



moss
on the
moon

Apr. 2009

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Produced by these wicked cool Champlain College students,
 Moss on the Moon brings awesome writing and great art together
 for you—on 100% recycled paper and at mossonthemoon.com

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So Here's the Deal:

Alli Neal

Here we are with the last issue of *Moss on the Moon* for the 2008-2009 school year. At 36 pages, this is our largest issue yet. On top of our usual writers and artists, we have ten great non-staff submissions. Even though we're not publishing again until the semester starts up again, we're always looking for content. Keep on submitting your writing and art to mossonthemoon.com/submit. We'll be putting an issue out early fall, and we're going to need pieces. Check the website over the summer for updates regarding deadlines and overall changes to the zine. That's right: cha-cha-cha changes. *Moss on the Moon* is growing up and getting too big for its little racecar bed. We don't have enough room in our itty-bitty half-sheet zine for all the wicked cool stuff we've been getting, so we're going to be joining the big leagues. Over the summer, we'll be giving it a complete overhaul. If any of you fabulous readers have suggestions—what you'd like to see more of, less of, or completely different—email them to editorialmaven@mossonthemoon.com.

Another option for giving us feedback is to come to the Short Works Slam *Moss on the Moon* is hosting on Thursday, April 16th. We're taking over the Fireside Lounge, hangin' out and reading from 8 to 10 PM. Come chill with us! Bring something you've written or just sit back and listen to others read their pieces. We'll take anything: poetry, fiction, non-fiction, whatever! It'll be about two hours of slammin' short works from some slammin' writers. Meet the people behind the scenes of *Moss on the Moon* (well, not everyone involved—I can't get the printing guys up here). Tell me what you think about the zine, no holds barred.

And, yes, there will be free food.

Casting Call: I will need a Marketing student for *Moss on the Moon*. Those interested can email me at editorialmaven@mossonthemoon.com.



chill with us at a
**short works
slam**

poetry, fiction,
non-fiction, whatever!

thursday
april 16
8-10 pm
fireside lounge

free food!

Don't Fear the Reefer

Allison Bernhard

In Burlington, VT, a city packed with college students, hippies, and a random mix in between, the seemingly age-old question is back in style: marijuana... do you wanna?

We've all heard the so-called benefits of decriminalizing, but they're real—especially in today's economy. Decriminalizing marijuana would allow for a decrease in the Vermont prison population, a declination in marijuana arrests and related "criminal" activity, an increase in spending money that would help support education and mend weather damages, and millions of dollars to be put to good use throughout the entire country. Besides, many of the myths about marijuana that are assumed by the uninformed public have been proven wrong, providing all the more reason for it to be accepted.

David Zuckerman, a Progressive member of the Vermont State House of Representatives, thinks that "There is no reason an otherwise responsible adult should face the life-altering consequences of a criminal arrest for what amounts to a minor indiscretion." In the year 2007 alone, 1,800 Vermonters were arrested for small-time marijuana possession. Is it really worth sending harmless citizens to jail over an ounce or so of grass? Imprisoning people who have a minimal amount of marijuana is a waste of time, money, and space. Shouldn't Vermont Police Forces be chasing down actual criminals who prove to be dangerous? As Ken Freer, a Morrisville, VT resident and contributor to the *Burlington Free Press's* "My Turn," said, "The point is that we need to reconsider our law enforcement stance on marijuana as part of any larger study that we appear poised to do on the ever-increasing Vermont prison population."

Between putting people in jail for marijuana related crimes and annual criminal justice costs directly dealing with marijuana issues, taxpayers are spending \$9 billion a year on trivial expenditures. *Nine billion dollars.* Decriminalizing marijuana would help steer taxpayers' money toward more important and relevant issues such as education and, especially essential in Vermont, weather related damages. From elementary school to higher education, Burlington greatly values learning. David Finney, President of Champlain College, says that "Students graduating from Champlain must understand how the world of today came to be... but they must also be equipped to dream of a better world." This attitude is not only prominent in Burlington's colleges, but throughout the entire schooling community. With the tax money saved by decriminalizing marijuana, schools

everywhere around the state would have the chance to be benefited, creating hope for the future of Vermont.

As far as weather damages go, it is widely known that Burlington has had its fair share. Cracked roads, icy sidewalks, and snowy highways persistently appear in the surrounding areas. Although the government claims to maintain winter-worn problem spots, the public can clearly see that its focus is elsewhere. If concerns with the weather were as high as those with marijuana, Burlington would always be in tip-top shape. Depressingly enough, marijuana crime seems to have taken over substantial issues that involve the entire public—and its tax money.

On a national scale, marijuana has been deemed the largest cash crop. In California alone, the annual value of marijuana crops is an estimated \$14 billion. Instead of receiving any revenue from these crops, the state "spends billions of dollars enforcing laws pegged at shutting down the industry and inhibiting marijuana's adherents." Harvard University economist, Jeffery Miron, suggests that "a national legalization effort would save nearly \$13 billion annually in enforcement costs and bring \$7 billion in yearly tax revenues." At a time when everyone is saving every cent possible, decriminalizing pot could not be more appropriate—the money that each state could be collecting could be used to benefit the public.

Marijuana myths have been spread throughout America, and there are many people who do, indeed, fear the reefer. When decriminalization is brought up, those people are quick to shoot it down, saying "That's the devil's weed!" or "Try that stuff once, and you'll be addicted for life!" and even "Marijuana will slowly kill everyone of your brain cells." It is because of these mere assumptions that marijuana has yet to be decriminalized in Burlington. But before the naive rule out all hope for this change, some things need straightening out. According to Lynn Zimmer, PhD, and John P. Morgan, MD, the myth that marijuana is highly addictive is false. They both agree that "most people who smoke marijuana only smoke it occasionally... a small minority of Americans—less than 1%—smoke marijuana on a daily or near daily basis." Those who envision a community polluted by pot smoke if it were to be decriminalized clearly need to touch base with reality. Equally misconceived is the notion that marijuana, when used over time, kills brain cells. "The claim that marijuana kills brain cells is based on a speculative report dating back a quarter of a century that has never been supported by any scientific study," states Zimmer. Rest at ease, myth believers!

Burlington's easy going crowd has been waiting some time for the issue on the decriminalization of marijuana to be taken seriously, and now that it seems to be the center of attention, there is no better time to pursue it. So what, as college students, can we do to get this joint rolling? Think about how effective it would be if Vermont Senators, Leahy and Sanders, received letters from 1,500 Champlain students expressing their opinions on the decriminalization of marijuana. What about 5,000 from UVM? This bombardment of letters would certainly overwhelm our senators, possibly provoking action in our favor. As a generation of change, it's time to fight for the right to light up.

Bleach It All

Patrick Willwerth

This is that good shit
which doesn't matter
in pale lamp light
sun waking and climbing
through cigarette-burnt blanket
curtains, sitting Indian style
four of us, six hours, talking in circles
Indian style circles, the kind
of talking where no one stops
or listens, like those birds

fifteen of them, chimney swallows
sitting on the lawn, lift off
all at the same time

right again and
t t
f h
e e
l r i g h t n
d d
n n o s
a a w e
p p n t
u u t
p l
u e t o t h e g r o u n d

We all come up.

My first car was a *that's nothing one time me and my* (Yo Ryan, gimme a beer and I'll) got the thing up to a buck twenty and we (five bucks tomorrow if you chop me one more) *cops chasing us but we were much faster* [she don't want anything to do with] used to run track (paycheck tomorrow just give me) *we knew the neighborhood so we hid behind this bush blue lights* running red lights shit we were gone before [she was all over me man take a fucking] (come on bro, hook it up.)

Then we crash to the ground.
Stop speaking deaf speech
on cue, like the birds.

I've heard the only place
you hear silence so loud
it hurts your ears
is deep in the desert
with nothing but sun-
bleached lizard skulls,
sand, dirt, and at night
you can see every star.

But I've seen the birds
been the skull
heard that silence
beat my ears
like a kick-drum
while hiding from the sun
in a third floor apartment
where the stars all drown.



"Experiencing" Homelessness

Molly Cain

As the end of winter is nearing, the trees and flowers blossoming, and the school year quickly wrapping up for us here at Champlain College, we are all looking forward to spring. We have been complaining for months about the sub-freezing temperatures outside and the harsh wind off the lake (although a lot of us chose to come live in this chilly climate). What many of us take for granted in these winter months are our homes. Whether it is a house, apartment, or tiny dorm room, most of us college students have a warm bed to get in at night. This is not the case for everyone, though.

Every night, there are hundreds of thousands of Americans sleeping on the streets in this country. During the first week of March, twelve students from Champlain flew down to Washington, DC for a Service in Action Trip. While there, we were able to get a new perspective on the homelessness and hunger situation down in DC and across the country.

The most powerful part of the trip was being able to talk with men and women who had previously or were currently experiencing homelessness. Our group went to the National Coalition for the Homeless and listened to two men talk about how they ended up on the streets and how they eventually got back on their feet. After we heard their powerful stories, we were able to ask questions and have a dialogue with these men. We wanted to know what we could do for the homeless people on the streets. How should we react when we seem them? If we do not have money to spare, what are other ways we can help?

There was one answer to all these questions that provided a very simple way to help out. The men who had spent years homeless in DC said that the best thing to do when you are going about your life and see a homeless person is to treat them like a real person. They told us that by simply looking them in the eyes and saying "good morning," we could brighten up their day. We were told they could feel as if they were not real people sometimes because passersby just ignored them or looked right thru them. By acknowledging the homeless as real people, however, you can make all the difference in the world.

This is something to think about the next time you wish for warmer weather or are bothered by how many layers are necessary to keep warm walking to class. Think about what it would be like to live on the streets, and how you would like to be treated if you did. The trip to Washington, DC left me feeling very lucky for the privileged life I lead, and gave me a new respect for those who are not so lucky. I know the next time I pass someone who is asking for money and looks sad or alone, I will make sure to acknowledge them, not just look right through them.



Varnish

Maureen Bonsignore

He questioned her motives, especially when she exhaled a cloud of nicotine ridden tobacco smoke and peered through it like a search light in the fog. He knew she was looking at him. She always looked at him at midnight. Midnight was her hunting hour, and he was always her prey, though she never said anything.

They met, unbeknownst to each other, at the same bar, the same seats, the same time. There would always be three seats between them, right at the curve of the bar so that they could admire each other without turning their heads. He could tip back his beer and see her through the pale ale and suds, like he was looking through an amber looking glass. And she was always peering over at him, through her mask of cigarette-scented fog as if she wanted to say something. But she never said anything.

Her dark purple nails would trace shapes on the wood bar top, re-signing names carved in with toothpicks and forks and knives, reliving the moments where people would drown themselves in noise and the scent of sweat. Her nails were just long enough that the tips of her fingers, the part where nail descended from the flesh, just barely made contact with the varnish. She could feel where the thick, clear lacquer filled the grooves of the wood, and the places it fell short, leaving a scar in the perfectly smooth counter.

He could smell her perfume. Lilacs and liquor. He would watch her, watch as veins moved across muscles under the dull fluorescents. His fingers would follow hers, because they moved the same way every night. He traced the same invisible lines, drawing maps to heaven across polished cedar. He would reach out, trying to catch the vibrations of her nails. He took deep breaths, feeling the hot smoke burn against the back of his throat. He would open his mouth to ask her name, but the words were caught in the back of his throat, tangled in the secondhand tar that he willingly let cover his lungs. But she never made an effort. She never said anything.

She never had to say anything.

He sat in the same seat the next night, waiting for her to walk out of the bathroom or in the front door and take her spot. He counted down the seconds till midnight, when he could follow those fingers and vibrations and trails of smoke. He wanted to stare through the fog and see the siren at the other end of the cove. He stared at the stool, desperately trying to remember exactly how her

fingers moved. He tipped his drink back and stared through the stale beer, and he saw nothing but obscured shapes.

He did the same the next night, and the night after that. She had never said anything. It was as if she had never existed, but in his eyes, she was all that existed. At midnight, the world would slow just so those hours of distant admiration could be elongated. He could feel seconds passing like hours when she was there, when she fell in love with him every night and would make love to him with just a glance. You just had to see her to know she loved him, and that he loved her with every inch of his skin. He loved her with his pores, and his strands of hair, and his fingerprints, and everything that was personal and intimate about him.

It was Friday and he was on that stool again, drowning in the smoke of women he could never trace the steps of. Their fingers were beautiful and perfect, but they didn't trace names or hold cigarettes the right way. Their voices were so loud compared to her elegant silence. This would be the last time he would wait here for her. Five more minutes.

Ten more minutes.

Only a half hour more.

Thick, dark purple nails slid over his shoulder, shifting the cotton of his shirt. Lilacs and tobacco smoke filled his nose, sending his brain on a trip. He could feel nails carving a name into his shoulder.

He didn't dare turn around, afraid that she would disappear. He knew it was her. She used just the right amount of pressure as she claimed him, carving his name against hers. He reached up and followed her fingers, letting the tip of his follow right behind hers. He recognized the pattern; it was what she always traced into the varnish.

Alison.

She had never needed to say anything.

Paper Cutter

Chris Lawless

She would cut everything from paper.
Her words, expressions, the things she hated.
Creased cardboard leaves when excited,
cut out dresses for dancing.
Her shoes melted in the rain
along with the roof of our house.

I'd let her make everything up;
the curtains we could draw on,
the chimney only set itself on fire,
magazines we could write ourselves
photography, the best we'd ever seen.

The pictures on the walls represented origami
wildlife among nature, but one of Elvis smiling
hips made from tissue paper
piñatas easy to break
dishes always thrown away.

She never knew what her real faced looked like
her figure never formed, only rigid, creased.
She bent without knees,
never saw the outside of the front door.

Our children were carried to each room
slept without making sounds
never cried since birth
but left nasty paper cuts.

The pets-different every week
She loved brown bag bears,
scared me to death.

The paper pills she swallowed stuck on the way down.
To be happy in life
but sad on paper.

Look Who's Facebook Stalking You Now

Ted Schwinden

Largely caused by a struggling economy and tight job market, “background checks” are routinely being used by employers to further investigate potential or current employees. This frightens me, due to the fact I’ll be looking for a job in just a few short years. Judgment should not be passed from outside social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook. Instead, candidates should be evaluated as they have in the past: through interviews, demonstrated professionalism, resumes, references, etc. Employers concerned about criminal backgrounds should check during the application process or during the interview, not on a social networking page.

My family knows people who have been passed over for simply holding a red Solo cup in one of their social networking pictures. Some of these people are well over the legal drinking age and are not acting belligerent, explicit, inappropriate, or embarrassing at all—it’s just the sight of the red cup. Who has the ultimate power to know what is in a cup that is in a picture? What if this person is the most qualified for the job? I often ponder where the line is drawn. How far should employers be allowed to go into the lives of their employees? If personal lives do not interfere with work in any way, employers have no right to discriminate against social networking users. Also, numerous questions of legality are being raised about discrimination against people whose social networking pages contain pictures or content around homosexuality, disability, race, ethnicity, color, religion, etc. These are all protected groups that are illegal to discriminate against in the real world. Social networking pages deserve the same protection.

Of course, responsibility lies within the individuals as well. They should be responsible enough to refrain from posting a picture using some illegal substance or committing an obvious felony. However, it is wrong for the majority of people who simply post their social lives on the Internet to stay connected to friends and family to fear losing employment opportunities solely because of their social networking page. I can only hope when I apply for a job, along with my graduating class, we are judged on our character and qualifications, not by our social networking pages.



Red Light / Green Light

Jaime Berry

What was it you saw that changed the color of your irises? You were perpetually wide-eyed, with pinpoint pupils and lashes you chopped off with our kitchen scissors. You looked at simple things for so long, but you couldn't watch anything more complex than a sprouting daisy, stage two; if it moved, you couldn't follow. What did you see that made you so afraid of motion and growth and change?

I touched you so, so slowly. I spent all day crossing the room, sitting next to you. I spent an hour raising my arm, ten minutes stretching my fingers out. I breathed the rhythm of sleeping even while my hidden heart was racing.

I touched you and you cried.

I wanted to scream, to demand answers; I wanted to shake you. Instead, I dragged my fingers over your cheek. You were looking and looking and not blinking and God, what were you thinking?

"Apples," you said. "Apples," emphatically, like it *mattered*.

I cried. I didn't know what to do with you. I didn't know how to make you move; I didn't know who you were.

"Apples, baby? Apples?"

"I said, I mean... There's nothing sweet anymore. We had... The apples are bad."

"We can buy more. I'll take you apple picking. We'll get green and gold and red; you love red."

"But I mean... I mean they turned brown and maggots devoured them. I mean they were young and perfect and something needed them. I mean... Time. I waited too long."

You moved, finally, suddenly, spastically. Your arms went wild and you rocked back before launching into my chest, tugging at my clothes, pressing kisses all over my face and hair. You tasted like desperation.

You choked out: "I can't wait. We can't stop anymore."

December 12, 2002

Alex Dahl

I was fourteen years old, a freshman in high school. I was an aimless and confused kid, unsure of my place in the world. Why was life so hard? Who was I supposed to be?

That night, I watched an episode of *Will & Grace*, as I sometimes did—the show had its flaws, but I still found it funny. Afterward, I didn't have anything else to do, so I stayed in the living room and let my mind wander. I thought to myself, what would it be like if I was gay? What would I think and feel, how would my life change?

I contemplated this for several seconds, then promptly concluded that there would be no change. I would think and feel the same way.

I *was* gay.

The realization was that immediate, like someone had flipped a switch. I didn't have any doubts. I didn't really have any evidence, either.

I just *knew*.

I stayed silent and still for some time. I didn't panic. I didn't cry. I was calm. I was happy.

I knew who I was for the first time.

The Box

Melissa Benton



There Will Be No Smoking in the Drunk Tank.

Matt Reevy

The gravity of the situation didn't really set in until the jailer snapped the elastic on his latex gloves and asked me in a velveteen voice, "Take off your belt and your sweatshirt, please." My jailer, dutiful employee of the Cumberland County Jail, located one right hand turn behind the railroad tracks on the way into Portland, Maine, was a man with a shaved head and the beginnings of a KGB worthy goatee/mustache combination; one of the guys who, when he got off his Midnight-to-Seven shift, headed home and watched Ultimate Fighting reruns with the sound off. His name was written above his right breast pocket in the same blackened brown as the rest of the uniform, but anyone who threatens, however jokingly, to put you in the same cell as that infamous inmate Bubba doesn't deserve to be called anything other than "sir." As in, "sir, when can I get these goddamn handcuffs off me," or, "excuse me, sir, when the hell am I going to get to smoke a cigarette?"

It turns out there's very little time to smoke cigarettes in the drunk tank. Hell, I was only in the drunk tank because I was too stubborn to submit to a breathalyzer—consequences be damned, one must cling to principles—and had the unfortunate luck of wearing a beer-soaked sweatshirt. Not beer-soaked of my own accord, to be sure, but beer-soaked because of the lanky arms and the loose grips of the fairly intoxicated. I wasn't a mile away when the faithful blues began to sing the praises of law, justice, and the inalienable right of any and every American Police Officer to cause much more of a headache than any member of a civilized country ought to without being tried for crimes against humanity.

"Do you know how fast you were going?" Officer Wiseman asked.

"Probably too fast, to be honest."

"Been drinking at all tonight?"

"Someone spilled some beer on me."

"That's why it smells, then." Officer Wiseman was living up to his name. His God-given, badge gleaming name. (For the record: Officer Wiseman's God is roughly one-third Jesus, one half-Budwiser, and a dash of Robocop)

"Yeah." And we began the license and registration dance, complicated perhaps because of my inexperience with all things clad in blue and likened on a regular basis to swine, but nonetheless destined to fail.

Accuse me of being filled with youthful optimism, call me naïve, claim that I should've seen it coming, but as a born-and-raised American Citizen I found

it very difficult to believe that I was going to jail for having a beer spilled on me. Next to that, the most incredible part about it was just how uncomfortable the handcuffs were.

Handcuffs, when properly applied by a trained officer of the law, reside on a plane of uncomfortable somewhere between being introduced to your father's long-time mistress at a family picnic and realizing that the reason that pretty girl at the end table has such a deep voice and an ambiguous name is because she's actually packing a different kind of seduction under his dress. Being handcuffed and forcefully seated in the hard plastic back seat of a police cruiser leaves a man a lot of time to reflect. Or, you can use the time to curse the bastard sitting in front of you for all that you're worth. I watched him type the phrase "like a giraffe" into his computer as we hit sixty-five on the highway. Typing and driving is fine, if you're on the sponsored side of the law.

So there I was, sitting in the holding center for the recently detained, thoughts of Shawshank dancing through my head, when I met James Driscoll, sometime PGA finalist and full-time weaponry enthusiast. He'd been held for demonstrating the effectiveness of his Smith and Wesson Model 500 inside a local venue.

"Wait a minute, you pulled out a revolver in the middle of a club?" Of all the questions that came to my head, this seemed the safest bet.

"Sure did." Everything this man did screamed professional golfer, which, of course, he was.

"Maybe I'm not seeing something, but you? Aren't you a golfer?"

"That's right. Golfer and gun-fan."

Nevermind what the hell this guy was doing here, ignore the stupendous odds of this story, those kind of vanilla questions flew from my mind as fast as they were formed. I just wanted to know what in God's name he was thinking, firing off his gun like that. Naturally, I couldn't phrase the question well.

"This is America!" Driscoll shouted, rising from his seat. "In America, we're allowed to carry guns. In America, we're allowed to fire these guns! Self-Defense! Second Amendment!" He was raving, chunks of white spittle forming at the corners of the mouth, the same mouth that had remained quiet as he raked in over two million dollars for knocking a small ball further and more accurately than most.

"OK Mr. Driscoll, back in the tank!" That was my jailer, the late-night UFC guy. For the record, I didn't get the dignity of being called mister.

"That's bullshit, Buzz!"

"Mr. Driscoll, my name isn't Buzz." His name was actually Charles. He went home every night to a bag of Tostitos and, although I would never know I was right, late-night UFC reruns.

"Buzz, this is un-American! Freedom! Freeeeedom!"

II.

James Driscoll had been tasered quite spectacularly. I can honestly say I've never seen a man so close to successfully attempting a one-man prison break. He leapt clear over the fake-pine barricade between keeping us from our freedom. He punched out Buzz (actually Charles) with the accuracy of an Ali and the power of a Tyson. He made it exactly five feet before three other guards came out in riot gear and tackled, maced, and tasered the shit out of him.

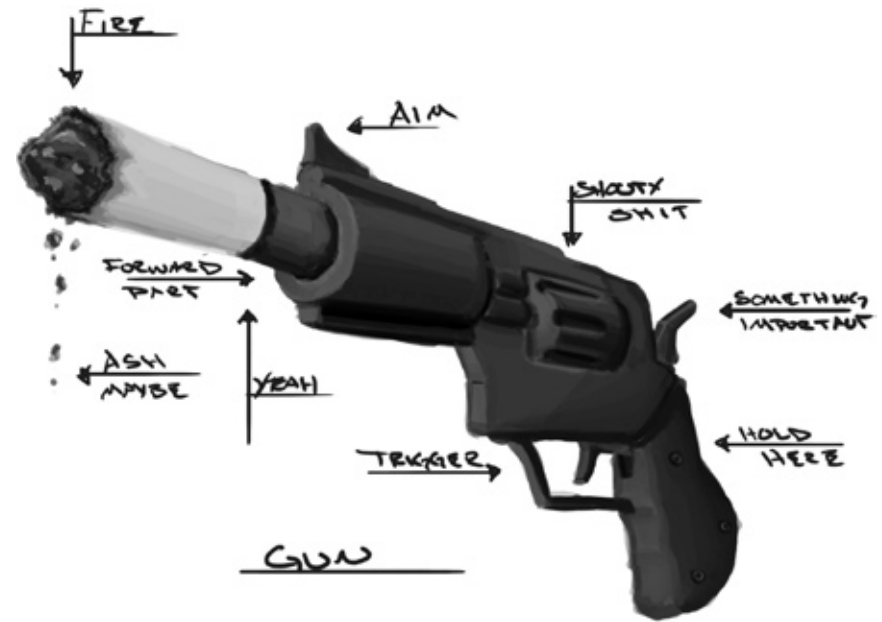
Me, I was implicated. Turns out my very own Officer Wiseman was the one who ended up tasing our beloved professional golfer, and it turns out that tasing a man who has already been subdued and maced constitutes unnecessary force. It just so happens that, should there be credible witnesses and video footage present, any police station can get sued to high hell. Officer Wiseman saw his career going up in front of him, and he turned to me.

"Listen, we can take care of the videotapes." he said in a way that just beamed KGB-Red.

"You just want me to keep quiet?"

"Exactly. We can let you go, get your car out of impound, you can go home and forget any of this ever happened."

I wish I could say I refused, let him suffer on the end of the same system he swore to uphold and protect. Instead, one of the other cops came back and told him that the video footage hadn't been working, and that Inmate Driscoll had been intravenously tested to have a .30 BAC. So I got tossed back in my cell for processing. Fuckers.



Some Dreams Just Make You Want to Hang Yourself, You Know?

Anthony Carace

I woke up that morning in a particularly pissed off mood, dreading what I might find from the night before. All the lights still on, the TV rerunning the some episode of South Park, the oven still burning precious gas. With my disgusting run of luck, a bum would be passed out on the couch, a half-eaten sandwich clutched in a lifeless hand.

But I didn't want such a horrible reality to be realized. I wallowed. I lay in bed for what seemed like hours, the alarm clock shattering the silence every five minutes, my apathy for existence preventing me from resetting it. I turned my computer on when I grew tired of hearing the perpetual buzz. Metallica blared to keep me awake. Free porn screamed sexual ecstasies to keep me awake. Facebook, with its false perception of friendship and connection (yet one so convincing I checked it religiously) kept me awake. These were temporary distractions from the horror that lurked just outside my door. Worse than death. Worse than disease. Worse than a kitten staple-gunned to a wall. Worse than the news that you're a father-to-be by some girl you met once three months ago.

Filth! Grime! A towering bastion of filthy dishes stacked half the height to the ceiling. Marinara stains festooning the just-cleaned counter. Beer cans littering the ground like it was a hardwood recycling bin. Bugs flying round my head because the kitchen is redolent of last week's tuna casserole. The dread of walking into the bathroom after someone had deposited a number two and was too drunk to remember the gift of a flush crept into my heart. I could see all these things, even without the door open. I'd seen them before, but they were too trivial to make a lasting impression. So, like a repeat of Seinfeld (the soup Nazi one), I knew they'd be back.

The hour of school drew near and my biting anger had been groomed to a blunt annoyance. It's gonna be the same tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. What's the point in giving a fuck? I shoved the covers aside before their warmth would cast me under a slumberous spell again. I reached for the knob cautiously, as if it were on fire.

An unfamiliar odor kicked me in the nose. It smelled like ammonia. It smelled... clean. Clean? With the band of warthogs I resided with? An impossibility disguised as an extreme improbability. I stepped into the net of freshness, befuddled by this strange scent. I turned on a light, as if illumination would identify this smell. The room was spotless. No cans, no bums, no candy bar wrappers. Not even a displaced DVD case or an errant fork. The shag rug had even been vacuumed. Vacuumed? We didn't even own one.

Disbelieving my eyes, I entered the kitchen. Not a crumb to be feasted on by a housebroken swarm of flies. Dishes in the cabinets from whence they came. The floor was mopped, the dish towels hung on the rack, the grease trap drained. My God, did a homicidal mother come upon our sty through some design of the divine and do justice to the demon of dirt? This was too good to be true.

And it was. I woke up to a party outside my door, raging in the other room. I was still drunk and had pissed the bed.

The First Rule of AIG Is: You Don't Talk About AIG

Alli Neal

No such thing as bad publicity? Tell that to the employees at AIG. Turns out, all of this media attention hasn't been good for the company—not that the company has been all that good to us.

Let's recap the timeline here:

Crooked, reckless, too-big-to-fail companies start failing, taking the economy down with them. Taxpaying Americans start losing jobs, loans, house and property value, college and retirement funds. Money from taxpaying Americans (and China) is used to bail out failing too-big-to-fail companies so that the economy will turn around and my parents can retire before they are 112. Economy still not looking so great. After failed bail, company gives bonuses to the crooked, reckless employees who started it all.

The next step in this sequence is, naturally, the formation of a very angry mob. Even better, the media is fanning the flames of the villagers' proverbial torches. "Outrage" is the buzzword in newsrooms on every channel, Senators like Chuck Grassley are on TV proposing that execs should commit hara-kiri, and Stephen Colbert is urging the public to become "a torch and pitchfork-wielding mob empty of all thought, an injured, vengeful animal lashing out blindly at shapes and colors." Everywhere, the same message is calling us to action: Let's go get AIG! The nation hasn't gotten this worked up about a building in New York since the World Trade Center.

The company has, naturally, taken some much needed precautions against the current uprising. An AIG corporate security memo leaked to Gawker.com advises employees on how to keep their children safe and avoid potential execution by piano wire.

First rule of AIG is you don't talk about AIG. Employees are instructed to remove all company memorabilia before leaving the building—that means badges, bags, shirts, umbrellas, and yes, all those "Go AIG" foam fingers. When in public areas, avoid conversations about AIG and, most importantly, *do not engage media personnel!* It's the print journalists and bloggers you really have to worry about. The little fuckers can move faster than the zombies with the expensive camera equipment.

The memo also cautions against walking alone in dark parking lots and giving out personal information on the phone (watch out for bugs that guy in the lobby planted on you while you weren't looking, while you're at it). Question anyone in the building who looks particularly shady or that you don't recognize, which means you're going to have to memorize the faces of the thousands of people you share a building with. Report them and any broken doors, locks, or windows to security. Make sure visitors are escorted by security, and remember: if you feel like you're being followed, call 911. When you're packing up your office because you just can't take it anymore, don't prop the door open—you never know what could get in.

Wait. Hold on a minute here. Something's not right. If your employees have to be quieter about working for AIG than if they were black-ops, you know you did something wrong. If people are finding out where you live so they can picket around your house, chances are you really ticked some people off. If you have to remove your company name from the side of your building because it's a potential bulls-eye for bombers, take your mailing address off your website to avoid anthrax-filled envelopes, and change the name of your company to stave off the easily-confused attackers, you probably screwed up royally. Like Austan Goolsbee, chief economist on President Obama's Economic Recovery Advisory Board, said, "It's almost like these guys should have gotten the Nobel Prize for evil."

What I don't understand is that we can conspire to replace fascist dictators and establish puppet states, but we can't put anyone more capable—or at the very least, someone a little less "evil—" in place at AIG. The Treasury now owns 80% of the company, and the crooked, reckless imbeciles who killed the company are still there. Someone more competent needs to step in. For example, I am completely incapable when it comes to technology. If hard drives could form an angry mob, I'd probably need a security memo. But if I screw up and my computer breaks, I take it to the Geek Squad, and they fix it. AIG needs a Geek Squad before this too-big-to-fail company brings down this too-big-to-fail country.

People have a right to be angry about the situation at AIG. Picketing at private homes might be taking it a little far, but at least they've got the right idea, unlike the people who think they're going to accomplish something by dumping tea in bodies of water and "teabagging Washington" (thank you for that one, Fox News) as a symbolic protest. History lesson: there was a tea tariff. The tea went in Boston Harbor to protest. There's an easily distinguished tie between tax on tea and throwing it in the water. There really isn't any connection between tea and bailouts. If you're really set on protesting with cut and dried plant life, maybe consider hay bales. Or, even better, write your politicians and demand they do something besides give \$182 billion to the weasels who screwed up in the first place. Forget the tea. Focus your completely justified, unwavering, blazing anger to where it's going to make a difference, and that doesn't mean threatening Bob the Janitor because he accidentally mentioned he worked in AIG—it's not his fault (but Bob, maybe you should have read the memo).

Don't Cry, Emo Kid

Michael Neumayer

I was recently asked to write an article about some problem that really got my blood boiling. However, being in Burlington, Vermont, I really didn't want to shout at people for not recycling, using green energies, or saving Tibet (admirable endeavors as they are). I didn't want to be "that guy" who yelled at everyone in the local newspaper for their transgressions against humanity. Instead, I've decided to remind people what a great world we live in. I want to inform people that, contrary to popular belief, the world is not going to hell. If you're going to be sick from the ensuing optimism, please continue reading within the proximity of a trash can.

Many people turn on CNN and see that we're in a recession, murders are being committed, wars are persisting, and little old ladies are having their handbags stolen at an alarming rate. Yes, these things are all happening—but I challenge you to observe the world outside the lens of the media. Believe it or not, just as many kind acts are happening right alongside the awful acts. A street observer will see with his own eyes that for every one man who gets stabbed on the street, a team of four to six dedicated people will rush to his aid in an ambulance. The score stands at one point, criminal to at least four points, heroes. I bet Fox News failed to mention that part. Believe it or not, crime rates have actually been steadily dropping since the early 90s. And here you thought evil was prevailing... shame.

Take your eyes beyond the street and you'll see that the rest of the world isn't that bad, either. In fact, it's quite a beautiful place. America alone is graced with canyons, mountains, lakes, rivers, and woodlands, thousands of square miles of which are protected in national parks. Sure, there are some regions that need to be cleaned up a little (we're working on it, New Jersey), but hundreds of thousands of people are at work year round helping to clean up and protect these areas. Even the new carbon dioxide problem has spawned countless organizations and movements to assist in its solving. No one knew what a carbon footprint was ten years ago, but now we can buy backpacks made from recycled plastic or pants sporting a carbon-neutral sticker. As soon as someone or something falls apart, people are there, ready to help out. Unfortunately, these heroes remain unsung and we go on believing that the world is falling apart and no one's doing anything to put it back together. Oh, how wrong we are.

Yes, it's true, our time has its problems, but what era doesn't? Just like the thousands of generations to come before us, we'll tackle each and every problem as it comes. So no worries. Don't fret. Just help where you can, get some work done, and then take off and enjoy this gorgeous world we live in. Go for a hike, hit the skate park, go to a concert, play *Left 4 Dead* with some friends. Just get out there and enjoy the wonderful resources we have available to us. Cynics, commence vomiting.



Melissa Benton

The Greatest Lake

Justin Benjamin

I sat her driveway, trying to think of what had led me to this point. I was here to tell her the truth, how I felt about her, how I have been feeling about her for sometime now. I really wanted to remember when I started feeling this way. Was it a feeling that had been building throughout our friendship? Or was there a moment I can point to? My first thought led me back to a moment at the lake.

I spent nearly two weeks every summer at my grandparents' cottage on Otisco Lake. This particular summer, I was fifteen years old and entering the stage where you really begin to notice girls. But as I look back on it now, I wasn't noticing her as most boys were.

We'd known each other for about twelve years at the time. She was by far the longest tenured friend I'd had, and the fact that I only saw her for those brief two weeks out of every year didn't make our friendship any less meaningful. It always seemed as though we'd pick up right where we'd left off the year before, without missing a beat. I mean, there was obviously the time at the beginning to catch up a bit, but for the most part it was like the lake was separate from our home lives altogether. It was like when we were together, when we were at the lake, nothing else mattered. There was one moment that summer when I was fifteen that really makes me believe that is the complete truth.

I had been relaxing. I didn't know it then, but because I ended up entering the work force full time the following year, this would be the last time I would be able to enjoy my full two weeks at the lake. It was my second to last day. The sun was beginning to set on another perfect day. I was out in the front lawn, sunglasses and headphones on, sitting in a lawn chair, savoring the end of summer. Ironically enough, she came strolling out just as "J.A.R." by Green Day hit on my CD player. In reality this stood for Jason Andrew Relva, but for me that couldn't be further from the truth. The song hit just as Jillian Ann Ryan walked past, her towel swiping my knee as she headed out on the dock.

This woke me from the soft sleep I had fallen into, and as I watched her walk out on the dock and dive in, I got to thinking. There were several moments over the past twelve days that had pushed me towards feeling what I was feeling. The first day I showed up and was greeted with a giant hug, the end of my first week at the movies where she fell asleep on my shoulder, and even better than that, the night before where we fell asleep together by the fire on the shore. These

thoughts not only reassured me of my feelings, but also had to show she felt the same, right?

I sprung to my feet and quickly headed inside to grab my swimsuit. As I walked back out the door, I passed my uncle who seemingly had some idea as to what was going on right then, because he shot me the slightest grin. I didn't really know what to make of it, but it only distracted me for a brief moment. I traced Jill's steps out onto the dock, dove in and headed for the raft about 100 feet from where I hit the water.

It's quite rare to have those days late in the summer when the lake sits perfectly. It's just about this time that the weather is beginning to take form for the fall, helping the shore grow larger and the days grow shorter. Most people use this time to try to savor up every last second of waterskiing and wakeboarding the summer had left. But this was not one of those days. The water was dead calm, almost like glass, and as fast as I swam out there, you could have made the mistake of thinking I had run. I had made my move so quickly that I hadn't even thought of what I might say when I arrived. I ascended the ladder while she sat on the opposite side, her back turned to me, staring out at the open water, her hair still wet from her trek out there and glistening as it lay on her shoulders.

It didn't hit me until I sat down next to her, with my hand mere inches from hers, that I shouldn't say anything. This moment was too big. Anything I would have said would have completely ruined it. So I just sat. We both gazed out as the sun sank behind the mountain in the distance and, shortly thereafter, she made her way back in. I stayed. No words were exchanged between us. It was as if she had known why I swam out there and didn't want to ruin the moment, either. But looking back, the moment could have used words. It could have changed what our eventual destination was.

I wanted this to be the most seminal moment in our budding relationship. The only problem was that it turned out to be the only moment that made it seem like a relationship beyond our friendship was forming. As I swam back in the water left me cold, a precursor to the bitter events that would transpire between us in the future. I often think back on this time, and think about if I would do it again, knowing then what I do now. While it ended up meaning nothing in the long run, it isn't often for a fifteen-year-old that you live a moment like you would seemingly only see in some movie. I've been searching for another moment like that ever since.

Why You Need to Grow Huge (Invisible) (Made-for-Dating) Balls

Carissa Stimpfel

The (almost only) unfortunate fact about sex is that the only way to get better at it is to have more of it in the first place, and yet the idea of propositioning a guy kind of makes me throw up a little bit in my mouth with sheer nerves and terror. There is no convenient game-based program you can hook up to your TV and play for an hour or two to gain more “Life Skills Sex Points” and hone your craft, like how you can play Mario Kart to practice acing your driver’s test. Instead, you have to find people who either like you enough to sleep with you, or are stupid enough to sleep with you.

(Don’t hate—you know it’s true.)

Thus, I believe, dating and the whole torturous process were invented to go about procuring a date. Dating, of course, only came about as a way to wine and dine someone into submission so you could sleep with them. Once in a while, you hear about or find yourself on one of those rare things called a “great date,” in which conversation flows as freely as the liquor and you find yourself walking beside someone in the cool night air thinking, “I could totally put up with this person’s ridiculous quirks for like, a month or two.” But, mostly, dating is about the sex.

Because of this, some people have evolved to the point where dating feels like a superfluous, out-dated notion; the last time I went on a bona-fide date was, umm...ah...well, last year? Needless to say, I’m not much of the dating type. In fact, you might say I’m a dating disaster. Dating and I just don’t seem to go hand-in-hand. I’m the kind of girl that actually fights a guy to go Dutch over the bill, can’t relax when he pays for all of it, and then gets flustered and accidentally opens the door for him while he stares at me and wonders why the wolf pack ever let me stray out of the forest. However, I am a huge proponent of the “let’s-just-stay-home-and-order-in-and-watch-a-movie-and-destroy-your-couch” method. That, I understand.

But more and more recently, I’ve been hearing more men say that they want women to be the ones asking them out and making the moves on them. I have a group of male friends who were all griping in their apartment one afternoon about the fact that more women don’t step up to take the pressure off and ask

men out, and they should. I don’t know how I feel about this. The overwhelming argument is that the men have the penis—if you want somewhere to stick it, you ask the girl out. On the flip side, if I really want to have sex with you, well, I’ll just have to grow an invisible set of my own balls and ask. But just let me state the way the formula has worked for years, even centuries: it’s the girls’ job to make it obvious that she’s interested in a guy, and from there it’s his job to actually say, “Hey, do you want to do something sometime?”

(Hopefully, there’s a little more thought and clarity put into this statement in real life.) (For you guys, just a hint—there should be.)

This is not to say that there is anything wrong with empowered women asking men out. All the power to those girls who can just waltz up to some dude and say, “Hey, you’re cute; let’s grab a bite to eat and then fuck.” This is just to say that for all of my blunt, free-wheeling talking, I am still kind of old-fashioned at heart. I get heart palpitations at the thought of having to find you at some point when you’re not hanging out with all your buddies, and string coherent words together that somehow get the main point across of “please consider going somewhere with me for an evening so I don’t feel like a huge slut when I sleep with you that night.” I am slightly loathe to go into that territory. Mostly because I never seem to be able to get that point across. Instead, it comes out as something along the lines of “Hnnnnnghhhh...uhhhhn...didyouseeethefinalscoreofthegameanddo-youwannacomeover?” I am ridiculously chicken-shit. Just be ready to expect this, guys. Just like some of you don’t want to be the only ones putting yourselves out on a limb when you’re jonesing for some spring-time lovin’, some girls are never going to be the type to say “you wanna go out sometime?” Your best bet in this case would be to start reading body language... we girls don’t just happen to make prolonged eye contact and flip our hair and touch you by accident. Unless she has a chronic neck spasm and no sense of personal boundaries, she likes you. There’s a beginning. Go from there, my horny college students. Happy hunting!

Although the author was born with the express purpose in life to write about love and sex, she would occasionally love some advice about what to personally lambast next. If you have a relationship conundrum or social issue you’d like to see her investigate in her own special way, email her with it at: carissa.stimpfel@mymail.champlain.edu. (Marriage proposals, spam, and misdirected emails will be deleted. Slavish praise and the phone numbers of hot men always appreciated. Laughter mandatory.)

niko

Geoffrey Klane



The Adventures of Chocoman

Ben Salerno

