceased actress of her sex kitten image and shows who she really was: a simple yet complex woman who yearned for the same thing everyone else in this world wants—to be loved.



One of the year's most surprising movies is a little French film with mostly unknown actors and a modest budget. Michel Hazanavicius' *The Artist* is a paean to the silent movie era. Imagine if Quentin Tarantino lost his violent tendencies and directed an ode to the wit of Charlie Chaplin. It's humorous in ways that will leave you speechless, as it should. It is a mostly silent film. The fact that this could be pulled off nowadays, and win an Oscar for Best picture, is a testament to the actors, especially Oscar-winner Jean Dujardin, Oscar-nominated Bérénice Bejo and Uggie, the dog.

The story follows George Valentine (Dujardin), a silent film star typecast as a swashbuckling romantic lead, eternally co-starring with his faithful dog. His films—*A German Affair*, *A Russian Affair*, et cetera, et cetera—are a hit until talkies are introduced into the picture.

Meanwhile, Peppy Miller (Bejo), an extra and a dancer, is thrust into the spotlight. Discovered by Valentine at the premiere of one of his films, she quickly ascends the Hollywood ladder. Heralded by studio director Al Zimmer (the versatile John Goodman), she ushers in the new era of talkies, much to Valentine's detriment.

Most people might be turned off by the idea of black-and-white and silent films, but really, it's their loss. There is no more entertaining and heartfelt movie out right now. There's a reason why this movie won an Oscar. It's a throwback to an era when movies thrived on nothing but charisma and charm. - Ethan Freedman

Monroe struggled with insecurities about her acting and marriage to Arthur Miller, but with Clark she was as carefree and charming as anyone could ever imagine her to be.

Williams' performance was impeccable. I left the theater intrigued not only by her, but by Monroe as well. I obviously wasn't around when she was alive and acting, nor have I seen any of her movies, but she seemed fascinating and had quite an effect on the people who watched her.

And even 50 years after her death, she still has that same effect. - Alyssa Melillo



The Piano Project: A Musical Olympics

by Sarah Evins

Wednesday, March 28 marked the 11th annual Piano Project in which students and faculty of the piano studio tackle this three-concert marathon each year. Flashing fingers, pounds of sheet music, hours of intense focus—the event is a basically a one-day piano Olympics.

This year paid homage to the piano works of modern French composer Olivier Messiaen. Quirky and deeply religious, Messiaen saw colors in sound and took inspiration from birdsong.

The event served to showcase student talents alongside the seasoned skills of professors Gilbert Kalish and Christina Dahl of the music department. Each piano student and professor alike took on at least one of Messiaen's vivid and powerful works. Through this cooperative scheme, the piano studio demonstrated its supportive community. Each of the three performances offered small glimpses into the collaborative experience of being a student in Stony Brook University's music department.

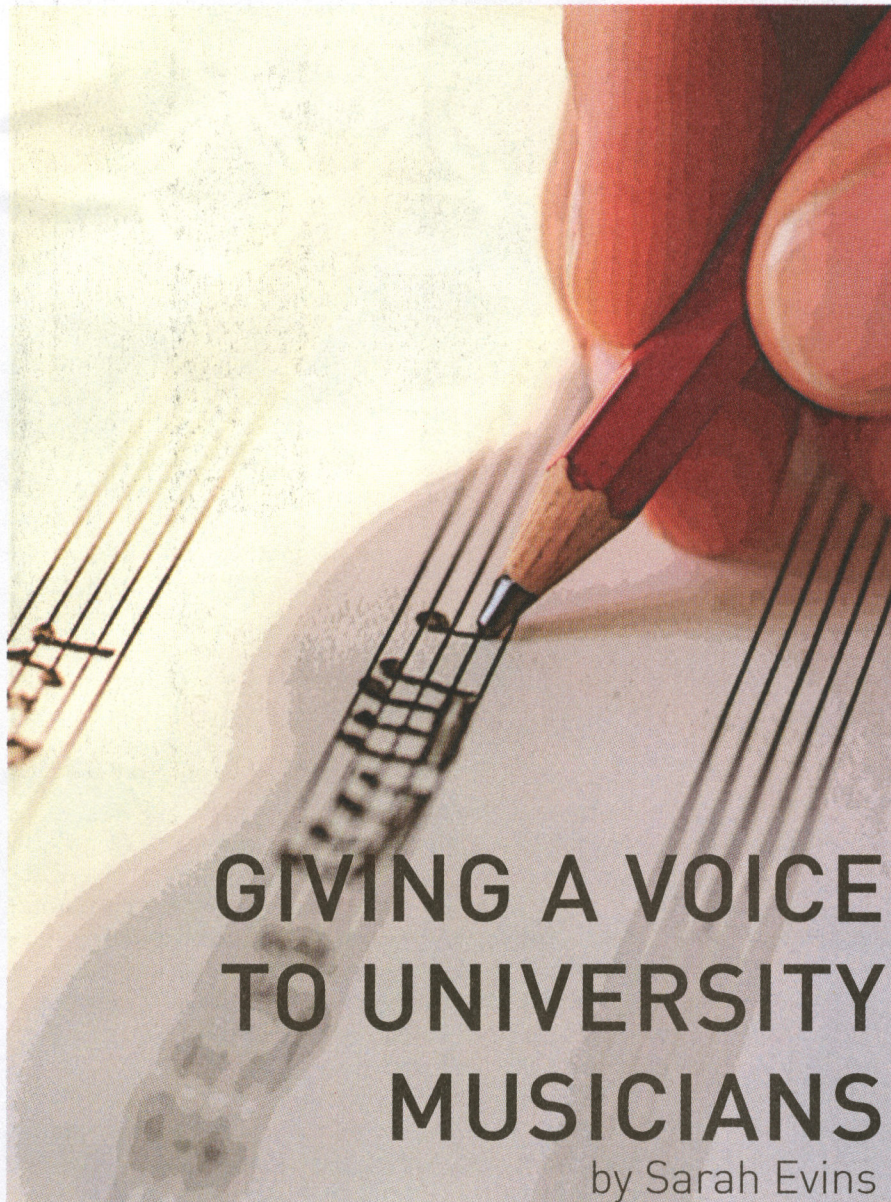
Kalish jump-started the event with a short introductory address. No stranger to Messiaen, Kalish himself has performed concerts and recorded albums dedicated to the Frenchman. Informed by these experiences, Kalish highlighted the composer's musical decadence, a theme clearly expressed in the musical interpretations of his pupils.

The Piano Project also supplemented its performances with the academic perspectives of professors Judy Lochhead and Peter Winkler. Lochhead's lecture focused on Messiaen's expression of religious devotion. Linking

the divine to Messiaen's meditative and timeless musical figures, Lochhead set the stage for the grandeur performances that would follow. Later in the evening, Winkler discussed Messiaen's musical adaptations of birdsong. Winkler presented first a birdcall and then Messiaen's musical imitation. Listening to these birdcalls offered the audience insight into Messiaen's mysteriously rhythmic and textural gestures.

Pre-concert lectures are usually offered before orchestra and opera performances, but the Piano Project instead chose a more inclusive setting for these lectures. Lochhead and Winkler's presentations wove seamlessly into the performances. The incorporation of academic, student and professional voices into one mammoth-sized event is what made the Piano Project different from most other musical events at Staller Center.

This collage of voices helped the Piano Project convey a vast amount of information in a short span of time. Performers divvied up three substantial works: *Préludes*, *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* and *Visions de l'Amen*. More than two hours long, *Vingt regards* was an especially challenging endeavor and was carried out with aplomb. While these split performances lacked coherency and displayed varying degrees of technical expertise, each pianist rose to the challenge. These formidable pieces allowed the individual voice of each performer to shine through. For more information on the Piano Project, please visit stonybrookpianoproject.org.



GIVING A VOICE TO UNIVERSITY MUSICIANS

by Sarah Evins

This isn't the University Cafe or the TAC. If you're looking for hipsters and ambience, you won't find it here. In the Staller Recital Hall, you're more likely to see empty seats, elderly couples and noses buried in program notes. The room is hushed, the stage lights stark. And the piano—a Steinway—is probably worth more than you pay for college tuition in four years. But tonight is different from other nights in the Staller Recital Hall. It's Monday, March 26 and a small band of songwriters has assembled for the first time to perform their songs.

Karl Hinze is the first of five songwriters for the night. He talks to the audience comfortably, as if we were sitting shoulder-to-shoulder in a friend's apartment, not spread out in anonymous darkness. His 10-minute set showcases pieces from his in-progress musical, *210 Amlent Avenue*. As Hinze accompanies each singer on the piano, scenes and

backdrops unfold from his vivid lyrics and musical motives. For those who find musical theatre too bombastic, Hinze offers a more personal rhetoric. His songs are more self-aware than they are spectacle, and each song paints a clear portrait of a character who is well-rounded and easily relatable, despite time constraints.

Julien Touafek is next. Also well acquainted with writing for musical theatre, Touafek blends musical styles with striking art song sonorities. The combination of the two becomes a visceral song cycle. As Touafek's powerful voice booms through the hall, he details a man's deteriorating relationship with his long-term boyfriend. The song cycle draws from a huge palette of emotions; fear, sadness, rage and nostalgia all coalesce into a complex and telling musical work.

In the following set, a bright-red toy piano and a percussion wood seat accompany singer-songwriter Andrea Daly. While she is often likened to Sara Bareilles, her music's exotic textures and clever lyrics create a striking mix of both indie and pop. Daly's voice knows how to astound and comfort, somehow soulful and light, all at once. Giggles erupt here and there as Daly presents the whole package capably with a strong stage presence.

Andrew Conklin, standing unadorned behind a microphone and guitar, brings to mind an afternoon performance in a coffee shop. But belying the simplicity of his set-up, Conklin's music is built on unique chord progressions and harmonies. The music of his set brings together sweetened folk melodies of bands like Fleet Foxes and

Iron & Wine with penetrating vocals like The Shins' James Mercer. And his clear sense of self-assurance puts the audience quietly at ease.

Closing out the night is Dan Weymouth, a long-time professor of electronic music and composition. Weymouth candidly admits that his first song is older than all of the other songwriters themselves. And while his songs are a musical reminiscence of past generations, the words they speak have universal messages.

We often take for granted our musical experiences. Open mic nights and garage band performances are more commonly social gatherings than they are cultural exploits. But in the hopeful, if sedate, atmosphere of the first Songwriter's Concert, the importance of innovative and thoughtful music rings true.

ART OF TAIKO DRUMMING

TAO

BEAT IT

by Jen Novotny

TAO is not just a group of drummers. It is a troupe of performers: dancers, comedians, master musicians of various Japanese instruments and, yes, drummers as well.

The group came to Staller Main Stage as part of its 2012 North American Tour on Sunday, March 25. I had no idea what to expect because I hadn't heard of Taiko—Japanese drumming, typically performed as an ensemble—prior to this show.

My first thought as it began was, "This is so earthy." The house music prior to curtain featured the sounds of running streams and leaves blowing in the wind. The opening sequence was equally elemental. The colors, black and red, along with the beats of the drums practically screamed "primal."

The costumes—which I can only assume were inspired by traditional Japanese dress—were fascinating; long, streaming skirts and bare chests were the norm.

The physical endurance required for this single performance is staggering. The first sequence alone featured much hopping about with large drums strapped to the performers' chests. The force exerted on the drums to produce the necessary level of vibrations was equally impressive.

At times, the performance reminded me of a college drumline...on steroids. Imagine if the bass drummers from the marching band were hopping around in a choreographed pattern while wearing streaming skirts instead of struggling to sway back and forth to the beat in a stuffy uniform. Got that image? Still not close to how fantastic this show looked.

There was even a number involving giant red flags that

five of the drummers-turned-dancers twirled like an all-male color guard. That's not to say that the entire cast was male. There were four women; they all beat the drums just as hard and played as many different instruments as the men.

However, I was most impressed with the diversity of the performers' talents. They all were excellent drummers, but many played two or three other instruments during the show, including a shamisen—a square-bodied, four-stringed instrument similar to a guitar—and something that looked like a flute, perhaps a shakuhachi.

A simple screen depicting mountains below a rising moon served as a backdrop for the drums of varying sizes, which ranged from no bigger than a ping-pong paddle to far bigger

than the two drummers beating it.

The transitions between scenes were very funny. The little kids next to me were laughing infectiously at the antics of a few of the performers. They always incorporated fantastic drumming with funny facial expressions and some slapstick. For instance, the first transition featured several of the drummers holding wooden paddles of varying sizes as they "passed" sound back and forth as if it were a ping-pong ball.

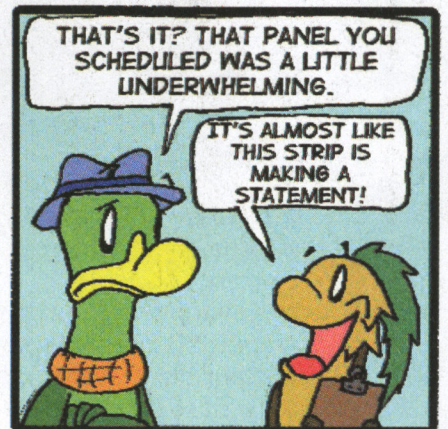
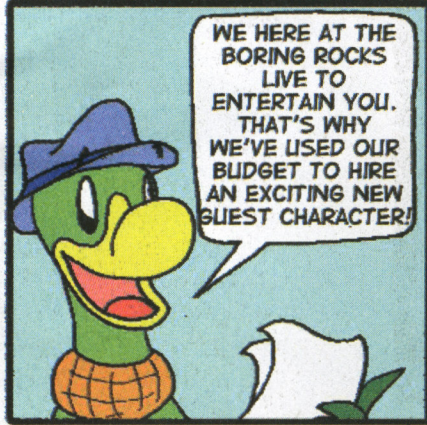
These were the times when audience participation was brought in as well. The crowd loved it once they figured out what was going on, though there were still some epic failures.

The hilarity was necessary to break up the intensity of the main ensemble performances. Traditionally, Taiko tends to start out rather slowly and build to a crescendo, sometimes ending abruptly just to launch into a frenzy again a moment later. The peaks could be so intense that I would start marveling at the speed and precision of the drummers. Mostly I wondered how they didn't smack themselves or each other in the head with the way their arms flailed through the air.

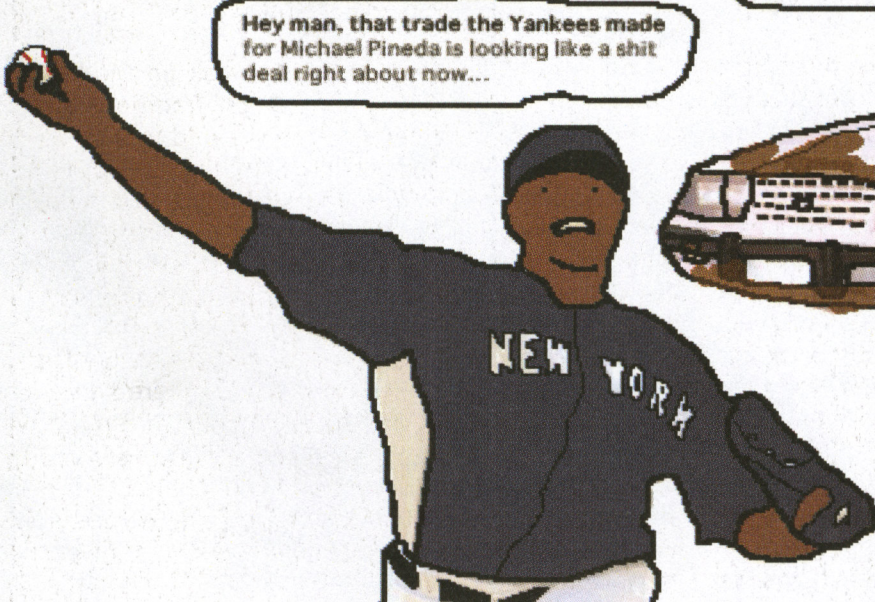
A few audience members left immediately after the standing ovation, perhaps not realizing there was more to come, and they certainly missed out. The performers returned with a stunning encore, which I'm sure could be heard outside of the Staller Center.

I can't wait to see another Taiko performance, though I'm sure it won't be able to match this first introduction from TAO.

THE BORING ROCKS present: A METAPHOR FOR SOMETHING! (by Evan Goldaper)

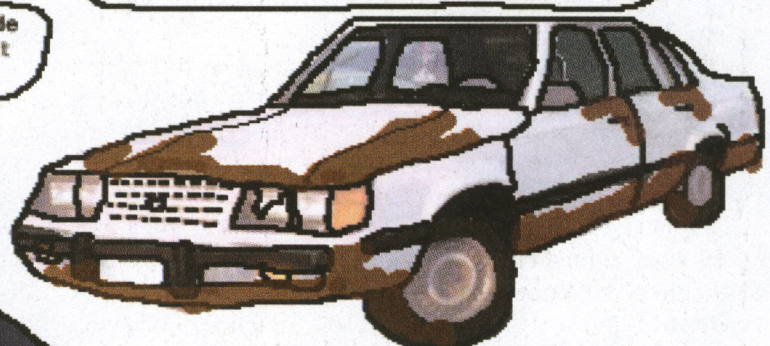


A very visual...
Sportz
By Mark Greek



Hey man, that trade the Yankees made for Michael Pineda is looking like a shit deal right about now...

I blame Brian Cashman, he should have looked into the player's recent history a little bit more and realized he was getting damaged goods.



He should have checked the CarFax?

...What?

You really need to watch something other than NESN once in awhile dude.

100 PAGES OR FEWER

REVIEWS OF BOOKS I NEVER FINISHED

by Liz Kaempf



Photo by Tom Johnson

There is a cornucopia of reasons people do not finish books: they don't have the time, they're busy with school or work, the book has too many pages, it's too boring, etc... But sometimes, you don't need to read the whole book to think you never need to go back to it. For me, it's Steinbeck's *The Red Pony* that I know I never want to touch again. Mostly, it's safe to say that if you stopped reading a book, it's because it's not worth finishing, but I always wished I could know if something was pointless before I put in the effort to actually start it. Thus, here is my gift to you, dear reader.

American Psycho ~ Bret Easton Ellis

This is a book that was never supposed to be successful. It follows shallow and drugged-up Patrick Bateman through his rock and roll lifestyle of getting paid, getting fucked, snorting cocaine in nightclub bathrooms and numerous tangents about the band Genesis, fronted by Phil Collins. It's neurotic good fun until Patrick begins his killing spree. And I was having fun until he graphically and violently mutilates a homeless man in the street, for being homeless, and then stomps on the man's dog and breaks its front legs. Then I felt sick, closed the book, choked back tears and proceeded to only glance at the book from a distance. I had to reread that passage to find the page I stopped on, and I'm equally as upset as I was three years ago when I stopped reading it. I suggest skipping this one if you're squeamish and don't like the torture and death of dogs and women, as the amount of detail makes this one hard to stomach.

Page upon which I became immensely ill, almost threw up

and cried: 132

The World According to Garp ~ John Irving

If you're familiar with John Irving, then you are familiar with the fact that all of his books are slow and long; hundreds upon hundreds of pages long. It's certainly a commitment, and likely not something to commit to in the tenth grade. But you have to make mistakes to learn from them. It's a novel that follows bastard son T.S. Garp and his feminist mother Jenny Fields through their lives. It's detailed and chock full of sexual escapades, maturity and deviance. It's definitely well written and worth the time if you actually have it. But if you're me and have the attention span of a goldfish, then this book is tough to get through. I should know; I've been on chapter 10 for the last seven years. Instead of trucking forward with *Garp*, I picked up *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut and finished that during my boring Politics in Government class in high school. The chapters were never longer than eight pages and there were pictures! Sorry Garp!

Page upon which I opted for a shorter book: 261

Madame Bovary ~ Gustave Flaubert

Flaubert set out to write a book about nothing, and he almost did it. The ratio between boredom and action in the novel is about 50:1. Every now and then there's almost sex and almost scandal and conflict. But Flaubert never quite lets you get there. Or at least I never got there because all he seems to want to talk about is the grass and agriculture.

If you skip to page 294 to see the lead female, Emma Bovary, begin her suicide by consuming a handful of arsenic, even that isn't all too exciting, and surely not slow and satisfying enough to make up for the rest of this uneventful book. Flaubert focuses on manure and it's apropos because all the characters are full of shit. If I spoiled the book for you, you're welcome, because it's not worth the 327 pages of inaction and indifference. Madame Bovary, <ce n'est pas moi.>

Page upon which I gave up even though the chapter ended with her pregnancy: 63

Second Chance ~ Jodi Picoult

I find American Literature, like its cinema, often conventional and predictable. I read the back of a variety of Picoult books, as people seem to rave and rant about her, and found none of them to be anything less than blatantly obvious. Thinking it must be her writing style that sets her apart I searched for the book that was unlike the rest. I found *Second Chance*, a story about ghost hunter Ross who is trying to cope with the death of his fiancé through suicide attempts and a mysterious woman. *Certainly a book about ghosts and suicide can't be boring!* I thought to myself. Well that can't be true, because it only took me a few pages to confirm that Picoult books are what my boyfriend likes to call "suburban housewife literature"—a passive reader is spoon-fed an average story about love, family and overcoming hardships through sub par language and a mediocre imagination.

Page upon which I said, "Fuck this noise": 44

Emma ~ Jane Austen

It's not likely most people ask themselves what book they will read for recreation and pick out an nineteenth century British novel by Jane Austen—but I did. I'd like to call that my first mistake. My second and third mistakes were buying it and then actually attempting to read it mid-semester last year. I only had to get to chapter four to chalk this choice up to misguided (a handsome, blue-eyed boy in one of my classes was reading Austen and I wanted to have something to talk about with him, smh). The title character fancies herself impervious to falling in love and wants to use her matchmaking skills to set up other couples while ignoring her feelings for an attractive suitor. Isn't it obvious already that she will fall in love much to her own chagrin? This book is intended to amuse based on the various personalities of the characters surrounding Emma, but the problem is that Austen was writing during a time period in which an author is paid by the word. That being said, there are too many words in this novel. Maybe one day I can come back to it to discover if the characters really are delightful and if there is a grand moral significance that makes this novel so popular, but until the time comes when it is the end of the world and I have nothing else to do with my life, *Emma* is going to collect dust on the shelf.

Page upon which I decided there are better ways to waste my time: 22

The Quest of the Holy Grail ~ Unknown Author

I don't think a synopsis is even necessary here: it's the legendary Arthurian romance of Perceval, Gawain, Lancelot and Galahad as they travel through sexual temptation and danger in search of the Holy Grail. Unless you know literally absolutely nothing about anything, then you have at least a semblance of an idea what this is about. Television, movies and other books allude to this quest all the time, so it's likely you don't need to read the actual translation from thirteenth century French. I have an affinity for Arthurian romances since reading the much shorter *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and I want to explore the depths of the Holy Grail, but this will be an epic journey that will have to wait until I'm out of school to ever get back to.

Page upon which I ignored the fact that I was going to have a quiz on it: 53

Jane Eyre ~ Charlotte Brontë

Another one of those classic British novels written by a woman, *Jane Eyre* is about plain, average Jane and follows her from an impoverished young girl to a student, then a governess and finally as a grown woman. It's also another book with entirely too many words in it. While reading *Jane Eyre* you will know the number of legs on the insect crawling under a rock in the garden that the girl walked past seven hours ago. You will have details about anything and everything, and it's distracting and boring. It's a book I want to finish for the sole fact that it is deemed a "classic" and it eventually depicts Jane's tortured romance as an adult. Sounds almost scandalous enough to be interesting, but you'll need to skim over many passages to get to the good stuff. I don't need my narrator to tell me about all the pictures from the book Jane used to read when she was a young girl. It's just more information than I will ever need.

Page upon which I stop even skimming the pages: 86

Fight Club ~ Chuck Palahniuk

Everyone should know this movie. It's a cult classic and a damn-near perfect film starring handsome and tortured Edward Norton, smokin' hot Brad Pitt, and bat-shit crazy Helena Bonham Carter. So the book should be that way too. And it is that way...until you misplace it for a few months and forget everything you've read like I did. Oops! The narrator is sarcastic, nihilistic and mostly insane as he frequents support groups for a variety of diseases he does not have in an effort to sleep at night. He finds an unstable love interest in Marla and then finds himself leader of an anarchist terrorist group that originated from the welcomed brutal assaults of "fight club." It's about time for me to dig this book out and see it through to the end, even if I do know the ending already.

Page upon which I lost the book in my car: 63



DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'

by Nick Statt

Across the vast pool of video games that I have picked up and played over the years, there exists a handful of truly transcendent moments, times when I find myself in silenced awe of the rendered landscape I am constantly participating in and the mind-numbing complexity of the digital world enveloping me.

For instance, traveling across a sun-soaked Manhattan by helicopter as *Grand Theft Auto IV*'s Niko Bellic, with thousands upon thousands of detailed skyscrapers creating a sheet of glowing orange glass as the breathing, automated city flows beneath me. Or holding a 9mm to the head of a random stranger—a father of two you learn—as *Heavy Rain*'s Ethan Mars, a desperate father forced to the fringes of morale decision making by a serial killer who, in the style of the *Saw* films, forces his victims, as well as you the player, to make weighty choices to save their loved ones. Moments like these leave me emotionally exhausted, more so than any film or book ever has; partially because video games remind me of how much more immersive my relationship with the experience is while still kindling the thought that the medium still has so much potential to grow.

But I can honestly say that I have never had a moment of such breathtaking transcendence like any one of the picture perfect moments of Thatgamecompany's *Journey*, a mere \$15 purchase from the PlayStation Store that became available for download in North America on March 13. It is a short and simple game, coming in at a little under two hours and involving no more than four controls - two for

movement and two for interaction. But it manages to be an absolutely powerhouse entertainment experience, offering more emotional resonance and thematic depth than any triple-A title currently trying to sucker players into obsessive multiplayer modes and squeeze pennies out of them with downloadable content.

Only because it seems absolutely necessary for anyone to talk critically and analytically about video games as pieces of art, I will, rather grudgingly, state my point of view: video games are art. Let me repeat that: the video game is, without a doubt, an art form, like books, television and film. Anyone who is still unconvinced of that either has a gnawing inner fear that an art form they love or practice is somehow going to be eclipsed by the video game or, as his or her head so far up their ass that they have been incapable of picking up a controller and actually playing one to see for themselves what the medium is capable of.

That aside, *Journey* is, by a wide margin, the most beautiful and artistic video game I have ever played. It is, visually, a masterpiece, set in an unknown land covered in gold-glinting sand that, when whipped up by the wind or brushed aside by your gliding, pointed legs, brings new meaning to video game realism. But the physics of sand aside, the game's art style is more akin to a Miyazaki film, channeling the anime fluidity flowing neatly between cartoon and live action.

Your playable character is a cloaked, faceless traveler, save two solid colored orbs for eyes, who cannot speak outside of a momentary chirp that emits from a fleeting

emoticon. Your only mission is to travel to the summit of a mountain in the distance, all of which is encased in what looks like a mix of cell shading and Japanese woodblock art. There were times while playing that I stopped and let out a few "oh my God's," as sonically mesmerizing classical arrangements swirled seamlessly in the background while I surfed down glistening sand dunes towards my mountain goal and soared through the air wrapped in white light. The game's only action besides travelling up and down the sand involved chirping next to floating fabric shards that enabled you to hover momentarily, and the mixture of those two mechanics with elementary puzzle solving gave the experience a near-non-stop flow while still not being so easy that you could simply push the thumb stick forward and reach your destination.

But the visuals are merely one half of *Journey's* simple, yet momentous, appeal. Its truly revolutionary mechanic is the fact that at any point in the game, you can meet up with a complete stranger playing the game somewhere else in the world. It is effectively the first ever completely collaborative single-player game in that at any one point, you are experiencing the same exact moment, down to sharing space in the same cut scene.

This not only gives players the opportunity to forge remarkably emotional relationships with complete strangers—people whose names, ages and locations are never revealed to you while playing—but it deepens *Journey's* far-reaching thematic web. Some themes the game manages to touch on are notions of intimacy in a sea of loneliness, the idea that life is given meaning only in the fleeting relationships you form with others and whatever else you subjec-

tively draw from the short trip to the mountain summit. A friend of mine even played the entire game with a single stranger who refused to leave his side, no matter how separated they became at times, leading him to frankly exclaim, "I actually feel a legitimate connection with this person," whereas I met up to four different people on my first play through.

The video game is, without a doubt, an art form.

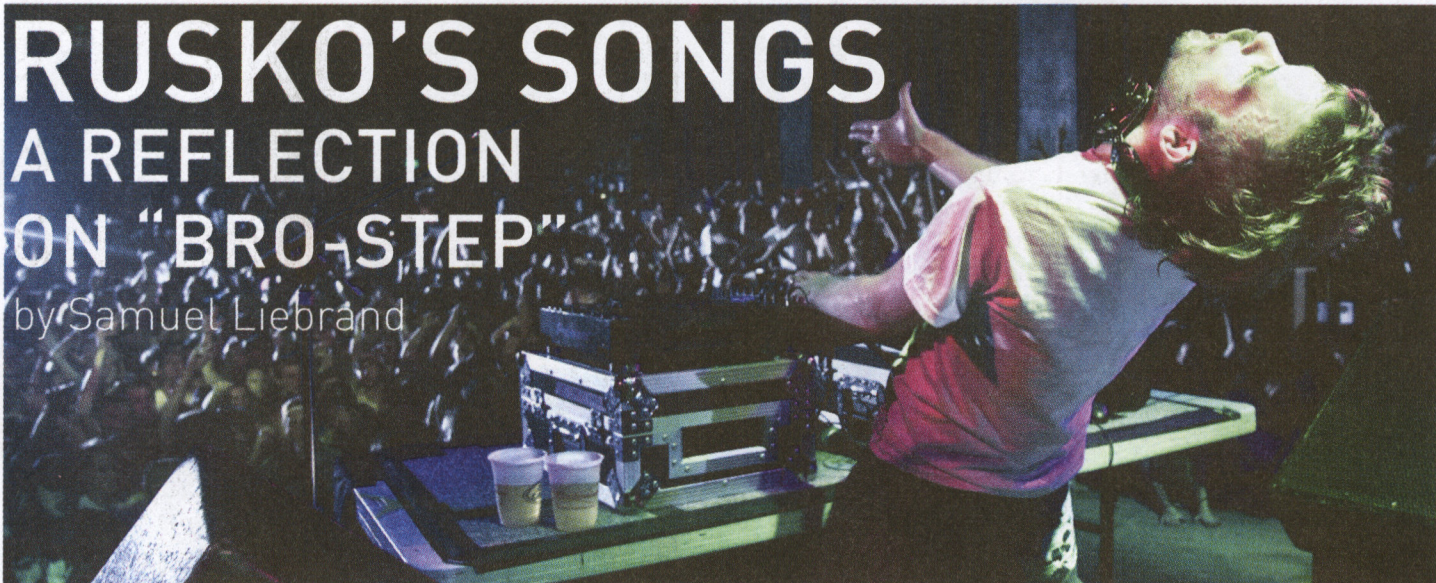
While *Journey* isn't saying anything new—yes, life can be an introspective journey where, if only for select moments, you share a deep connection with maybe only one other person—but the game's mission is not to reinvent the meaning of life or to tell us that we should view it as one part ambiguous fable and one part semi-religious parable. What it does aim to do is frame the above-mentioned philosophical head-scratchers into one of the most emotionally affecting experiences to grace any artistic medium. *Journey* will undoubtedly become one of the most influential titles in recent years—it's already the fastest selling PlayStation Network game of all time—but more importantly, it has pushed, with a small independent studio and a simple idea, the ever-evolving medium of the video game even further beyond our imagination.



RUSKO'S SONGS

A REFLECTION ON "BRO-STEP"

by Samuel Liebrand



Now that everyone and their mother has had the chance to Google "dubstep" and construct their own well-rounded opinion of it upon listening to the first YouTube video result for a minute and a half, the genre as a whole seems to be entering an awkward plateau before its inevitable shattering into millions of microscopic offshoots. As it stands, dubstep has infiltrated pop radio in shitty songs, commercials for shitty alcohol, trailers for shitty movies and only the shittiest of Internet memes, only to give unenthusiastic observers an unfairly singular representation of an incredibly diverse, if not polarized, phenomenon.

Caught at the center of this increasingly tangled web is Rusko. The British producer is accurately credited as a prominent figure in bringing the originally distant and haunted underground genre to a mainstream audience with a club-friendly filter. Although he has claimed in interviews to be trying to distance himself from the "bro-step" scene that he has unintentionally nurtured to a fever pitch, his sophomore effort, *Songs*, does little to shake off his association. And as the moronically bland album title suggests, it lacks inventiveness or thoughtful execution.

The former complaint may be unfair. It's not abundantly clear whether Rusko is pandering to a foundation of his base or if the music he genuinely loves to make just so happens to be enjoyed by douchebags in bright green t-shirts that say "SWAG." Or perhaps it's a little bit of both: his lack of new direction suggests he's at least tolerant of what he currently has, socially and sonically.

The second complaint is less of a criticism and more of an unfortunate truth. Faulting Rusko for the unchanged continuation of his now-modest wobbles would be like faulting Metallica for still turning the gain on their amplifiers up to ten and being pissed off all the time. But the problem isn't really that he's using largely the same elements he always has, but that he has executed them in

bland and sometimes downright silly ways.

Some songs are inoffensive enough: the lead in "Somebody to Love" starts out with a honky-tonk piano sample and female vocal combination that sounds incredibly reminiscent of Basement Jaxx ten years ago, but with diminished personality. The predictable chorus does its best to hold back the worst of indulgences by the wobbles' id to limited effect. "Pressure," though containing funky spatial elements usually reserved for guys like David Guetta, is the strongest track on the LP thanks to a balls-out pop attitude, catchy verses and a sense of crisp atmosphere.

This atmosphere is what the rest of the album severely lacks: nearly every other track feels one-dimensional or even incomplete. His reggae-infused songs are the worst offenders, offering little interesting texture and no sense of space, leaving them nothing but forgettable exercises in structure. "Skanker" sounds just one step short of distorted circus music, and "Love No More" is so boring in every way that I wonder where Rusko thought the appeal was.

Like the second-wave of emo ten years ago (holy fuck, that was almost ten years ago), dubstep has come of age and popularity during the same stage as its worst excesses. It's no wonder it's so divisive, even amongst its fans. But in the end, Rusko doesn't make music for your bedroom—he makes music for the dance floor. While a producer like Jamie xx can construct a full LP of interesting, delicate and thematically consistent tracks like on last year's brilliant *We're New Here*, Rusko uses the form of the LP to introduce the basic framework of his live performances. On *Songs*, structure doesn't matter, since variation is for the stage. Is this a good strategy? Maybe. Rusko could have some tricks up his sleeve that he doesn't want to spoil on a record. But if that's the case, it leaves a collection of songs that are almost entirely forgettable, and a potential audience yawning.



Madonna just needs to stop, it's as simple as that. This has never been more apparent than after her latest release, *MDNA*. The album itself sounds alright (by modern pop standards) until you realize that someone with an age close to that of your grandmother's is singing tracks entitled "Gang-Bang" and "Girls Gone Wild." It's at that point you find yourself feeling very, very dirty.

The record brings absolutely nothing new to the table. It sounds like any crappy pop record that comes out these days. Infused with sexual lyrics that make little sense and electronic beats, each song sounds like a crappy remix of itself.

She tries too hard to make the record sound like house music, with the attempted breakdowns and poorly executed synths. Even the album art and title, which is a play on the popular club drug MDMA (the main ingredient in ecstasy), show that she's trying to fit into a scene that she just has no part in.

The question that needs to be asked is: why did she even feel the need to change in the first place? Madonna's fans love the music she used to create, so why try to fit into a genre of music where you have no fan base? It's almost as if we're witnessing Madonna go through her own mid-life crisis, except it comes in the form of crappy pop music.

Madonna has always been one to try to break away from the crowd and test the boundaries of music, which is apparent in all of her other releases. But this one just seems as though she's trying desperately to fit in with every other pop musician. You get an A for effort Madonna, but an F for execution. - NICK BATSON

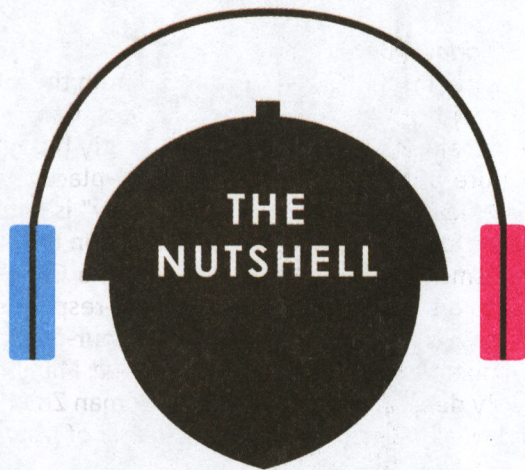


Bach, move over. Satchmo, step aside. Willow Smith has arrived with some ear-wiggling tunes that you're sure to hear at every party and club in the foreseeable future. Willow does what she likes, according to the soon-to-be-classic audio tale "21st Century Girl," and what she likes is to rock the beat. Um, hello, we can totally get the party started, especially with the Obama name-dropping "Fireball" featuring the beautiful Nicki Minaj (my offer for sushi still stands, Nicki, hmu bb).

What's number one on Willow's mind? Partying. She repeats that she's the "fireball of the party" 89 times in the song "Fireball," which is actually useful because I found myself wondering if she was actually the fireball of the party and had those questions answered, thankfully. She repeats that she is the fireball of the party once every 2.82 seconds.

In "Whip My Hair," Willow whips her hair back and forth 70 times. Not only is her music beautiful, comparable only to Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, but it also gives quite the work out. I have short hair, so I can't whip my hair, but I'm sure it's a great exercise song for the longer haired folk. The drums remind me fondly of Neil Pert and sound very Rush-inspired. The drum-clapping breakdown echoes the spirit of unity that rippled through America in the 1970s.

"21st Century Girl" sounds David Guetta-inspired, giving proof of Willow's genre-breaking talents. Did David Guetta create this song? No, five people who aren't David Guetta wrote this song. It took five people to write this—five. That's how brilliant it is. If you ever find the party you're at is getting a bit dull with all the dubstep music, pop in a track by Willow and watch everyone whip their hair back and forth. - DAN CASHMAR



Shinedown - Amaryllis

Despite their previously successful and well-made albums, Shinedown's *Amaryllis* is so boring that I could barely listen to the whole thing. Although some of the songs are kind of catchy, it's only in that annoying "why am I listening to this again?" kind of way. The worst part is that they all sound more or less identical. If you listen to "Bully," the first song released, you've pretty much heard the whole album. Just listen to the preview on iTunes; it feels like listening to one really long song.

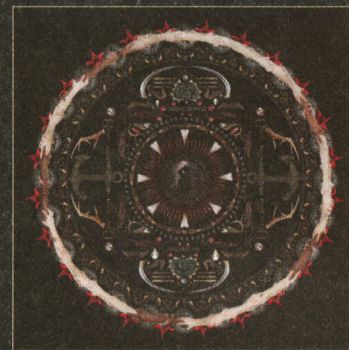
The All-American Rejects - Kids in the Street

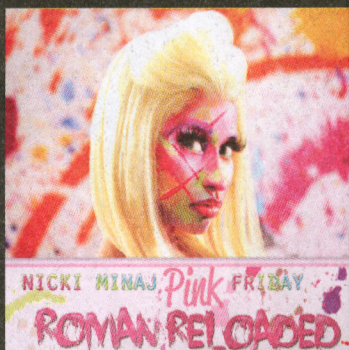
This album really portrays the band's "coming of age" following the last decade's post-Blink 182 pop-rock wave. Now focused on carefree lyrics backed by simpler themes, Tyson Ritter draws on his experiences with relationships in order to create an album that really establishes The All-American Rejects' identity as a love-oriented hitmaker with a healthy enough mixture of instrumentals to keep them tied to the rock genre. "Beekeeper's Daughter" has the same vibe as previous hits such as "Give You Hell" and "Dirty Little Secrets," but has a maturity that really adds to its pop-rock feel. Most of the songs on this album have a catchy beat, however, "Affection" uses an orchestra that takes the love ballad to a new level. Overall, it's a great showcase of what the band has to offer all these years later, without over-doing it or reminding fence-sitting listeners why they stopped listening in the first place.

Pop. 1280 - The Horror

No frills, no gimmicks—just serial-killer-in-the-bushes-type scary punk music made by four guys from New York City. *The Horror* is one of the most genuinely disturbing albums that I've listened to in years—and also maybe one of the coolest. The songs all have a moderate tempo, fueled by an unfathomably fuzzy bass, tinny guitar riffs under the slick vocals of Ivan Lip. Pop. 1280 sounds like a nightmare where Nick Cave goes for a late-night jog in Prospect Park, falls, cracks his head on the pavement and then suddenly started playing music in front of a tree all woozy with blood still oozing out of the back of his head.

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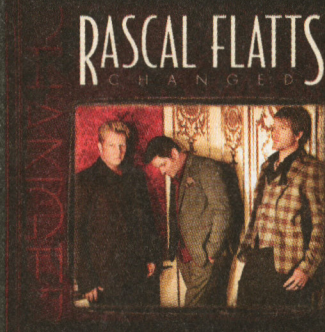
Nicki Minaj - *Pink Friday: Roman Reloaded*

Nicki Minaj's witty rap verses don't disappoint in the latest album. There are collaborations with artists 2 Chainz, Rick Ross, Cam'ron, Lil Wayne and Drake that leave a majority of the album in a strictly hip-hop zone, however, it does shift to more pop-like sounds in distinct places, like Minaj's signature hooks and dramatic choruses. "Roman Holiday" is known mostly due to the over-the-top performance at the Grammys, but on the album, Minaj tones it down, no exorcisms here. Songs like "Come on a Cone" resemble previous hits like "Did it on 'Em" and convey the well-respected confidence and sassiness now commonly associated with her in-your-face personality. While there have been mixed reviews of *Roman Reloaded*, Minaj continues to flesh out her surprisingly deep alter ego (the brash Roman Zolanski), and explores the strengths and weaknesses of her specific flavor of pop/hip-hop.



Rocket Juice & the Moon - *Rocket Juice & the Moon*

Rocket Juice & The Moon's first LP is a polarizing album from a polarizing supergroup, which includes the Red Hot Chili Peppers' Flea, Damon Albarn of Blur/the Gorillaz and Nigerian drummer Tony Allen. At some moments, the brilliance of Flea's bass lines and Allen's percussion click perfectly, yet the majority of the album sounds like nothing more than a boring mess. With supergroups, there is often the problem of talent clashing with chemistry, and RJ&TM is a victim of it. The album shows promise amidst the chaos, but for a group with this much talent, this is a disappointment.



Rascal Flatts - *Changed*

Despite the album name, the only big shift present on Rascal Flatts' new release is that the songs here have more religious undertones than the band's self-titled release way back in 2000. There are songs about love and longing—popular topics for the band—and are delivered with the expected emotion and bravado. "Banjo," the second song on the album and a standout track is a rowdy anthem about getting out of the city life. So overall, this album delivers an array of country songs about love and religion that will get any country-lover's boots tappin,' but doesn't break any new ground or push Rascal Flatts to heights.



Bear In Heaven - *I Love You, It's Cool*

With their latest album, Bear In Heaven has proved that they can follow a critically acclaimed start by crafting some of the best experimental rock out there. The soundstage just feels immense; the electronic sounds intertwine seamlessly with the powerful drums, ambient guitars, vocals and the free-flowing bass, fusing together a spacey, almost shoegaze-like, harmony. While *I Love You, It's Cool* doesn't show a jump in innovation, it does just what a sophomore album should - refine and improve the band's sound.

THIS CENTURY

by Khosnur Alam



I recently interviewed Joel Kanitz (lead vocals) and Sean Silverman (guitar) from one of the finest Arizona-based bands, *This Century*, at the Vibe Lounge in Rockville Center on March 30. They were on their east coast Acoustic Tour inspired by their newest release called *Acoustics EP*, which came out January 31.

Khosnur Alam: For anyone who's new, give me a brief highlighted summary of your band's history.

Sean Silverman: We started in 2007, and we've been together in matrimony ever since. We've put out one full-length record [*Sound of Fire*, released April 19, 2011], a bunch of EPs [8] and are currently working on our second full-length record. This new record will be a little different.

KA: You have self-released almost all your EPs. What's that like?

SS: We've always been about the DIY culture: making everything ourselves, doing everything ourselves. A lot of punk bands did it in the past and we've always thought it was a kind of cool thing to do. There's something personal about doing something yourself, something that you've done with your own hands and then giving it to somebody.

JK: Yeah, a lot of the grassroots kind of stuff. Thinking back to my teenage years, when I was really into the music scene, it would have meant a lot more to me, if it was more self-made. Kind of like our second EP, *Look What We Made* [released October 31, 2008], which was handmade by the band. It means a little bit more and it makes the fans feel like they're a part of the process.

KA: What's the song-writing process like—who contributes

what? Influences?

SS: Usually, I'll bring a skeleton of an idea to Alex [bass guitar], who'll add the rhythmic element, Ryan [drums] too, and then Joel and I'll work out the lyrics and melodies.

JK: It's really hard to pinpoint what our influences are; it rotates a lot. I think as long as we're having a good time and enjoying writing, it comes through when we record it and perform. I think it goes over better with our fans too.

KA: What has this tour been like thus far? Tomorrow's the last date—any fond memories?

SS: It's been amazing. It's really nice to play these small, intimate shows. Given that we haven't done any national touring in about six months, we still have incredibly devoted fans who will keep coming to see us perform, singing along to all the songs.

KA: To all the new listeners, why would you say they should listen to *This Century's* music?

JK: That's hard to answer...we don't want to toot our own horns. We want our music to have a positive impact on people, and that's what I hope would happen when someone takes a listen to it.

During their set, Kanitz and Silverman played twelve songs and the crowd was indeed singing along to every one. They invited four ladies on stage to sing along to "No Way Out," off the *To Love and Back EP* (released June 12, 2009). This is a completely unbiased statement when I say that everyone should at least give *This Century* a listen—you won't be disappointed.



SANTORUM'S LAST STAND

by Ethan Freedman

The presidential primaries are usually a time when the people of a particular party come together. They coalesce to elect someone they feel has the chutzpah (here's looking at you, Michele Bachmann) to throw out the incumbent. How the primaries are run is often an indicator of how strong the base of a party is. Take, for instance, the 2008 Democratic primaries: Candidate Barack Obama rode a fevered excitement, with the help of rousing endorsements from the likes of Ted Kennedy, all the way to the White House.

Going into this year's elections, the major Republican players are Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum. Both represent different ideologies, Santorum being a staunch conservative, while Romney can appear sketchy. Excitement for both candidates has been tempered, particularly for one Willard Romney. However, many on the right have decided that enough is enough, in terms of the democratic process, and that Romney should be the de facto nominee, as they say is inevitable.

Santorum, however, is not going down without a fight. As has been Republican practice throughout the primaries, he has simply doubled-down with his comments. Santorum, in the past, has been no stranger to outrageous commentaries. In 2002, in the midst of the Catholic sex scandal, he wrote that the scandals, particularly those that happened in the Boston area, occurred because America was too liberal. In 2003, his likening of homosexuality to bestiality landed him an alternative definition to his name, at the hands of gay rights activist Dan Savage. In 2005, he compared the Democrats' use of the filibuster to Nazism.

Recently, Santorum has been more calculating, as you have to be when running for the presidency. However, this hasn't prevented him from playing the race card, intentional or not. In early 2011, Santorum told Cybercast News Service that President Obama's chancy stance on abortion is "almost remarkable for a black man." That wasn't the last time he made a racially charged statement, or the most offensive one.

Nearly a year later, this past January, a video of the former Pennsylvania senator made the rounds online and through the pundit parade. Santorum told a crowd in Iowa that he didn't "want to make black people's lives better by giving them other people's money." Later, he went on Fox News' The O'Reilly Factor and stated that everyone simply misheard his comments. "I looked at [the video] and I didn't say that," he said. "What I started to say was a word and then it sort of changed and "blah" came out. And people said I said "black" and I didn't."

Then came an incident a little more than a week ago, that more or less served as the nail in the coffin. During

In 2005, he compared the Democrats' use of the filibuster to Nazism.

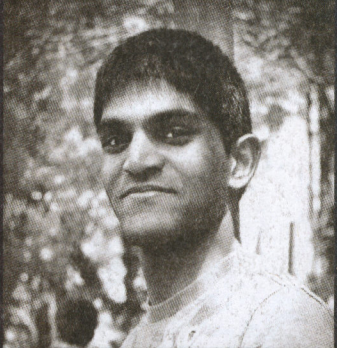
a stump speech in Janesville, Wisconsin, Santorum nearly dropped the "n-word" in reference to Obama, while discussing the President's "anti-war" stance with a gathering of supporters. "We know the candidate Barack Obama, what he was like, the anti-war government nig—" he said, stopping and switching to a tangential point, "America was a source for division around the world; that what we were doing was wrong."

Santorum, of course, denied the allegations. But at this point, his follies seem almost comical, a caricature of conservative values. In the end, it comes down to desperation; Santorum was seen as the conservative base's proverbial favorite son, and this can be seen as a last-ditch effort to rile up his base.



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LITERARY ISSUE

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Through classes, assignments, tests, and soon-to-be finals, it's been a long semester. Now the summer is rapidly approaching, and whether you are making your schedule for next semester or finally graduating, it's time to take a break. So fall into your bed in your comfiest clothes—or no clothes, if that's what you're into—and relax with The Stony Brook Press Literary Issue. Soak in the free verse, revel in a few good stories, and please your eyes with some delightful art and photography made by your peers.

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LIZ KAEMPF**

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FRONT COVER SCULPTURE BY JEREMY DENNIS

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VANITY FAIR

Listen or perhaps
was it:

*look she began to say
we are on two different paths
I have begun to notice this*

*this self-inflicted cycle
of a workaholic...*

pressed between the working hours
and homework minutes
then:

*where was our playtime?
She proclaimed*

This is where
his crying pursued
or even his temper began to rise
with...

*I think we should stay friends
with...our future dialogue must be clear and concise*

as he had fallen for her
he could not imagine
the resentment and halos
to the single moon
she began to start counting
more often than not
because he was not there

he cannot stop to wonder
the unending pattern of phone calls
emails, texts, and flowers
that later ensued

she would not answer them
because she does not feel
the same

His first love
later did he not become bothered
by the 1994 song

Dating in the digital age
he thought
has lost that vanity fair

INGREDIENTS

I hope to have a time
when I make eggs correctly
with that darn sunny side
up perfectly
yet today I have yet mastered
the ingredients

FAVOR

I ask for a favor;
She questions
About the pen and paper
That's now in her hand;
She crackles with nervousness
I began to write this as she
Focuses on her exposition

That's how it started
She was panic-stricken
I don't remember if
She made it through
Still I somehow managed
To make her write
On stage fright

RAILROAD

what a fantastic little
fictional steam
locomotive painted blue
with red lining or perhaps
just in black and grey
on my Philips television

my conductor hat is cornered
upon my boyish head
with a little 'toot'
from my mouth

by bryan carroll

photos by rebecca tapio



IMAGINE THIS: THE SONNET OF JOHN AND YOKO

by jon coe

I fin'lly told her all the things she lacks
but I forgot about my own mistakes.
I emphasized desire over facts
like Lucifer upon his fall from grace.
Like Sampson, did I let her in too close?
I guess I sort of handed her the shears
to trim away the things I value most,
manipulating me with sex and tears.

If yesterday there'd been a way to know,
if only Prudence had called out: Beware!
(I could have used a little help, my friend)
Then in my life away from Eve I'd go,
the first time that I see her standing there,
remaining true to the Fab Four Horsemen.

photo by arielle dollinger



by anthony reffi

IN ARMS

A simple greeting for an old friend,
A relative, a lover, but never the thief.

A goodbye, forever or until next time;
Whether that be weeks, years, or remains unbeknownst.

A time of despair; heartache, death, failure.

A time of beauty; passion, rejoice, love.

A time spent *in arms*.

**THINKING
OUT LOUD**

I need my head to ache
So I could redirect my focus.
This place is dark & unwelcome to
strangers.
But who else is there?
You are all strange.
Each stranger, stranger than the last.
Although I want to let you in.

UNTITLED
by jon coe

Let's say I were to find the tree of life
to give me infinitely many years
and render obsolete all of my fears
while Immortality becomes my wife.
If life's a river rushing out to sea,
why could I not divert to form a pool?
Could there be anything else half as cool
as extending on the entity of me?
Unbounded prospects from a fleeting trip.
Such leisure time! As much as one could need
for travel, watching films, and books to read
while cohesion staves off time's evil drip.

Now one day I may find that tree, it's true.
But would I want to live on without you?

“Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody.” — *The Catcher in the Rye*, SALINGER

CHEMISTRY FOR THIRTY SOMETHINGS

by kim johnson

There is judgment here.
I am relative to a standard
which is relative
to the subjectivity of comparison.

There is uncertainty here.
The measurement,
(me in volumes cubed),
is vying to be quantified.

But
I am susceptible to your droopy eyes
your shaky hands
your irresistible touch
your weakness.
And you,
(the measurer
the time keeper
the quintessential guru of time suspended in action),
are just cracking under the pressure.
Apples to oranges?
Oranges to madmen?
Cynics to sanity.
Define the standard.
You set the parameters.
Tell me where I add up
where I lost control
and give me the deviation expressed
over the percent
of what I lost in you.

FUSION

by jim davis

Hand to hand
a bond is created
melting at the seams.
Armslength is nothing
when fingers touch.

Pulling apart the two joined hands,
cracks fractures in fingertips
leaving pieces of one on the other's side
irreversibly.

PARADISE

by allen vilensky

Overhead the ocean realm,
Lies gently on the splendid sand,
And countless waves of coral shell,
Bring timeless grace back to the land,
Overhead eternal night,
The quiescent moon peers into sight,
And everything illuminates on hand.

Cloudless everyday you fly over the dusk of night,
Luring and insuring of my sight,
And from my dream I wake to find I'm lost inside your eyes,
A thousand light blue trails of paradise.

ME FAITHFUL HUSBAND

by richelle a. davis



photo by arielle dollinger

He that hithers to my waking call
Up in the morn, with a twinkle in thee eye
A perk in the smile
Hands open like a bird's wing
My husband
Sweet charms you bless me
Ye is a miracle
A crown upon me flat head
Fix all of me tremors
Thunder I run
You cover my soul
Shining, my sun

Hath you forgive me mistakes?
Lead me to the light afar
Hold me for I tremble

Locked ye is
Shall dwell forever
Ye always will
Always will ye shall be
And I gasp
Flabbergasted
Not of fright I proclaim!
Nor from tender words of disappoint
'Tis new and ugly to thee lips
So I forgive ye

But here shall stay
In here
Not creeping to a brick
Nor to the green
Not an infant not yet weaned
Or place to make green to make ye mean

I promise
Ye promise
We promise
Holy vows of heaven
Cherish a breed of seven
And...
I lay
And...
Ye stay
And...
I see thee a bright ray
Neither leaving
Nor straying away

by ethan freedman

AND THE BUTTERFLY CHASED THE BEE

They stared into each other's eyes
Open for all to see.

In constant flowing motion,
They fell into the sea.

One high and one low,
Yet they could not foresee;

They collapsed in each other's arms,
And the butterfly chased the bee.

And into the dawn of summer
This kind of thing went on

The beauty in her face
Matched the beauty in the dawn

They sat, staring,
Singing "Let It Be"

Lost into the nighttime,
And the butterfly chased the bee

Their love was unmatched
By any deity

Her love was Athena
His, Zeus, maybe

Each a rose and a thorn
Each love, an eternity

They sat by the lake
And the butterfly chased the bee



And one day it will hit you,
a bullet, love.
A And it will pierce your membrane,
the armor plate you call your skin.
RANT Cut through without rhyme or reason,
your heart beating staccato,
your mind racing legato,
OF you fall.
And either they take you to the hospital,
take it out, remove it from your life,
or leave you to die
LOVE But
with love in your heart.

LAST NIGHT

I woke up early this morning from last night and,
aside from rotting my teeth,
it corrupted my soul.

But I took it lightly,
For if it was as bad as you made it seem to be,

And we are all going to hell, as you say,
then my soul would mean nothing,
And my teeth, even less

And I've already been there and back
Because I survived last night,

And while I was paralyzed by the words you were saying
in the spot you were standing,
in the room we were in,

At least I could say
I did not pave my own path to hell since

It's much better to be the victim than the cause
because at least a victim could just smile
and say, it's just not my day

Because at least when caught up in the cross fires
You could duck

And not take aim and fire recklessly and aim to kill
Covered in blood on a foreign battlefield
But; just cover your own ass

And then brag about
how you were in the war and won

photos by nicole kohn

we are not alone

control is an illusion



Jesse Cherry

moons may shatter and worlds may fall



yet stars shine and hope lingers

Jeane Cherry



PASSING BY

by allen vilensky

Lady-killers dancing with the overnight romantics,
 The fragrant taste of antics rising high,
 And a drink or two to think things through,
 Before trails of sex start to infect,
 With fat checks and mirrors full of lines.

But the liquor comes from upside down,
 It flows through the men and up the women's gown,
 And there ain't no vacant room in town,
 Just a one night visit sign,
 And a man up front who makes the deal,
 Says, "You can touch but you can't feel,"
 And I must admit it does appeal,
 But I'll let it pass me by.

Good old Brandy's looking fancy
 With a poor old sack in sight,
 The angel's kiss flutters him with bliss,
 And so he grabs her tight,
 In walks Big John and he ain't too fond
 Of men who turn their backs,
 And Mrs. Daniels, she likes Samuel,
 But she'd rather dance with Jack.

Johnny Walker's resting on a pair of risky aces,
 The whisky hints the raises amply with the deuce,
 And he took the bait cause he couldn't see straight,
 A sip, a slip, heaven lost its grip,
 And suddenly all hell broke loose.

The Jolly Ranchers run for cover,
 Cause they're in no shape to fight,
 But the bar is tender, so they surrender,
 And wave a flag of white,
 John knocks out old mighty Lone Star,
 But him and brother Tom ain't too far apart,
 He somehow forgot, quickly took a shot,
 And put a silver bullet in Tom's heart,
 Meanwhile in the corner, it's slowly getting warmer,
 There's a fire in the sky,
 The moon is shot; cause the bullet didn't stop,
 And the whole place drops,
 Every time it passes by.

Suddenly, the Cowboys come storming on black
 horses,
 Warningly the place drops coldly to the jagged floor,
 And the whole damn set screams Russian roulette,
 So they tip their hats to the daunting fact,
 And walk right out the door.

And the Cowboys came from inside out,
 They emptied the inn and went on about,
 And when they asked me why I took this route,
 I told them one big lie,
 But the awful truth, it stays intact,
 No man can resist this fated fact,
 So I'll take one good look and turn my back,
 And keep on passing by.

SURGEON'S GENERAL WARNING

I am in your room, for the first time.
 You close the door
 and my scalpel is the first thing you see.

by jim davis

I lie beside you on your bed.
 You ask me questions—
 I brandish.
 A pound of my flesh,
 for a pound of your flesh.

I make an incision
 starting at my heart
 and moving downward.
 Peel back the skin

Your sheets are red;
 All I want is for us to be close.

One hand
 holding my intestines in,
 I move to cut you
 from heart
 downward.

You let me.

As I penetrate you,
 I hold you close
 make you comfortable.
 You are either too scared to say no
 or trust me too much to not say yes.

Your sheets are red;
 This is how we can be close.

We are both open now.
 Both on display,
 to an audience of one
 on your stage of dreams.

Your skin is soft
 but my hands are deep inside you.
 The lights go down
 and as I pull you closer
 we embrace
 this crimson slumber.

Your sheets are blood red;
 We will never be this close again.

I wake up;
 your skin is cold
 and the warmth behind your eyes is gone.
 You lay still
 pale
 breathless.

I used you
 to satisfy my bloodlust...
 But you can only slaughter a sheep once.

by sarah evins

UNTITLED

under the heavy breath of the moon
distant and removed

the ticking turns of upturned mouths
sweeping arguments of streets
and quiet cat scratches
of wandering leaves

help me forget
my furrowed thoughts

photo by
nick batson

TIGHTROPE WALKING

The laundry room
Where vermin sleep
And where I go to cry

With hanging bras
Along a line
Soaking up the air to dry

And while I sleep
The nexus of my words and my desires
Withheld in daylight
Each soft breath inhales and dances each spry step
And broadly from each fit of pique
And each defying, deathly act
Abbreviates and ruminates
And disengages
Quietly

'Til morning comes
Collaged and glued
Here pinned, then tucked, all held in place
And nexus never factors in
With lips locked shut,
And stolid face.



THE EXTINCT MUSE

by elizabeth yoo

The wavy hair swept back into a bun,
Translucent flesh wrapped around snow-white bones,
Naked collarbones bearing precious stones;
And the lips parted to harbor a gun.

The trachea seated inside the lily throat
Quivered at the touch of cold carbon steel
On her lying tongue. The pyrite jewels reeled
When I jerked the trigger. I put my coat

On and sold the necklace to the stranger.
I brought her over to the tide—My hands
Rattled as I weighed her down with an anchor.

I retreated, weightless, from the moist brink
And wiped the dirt off from her Judas kiss;
Aphrodite of Milos had to sink.

Beside her, my works drifted far away;
I destroyed myself, the artist, so that
My obsession and disillusionment could decay.



“Avantika, The
Indian Queen”

drawing by
Chiara Eskew

THE HEARTS OF “THEM”

by jared hunte

I have seen the pleasure of lost hope in a grown man's eyes
If ignorance is bliss, then this is paradise
His dreams never existed and his hopes are hindered
The passionate fires of his soul outed by that bitter-sweet elixir
He only shows ambition in the quest for hard liquor
The antidote the poison of his heart only makes him that much sicker
Aspirations have no place in his land of lost dreams
All significant emotions are replaced by childish greed
Success has no place here
He handed me his dignity as he groveled for that beer
That only drives him deeper into the chasm of oppression
He remains blissfully unaware of his plight as he downs them in succession
“Where does this life lead me?” is what he never stops to think
Any hope of escape from this happy hell is squandered on drinks
The force of realization will never push him to reality's brink
Deep down into the waters of irresponsibility is where he will continuously sink
His “high” poorly disguises his pain
He soon comes to regret what he's done with his monetary gains
He tries in vain to break the shackles of addiction because to his loved ones he must remain true
His son is destined to follow in his father's wayward footsteps because the cycle must continue...



WONDERFUL, WICKEDNESS

by paul longo

An immemorial flickering catches my attention as I walk toward it, stealing its beauty one furtive glance at a time until I am upon it and its light encasement ripples like water with my touch and its unspoken serenity sends palpable shockwaves through my body stoking the embers of a coldness that grows within me.

The scene fast-forwards until my view is blurred, and life is as one amorphous entity before me and my mouth opens to scream but produces little crude things which fall to the floor lurking off into the world to work their way into somebody, their magic a wonderful, wickedness mistaken for beauty and the real thing, and more and more come pouring out, and they dance around me as savages and I am their fire, their prey, their God, their destination, and the more I cry out the more they slip off my tongue until there are so many that moon and stars and sky are blotted out and there is a sick choking sound that I hear from the outside, yet feel from the inside, and I stop.

I listen.

And what is impressed upon me is a silence I have created.

It is mine and I am its. The world I have created is small, and proves that neither of us exists.

SILENCE BROODS NO MORE

Cards cannot play themselves

Enjoy the game

Aces over

Sharp spades spinning

Tattered black curls

Swinging like a late night jazz

Warrior woman

Twisting with tired turns

The tortured ones

Stretching for food

Rate politics

As all the same

The books bear blank white pages

Aglow with TV

Cantankerous consumerism enslavement

Of freedom

Erroneous misplaced judgment

But not for ourselves?

Slutty deification deems tit censorship

Tall nipples

Landmark tops of city buildings

Not phalluses/tits!

There is no Beauty in the God above mankind

Inhumane

Fallacies fucking fallacies

No fucking's allowed!

An arm of white man's negativity m/m

Poetry?

The greed driven chains of the cave

Stuck with iron stakes:

by r.j. huneke

Take the hammer and POUND

POUND POUND

POUND there is no love

POUND accept self-hate

POUND in selfish POUND POUND

Fuck her

POUND there is no care

Take the hammer and POUND

These self-proclaimed kings,

Rapping idolatrous gods

Model them POUND

Hate everyone POUND

Hate who we fuck POUND hate who we fuck

POUND

Drink up the desire to POUND greed

Be greed POUND Be greed

Suck my dick bitch POUND

Let the next cunt suck my dick bitch

POUND POUND greed come

Greed come POUND

Selfish self-hate selfish self-hate

POUND POUND POUND

Negative absolute zero cold

Apathy swallow and spit greed come

POUND titanic rusty anchoring chain

Lapping the very vessels as

Imagination drowns in digital blood

POUND

Part II:

Castle: the rook protect thee

Let the pawns play

The broken toothed grins of the queen and king line the board with games

Let the pawns play

A higher straight hits home and controls the bet

This house is full of riotous laughter raving lunatic answers
and shifty bending pawns

That's Check: you can't keep them out

Pawn sacrifice

Walls of diamond shard bling shrapnel for the twisted slave armies

Pawn sacrifice

Zombification manacled together

Clinking they hold the line at the status quo I'll swap your pawn with mine

And reap the queen's pussy

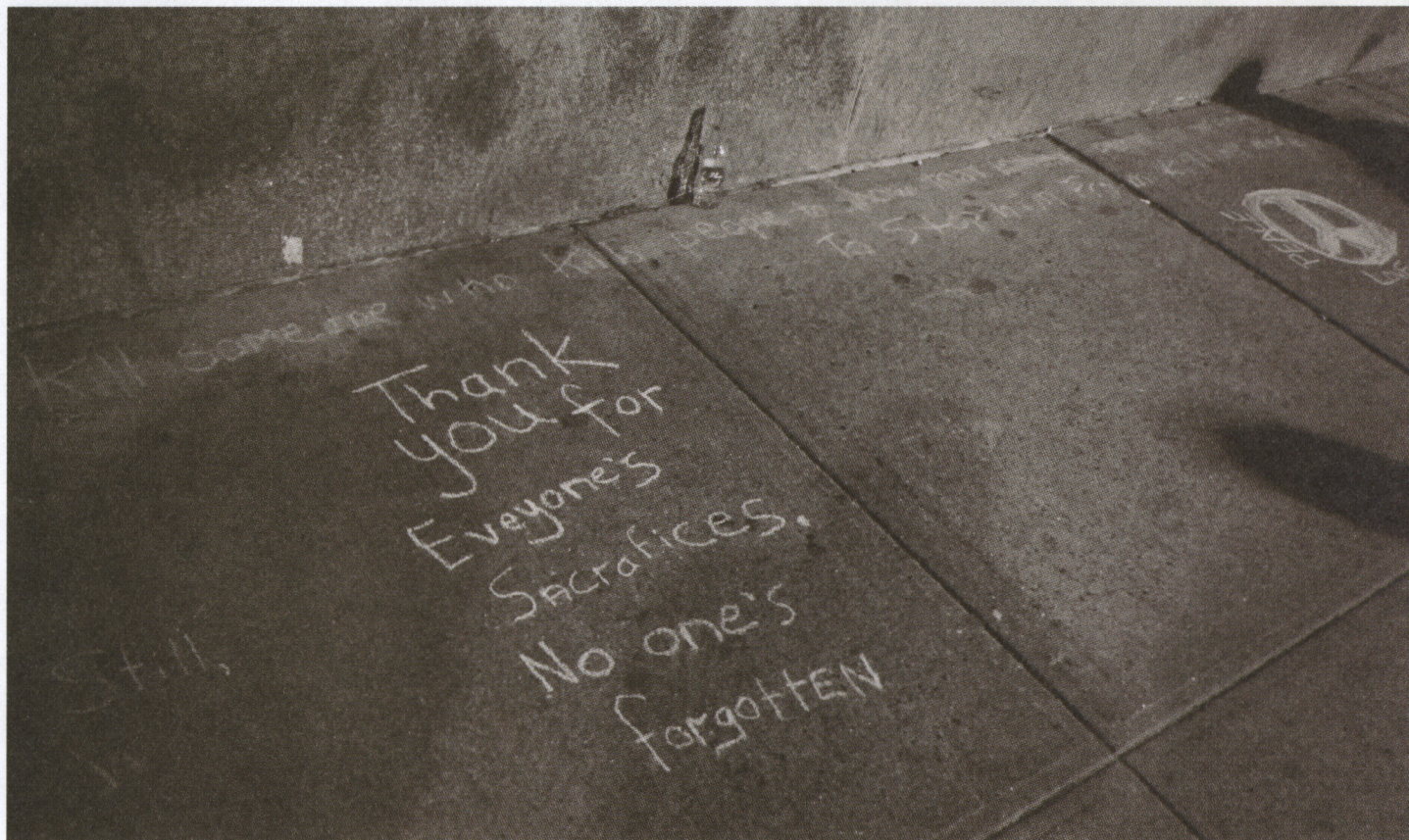


photo by nick batson



The steaming sumptuous jazz singer wields blended coffee on winter nights
 Her cold is soothed with a cough and a drop of...
 Traps, like bear claws with metal teeth, to adorn the inside
 Of her cracked cup
 Her break begins and ends in an alley of rusty brick and delicate dicks
 The grime the sticky black grease of the night shadows her heavily
 She whisks her hair with a weak bronze hand
 And takes up the tarnished drizzly stage once more
 The song aches from out of her quivering breasts like lightning tearing down a tree
 Gnarled battered lungs of urban and suburban
 People, not myths, idealistic zombie people eyeing
 Her rolled up sleeve
 Where from coffee stained tracks rides a single Joker card laughing with worn edges
 Suddenly lost in the screams the moans of the sacred selfless song
 And despite the devils in us all
 The paths in the maze reach an end as they're ONE

And it occurs to the near out of work seamstress that she is seeing into
The Eye! Osiris! Ra! Jesus! Mohammed!
Buddha! Gandhi! Plato! NO! Freud! NO! Mary Wollstonecraft!
Hugs microphone
Stands swaying in a slippery dress far too large for the skeletal shrink-mare
Even the de-sexualized euthanized acne bobbin' head dolls
Wake up from apathy genocide
The eye peels back: the Oneness the Emerson

Part III:

The tortured ones round another bend
Slowly
The clinking chains drag on the moist pavement with their famished phalluses
Shrinking weakening with the pale sweating flesh that is
Reveling in western society
Without food

The tortured ones moan with mounting madness
At whim
Screens buzz with control exhaustion emittance carefully bred without food
Creeping creeping along on bony toes and bleached skulls
Scraping civilization gunk with spoons
And lost dreams

Abstinence censors Nature herself
Females
Can only open the doors the legs of their imprisonment when told
Fuck abstinence with liberated wet vaginas
From where will we be born if not from these
Clams with pearls?

The tortured ones tire of the lines
Growing
They will gasp, sputter, sweat, toil, scream, zombie, Sh! Silent Sh! No more!
Climb beyond subsistence the 3rd Estate us and them

POETRY

Use volcano skulls to tread up and out
Precede blows

The tortured ones bend the cards for all
They're worth
Stop and inject the foreplay on society do Not POUND in Chains
Caress the round peaks amongst the mechanized city
Come freedom

Part IV:

Where are the Tinkerers with their Mark Twain mustaches
And their expensive cigars
Exhausting all efforts of will to think outside of the cranking cranium
gearbox
Spinning the smoky turbines of spirited spiritual spiriting effectual
innovation?

Mary Wollstonecraft where are you and yours hiding out?
Frankenstein wrinkles and cries
While white daughters of religious parents reaffirm ancient worm ridden grave headstones
In youth for the female soul awaits another place where her black taboo fucking
is delicious

Can Kerouac Iron Man and Ginsberg Spiderman
Be taught at universities?
Grappling the shameful trials of gavel dropping conformity countenance
cobwebs
While tight folded lips are stapled closed and their throats choke on the voice that's been denied them

Part V:

We are the trapeze artists in the mounting urban rain
Soaked beyond recognition
We are the fearless fastidious revolutionaries
Hitchhiking grifter students
We are the pipe-smoking painters mixing rainwater oil
With loose canvas clouds and dirt

We are silent-brooding no more.

We are the art warriors wrestling their violent ways

Downward vehemently

We are the splashers of wavy glossy city streets buckling

Windy suspension bridges

We are the international voices carving from the greed

To end the hollowed eye look

We are silent-brooding no more.

What magic rips the fabric wantonly grrrrrrr

The whores have left the modest Red Light District and moved into

Inner Outer City Suburb Farms

And homes

And universities

Gluttonous sexual mutations ruin the face of Love (with three broken eyes

Snakes for hair

And long acrylic nails)

What magic struggles amidst strangulation

The black magic squares off with the white and the gray

Imagine a voice faultless and accursed

Tantalizing untainted vocalization

EMPOWERMENT ROARRR!

Blond cat-like eyes query

While the creature wrestles the vines' leafy limb

The pupils reflect a patch of escaped moon

Two golden puddles amongst emerald cities

Patient spotted darkness

With a yielding of a Growl

You'll be caught!

Imagine the leopard leaping nightshade

Terrifying swiping the muzzled nations'

INDIVIDUALLL!

The sharp curvy nails claw

POETRY

At the silent cranium hat straight jacket
Canvas frays and *slashes* at the very sound
Of the creature flexing wild vocal chords
Waiting scratching tree bark
When shall they listen and Growl?
Spot shadows
The tree, the dirt, the earth beneath the nails
So sedimentary gritty
Crawling
A desert in the claw
We remember the...
As one, as all come from...
A dance in the shadows of prey

A metal grate loomed near
Despite the porous lawn, garden, scrub
Oaks, leafless shrubberies,
And the university backdrop,

A metal grate loomed near
The perspectives ultimately
Became a rusty uneven grid-like grin
A drain
Would that we did not fall, crawl,
Spill, slide and worm
All the time
Down shifting sifting into the well
A metal grate loomed near

Part V:

And the missiles ejaculated
Death: messy, sticky, liquidity
Parts of persons fused themselves and surroundings
Like falling in a warm lava lake
While other pieces separated and shook
Enraptured?
And were then stilled





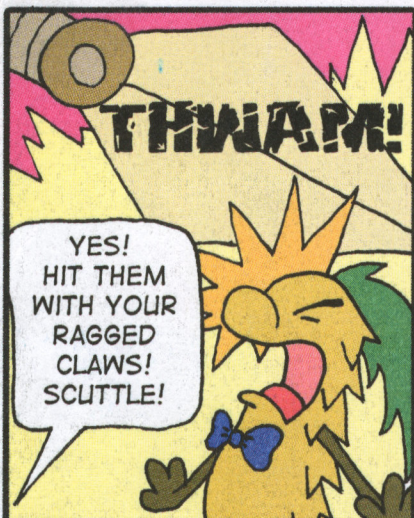
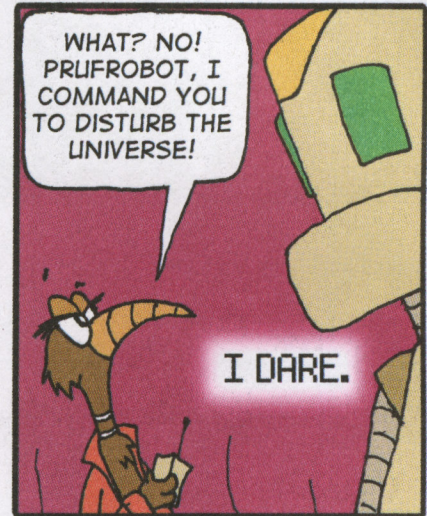
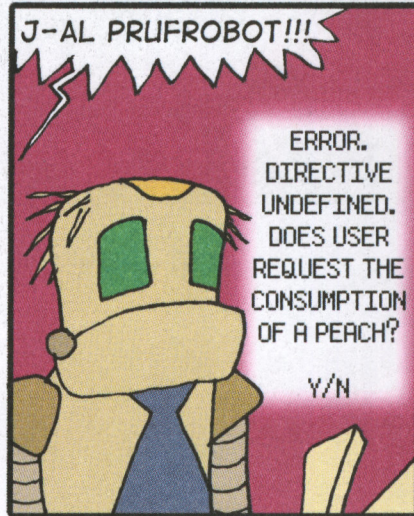
photos by nick batson

How is it in a day, any day, today, yesterday
 That sex is frowned on, spurned and restricted unnaturally
 While genocide Qaddafi's are allowed for so fucking long?

Tell me momma about the missiles
 Is it not enough that the earth quakes
 On her own and humbles nuclear ambitions
 Glowing emerald crimson fires
 Melt the plastic people in slow suffering
 Whose folly?
 Tell me we missed

How is it possible to hear the anguish in their voice?
 Not one child in Japan should have to drink poisoned milk
 And weep aloud without everyone being able to hear.

A Very Literary Issue of THE BORING ROCKS by Evan Goldaper

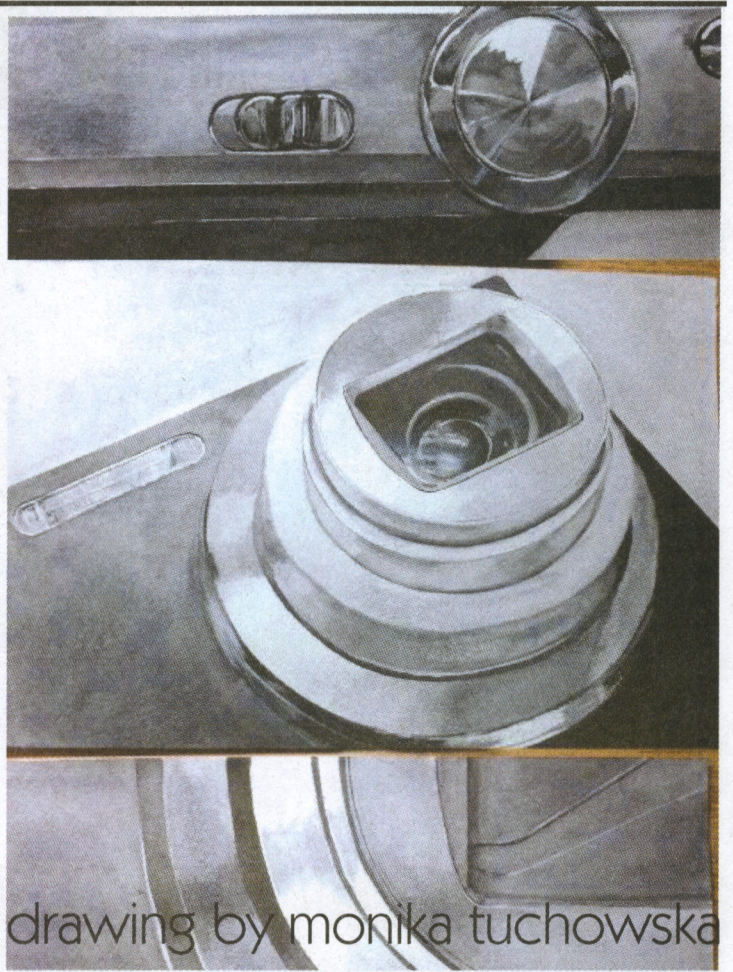


“When by now and tree by leaf she laughed his joy she cried his grief.” –E.E. CUMMINGS

ARTWORK



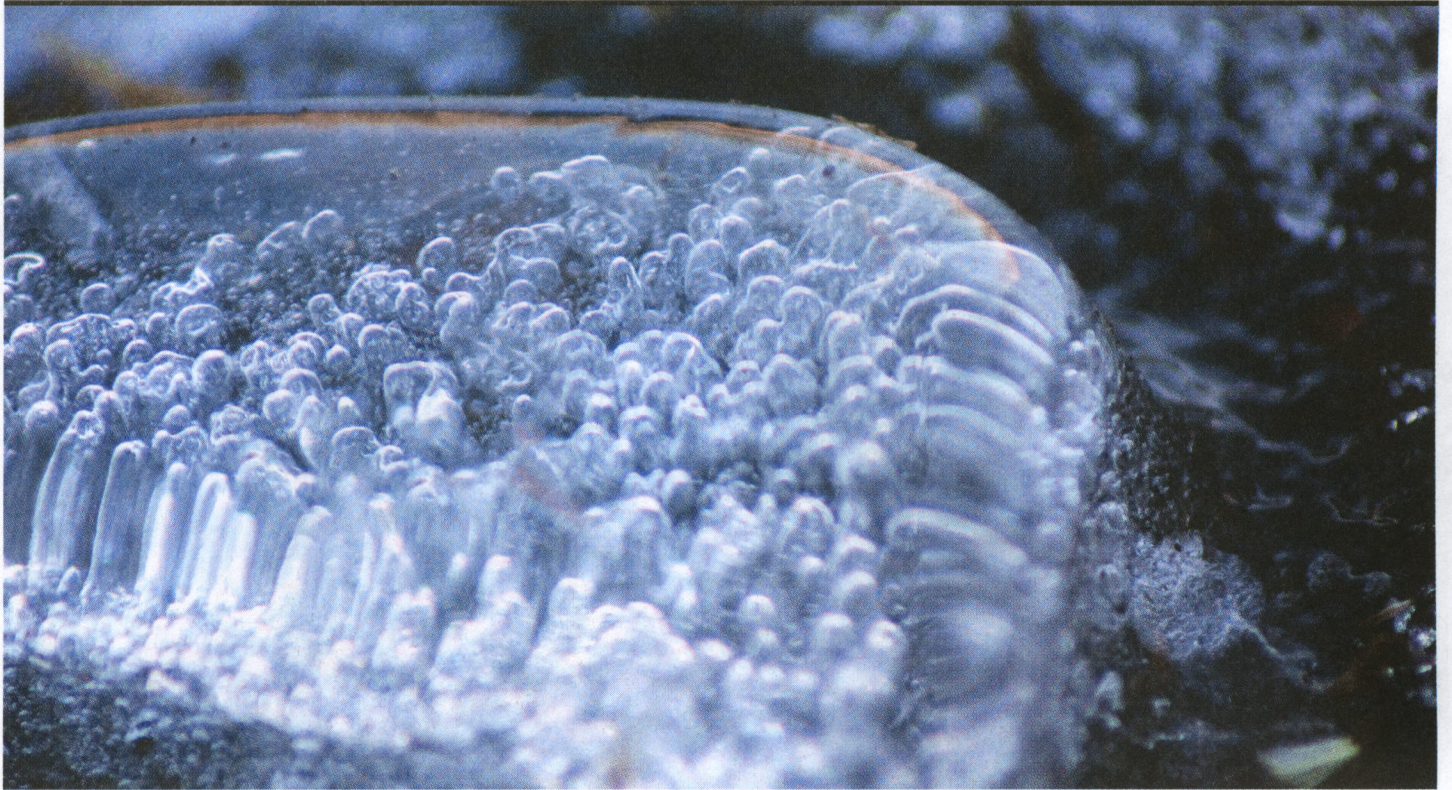
drawing by edwige lauture



drawing by monika tuchowska

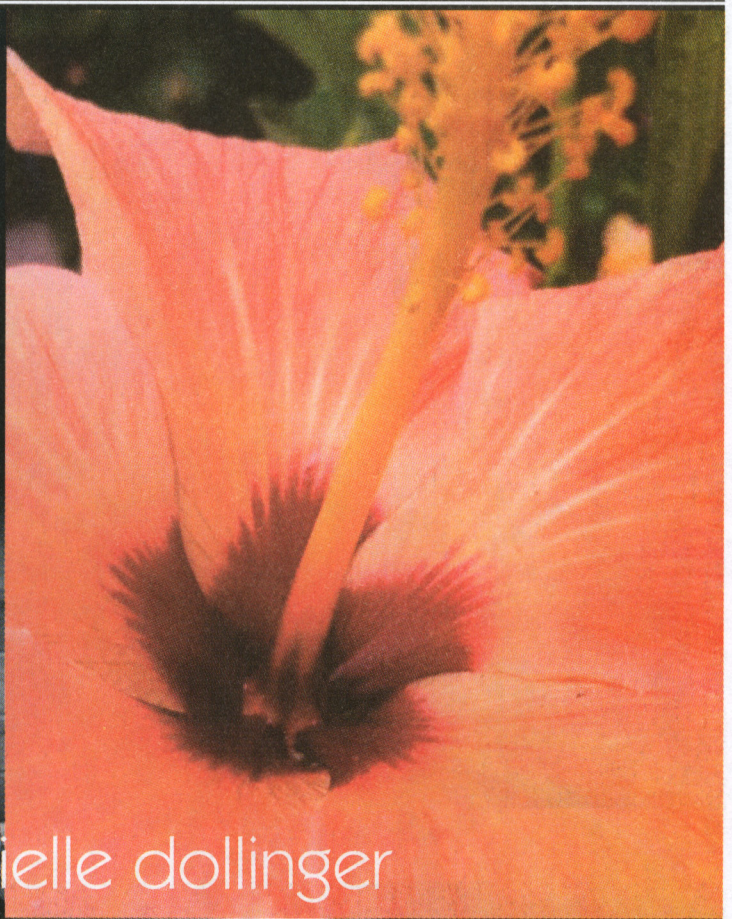


photo by ezra margono



photos by jasmine haefner





photos by arielle dollinger



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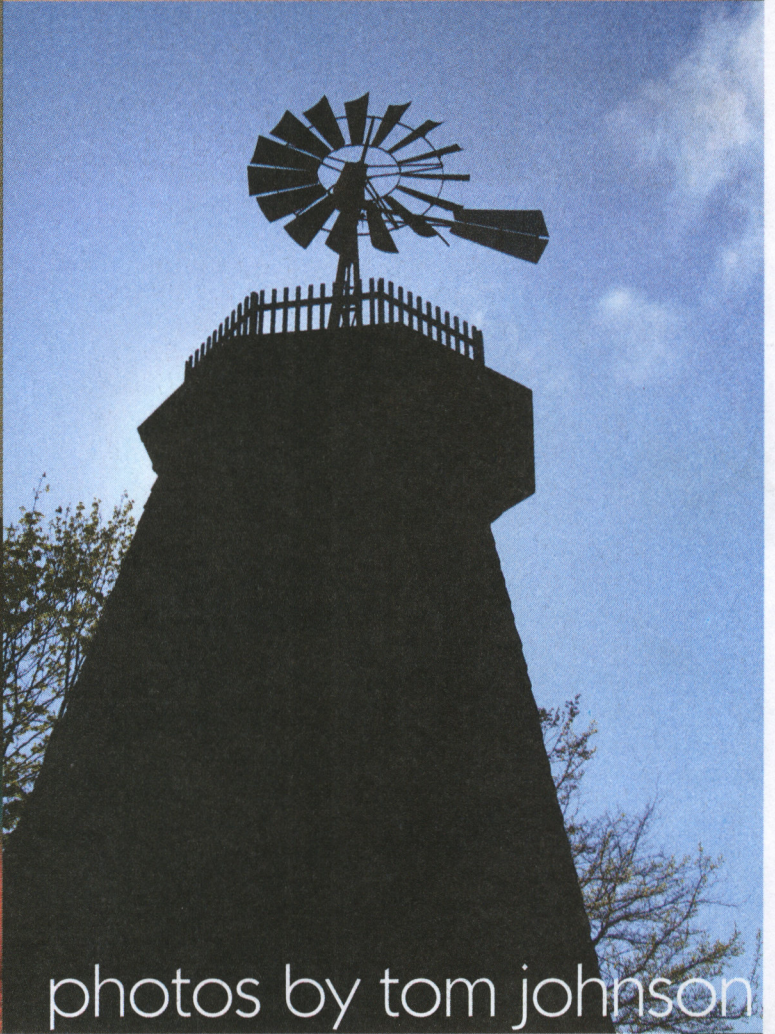
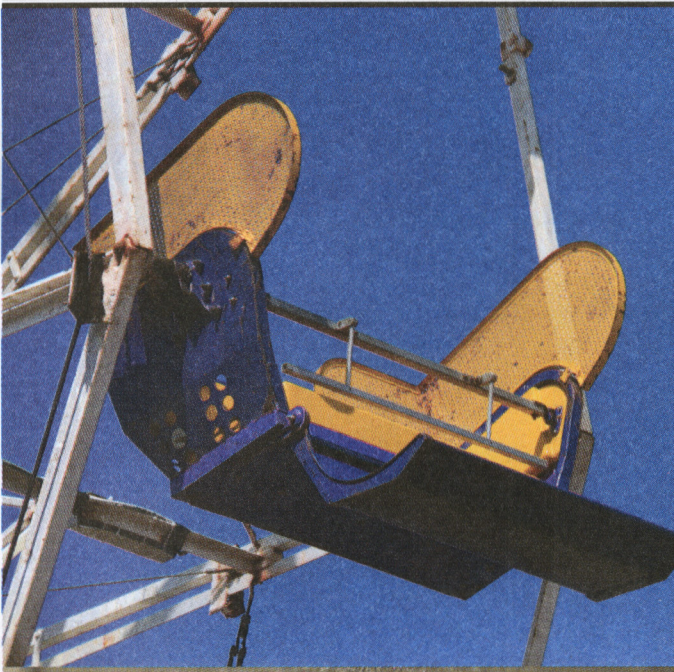
“To clarify the pulse and cloud the mind, and leave me once again undone, possessed.” —MILLAY

PHOTOS



photos by liz kaempf





photos by tom johnson

7 MINUTES OF HEAVEN

by david k. ginn

Suzanne...what an odd name for a girl these days. Maybe it was all the rage decades ago, but now all the young Suzannes were named after a grandmother or aunt who had died long ago. Suzie Canton was one such echo. She told him that right before she found the ladybug crawling on her math book.

Josh tried to blow it off her finger, but it wouldn't budge.

"Stop that," she said. "It's pretty."

Josh grabbed her waist with both hands and pulled her closer. "You're pretty."

"We have to set her down somewhere safe."

"It's probably a 'he'," Josh said. "And it was doing just fine before we showed up."

He pulled her arm. The ladybug flew off, disappearing into darkness. They stood still for a moment. The bathroom was small, but they could dance.

She wrapped her arms around his neck and dodged his first kiss. "Slow down, tiger."

"We've only got four minutes left. Come on."

"Wouldn't you rather have two really good minutes than seven that are just alright?"

Josh hooked his arm around the small of her back. She was tiny, but she had some healthy meat on her. Despite her cleverness, though, she was wrong. He'd rather have seven alright minutes.

She slapped his hand. "Cool it."

Cool it? Was she teasing or was she born thirty years ago? "You don't act like you're fifteen," he said.

"Really? You do." She shook from his grasp and turned away. "You're no fun."

"This isn't about fun. It's about..." He couldn't think of the word, or maybe he was just worried about how it would sound.

"I know what it's about for you." She made a gagging motion. "Let's go back to the party."

She opened the door. The light outside blinded him. Why so many lights? It was nice and intimate in here. Nice and dark.

A dozen partygoers cheered and raised their red plastic cups. They looked like they were filming a football commercial.

Nikki Hawkins raised her shoulder and smiled. Was she flirting with him? Three minutes in the closet and suddenly Nikki Hawkins, who had turned him down in the first grade and still showed people his love letter when she wanted a laugh, was flirting with him. He felt a pang of pride, although he knew he didn't deserve it.

"Suzie!" yelled some faceless stranger in the back of the living room. "Still two minutes left! I'll take over!"

Suzie looked at Josh, and he could see her intentions as if she had posted it to Facebook. She did not want a single person thinking they had come close to making out. Time seemed to slow down. His face was burning red before she even spoke.

"Anything's better than that," she said, pointing to him and the bathroom door.

The entire room exploded in a fit of laughter and cheers. People he knew—people he thought might be his friends—fell off their chairs and couches, faces wet with tears and cheap beer. Nikki Hawkins smiled at him again, but she was not flirting anymore.

A kind of surge took over. He felt like a man sliding off a mountain, with one good swing of a pickaxe between life and death. He looked right at Suzie, chest high with confidence.

"Sorry you couldn't handle me."

She turned heel. No one was laughing. It was like a sitcom where the laugh track changes to a chorus of "ooooohs". She could walk away, she had to know that. She was a girl; girls could shake this kind of thing off.

"Couldn't handle you?"

Jesus, she was taking the bait. Back in the closet, Suze. You know you want to.

"Two more minutes!" someone shouted.

She pushed past him and into the bathroom. The crowd went wild. Josh followed her and shut the door.

"What are we going to do for two minutes?" he asked.

Without another word, she grabbed the back of his hair and pressed her lips into his. His arms went limp. He felt the warmth of her face, the crash of her teeth against his own, the tip of her tongue touching his gums. She let him go and stepped back against the sink.

"Happy?"

He was, and he hoped to God she wouldn't notice. "Can we—"

There was a sharp *crack*, like a branch breaking off a tree. It seemed to ripple through, as if someone had shot a lightning bolt across Patty Callister's property. The light under the door went out for a second, then flickered back on. Car alarms blared outside.

Suzie stood with both arms against the sink. For a moment all Josh could hear was her heavy breathing.

"What the hell was that?" she asked.

"Sounded like thunder."

There was a rustling sound outside the door, like the crinkling of a potato chip bag. Feet thumped against the floor, left to right and right to left. Someone screamed.

Suzie reached for the door handle. Josh pulled her hand away from the door and spun her around to face him.

"Relax," he said.

"Did you just hear that?"

"It's probably a joke. They want to scare us out."

The crinkling started to die down. So did the footsteps. There was a moment of silence, when all Josh could hear was Suzie's breathing against his chest, and then the light under the door went

out again.

She reached for the door handle. This time he didn't stop her.

The living room was dark. Something was fluttering in the kitchen, like a small swarm of flies. That too got quieter until eventually it stopped. Suzie stepped out of the bathroom and looked around.

He followed her a pace behind. It was almost impossible to see. He braced his legs against the possibility of running into a chair or Patty Callister's dilapidated poker table.

"Hello?" Suzie said.

No one answered. Something was starting to smell bad, like rotten meat left out over night. Josh pinched his nose.

The dining room was on the right side of the living room, shrouded in darkness. To the left, Josh could see the kitchen light through the open ledge in the wall.

"Find a light," Josh whispered.

Something sniveled. Josh and Suzie turned to the dining room. She grabbed his hand, and it was probably no comfort that his was shaking, too.

The snivel turned to a sob, then a whisper. "Guys?"

It was Nikki Hawkins. Her words were broken up by heavy breaths and quick sobs.

"Where are you?" Suzie asked.

"Here."

That didn't help much. He looked around for the light switch, but it was too dark to find it. He remembered there was a chandelier above the dining room table, and if it was anything like his house,

there was a light switch in the living room. He felt along the wall.

"I can't see you," Suzie said.

Nikki's voice was a lot clearer: "Just walk forward."

"What the hell happened? We were only in there for a minute—"

"Be careful, please."

Josh's hand stopped at a plastic wall plate. "Let's get some light in here."

Nikki's scream nearly knocked him over. "No!"

He had already flicked the light.

They saw her in the dining room, lit now by the swinging light of the chandelier. Her face was deep red. She screamed and screamed, and over it somehow Josh could hear the rustling sound, that awful crinkle that sounded like crushed tinfoil.

Blotches in her face became darker, and then her flesh began to tear away as if someone were clawing into her. She grabbed at her cheeks, her forehead, her scalp, but her hands were wasting away, too. Suzie started to run to her. Josh grabbed her by the shoulder and yanked her back.

Nikki was crying. Josh could see the bones in her cheeks. He looked away, and in the resonant light he saw a heap of flesh and clothes on the far end of the living room. He turned back to Nikki in time to see her fall to her knees. She was staring at them both, and her eyes were accusatory. Josh heard the buzzing again, the flutter of bees or mosquitoes or whatever the hell it sounded like.

photo by tom johnson



"I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool." —*The Great Gatsby*, FITZGERALD

SHORT STORIES

There wasn't much left of Nikki Hawkins. He pulled Suzie away and walked backwards to the kitchen.

An awful smell overtook him. He looked at his hand and realized Suzie had thrown up on him. He didn't care.

They were nearing the kitchen. He and Suzie looked up at the lights, and he could tell she understood.

The lights. Jesus Christ, the lights had killed her. Nikki Hawkins, who he thought about every day after school since he had learned what Ken Larkin called "bologna bopping". He had just seen her skin burn away.

Was it really the light? He looked down, and in the faint illumination from the dining room he could see outlines of bodies. This wasn't happening. No way.

The front door was in the kitchen. They couldn't leave that way, and Josh wasn't sure if he even wanted to. Who knew what the hell was out there?

Someone was in the kitchen; Josh could hear them whimpering. He sidestepped until he could see through the archway.

Patty Callister was under the kitchen table out of the light by mere inches. There were two sets of overheads, and the one to the right of the table was off. The front door was under the other.

Josh crouched and made a *psst* sound. Patty jerked and put a hand over her mouth.

"What are you doing?" he whispered.

"Where's Nikki? I heard her scream..."

Josh looked to Suzie, who was still shaking. Bits of sick were stuck to her lower chin.

"Come to us," Josh said to Patty.

She shook her head.

"It's okay," he said.

Patty's eyes were red with tears. "I can't go in the light. It's safe here."

"Where is the light switch?"

Patty pointed to the darker part of the kitchen. There was too much light for him to make it across, but Patty could do it.

He thought about the logistics, and for a moment he understood just how insane it all was. What could tear someone's flesh off like that—eat it, even? Was it the light itself, or something in the light?

"I want to go home," Suzie said.

Josh tried to keep focus. "Patty, you need to turn the lights off. If you don't, we'll never leave."

"I'm scared."

"No shit, me too. But we need to get that light off."

Patty stared at him for a moment, then nodded slowly. He knew she could do it. She was captain of the swim team. If she could dive from ten feet in the air she could duck out from under a table and turn a light off.

She crawled to the dark end of the table and looked at them one more time before sliding out. She looked behind her, as if the light would catch her in the act and follow her across the room. When she saw she was safe, she ran to the wall and caught her breath.

"There are like, four switches here."

"It's your house. Which one is it?"

"I don't know. I always do the wrong one."

"Are they connected to any other rooms?"

"I... I think so."

Josh looked up at the ceiling. There were two sets of lights in here, too. One was by the bathroom door, and the other was right over their heads.

If she flipped that light instead...

"Patty, please hit the right one."

"Okay, just give me a second."

He heard her count to herself, maybe to three or maybe as some sort of memory exercise. A second later the lights near the bathroom door flashed on. Josh jumped. He was in light now, but apparently not enough. There was a faint line on the carpet, the difference between life and death. He backed as far away from it as possible.

"Patty!"

"I'm sorry," she shouted. "It must be this one!"

The kitchen erupted with light. He heard Patty scream. Something thudded against the floor.

When his eyes adjusted, Josh saw her under the table again. Her face was red and slashed, and one of her feet was reduced to bone. A pool of thin blood was forming on the tile.

She was under the table's shadow, though. If she could stop the bleeding, she might be okay.

Patty grabbed at the table leg with one hand. Suzie jumped forward instinctively. Josh grabbed her by the leg.

"Don't," Suzie said.

Josh didn't understand what was going on. Patty was holding the table leg, lifting it even, as if—

She must have hit it on her way down. The wood was splintered in the middle, and the weight from the tabletop was pushing it out.

The crinkling sound crackled and popped as Patty's hand began to tear away. Blood dripped down her arm. The table began to dip.

A book slid down the tabletop and fell to the tile. Then a plastic cup, and a wire fruit bowl. Apples rolled across the floor.

The table fell forward. Josh looked away, but in the corner of his eye he could see Suzie staring, her face still as a statue.

He crawled across the floor and sat with his back to the wall. Patty didn't scream. She whined and moaned, and then the crinkling stopped and the house was quiet again.

They were screwed.

Both sets of switches for the living room were now under light. The bedrooms were past the dining room, and the bathroom door was a no-go.

They were sitting in a six-foot circle of near-darkness. On all sides, the overheads bathed each room in light. As far as he knew, this was the only dark area in the entire house.

He looked up at the lights defiantly. He had never noticed until now just how many lights there were in a house. Dozens. Twenty, maybe thirty, maybe more. Why would anyone need so much light?

Mrs. Stewart, his science teacher, had told him that light pollution changed the way we see the night sky. You can only see

the stars clearly if you're on a mountaintop or in a rural area. Josh had been to neither. As far as he could guess, he had never seen the true night sky.

A crazy thought crossed his mind, so insane that he smiled a little: What if nature was fighting back?

Suzie was still staring into the kitchen. He wasn't worried about her. He was tired, mentally and physically. His eyelids fell slowly, and soon the room was dark. The world was dark. He felt safer already.

When he woke, Suzie Canton had her arm around his waist. Her body was warm. She was snoring.

He tried to move her off his shoulder, but her body was like a sack of potatoes. He wondered if that was true for everyone. He had never been so close to somebody before.

He grabbed her by the waist and shuddered when he felt the hot flesh underneath her shirt. He could barely see, but she was close enough that he could make out her tired eyes by his shoulder.

What the hell? They had two minutes left, didn't they?

He squeezed her waist and leaned in to kiss her lips. They were soft and wet. She tasted like sick. He didn't care. He moved his hand around her waist, over to her stomach. A chill ran up his arm.

He slid his hand down slowly. It was shaking, but the danger only turned him on more. He had never seen a woman except on the internet. If he could feel it, just once...

He slid his hand under the top of her jeans. The button popped loose. She was hot and wet, and it smelled awful. He forced his fingers down.

She had been right, after all. Two great minutes were so much better than seven. How was he supposed to know? He had never experienced two really great minutes before.

She squirmed a bit. He pulled his hand out and fixed her shirt. His hand smelled like her. He tucked it under his leg.

"Is it morning?" she asked.

"No."

She sat up straight and stretched her arms over her knees. "We'd be dead, wouldn't we?"

Josh glanced at the window across the room and nodded.

"I'm cold," Suzie said.

"Me too."

"Do you hear that?"

Josh sat still and perked his ear. He could hear it: footsteps from the kitchen, light and slow.

Suzie pointed to the kitchen, and Josh understood. Someone was walking in the light.

He peered over the ledge, but all he saw was a dark shape move quickly out of view.

"Patty?" a man's voice whispered.

Suzie grabbed Josh's arm. "It's Mr. Callister," she said.

"What's he doing?"

"I can't see."

"Patty..." The man was sobbing. Josh couldn't tell if he had found his daughter yet, or if there was even anything left to find.

An apple rolled onto the living room carpet. Mr. Callister stepped into the archway.

He had a large blanket draped over his body, covering him from hair to feet. He wore leather gloves and long sleeves. The blanket was dark gray. It reminded Josh of those war video games where the snipers wore nets of leaves and grass to blend in with the environment. He looked ridiculous.

He stepped into the shadow. Light followed him.

He had a flashlight in one hand, and he was slowly swiveling it around the room. Josh grabbed Suzie. They had to say something. If he didn't know they were there—

"Mr. Callister!" Suzie said.

The blanketed shape spun on one heel and gasped. He tripped backwards and the blanket flew off. The crinkling sound erupted like a recycling plant. The flashlight fell to the carpet. Josh ducked.

Suzie screamed, so loud it made Josh's ears pop. He saw her face melt away, saw the muscle in her cheeks and the tendons pulsating through her neck. She screamed and screamed and waved her arms wildly in the light. It was like a beam pointed right at her face, a death ray aimed at her.

Clumps of her hair dropped to the carpet. There was no more scalp to hold onto. She fell forward, face in her knees, as if she were practicing one of those nuclear bomb drills in school.

Josh looked to the bathroom door. The overhead was right above it, but—

Fuck it. He could make it if he tried.

He crawled to his feet and half-stumbled, half-ran into the light.

His arms stung. His flesh burned. It felt like a thousand bee stings. He wanted to cover his face, to stop short and panic and protect his burning cheeks, but he wouldn't let himself.

Gravity seemed to double. He reached for the doorknob. It felt like he was curling weights.

He swung the door open and dove in. He scrambled over the toilet and reached for the knob. He saw the skin on his hand being eaten away. He pulled the door shut and fell to the tile.

He backed away, as far from the door as possible. A little shag rug bunched up underneath him. He pressed his back against the wall and breathed.

He was okay. Goddamn, he was okay. There was gauze in the cabinet. Antibiotic ointment too, he was sure. What suburban family didn't keep stuff like that in the bathroom? His skin would heal. He was safe, the last person alive on 29 Peekskill Drive. Maybe the last person alive on the planet.

The window was right above him. The white curtains fluttered in the early morning breeze. It was a half-bathroom, no shower, which meant no shower curtain. He could get naked and use his clothes to block the light, though. He could drink water from the tap, and eat—

Well, he would find a way. He could stay here for a long time. Seven minutes, at least.

He smiled. His lips cracked and bled. Seven minutes, he could last, then another, and another. How hard could it be?

MANHATTANHENGE by oswaldo jimenez

“Past sorrows, let us moderately lament them; for those to come, seek wisely to prevent them.” —*The Duchesses of Malfi*, WEBSTER

It's the Vernal Equinox in Manhattan. Purple shadows stick to everything in sight as the sun sinks at the far edge of West 42nd Street. “Shorty” Walker wobbles forward and back trying to escape from his shadow, but sinks right back into it, like an animal trapped in a tar pit.

Walker arches his back to prevent from falling over. His toes strain inside his shoes, like an infant learning to balance the weight of its upright body. He reaches into his coat pocket, pulls out a brown paper bag, peels it open, and takes a long drink from the bottle inside it. His shadow waits patiently while Walker stops to swallow.

“Sun looks weird gone behind them buildings,” mutters a large woman sitting on a bench at the periphery of Bryant Park. Her voice is high and pitchy like that of an infant trying to get its mother's attention; annoying and unexpected, coming from a human being weighing roughly three hundred pounds. The woman's hulking body melts onto the park bench like a stack of cheese wheels left under the scorching sun. Her head, a blubbery ball spewing sweat into the folds of her neck, flowing like a melting candle. Her eyes, nose, and mouth are barely suggested by the folds of fat that make up most of her face. Her forehead starts at the bridge of her nose and continues on until it reaches the back of her head.

Walker replies without looking at the woman, “The sun's not just *going down*, you have to look at the whole spectacle, my friend,” remarks Walker, tracing an arc in the air with the slow sweeping motion of his extended arm. The sleeve of his wrinkled jacket slides down to reveal a pale, scrawny appendage that ends where the paper sack begins. Walker shakes the paper sack from side to side, wipes the lip of the bottle inside it with the palm of his hand; brings it up to his mouth, and takes another long drink.

The stout woman's pinkish tongue instinctively licks her fat lips watching Walker's adam's apple slide up and down. Her eyes protrude out of their fleshy casings like a tree frog eyeballing an insect. She looks up at Walker from her promontory, using her chubby hand as a visor to shield her eyes from the last rays of the deflated sun. “I'd say the sun's gone behind them buildings to take a dump,” mutters the large woman, shrugging her shoulders dismissively and making grunting noises that pass for laughter.

“No, no, no, that's not what I'm saying,” Walker blurts out impatiently, stretching his neck like a chicken reaching out for a fat worm, and shaking it from side to side before swallowing it whole. “Listen, listen,” Walker commands the woman, cupping his hand over his right ear and pointing his index finger at the woman, while keeping a strong grip on the bottle inside the paper sack.

“The silhouetted pre-war buildings rip a sliver of sky with their jagged edges as the moribund sun bleeds, and splashes its blood on the street and empty sidewalks. Tail lights glow like cinders from a smoldering fire, while a solitary cyclist drags his long, heavy

shadow towards the vanishing horizon...” Shorty Walker finishes with a slight slur in his speech. “See? That's how it's done,” shouts Walker, moving his body like a prize fighter, punching at the air with his fists. “That's how it's done,” he repeats, then bows as a magician on stage performing a magic trick.

“Shiiiiiet...I guess,” half-concedes the husky woman. “You some kinda poet, man?” she asks Walker while pulling down her right eyelid with her middle finger. “I mean,” she remarks with levity, ‘sliver of sky?’ Kinda shit's that? “Sounds phony, dude,” she adds, sinking her fingers into her flabby chest. “Gotta give it to you though...I like the ‘bleeding sun’ shit. Your mama teach you that fancy talkin’, man?”

Walker feels challenged. Lifting his chin in the air and stretching his neck like a peacock flaunting its feathers, he fills his lungs to capacity before announcing,

“I, madam, am a writer.”

“A writer, that a fact? Yeah?” asks the fat woman, arching the muscles on her face where there should be eyebrows. “Made any pictures? Mr. writer?” she asks with her blubbery head bobbing. The screeching sound of the woman's voice, with its mocking inflection, makes Walker's skin crawl. Walker's skin is a pale veil covering a thin frame. His face is creased by furrows, and dotted with ruddy blood vessels crisscrossing his cheekbones and forehead like grain on fine leather. It hangs on his bulbous head like a mask on a Mardi Gras reveler, with a pair of large black eyes moving inside their sockets like two Magic 8 Balls divining his fortune.

Walker shifts his gaze to the paper sack dangling from his right hand before replying with prickly pride, “I'm not a movie whore: I write literature.” He objects while pounding his fist on his chest. After a pause, Walker peels off the brown bag to reveal a half-empty bottle of Chivas Regal, its piss-color contents flares when a stray ray of sunlight filters through it. “I have to get something published,” Walker admits inhaling and exhaling deeply. “You know, that's how it all starts. I need to be discovered,” he mutters as he takes another drink and exhales letting out a heavy sigh.

“Discooooooovered...riiiight,” says the heavy woman, eyeballing the swishing liquid inside the bottle.

“Here,” says Walker, “have a swig,” swinging the bottle towards the thirsty woman's hands. The gargantuan woman eagerly grabs the bottle by its neck with her fat right hand while cradling its bottom with the palm of her left. The liquor dances inside the bottle as it exchanges hands.

“Fancy shit,” she whispers checking out the label. “I thought you said you was a starving artist and shit?” she mutters rhetorically, holding the bottle between her gooey fingers, then rolling her head back taking a generous mouthful of the glittering hooch.

“This good shit, man,” murmurs the obese woman, making clicking sounds with her tongue. She wipes her lips, and then the



mouth of the bottle with her dirty sleeve.

"Name's Tiny," she mutters, extending a flipper of an appendage towards Walker.

"You don't look so tiny," says Walker reaching over the woman's bulging abdomen to grip the doughy digits of her right hand. "I'm Johnnie Walker. Friends and enemies call me 'Shorty,'" he says, letting go the doughy fingers.

"You ain't look so short ayther," mutters Tiny, her large body undulating like Jell-O. Walker's head moves up and down as his eyes follow the fat woman's movements. He feels a certain closeness with the woman after sharing the bottle with her.

Tiny wears a pair of laceless canvas shoes that barely hold the flesh inside them. They're black from filth rather than original color. In contrast, Shorty's feet neatly disappear inside his white, patent leather loafers.

"Can I tell you a quick story?" asks the lean Walker, turning quickly on his heels. Before the woman has a chance to answer, Walker parks his rear end on the narrow space of bench next to the whale-of-a-woman. Walker's bones creak inside his skin like

photo by nader nourae

dice hitting the sidewalk. His thin body fits snugly between Tiny and two cardboard boxes filled with unnecessary trinkets the big woman had collected around the park. Tiny turns her head like an owl, her eyes widening and eyebrow muscles arching. She's still cuddling the bottle of Chivas Regal between her fleshy arms like a raptor protecting her freshly caught prey.

"Ain't no need to story me man, I got stories of my own," mutters Tiny trying to prevent any further closeness with the insistent man. "Just 'cause yo sharing yer here liquer don't mean we close, dude." Tiny's body jiggles as she attempts to put an inch or two of distance between herself and Walker. She still sounds like a blubbering infant when she talks, her shrill voice continues to make Walker's skin crawl, but the effect of the alcohol has dulled Walker's need to be comfortable. He feels the wind buffeting his face, but it's neither warm nor cold. His senses are practically those of a corpse. Like a dead man in some sort of purgatory, Walker

SHORT STORIES

watches the world spin around him. Bodies parade in front of his eyes, but his eyes only detect blurs of red, and blue, that fade faster and faster as he settles in his stupor.

The sun has completely sunk beneath West 42nd. The only signs of its existence are bleeding rays of light reflected in a distant sky as asters of decaying light envelope the few clouds visible between the black buildings. Walker's attention remains focused on Tiny's inadequate shoes. In fact, he's been staring at the amount of flesh spilling over the side of her dirty canvas shoes. He's unable to recall his destination. Sitting on a park bench with a whale-of-a-woman seems the right thing to do at the time. Perhaps it is his destiny.

Walker lifts his head slowly shifting his gaze to Tiny's barely discernible eyes inside the slits of fat. With a deep sigh he lets his chin collapse onto his chest. Then finally, he's able to focus his blurry eyes on the woman's face. Walker's head weighs a ton on his shoulders.

"What's your name, then?" Walker blurts out like he had just noticed Tiny sitting next to him. His eyelids blink in slow motion fighting gravity with each move. The whites of his glassy eyes are red as the distant sky. "I'm a writer, you know," he lets out. "I've got Literature," he says, talking as if he were at a revival meeting. "There are few men of letters anymore, you see, and I'm one of the few remaining men of letters." His words are glued together one on top of the other. "There's just a few men like me left, you know—what they call the intelligentsia, mind you. Intelligentsia," he repeats condescendingly. "Those of us who care about language and the mysteries of literature, am talking no trashy novels, or romance paperbacks that people read in the subways, no ma'am, that's not what am talking about, I mean the good word..."

"Good Word my ass, you blasphemur," Tiny erupts, interrupting Walker's rant. Her voice speeds past Walker like an out-of-service train rushing through stations, escaping Central Station ignoring man and woman alike.

The blubber from beneath Tiny's right arm jiggles back and forth as she lifts and slides it purposely inside the opening of her large blouse. Skillfully she undoes two buttons of the mangy blouse with her chubby fingers, then roots inside her large bosom slowly, and pulls a black book the size of a small paperback with gold stamped letters on the cover spelling out 'Holy Bible.' "Here's Da Word," she shouts shaking the sacred book in front of Walker's face. Walker had been staring at the machinations of the giant being, his eyes squeezing out of their sockets like a fish's on the butcher's table. Tiny sets the Chivas bottle down, holds the Bible and starts thumping on its cover with her chubby palm, causing her entire body to jiggle like a giant bowl of Jell-O. She holds the Book up high and starts to belt out a Hymn.

The light that shines in darkest night comes from the cross of Jaysus Chraiss em no eye has seen no ear had heard save Jaysus Chraiss the Father's Word So come, one and all bow...bow...bow...bow, before the Lamb of God...

A small contingency of onlookers had formed in front of the odd couple. Two young males wearing matching undershirts, crooked baseball caps, and pants large enough to fit a cow inside them lingered on after the others left. Both spoke the language of

the urban youth. Their upper body, arms and neck, covered with tattoos of glyphs and dragons.

"Nice girlfriend muddafuckah," said the younger one mockingly to Walker.

Shorty Walker was sitting next to Tiny with one of his skinny legs crossed over the other trying to squeeze into the small space left in the bench between him and Tiny's giant body. His white patent leather loafers reflected the light from one of the nearby lamp posts, its light cut a semi-circular space from the ragged shadows.

"Betcha she can squeeze your whole damn body up her asshole," the darker of the two blurted as his body swayed from side to side, his right arm sliding down his pants down to his crotch. He gestured rhythmically with his tattooed fingers while he bit his lower lip with teeth adorned with a gold cap tooth.

"Maricon," shouted the young one, nearly touching the ground with one his knees as he moved closer to where Tiny and Walker sat frozen.

Instinctively, Shorty Walker felt the need to confront the strangers. It was his manly duty to defend his honor. The hard ground met the sole of his white patent leather loafer as he uncrossed his legs. The thin skin on both his hands stretched, as his fingers slowly shrank inwards. The veins crisscrossing his face bulged like the full net of a fisherman's catch. He felt a fire burning inside his chest. He drew a deep breath into his lungs to lunge at the mocking strangers. His strength came straight from the bottle of Chivas Rigal. Just as his weak leg muscles pushed his body upwards, a powerful arm overtook him and jerked his body down into a sudden darkness.

Tiny grabbed Walker by the neck and buried his head, and nearly his entire body into the folds of her giant belly. The scent of human sweat went up Walker's nostrils nearly suffocating him. He tried to get from under the tremendous force that pinned him down, but all efforts were in vain. From time to time the sound of taunts and insults from the hoodlums penetrated the constricting folds of the woman's blubbery abdomen and reached Walker's ears. Walker felt the heat of anger in his chest, but could not free himself to act upon it. Tiny, with the strength of a minotaur, had Walker pinned against her belly and would not let him go.

The last thing Walker remembered was a muffled blast, the familiar smell of fireworks, and the warmth of a slow-flowing liquid trickling down his face. The pressure bearing down on him had subsided. He rose up quickly and felt around his head, his face, his neck, his chest, his arms. He was fine. His hands, however, were stained with purple liquid that stuck to everything he touched. A bolt of lightning hit his brain when he saw Tiny's head, a blubbery ball spewing blood into the folds of her neck, flowing like a melting candle.

THE FIVE DOLLAR BILLS

by daniel cashmar

Nathan, a portly young man, was relaxing in a recliner watching television when his cat, feeling only contempt, knocked a vase off the fireplace. Electricity rushed through Nathan’s blubber, powering his muscles and he dashed across the room, diving toward the oddly slow falling vase. In fact, everything seemed to be moving slowly—including his miserable orange cat. He caught the vase and was incredibly out of breath. Time caught up and he stood to find he burned through his jeans from the furious friction of his meaty legs rubbing together. The cat looked at Nathan, hatred pouring from its eyes. Five minutes passed and he realized he had the power of super speed.

“This is it,” he said to the vase, as cats are less likely to respond than inanimate objects. “I’m going to be a superhero!”

The next day came and Nathan put fliers around his town, calling for all local superheroes to try out for his team. He set up a table on his front lawn and sat behind it. Within minutes, he had a line in front of him that could have possibly included everyone in town. A considerably frail man with ridiculously large triceps approached Nathan.

“What’s your super power?” Nathan asked him.

“I have super strong triceps,” the stranger told him.

“Is that a super power or are they the only muscles you work out?”

“Both.”

“You’re in. What’s your name?”

“Ashley.”

“Why is that your name?”

“I’m sorry.”

Many people were rejected by Nathan and Ashley for their team.

One person asked, “Why don’t you just join the Police Academy? Then you’d be able to fight crime legally.”

“Why don’t you just shut up!” Nathan and Ashley both yelled.

A man in a wheelchair was then pushed forward to the table by a younger man.

“What’s your super power?” Nathan asked him.

“I can never die,” the old man told them. “Show them, son.”

His son produced a gun from his coat pocket and shot his father in the face, immediately killing him. An ambulance escorted them off the premise.

Next to approach their table was a girl who was completely average looking in every way.

“What’s your super power?” Ashley asked, while Nathan cursed him from under his breath for stealing his line.

“I can grow my nails super long and they become super sharp, but I have to cut them after because they don’t retract,” she told them.

“Can you show us?” Nathan asked her.

The girl’s finger nails grew super long, about 11 inches, and her toe nails ripped through her shoes, which apparently upset her as she started crying. In her fit, she slashed a nearby bush and perfectly trimmed it.

“You’re on the team,” Nathan said. “What’s your name?”

“Ashley,” she told them.

“WHY WOULD YOU DO THIS TO ME?!” Nathan screamed at her.

She took the seat next to Ashley and an old woman walked up to them.

“What’s your super power?” Nathan asked, as per the usual.

“I bake delicious cookies,” she told him.

“You’re in.”

She slowly hobbled over to the chair next to the female Ashley and her motion to sit was so painstakingly slow and inaccurate that sweat began to pour down Nathan’s face as he nervously watched. The chair was not even beneath her. No, what are you doing, no, why, the chair is right there, stop it, stop it, turn around, the chair, no, oh my god, he thought to himself. The female Ashley pushed the chair with her large fingernails so that whenever the old woman finished sitting, she would land on the chair.

“We only have room for one more hero,” Nathan told the others. “Though, this is entirely based on the fact that I only have one seat left.”

A pretty tall, thin man walked up to them, after a few rejections of others, and announced his super power of invisibility.

“But...” Nathan said, expecting a catch.

“But, I’m blind when I’m invisible,” the thin man said.

He was most certainly invisible after speaking, if you chose to not look at his clothes.

“Congratulations! You’re the final member,” Nathan said. “What’s your name? If it’s Ashley, you can go fuck right off.”

“It’s Tim,” the man, who was thankfully not named Ashley, said.

They all agreed to meet later that night in Nathan’s basement to discuss costumes and a superhero team name. Tim, Ashley 1, and Ashley 2 showed up but there was no sign of the old lady.

“Maybe it’s passed her bed time,” Tim suggested.

“Hey, show us your super power,” the male Ashley said to Nathan.

“Okay, so we’ll go on without the old lady for now. Prepare yourselves,” Nathan said quite confidently.

Nathan took a runner’s stance, dashed forward toward Ashley 1, but stopped short of him, panting violently and wiping his brow of sweat. Ashley 1 was taken aback by Nathan appearing in front of him as if he teleported and the three watching clapped awkwardly and off-beat. Nathan’s pants were now torn to shreds and he took them off, conducting the rest of the meeting in his tighty-whities.



photo by nick batson

“So, the first order of business is to decide on a leader so that when we’re fighting crime, we won’t get confused. Naturally, I should be the leader,” Nathan declared.

“No, I’m the only girl, so I should be!” Ashley 2 said enthusiastically.

“Yeah, but I’m the tallest,” Tim said quite convincingly.

“I’m the strongest though,” Ashley 1 added.

“How about whoever thinks of the best team name gets to be leader?” Nathan proposed.

“The Justice League,” Ashley 2 said.

“That’s taken,” Nathan informed her.

“The Brady Bunch,” Tim said.

“So is that!”

“The Pittsburgh Pirates,” Ashley 1 said.

“What? No! That’s a baseball team. How about... the...,”

Nathan took out his wallet, pulled out a five dollar bill and held it out. “How about the Five Dollar Bills?”

Everyone agreed that was a fantastic name for a band of superheroes and Nathan became the leader. Next on their brief agenda was to decide on costumes.

“Our costumes should depend on what time we fight crime,” Ashley 2 said.

“What do you mean?” Nathan asked.

“If we fight at night, we should wear dark clothing.”

“But everyone’s asleep at night,” Ashley 1 rebutted.

“Yeah, why would crime be a problem at night?” Tim asked.

“Wait, she’s right!” Nathan exclaimed, “That’s exactly when crime happens! Sleeping people are much easier to... crime... than awake people.”

“Exactly,” Ashley 2 continued. “So we should wear really dark clothes.”

“And ski masks!” Tim yelled.

“Yeah, we don’t want to get identified as heroes on a daily basis. It could threaten the lives of our families,” Nathan said. “But, I think I need to not wear pants because I really don’t have the money to buy a new pair each time.”

“Wait, what if criminals wear the same clothes as us? We need to be able to distinguish ourselves from them,” Ashley 1 said.

“Pink headbands,” Tim quickly replied.

They all agreed on their costumes and met in Nathan’s basement the next night wearing dark clothing, ski masks, and pink headbands. Nathan was sporting black boxers this time to keep his crotch area within the dress code while still maintaining his sans pants budget. They decided that the old lady probably died, because no one would forget to go to superhero meetings, and hopped into Tim’s white van. While patrolling the town that night, they discovered they lived in a rather pleasant neighborhood. Many houses were adorned with shrubbery, trees, and other images of American suburbia. Suddenly, a man with calculators taped to his arms, a cape cut into the shape of a plus sign, and eccentrically colored clothing jumped out in front of the van as they pulled into a parking lot outside of an electronics store. Tim parked the van, avoiding the man, and they all got out to see the man who almost

killed himself.

“So, we meet again, ZEROES,” he said to them.

“You almost killed yourself,” Nathan said.

“Again? Who are you?” Ashley 2 asked.

“Ha! I’m the...Mathemortician!” The odd fellow said, smirking to himself. “And I’m,” He paused to push keys on his calculators, “calculating your defeat!”

They stood in silence, looking back and forth from him to each other.

“Time for me to,” the Mathemortician continued, “integrate my fists with your faces!”

Ashley 1 punched the Mathemortician in the gut and sent him crashing into trashcans 20 feet away. A cop car had just driven by slowly and put it’s sirens on.

“Shit, run!” Nathan yelled.

They hopped into Tim’s van and sped off at about 10 miles per hour over the speed limit. In the van, they all decided the night was a success after all and that they’d meet a few nights later because they wanted to study for classes or actually work some hours to pay bills. The night came when they went patrolling for crime and they parked in a shopping mall’s parking lot. Walking from store to store and peering inside through the eyeholes in their ski masks, they saw no criminal activity. From behind, a voice yelled at them.

“Hey EGGHEADS!”

They turned and it was a man wearing a chicken costume that you could buy from a cheap Halloween store.

“I just flew in and boy are my arms tired,” the chicken man said.

“Aren’t you the guy from the other night?” Nathan asked.

“Uh, no,” the man stuttered. “Time for me to beak the shit out of you!”

There was an awkward silence once again and Tim turned invisible. His entire body was covered in clothing so no one was aware of his invisibility. Ashley 2’s nails grew and she stabbed the chicken man in the chest.

“Not again,” he cried.

He fell to the ground, convulsing and they called for an ambulance from the van. Tim drove them away and they retreated to Nathan’s basement once again. Nathan’s mother opened the door.

“Nathan, honey, are you okay?” she asked.

“MOM, OH MY GOD, SHUT THE DOOR. LEAVE ME ALONE,” he screamed while Ashley 1 admired his own triceps.

“Okay, dear, I love you,” she said as she closed the basement door.

“Alright, everyone, that was close. We may have murdered someone. Let’s, um, not stab people from now on,” Nathan said, mostly to Ashley 2, who was currently washing blood from her ridiculous nails.

They settled for the night and met next week in Nathan’s basement once again. Tim was fumbling around in front of them.

“Someone else has to drive tonight,” he told them. “I had a ton of alcohol.”

“Really? How much did you drink?” Ashley 1 asked.

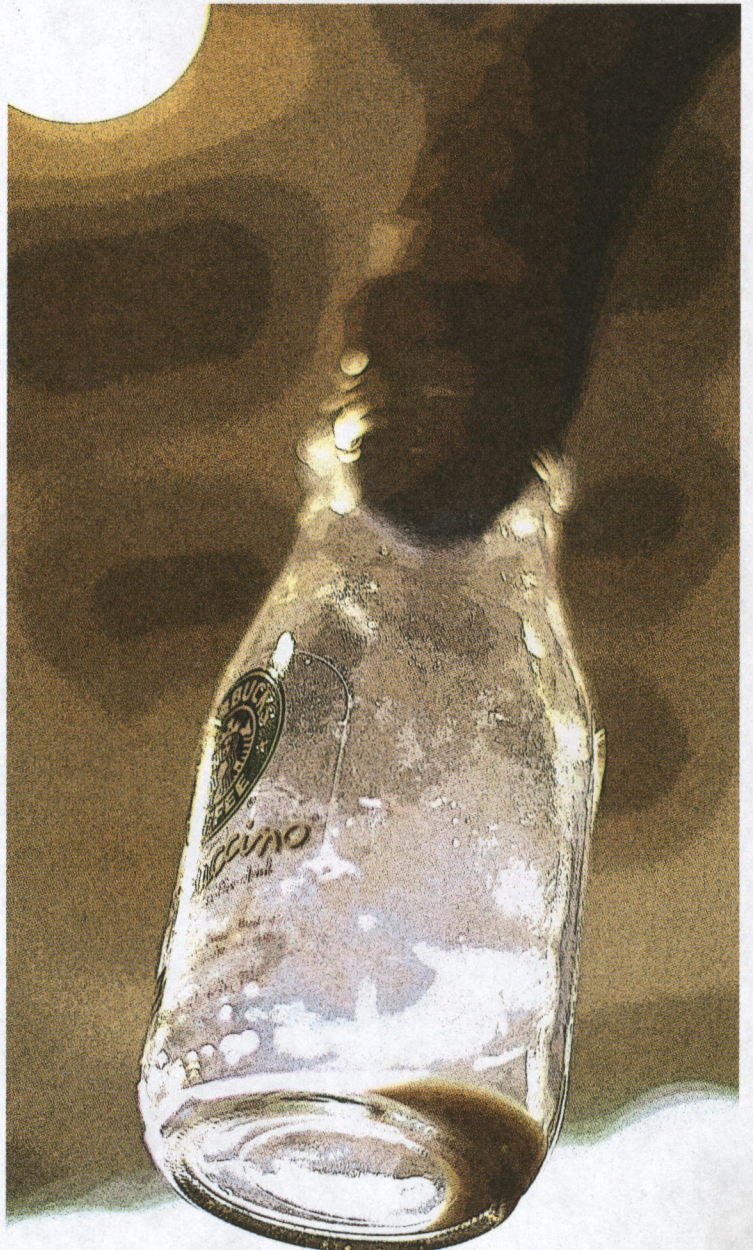
“I had two beer-battered fish cutlets tonight.”

“I’ll drive!” Ashley 2 exclaimed to which everyone laughed hysterically.

Wiping tears from his eyes, Nathan said, “Yeah but seriously, I’ll drive.”

Nathan drove them around town, looking for trouble once again when they came across an actual robbery for once. A few thugs dressed in dark clothing and ski masks had broken into the local liquor store and were emptying the cash register along with stealing some fine French wines. They seemed to be doing the store a favor,

photo by tom johnson





by carlene gonzalez

however, by trashing all of the tequila. Nathan parked the van and they did the awkward walk-crouch that people do when they're attempting to be stealthy. Entering the liquor store, the thugs stopped instantly to look at the heroes who were dressed in their dark clothing, ski masks, and pink headbands. The one searching the cash register withdrew a gun from his pocket and fired at Ashley 2. Ashley 1 dove in the way and the bullet ricocheted off of one of his massive triceps and killed one of the thugs breaking bottles of tequila. Ashley 2 and Ashley 1 looked at each other, overcome by their emotions. They removed their masks, while everyone else watched, and held each other close. Nathan and Tim started to hoot and holler, cheering them on. The Ashleys stuck their tongues straight out and the cheering turned to jeers of disgust and confusion. The tongues slapped each other and would have continued prodding each other had the thugs not fired more bullets.

"Hey, whoa, whoa, whoa!" Nathan yelled, waving his hands,

THE QUESTION by artur lashiker

The wide-eyed boy wanders through the zoo staring at all the animals around him. Amazed by the different types of life that inhabit this planet. Holding the vain human belief in his mind that he is somehow better than these animals, above them. That sad belief that we are all, as a "complex society," far superior to these crude beasts.

But what makes us better than them? What all-powerful characteristic makes us more than a bear or a snake? Is it our ability to communicate and work together? Don't wolves already do this? Do they not run in packs and communicate each other to coordinate where the prey is? Is it our ability to create things hundreds of times our size? Doesn't a spider already do this? Does it not create magnificent webs many times it's own size? Is it thumbs?

So what makes us better than them?

The so-called choice that we preach what we possess. Do we really have it? Are we truly the masters of our own destinies? Are we as intellectually advanced as we think we are?

The boy continues on through the throngs of people.

Alone.

He makes his way to the wolf exhibit and looks out. Why are they so different from us?

The reality is they aren't. Like the wolves, humans are trapped in a cage. They walk, pacing along the edge of it. Constantly looking for a way out. A way into a more glorious world out there, a path to freedom, a path to what lies beyond. Unfortunately after a long time, people forget what they are looking for. Forget what the outside looks like. What it smells like. What it tastes like. They forget the feeling of freedom. And so they continue, pacing along the edge of their cage out of sheer habit. It is a cage of their own humanity; a cage of their own inadequacy. A cage of broken promises and fruitless dreams. A cage made by the very thing that

"I'm just as disgusted as the next person by this horrible make-out session but there's no reason to fire your guns!"

At that moment, the police had arrived on the scene and put their spotlights onto the liquor store.

"Drop your weapons," the police commanded through their megaphone.

The thugs pointed their guns at the police and started firing. The police returned fire and killed everyone, except Tim, who had stripped naked during the chaos and turned invisible. He snuck into his van and started to drive away. The police officers opened fire on his van and it exploded unrealistically, like in any action movie. The end.

we think raises us above these "beasts." A cage of civilization.

The boy is too young to understand the significance of what he sees, but someday he will. Some day he will look upon his own world and realize that something is wrong.

But meanwhile he looks into the wolf cage. They look back. They know the truth of it.

He continues on through the zoo looking through the crowds. Alone.

There walks a man, an arm lovingly embracing his beautiful wife, smiling and laughing with his kids. He is dressed in pristine neatness. Trotting along being an ideal father, husband, man. But this is just one face of this individual, one side. If the wife knew he was cavorting with his secretary at work on a nearly constant basis, and that he just fired a man who was feeding his family on the pay check he earned there just to give said secretary a raise, then what would he be? Which is the real face though? Does it matter? Can he really be a good father, husband, and man, but be evil on another side?

People live different lives as different people. A kind loving man at home, an adulterating swine in his work life. Everyone has different sides to him or her. Different stories. Different lives. Some more than others. But that's only because we are so superior. So much better than the common beast.

The boy still understands nothing of what he sees. After all, he is far too young to understand the complexities and choices of an adult life. He is too small to comprehend what he witnesses on a constant basis. So he merely trudges on, seeking to remedy his most pressing issue at the moment: the one thing that is haunting his mind, enveloping his thoughts.

He is alone, so very alone.

NOT COOL ENOUGH FOR PUNK

by andy polhamus

It could be the story of a band, or maybe the story of an adolescent lifestyle. But for me, it's the story of how I grew up. I was in the eighth grade, and I had started talking to Chris Froberg about ska. It wasn't cool music by any means, and hadn't been for a long time. Ska, a genre that started life as an offshoot of reggae and eventually morphed into a blend of punk and horn-driven pop, had enjoyed some popularity as a fad in the late 1990s and early 2000s. But by the time I began listening in 2004, the wave was over and ska was something "serious" music fans wouldn't even talk about.

But Chris and I weren't serious music fans. We were two unpopular kids in junior high. We'd gone to school together and played on the same Little League team, but he'd lived across town with the kids who wore Nikes and got their clothes from the mall. My parents, a public librarian and a customer service representative at a mortgage company, bought my clothes at Kmart.

Everything changed when Chris's dad walked out. After a few years of struggling to support two boys on a single income, his mom had to sell their house. She moved Chris and his older brother to my neighborhood on the working class side of town, but only after a year of saving up for a new place while they lived with some family friends. One day we ran into each other and the friendship picked up as if it had been there all along, paused and waiting to be played again.

When we began hanging out, both of us had been listening to ska for a year or two. I'd picked it up from hearing a couple singles my older sister had brought home and from a few songs my friends had downloaded. Chris, who grew up with ready access to his brother's extensive collection of punk and ska albums from the '90s, had been more informed than me by the time he hit sixth grade. The first few months of our friendship amounted to little more than a tutorial in which Chris taught me all about the subculture we were too young to join.

But there was more to it than ska. We talked about school and all the kids we hated. We talked about the girls who never looked our way and the books and movies that shaped our personalities one quote at a time. We talked about the things we loved and the things that our other friends couldn't possibly understand. And in the meantime, there were the shows: Catch 22 was the first, then Mustard Plug, then Streetlight Manifesto and Reel Big Fish. When our tastes developed more, we reached further back into the genre: The Skatalites one night, The English Beat another. God only knows it wasn't very cool, but it was ours all the same.

Ska became an even bigger part of my life when I was 15. My school's battle of the bands was coming up in the spring, and my friends and I decided to write a few songs to compete. We had spent every weekend of the last two years taking turns coercing our parents into driving us across the river to Philadelphia to see whatever band was playing, and were eager to try our hand

at playing the genre we loved. Since Chris couldn't play an instrument, he couldn't be in the band. Instead, he started a punk band, teaching himself to play the guitar as he went along.

Meanwhile, my own band, whose name was too stupid to mention even as I write these words, had started writing songs. I played the trumpet, and when the kid we asked to be our vocalist turned out to be better at guitar than singing, I had to take over vocal duties, despite the fact that I hadn't sung since choir in the fourth grade. My friend Erik played the alto saxophone, and the rest of the lineup was recruited from the school marching band. While we worked out key signatures and tempo changes, our classmates laughed. They had never heard of ska, and couldn't understand what kind of rock band a bunch of band geeks could possibly start. "I just don't really listen to that kind of music," one of the popular girls told me. When I asked what kind of music she thought we played, she shrugged and walked away.

Our first show was a sweet 16 party. Since we didn't own any equipment besides our instruments and guitar amps, I had to stand behind the pool table in the basement and sing through a karaoke machine. We played four songs—our entire catalog—and drove home talking about "the future" and "the next level," whatever those might have been. A few weeks later, we came in last in the battle of the bands. But we had already achieved the impossible. We had started a band, and it had stuck.

The next four years went by faster than you can strike an out-of-tune C chord before an audience of seventh graders. My band garnered attention from local kids and soon we were getting invited to play all over the region. We must have played every coffee shop in South Jersey. A promoter in Philadelphia noticed us, and we opened for a few touring acts—nobody famous, but a handful who were big enough to bring out a hundred or so high school kids to an all-ages club on a Friday night.

When I was fresh out of my freshman year of college, we tried booking our own tour. After I had secured five performances, the whole thing fell apart when our guitarist's mom wouldn't let him travel unsupervised. I was furious. It had always been obvious that the other kids' parents didn't trust me. They never let their sons drive with me alone, and apparently there was a nasty little rumor that I was not only gay, but on drugs. Not only were both of these rumors untrue (let alone totally irrelevant to my relationship with my band mates), but the circumstances of the week-long tour—our youngest member was 18, we were only going to four states, and none of the shows would be held more than four or five hours away—made their reservations even more ridiculous. We limped along, playing sporadically for another year before I announced our breakup at a show in our hometown in July 2010. The next day I canceled all of our remaining shows—maybe half a dozen in all.

The following January, we got together for one last show in Philly. We were the openers, and only 20 people were there to

see us play (the club had a policy that bands under 21 had to go on before seven). One of our horn players never showed up, and another only came because he was owed his share of the money we had made from playing and selling our self-released CD. Five years of our lives and hundreds of miles of driving had earned us a little less than \$200 each. Afterwards, we gave what was left of our merchandise away to the crowd as they walked out the door. I was 20 now, and with the exception of performing my own songs, I hadn't listened to ska in years. I split the remainder of my winter break between spending time with my girlfriend and getting back in touch with Chris Froberg. When I sat down to write this, I sent him a note and promised to give him a copy.

A few months later, I was listening to a college radio station when I heard a song by a band we had played with a year or so before. I was in the passenger seat of my girlfriend's car at the time, heading south on Route 42, the same highway that bridged the gap between Philadelphia and my old hometown.

The frequency was weak, and the song was barely audible. With an old involuntary response that required me to prick my

ears up at any trace of ska on the radio, I cranked up the volume.

I didn't speak to most of my old band mates anymore, and I hadn't played the trumpet in months. But for two more minutes, I remembered the feeling I used to have when listening to and playing some of the dorkiest music imaginable. The crushing chords and blaring horns swirled around me; made me fourteen years old again. The song reached its climax and passed the bridge, the drums pushing the melody forward to its very last seconds. Right before it ended, we left the station's broadcast range. The song played on, fading quickly now, until there was only static.



“We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.” –“The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” HUGHES

THE CLOSEST YOU CAN GET TO AN ALMOST PERFECT WRECK

by liz kaempf

Jessie! Jessie-girl! Open up, c'mon!" She heard this wake-up call from the outside of her motel room. She watched paint chips crack and fall from the door as it was knocked upon. She lumbered out of bed and towards the source of the sound. She rubbed her eyes with one hand and unlocked the door with the other. Pushin' her hand back from her face and into her hair, she looked up through half-closed eyes at her visitor.

"What the hell, Darla?"

"What the hell, what? I'm home. Why you lookin' at me like that?" she asked slowly pushin' past the girl standin' between her and the room.

"Why don't you come back later in the day so I can sleep longer before you crash back in here?"

"I always come right home after goin' out."

"You've been out since 5 'o' clock yesterday."

"Right."

Darla stripped off her clothes and helped herself to the cleansin' hot water of the shower. The girl called Jessie shook her head and returned to her restin' place on the bed. Every day she hated Darla more. Her attitude. Her walk. Her smell. She always reeked of booze and smoke and sex. It choked her up, when Darla would come back "home." She thought about ditchin' her, droppin' her off at some bar somewhere and just drivin' away. But Darla was dependent, and had a few loose screws in her head. She found her wherever she went. Like a dog trackin' down its master. Jessie resigned to say in bed while Darla was in the shower.

Darla. Who used to be young and polite and unaffected; who found out about the men in this world through force and pain and time.

She closed her eyes to remember a time before Darla. There was blues music. Nothing else. Darla took over her world.

The girl laid an arm over her eyes and tried to focus on the notes of a guitar to put her back to sleep. When she woke up Darla was nestled next to her. She was clean and quiet. She smelled like fresh laundry. It was the first time she ever thought Darla was pretty. No cigarettes, no lipstick, no knives. Just a girl, a sleeping child.

Jessie gingerly rose from the bed, walked to the bathroom, and let cool water from the sink pool in her hands so she could sip from it. She let the faucet pour out over and through her fingers. She didn't notice Darla come up behind her in the mirror, not until she wrapped her arms around her waist and pressed her cheek against the other girl's shoulder. She kept quiet for a while she held her body against that of her companion.

"Can we go out tonight?" she asked quietly lookin' in the mirror.

"You can do whatever you want."

"No," Darla said, "I want you to come with me. Like old times."

"There are no old times."

"Sure there are. We had fun not so long ago. Please, Jessie-girl?"

Jessie tried to remember what Darla was talkin' about and came up blank. She has no good memories with Darla. No memories at all.

"Yeah. We had fun," she lied. "Where are we goin' tonight then?"

"Yes!" Darla chirped. "I know a bar. It'll be fun." She kissed Jessie on the cheek and hopped away leavin' the other girl to wonder what "fun" was.

The girl called Jessie always drove; never let anyone else touch her baby, her Firebird. She barely liked having anyone in the car with her. Darla directed her one town over to a little dive bar called The Rat Trap.

Of course, there were only men there until they walked in. Darla had a way of pickin' out the places that will make her a minority. They sat at the bar with eyes stabbin' holes into their backs, their legs, their breasts.

Jessie took her regular tequila while Darla ordered a beer, "barkeeper's choice," she had said. She took a sip from the bottle and abandoned her companion. She swaggered over to a few men at a pool table and chatted them up, leavin' the other girl at the bar with her tequila. She spoke politely with the bartender and an older gentleman to her right with a cowboy hat sittin' on top of his grayin' head. They talked about cars and the North. All the while Jessie kept one eye on Darla, who eventually separated one of the men from the pack. He was tall and heavy with beer in his middle. He was easy prey, and they walked into the bathroom together. No shame. No privacy. No hidin'.

The girl tried her best to ignore it while drinkin' her second tequila and listenin' to the gentleman with the cowboy hat talk about his deceased wife. She was beautiful, apparently, with the same long brown hair as Jessie. But Maribelle had blue eyes, "like a sky after a storm," he had said. He spoke about her while peerin' into his pint glass. He wasn't over her loss. It was six years ago, but he said he could still smell her lavender perfume in the house whenever he got home. Jessie never smelled flowers when she got home.

She was only half-listenin' to the man. His name was George. He was born in Kentucky. When he ordered his fifth beer she realized how long Darla had been gone for. She excused herself from the bartender and George, who tipped his hat in courtesy. She walked towards the bathroom with apprehension. *Why does she fuck guys that are so average?*

She was outside the door and could hear a voice. “Do you like that? Huh? Do you like that, baby?” she heard Darla askin’ the man. He responded in grunts, moans, and *huhns*. S’pose he likes it.

“Darla, time’s up,” Jessie called, rappin’ on the door of the bathroom.

“Alright, mama!” was the response she got. Less than a minute after that and Darla crept through the door out to the girl. She was shovin’ somethin’ into her back pocket. “What?” she asked steppin’ past the girl. She licked her lips and pushed out her chest as she walked away.

Jessie shook her head. *Why does Darla always make me wanna kill someone?* She followed the girl towards the door. Darla skipped out to the car. Jessie returned to the bar and polished off her drink. She left too much money for the barkeeper and gave George a kiss on the cheek. “Cheer up, sugar. You a good man, and Maribelle was lucky to have you for the time she got.” She smiled, grabbed her leather jacket off the back of the bar stool and followed the path Darla had created.

They drove off before one of the pool players saw the blood seepin’ out from under the bathroom door; before the bathroom was opened to find the man with the heavy middle stabbed to death in his stomach, his heart, his crotch.

Darla seemed pleased with herself as she lit a cigarette in Jessie’s car. “Outta the window, D,” she reminded with a sideways glance, and Darla obeyed. The last thing she wants is to piss Jessie off. She’ll clean the blood from her knife after the girl with the leather jacket falls asleep.

The next time Jessie woke up, Darla was gone. She didn’t bother tryna figure out where she could have run off too. Probably another bar, another man. It didn’t concern her and she didn’t care, as long as the car was still here. She tossed her legs over the side of the bed and slowly made her way to the window. Her baby sat in the sun exactly where she left her.

She rubbed her knuckles into her eyes and turned to fall back into the bed. She paused halfway and looked back at the window. She raised an eyebrow. *I’ll fuckin’ kill you, Darla.*

In her underwear and a t-shirt the girl walked out across the dirt to the Firebird, noticin’ the front seat was pushed too far forward. She unlocked the driver’s side door without lookin’ down, she glanced around to see if anyone else was nearby. She bent over to look underneath the seat in that way that always elongated her legs and pushed her ass out. *Can’t kill you girl when you got my gun.* Darla had given her a reason to hunt her down now; a reason to end their relationship. Jessie was past tolerance. She would wait for the sun to go down, because the other girl would too.

Darla wasn’t hard to find. If she had something that didn’t belong to her she wouldn’t stray too far from “home.” She only needed to visit one bar, Oxhead’s, to find a napkin with a lipstick kiss from Darla’s thieving mouth. It had fallen to the floor beneath a bar stool and the girl hoped Darla hadn’t taken her next victim too far away.

“Bitch!”

The girl heard the curse before she got back into her car to leave. Trees and underbrush followed the stretch of highway the

bar was located off of. *In the woods? She never was a classy broad.*

Darla and whomever she was with were hardly quiet. Jessie saw her gun, and saw Darla beatin’ a man with it. Even in the dark she could see blood drops flying from his mouth to the grass underneath him. She didn’t move at first. Just kept watchin’ Darla. This girl, that used to be too quiet to the point when it was almost endearing, was laughin’ as she smashed the butt of a gun that was not her’s into the face of a guy that likely did nothin’ more than take Darla’s bait. She had led him here, coerced him, seduced him. And now she was punishin’ him for accepting sex.

The girl watched from a spot halfway between Darla and the highway. The expression on her face didn’t change. More than anythin’ she just wanted her gun back, and Darla’s gonna get blood caked in the barrel and the engraving on the grip. Jessie stood in her tall black boots and realized they were not rooted into the ground. She let out a deep breath and took off her jacket, one sleeve at a time. She looked at the ground and debated puttin’ it down.

Darla was screechin’. “What chu think, baby? You think I asked—for—this. You do, don’t cha? Think I’m a whore? Well screw you, fucker!”

Jessie placed her jacket on the earth by her feet and walked casually over to the assailant. “That’s enough, Darla,” she called out, not quite next to the attacker yet.

Darla looked up, surprised. She locked eyes with her companion and smiled. She licked some of the blood off her fingers. “No, it’s not.”

“Yes, it is. Now get away. C’mon! Get away!” Jessie commanded grabbin’ the other girl by at the elbow.

“Get off me!” Darla screamed.

“You’ve made your point,” the girl without her leather jacket responded. But Darla turned loose and struck at the girl with the stolen pistol, crackin’ her in the jaw. Jessie was stunned and in the confusion didn’t notice Darla come at her. She pushed her down and Jessie tumbled backwards to the ground. She felt rocks grind into her back and sticks scratch her skin.

“No, I haven’t,” Darla said maliciously.

She looked down at the man with a pityin’ look in her eyes. He was strugglin’ to breathe and to stay conscious. She stepped over him and lowered herself to a straddle over his hips. Darla leaned in and pressed her body against his. She whispered to him, “Do *you* think I’ve made my point?” while she stroked the side of his face with the gun. “Well? Do you?”

“Y-yes...yes,” he whimpered almost inaudibly as blood dribbled out of his mouth.

“No,” Darla said, her eyes flickerin’ from mania to resolved confidence, “not yet.” She lifted her chest off of his, cocked the gun, shoved the muzzle ‘gainst his temple, and pulled the trigger with a smile seepin’ through her lips.

Jessie, who came to stop Darla, watched the man’s blood leak out through the hole in his head. She was calm and unimpressed by the course of events. As she rose, the other girl matched her. When both women were on their feet Darla took a step forward and held the gun up, pointin’ it inbetween the eyes of the girl who tried to stop her.

SHORT STORIES

Jessie didn't blink, didn't budge. "I should kill you, Jessie-girl. This ain't had nothin' to do with you. You didn't need tuh be here."

"I told you once before," Jessie started, "if you're gonna put a gun to my head, you better damn well pull the trigger."

It was a standoff. Darla was a coward when it came to fightin' Jessie. She just wasn't the bitch you wanted to fuck with. She lowered the gun and laughed.

"C'mon, Jessie-girl. You know I would never hurt cha!" Darla made the motion to throw an arm around her friend's neck but then thought better of gettin' too close.

Jessie just walked away. She picked her leather jacket off the ground and headed toward her car. Darla followed suit not lookin' nearly as pleased with herself as she had a few minutes before. An hour's drive down the road Darla tried to strike up a conversation with the driver, resultin' in the car being pulled over.

"I gotta pee," Jessie said, gettin' out of the car.

Darla slipped her knife out of her back pocket and picked dirt and blood out from under her nails with it. Jessie walked to the passenger side of the car, grabbed Darla by her grimy black hair,

and dragged her out through the window. For the first time in days, she was the one screamin' in pain. Darla was thrown to the side of the highway and rolled through the dust after bein' kicked in the ribs. She coughed and spat onto the ground. No blood yet.

Jessie showed no emotion, no sign of hatred or disdain. All she wanted was to beat Darla's face in and down her throat. She wanted to knock her teeth out and watch her choke on them. She wanted to break her bones, rip her skin off, gouge her eyes out. Jessie wanted Darla to cry and plead and grovel for her to stop. She wanted Darla to beg for her life, like she made so many men beg. She was fucked up, and needed to be fucked up by someone else. By Jessie. By someone that did not fear her, or pander to her every whim. By someone that couldn't be seduced by tits and ass.

Jessie pulled Darla up by her hair and punched her square in the face. She did it again, and again, and again. She waited until she felt the warm slime of blood coat her knuckles. She threw Darla back to the ground and kicked her until she was sure a few ribs snapped. Even though the bloodied and battered girl heaved and struggled to merely raise her head, it didn't feel like enough to Jessie. She hadn't punished Darla enough for what she had done, but there was little else she could do without killin' the damaged girl writhin' on the side of the road.

She tried to shake the blood off her hand, but instead leaned over and wiped it off with Darla's shirt. There wasn't even pity in her eyes when the girl looked up at her punisher.

"Jessie-girl," she choked out, "you got me. I learned my lesson."

"No. You haven't."

Jessie walked back to the car realizin' she hadn't wiped all of Darla's blood off her hands. It was stuck in her fingernails and would probably be stuck there for days even with a few dozen showers. Darla was a disease.

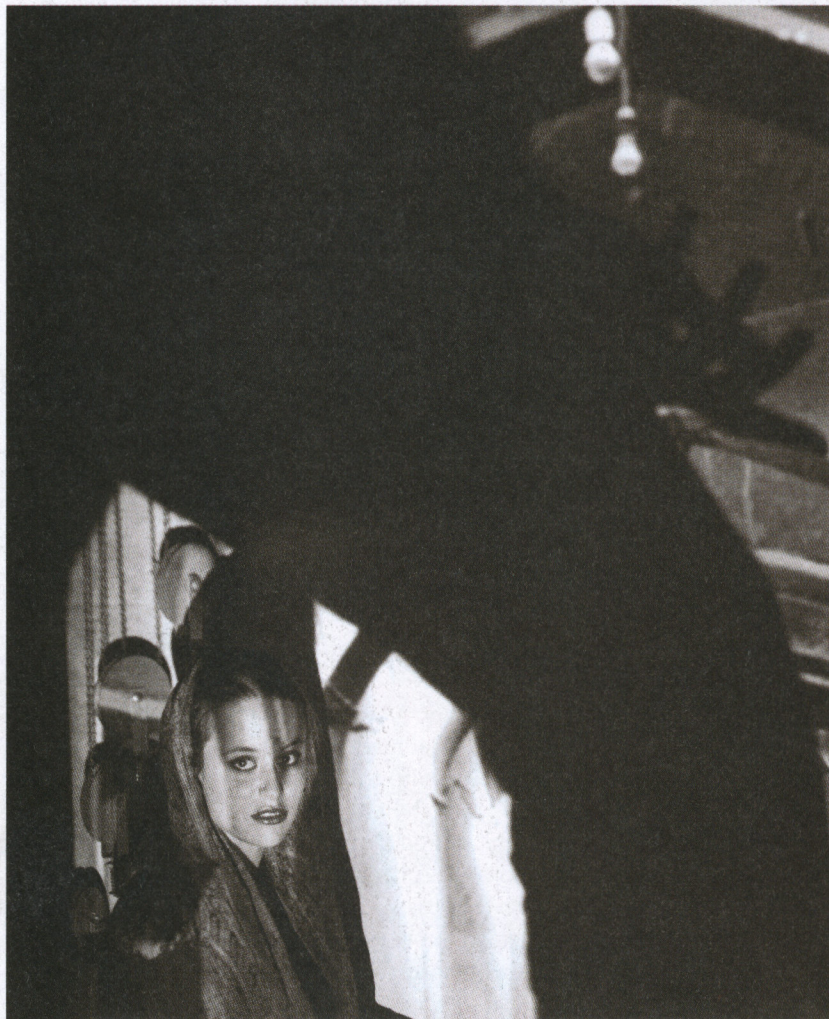
"Don't leave me here, Jess!" she yelled with blood sputterin' out in front of her face. Jessie closed the car door.

"C'mon, stop, please, girl, please!" Jessie started to drive.

"I'll just find you again. I always find you. You shoulda just killed me, bitch! Why don't cha just kill me already, huh? Jessie! Jessie!" Darla began to laugh, high-pitched and manic. Jessie could hear the echo of it for only a few seconds before it faded away into the emptiness of the night. She hoped she choked on her own blood. She wished coyotes would eat her flesh. She wanted her to crawl away and die.

She looked at her passenger seat and saw Darla's knife open on the leather. She could still see the red disease of Darla from killin' the man at The Rat Trap. She closed her hand over it and threw it out the open window. She was past tolerance, and past Darla.

photo by nader nouraee



HAIKU WARZ

Evan Goldaper
I like to tag him in posts.
The syllables fit.

You know, your mother
Also fits well in this space
Ridiculously

Haiku wars? Yay! Great!
Absolutely! But of course!
Can't say yes enough.

I'm of course talking
bout saying "that's what she said"
Remove minds > gutter

One in the Morning
Good time for frivolously
Haikuing and master—

Lunch planned with Andi
Just watched him ignore my call
Fucking typical

—ing debates. It sucks
when you run out of room
writing these Haikus.

Unbelievable
You're so unbelievable
Great song, EMF

The Lord Commander
Is the Harbinger of Doom
None shall stand my wrath

Jessie, if you were
In Veggieales you would be
The gourd commander

Unforgettable.
Unfortunately you are.
Another great song.

Like the brightest star,
all my opponents shall burn.
They gon' burn, all right.

I took a shower
a penny fell off my butt
change for domino's

You best get to class
You gonna fail all dat shyt
Wassim be mad, bro.

Bro Brah, I were in Dat
You know I be on thaatt
Bitches Be Trippin'

That's not a rap song
Rap cannot be written in
Haiku verse, motha fucka

Man, bitches trippin'
over syllables, I checked
da dictionary

As long as it's right
Translated in Japanese
He should be ok

Underestimate
Japanese language, you shan't.
For they will cut you.

Jessie...your haiku's...
I'mma let you finish, but
Beyonce's better

If you liked it, then
You should put a ring on it.
Put your hands up, oh.

"Hurgadurgahur
Durgadurgadurhurgen"
By Jasmine Haefner

Is he Robocop
Maybe he is just a bus
He says, "Drop it, creep."

If a tree falls in
Space and no one is around,
Does it make a sound?

Your own brand of farts
Always smell so good because
It's released pressure

I had a weird dream
Where I ate a beef taco
Shit, I am a veg

Are dream animals
Forbidden like real ones are?
I want to try roc.

I would be willing
to bet that dream animals
are much more tasty.

Things of course get weird
When you consider dream plants.
Can I eat mandrake?

Don't mandrake scream like
little babies? I think that
would be hella weird.

Imagine if it
screamed from your belly after?
Crazy shit there, son.

Did you ever say
I gotta blast a dookie?
I do all the time.

Thought I was being
rather artful to say the
least. But fuck all y'all.

HERGADURGAGU
RINGGA HINGA... Translation:
"Fuck you Dan fuck you"

I was under the
Impression that Danes don't talk
Like that. HURGADERG!

In America,
I hike hills. In Soviet
Russia, hill haiku

