

the water tower.

uvm's alternative newsmag

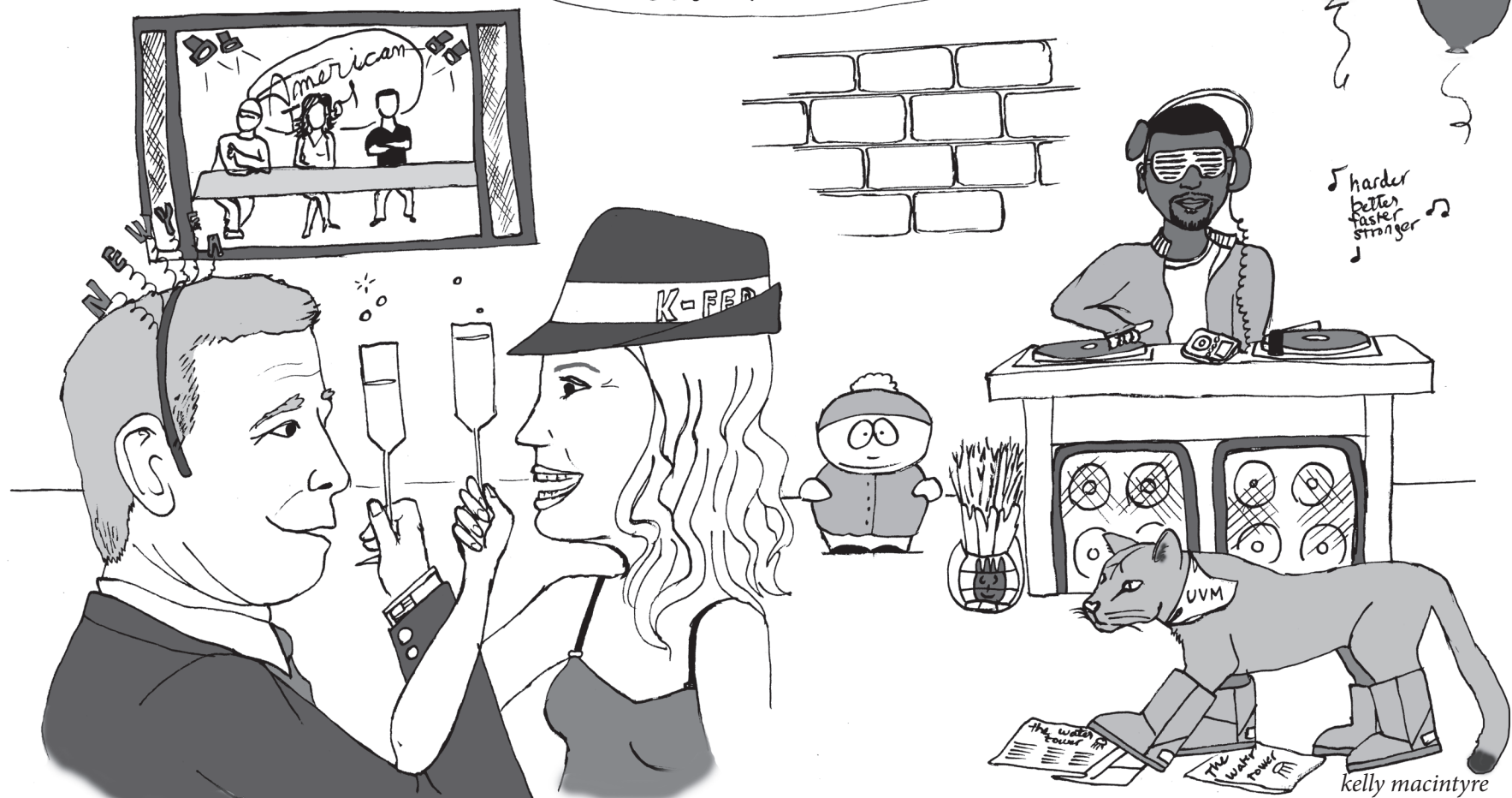


volume 6 - issue 13 - tuesday, december 8, 2009 - uvm, burlington, vt

last issue of the semester!

OUR DECADE

IN 800 WORDS



by maxbookman

2000

Ball drops. The 21st century begins. Computers still work just fine. Future UVM Class of 2010 hits puberty. Everyone Wants to Be a Millionaire. Napster launches. Metallica flips out. Playstation 2 released; will sell over 138 million units. *Jackass* makes being an idiot look badass. Tom Hanks gets stranded on deserted island with a volleyball. Yankees take the Subway Series. Al Gore elected president. Supreme Court has other plans.

2001

George W. Bush inaugurated, Gore gets fat and grows beard. First iPods hit stores. They don't do pictures, video, or apps, and nothing happens when you touch the screen. Wikipedia launched; research papers no longer require the library. September 11th. Americans unite, momentarily. Anthrax scare. PATRIOT Act passed; Ben Franklin cries from his grave.

2002

LSU provost Daniel Mark Fogel comes to UVM. Tuition and average class size begin steady rise. *X-Files* ends, *American Idol* begins. *Greek Wedding* a hit, subsequent TV series a big fat failure. Wet Kirsten Dunst and upside-down Tobey Maguire make Hollywood gold. U.S. troops arrive in Afghanistan; are forgotten until end of decade. Andrew W.K. parties hard, Avril Lavigne makes things so complicated. Bush starts talking shit about Iraq.

2003

Dave Chappelle is Rick James, bitch. General Tommy Franks says "there is no doubt" that Iraq has WMDs. They're never found. Colin Powell tells U.N. that Iraq produces Anthrax. It doesn't. Michael Jackson touches little boys, R. Kelly pees on little girls. Bill Gates doesn't think Google will ever make it. The Governorator takes office in Culifornia.

2004

Morgan Spurlock eats McDonalds for a month; risks liver failure. McDonalds discontinues Super Size meal; stoners everywhere upset. State Senator Barack Obama hits national stage with stirring speech at John Kerry national convention; presidential ambitions immediately follow. Gays in San Fran get to learn how shitty marriage is. Gary Brotsma records himself rocking out to O-Zone's *Numa Numa*. Red Sox stop sucking. *Lost* premiers, begins abusive relationship with loyal fans. UVM introduces new mascot, Rally Cat. UVMers still not sure what a catamount is.

2005

YouTube goes online; procrastinating at work revolutionized. Saddam Hussein hanged; botched execution caught on YouTube. Bush inaugurated for second term; Dems cry. Gay cowboys gross out suburban teenage boys. John Paul meets Saint Peter. French fry EU constitution. Palestinians elect Hamas. Deep Throat comes out. New Orleans pummeled by Katrina; Bush watches from above.

2006

MySpace blows up; won't become creepy for another two years. Facebook opens to high school students; kids stop talking to each other in person. UVM Class of 2010 starts freshman year. Classes are small, Billings is the student center, and no one has more than one roommate. Pluto demoted. Al Gore shaves beard, makes a movie. UVM transfer student Michelle Gardner-Quinn found murdered in Richmond. American population surpasses 300 million. Iraq casualties surpass 9/11 casualties. James Bond gets good at poker. Dick Cheney shoots friend in the face. Naked guy on LSD and MDMA assaults three girls in Harris Millis.

2007

First issue of **the water tower** hits stands. Nobody reads it. New York Football Giants upset Patriots in Super Bowl; Frank Sinatra heard around campus. Microsoft releases Windows Vista. Everyone hates it. *South Park* turns 10 years old; Stan, Kyle, Cartman, and Kenny still in fourth grade. Spectators and security outnumber participants at Naked Bike Ride; event stops being cool. Rihanna lets us stand under her umbrella-ella-ella. The iPhone is released; Verizon customers remain jealous through end of decade. *Burlington Free Press* names President Fogel Vermonter of the Year. Nobody knows why.

2008

America elects half-black president; last time in decade UVMers outside of Poli Sci department pay attention to politics. Internet news explodes in popularity. Journalism begins steady decline. Pirates make a comeback. America pretends to love China during Beijing Olympics. Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe re-elected with 85.5% of the vote. Remaining 14.5% disappear inexplicably. Bill Kramer says "Bear Sterns is fine." The financial giant folds one week later, along with the rest of the economy. Bush just watches, counts days till Obama inauguration.

2009

UVM Hockey enters Frozen Four for the first time since the 90's. Michael Phelps rips bong. Federal government becomes a used car dealer. UVM students walk out of class to protest budget cuts; nothing happens. Oxi Clean needs new spokesman. Farce election in Iran sends angry mobs into streets, capturing world attention. Michael Jackson dies. World forgets about Iran. *Time* calls the 00's "the decade from hell." *National Review* says it was a lot better than the 30's or 40's. UVMers get hyped-up on Adderall and caffeine while studying for finals; forget to reflect on the decade in which they came of age, whose experiences have formed the basis for their futures. The ball drops. ■

get
inside
me

news
a presidential letter
to santa
by gregfrancese

reflections
beardvember!
(the results are in)

créatif stuffé
may 4, 2241
by joshhegarty

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inbox

shuffle make me mad!

To **the water tower** staff,

Please do something about the "Shuffle" section on the back page. It's truly awful. It seems that every week, Ms. Critsimilios chooses a topic, and then chooses songs that have the topic in the title. How about writing something that takes more than twenty minutes? Does she even listen to the song's content? Take issue 12, December 1st. Every song has "California" or "Cali" somewhere in the title, yet not all of the songs relate in content or message! Maybe someone else with the better knowledge of music could do a better job, or at least someone with more time on their hands. I would be very surprised if this is the first time you are hearing about this ridiculously moronic article.

Pietro Castelli

Sometimes reading **the water tower** makes our readers want to get naked and fight the power. But most of the time, they just send emails. Send your thoughts on anything in this week's issue to

thewatertowernews@gmail.com

the water tower.

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the shit list

with macsmith

New Jersey Nets The Nets finally won a game over the weekend, ending their record-setting 18 game losing streak to start the season. Now complete with its own horrifyingly abysmal sports team, New Jersey is currently in a dead heat with Detroit for the "worst place in America" title.

President Obama Last week the Commander-in-Chief tried to please everyone by committing 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan, but ended up pleasing nobody. This makes him the first African American President to receive a Nobel Peace Prize while at war, and then send more troops to said war, and piss everyone off. All pretty much at the same time.

Vermont According to a new study that measures reports of alleged police abuse by state, Vermont is numero uno, topping off the list with a Police Misconduct Rate of 29.3 per 1000 officers. Don't believe me? Ask the friendly UVM officer who's about to search your room for pot because you just coughed suspiciously.

Kind of Weird People The world has a lot of them, and this family, whose name remains anonymous, is no exception. Last week an HIV positive husband infected his wife with the virus so that she would have sex with him again. Long story short, he's in jail now. But I suppose, on the up side, he's not getting raped. Or is he?

Vermont, Again Hey everyone, want some snow? Go *anywhere but Vermont*. Like Texas, Louisiana, Virginia, Georgia, New York, I dunno, fucking Mexico, maybe. Goddammit. (And if there's snow on the ground by the time this issue comes out, then it's about time.)

sportsblink

with michaelcieslak

Sports are awesome. This week there was sooooo much college football and **Florida** lost, tools. **Bills** lost, too. **Alabama** beat **Floida** in college football. Then **Texas** kicked a field goal and they won. There was a World Cup Drawing: **United States** has to play **England** and they are going to get shit on so bad. **Alabama** and **Florida** will play in the BCS championship football game. **TCU** got screwed real hard. Not to mention their mascot is the horny frog. **Cincinatti** beat **Pitt** in college football. It was a sweet comeback. I was at a formal during all of this so I couldn't see it, but I heard it rocked. **Tiger Woods** was found next to his totaled car... I think, I don't care.

The winter Olympics are going to be *awesome*; personally, I am a fan of the hockey. Watch the **Russian hockey team**-- they are going to be dirty. Also in curling, keep an eye on **Mark Woflenstiti from Finland**-- he's a genius thrower of circlish rock things. And his sweepers can sweep the shit out of stuff. **Stowe** is open; it's going to suck for a while, though. I don't know whats going on in the NBA, but who the cares, though. **Sabres** are awesome. Goodnight.

the news in brief

with paulgross

"This decision represents an intransigent embrace of a pattern of life Christians throughout history have rejected."

-Traditionalist Episcopalian **Reverend Kendall Harmon**, on the second appointment of an openly gay Episcopalian bishop. The church had a big split a few years back when the first gay clergyman was appointed, and clearly Rev. Harmon decided to stay in the Stone Age.

"Providing this assistance is a humanitarian imperative."

-**Barack Obama**, on the eve of the Copenhagen Climate Change talks during in which 192 countries will come together in an attempt to approve some kind of new solution to the growing problem of global warming. Hopefully they'll finish before Seychelles is under water.

"It's been years."

-Defense Secretary **Robert Gates**, upon being asked how long it has been since the United States (or anyone!) has had reliable information on the whereabouts of al-Qaeda leader, Osama Bin Laden. We've been looking for him mostly in Pakistan, but the Pakistani government insists he's not there. My guess is that he's hiding in a bunker somewhere in North Korea, playing WoW.

"These pictures make a lot of money abroad."

-A British paparazzi photographer, **Ingrid Seward**, on a recent warning from the British Royal Family that they ought not to be photographed doing "private, everyday things." Though, it sort of begs the question of if you can issue a national warning to tell people to stop taking pictures of you, are you the sort of person who does "private, everyday things."

"We see patterns on the bones...indicating that they had been spit-roasted."

-**Bruno Boulestin**, an archaeologist at the University of Bordeaux, on the discovery of 7,000 year-old human remains in Western Europe that show evidence of mass cannibalism...and for all the crap we give the Aztecs...

the water tower is UVM's alternative newsmag and is a weekly student publication at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont.

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Tuesdays at 7:00pm

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Or send us an email

Our generation stands at a crossroads. As we walk through a world ever connected to a thunderstorm of news and reflection, we risk losing the ability to think for ourselves. **the water tower** is for us non-thinkers. We provide witty and sometimes outlandish opinions so that you don't have to come up with them yourselves. We can't promise that you will agree with everything that we say, but you will respect the tenacity we have to say it. Every once in a while we will generate something that is truly thought provoking. We are the reason people can't wait for Tuesday. We are **the water tower**.

un-P.A.T.R.I.O.T.-ic abuses under obama

by katedonnelly

"We don't have to settle for a PATRIOT Act that sacrifices our liberties or our safety -- we can have one that secures both." (Then-Senator) Barack Obama made this eloquent statement in 2005 on the Senate floor. Obama was referring to President Bush's PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act was launched in response to 9/11. It includes provisions that allow the government to obtain private information on U.S. citizens through warrantless wiretapping of phone calls and emails, as well as seizure of records from credit reporting companies, banks, internet service providers, and libraries. Another provision includes the relaxing of conditions under which citizens can be accused of providing "material support" to terrorists. Only four years ago, Senator Obama claimed these provisions were "just wrong."

Now President Obama is going back on his words and reversing his strong opposition to the PATRIOT Act. Key components of the PATRIOT Act are set to expire at the end of the year, but now Obama is seeking to extend them until 2013. While he has always been opposed to Bush's vision of the Act, he has defended certain parts of it. In 2006 he even voted to re-authorize an altered version.

Michelle Richardson, Legislative Counsel for the leading civil rights group ACLU, says, "The President's reversal on Patriot Act reform is a major travesty ... There have been many, many abuses of power in the last four years." Richardson also claims that more abuses of power are inevitable if these programs continue. She adds, "overall, the Obama administration has made marginal improvements but is largely a continuation of the Bush administration with respect to civil liberties."

The PATRIOT Act has led to frightening abuses of power. Guantanamo Bay is, sadly, a great example. Claims of wrongful imprisonment and torture have been hot-button political issues. Every major media outlet has seemed to weigh in on the abuses of the Guantanamo Bay detainees. Newspapers have showcased pictures of the facility and the prisoners, and every cable network kills time with a shit ton of political pundits debating the treatment of the prisoners.

One abuse that seems to be flying under the radar in the media is the National Security Agency's surveillance of private U.S. citizens' phone calls. However, ABC News has recently reported how the NSA hired members of the U.S. military service to eavesdrop on thousands of calls from Afghanistan and Iraq to the U.S. Most of these calls were made from Americans overseas simply talking to their loved ones at home. Some calls were from U.S. journalists calling their networks. These are personal conversations that *no one* should be listening to.

Two U.S. military whistle blowers have come forward expressing their guilt from listening to these phone calls and even becoming fascinated and intrigued by them. They explain how they abused their power by getting way too interested in their fellow American citizens' private lives. One sick fuck claimed how he liked to listen to people having phone sex! He said, "... conversations were stored on the computer and that listening to conversations was like listening to an iPod." (Hmmm ... my iPod doesn't have a phone sex app.) Both military spies who came forward now claim what they were doing was morally wrong and counter-productive to combating terrorism.

The PATRIOT Act is symbolic to the post-9/11 generation. It reveals how paranoid and vulnerable the U.S. is. It shows the world that we throw our civil liberties out the window when we are scared. A major pattern with the PATRIOT Act is that it rarely succeeds in targeting terrorists. Mostly, it gives license to victimize innocent people who have absolutely no ties to terrorism.

As intoxicating as Obama's presence in the White House may be, it is important that we hold him accountable for his poor decisions. He is getting caught up in a political undertow that is sacrificing his morals and ethics along the way. Obama should not extend the key PATRIOT Act provisions till 2013. There will be way too many abuses of until that time. Where's '05 Senator Obama when we need him? ■

Dear Santa,

A lot has changed since the last time I wrote to you. For one, my Blackberry no longer makes midnight phone calls to Domino's. Secondly, because of my big promotion, we've moved to a new house. Sasha and Malia wanted me to make sure you knew which one it is. It's the big white one on Pennsylvania Avenue with the pimped out Cadillac limousine with the rims and bulletproof glass. Unfortunately, the chimneys in the house are blocked, so you'll have to be buzzed in at the front gate. When they ask who you are, tell 'em you're Al Gore, but your compost-powered razor broke and you ran out of Rogaine. Once you're in the building, you can't miss the huge tree decorated with Bears, White Sox, and Bulls ornaments. Yes, that is an autographed basketball ornament from Michael Jordan. On your right, you'll find some of the finest chocolate chip cookies Chef Cristeta Comerford could make. Oh, and be careful with that Guinness; Michelle says too much of that stuff will make you sound like Rush Limbaugh.

For Christmas, each person close to me, except Vice President Biden, has remained silent about what he or she wants. I've therefore taken the liberty myself, as Commander in Chief, to tell you what to bring everyone. For Bo, a new bone shaped like the leg of a reporter; he sure does love those press legs! For Michelle, my beloved wife who owns the entire J. Crew collection, a sleeveless parka so she can continue to awe Americans with those "Michelle Obama arms" all winter long. For Sasha, a clone of Milq Cyrus; for Malia, a boyfriend I can play basketball with; for Rahm, a copy of Basketball for Dummies so I can play basketball with him; for Hillary, a new pantsuit from J. Crew (or Liz Claiborne - she's a diplomat, not a model); for Joe, a \$100 Timtrak gift card.

Lastly, Santa, there is me. I may have said some things during my campaign that I haven't really acted on. Each morning, the media, not unlike a New Jersey mob boss, keeps reminding me of the many promises I have yet to fulfill. Santa, for Christmas, please, please, please, close Gitmo and get Congress to approve the health care bill before next Christmas. Also, if you could, have Fox News shut down. Completely.

Santa, if you fulfill all my requests of this letter, I will mention you in my next State of the Union Speech and have Congress pass a law prohibiting the spread of doubt of your existence.

With much respect,

President Barack Obama

by gregfrancese

the water tower obtains secret copy of copenhagen resolution

by emilyhoogesteger

We, the leaders of the participating nations, in recognition of the fact that climate change is a serious issue that must be addressed without further delay, have pooled our resources and (briefly) put aside our pride to develop a plan which will save the world from destruction and devastation, more or less. We present the following resolutions to take immediate effect.

1. In order to reduce emissions, all delivery trucks will be stopped and all planes immediately grounded. All correspondence will henceforth be completed by way of the Pony Express, which will be reinstated in place of the U.S. Postal Service. In light of the lack of airplanes, all persons looking to cross the ocean should consult the motion picture Kon-Tiki for advice.

2. To end dependence on oil, alternative energy will now be the only type of energy allowed for public and private transportation. Commuters who turn in their cars will be issued a free personal transportation apparatus. Residents of Canada and Scandinavia will receive skis, residents of island nations will receive kiteboards, city dwellers will receive hang gliders and zip lines, and residents of Colorado will be given weather balloons.

3. All opulent desert cities, such as Las Vegas, which absorb precious water resources, will be immediately vacated. The citizens of these cities will be relocated to cities without an excess of water resources, in accordance with the new Initiative to Locate and Resettle Atlantis.

4. Construction will begin immediately on a giant pool skimmer to remove the trash from the oceans.

5. To reverse the effects of pollution and lower the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, a program of Extreme Reforestation will be instituted. Groups of guerrilla tree-planters, code-named "Johnny Appleseeds," will be dispatched to all points of the globe to start forests in any and every available area. Areas that will be reforested include, but are not limited to, lawns, rooftops, golf courses, skiing hills, roads, and the tops of bald people's heads.

6. To build up an ethic of nonconsumerism among the public, all schools, colleges, and community centers will offer free classes in Tree Hugging, Dumpster Diving, and Living Without a Toilet or Any Furniture. Local "Green Police" will reward citizens seen wearing dreadlocks or not showering for at least a week with a free mason jar. ■

nativity scene the green

by mikewhite

A close friend asks me, "Why does it matter? I'm not offended, are you?" "Yes I fucking am," I reply, too harshly for the situation, but I wanted to get my point across. I would like to pose this question... Should the Green really be decorated with just a lone Nativity Scene? I fully appreciate the rights of whatever religious organization to display their objects on public property. But is a showing of solely Christian Spirit the right message to be sending to prospective students? Many of these prospective students might be seeing Groovy UV for the first time. I, as an Atheist, would have been very disappointed if the first sight I witnessed when arriving to the vast new cultured world of UVM was a Nativity Scene standing alone on the Green. A showing of diverse customs with many different points of view represented equally would be much easier to stomach. It could be a celebration of the variety of culture here at UVM. It is on that premise that I am going to erect a "Festivus Pole" on the Green.

Festivus is a holiday that was first presented to the masses by Seinfeld. In an early episode, Frank Costanza, George's father, finds that he is tired of the traditional holidays because they have become too commercialized. He, in response, makes up his own holiday called "Festivus" which has no religious connotations other than that it is a celebration, and it is in the winter time. Festivus only involves a meal, an "Airing of Grievances" (complaining about who has wronged you in the past year), and "Feats of Strength."

I would like to propose the celebration of Festivus here at UVM, which is to be held Sunday the 13th of December around the Festivus Pole. We will be partaking in the "Airing Of Grievances," where we will discuss how we have been wronged over the year in order to cleanse our spirits of any vindictiveness. After the "Airing of Grievances," we will share a Festivus Meal around the Festivus Pole, which will consist of food that you bring. Once the meal is over, we will all participate in "Feats of Strength," post-meal Pillow Fight, just like our ancestors did. A secular celebration of people is just what we students need, especially in the midst of loads of finals stress.

All will be welcome to come and celebrate around the Festivus Pole and all are invited to bring any musical instruments or hookahs to add to the festivities. Invite friends, invite family, invite people you don't even know. Festivus is indeed a holiday "for the rest of us." ■

the five worst leaders ever

by georgeloftus

5 Sir John A. Macdonald The biggest proponent of a Canadian constitution and country's first prime minister, Macdonald started the tradition of Canadians being complacent and generally lame. They weren't independent until 1982. It's almost sad how happy they were letting England hold their hand. In their Constitution under Article III (Executive Power) provision 9 states: "The Executive Government and Authority of and over Canada is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the Queen." That's not a joke, that's verbatim. Although it's nice having a 1.4:1 Tim Horton/person ratio, money that's different colors, and the credit of inventing hockey, none of those are a good substitute for dignity... Except maybe the Tim Horton thing. Have you been there? It's fucking delicious.

4 Wayne Wheeler An attorney from Ohio who clearly aspired for a life in politics, drafted the 18th Amendment which outlawed alcohol. This led to prohibition, which then led to people like Al Capone organizing crime. So while he may have given us cool things, like the movie *The Untouchables*, he is also indirectly responsible for creating NASCAR, which is somehow still thought of as a sport. Parties were probably hard enough without Guitar Hero, but I can't even imagine them being completely dry. Wheeler must have made it infinitely harder for guys to score a girl to go home with, and infinitely harder for girls to score a guy that will want to go on a second date...

3 Emperor Palpatine Let's review: Emperor Palpatine was in charge of a galactic empire, and created the ultimate weapon not once, but twice. The second time he thought he was safe by putting it next to a planet inhabited by three-foot tall clumps of hair. He built a cannon that could destroy planets, and had spaceships the size of cities, but the one thing he didn't take into account was the apparent fortitude of Ewoks. Jim Henson creation. Seriously, they're like clumps of armpit hair with arms and legs. In all fairness, their spears were really sharp and almost twice their size, so at least they were really well prepared for any kind of attack, y'know, from a fish or a bubble.

2 Adolf Hitler Keep in mind this list is looking at the top five worst political figures, not the top five worst people in general. High performance cars, deliciously refined beers, and mythically sex-crazed blondes will never be the first thing people think of when they go to Germany. Instead, it's death camps, a war that cost millions of lives, and some other kinds of atrocities. There's no way to fuck up a country better than to put a total dipshit in charge (note: see any Daily Show episode, 2000-2008 for further details). How could anyone fail harder? (Again, see any Daily Show episode, 2000-2008 for further details.) Also, he made it impossible to grow a very specific kind of mustache. Granted, it's ugly, and people shouldn't grow one anyway, but it'd be nice having the option. Thanks a lot, asshole.

1 Scar Yes, the same Scar that killed Mufasa and made Simba so guilt-trodden that he ran away from home to a better life with a warthog and a meerkat. The opening scene of *The Lion King* showed a lush and vibrant paradise full of life and optimism. Clearly, a great place to raise some cubs, and no one ever went to bed hungry. And then Scar took control. On average, a male lion will reach maturity between by the time he's two or three, and that's exactly when Simba came back to get Scar off the throne. That means it took, at most, three years for Scar to A) destroy the Circle of Life B) turn Pride Rock into an inhospitable wasteland with constant thunderstorms but perpetual drought and C) lose in a fight to a lion raised by a warthog and a fucking meerkat. Simba grew up eating bugs and talking to stars. Even if Scar came up with an excuse it wouldn't be good enough. Worst. Leader. Ever. ■



ABC as easy as ADD

by emilyarnow and jelenaaleksich

The week of Thanksgiving lets all of us have the opportunity to gobble, relax, and kick it back for a few days; yet, after that short time of tranquility, the student and faculty population is coerced to strap into overdrive so that we can all finish up another round of classes successfully. Now that the final days of the semester are approaching, we are all surrounded by a frenzy of chaos: How do I study for all these upcoming finals? Should I participate in the Naked Bike Ride? Holy crap, another semester has passed already?

It's pretty much a known fact that being a college student is difficult. Organization and multi-tasking are very crucial for many to get by during these busy academic lives of ours. We must fight the endless temptations that may hinder our focus like our vital social lives, Call of Duty, and sleeping. We must rise up to the challenge of working for more than six hours straight at the library. We must anxiously figure out where our residences will be next year off campus. On top of all of this, we must still stay on top of our game academically and be strong for the final home stretch.

Sophomore Connor Leonard talks about these daily pressures: "It's nearly impossible to balance schoolwork, classes, and actually having a life. I'm either sacrificing tons of homework to chill with my friends or vice versa; it leaves me with countless all-nighters because I just don't have enough time during the day." So this begs the question: How the hell do we attain this? Well, whether it is ethical or not, the temporary resolution for many seems to be consuming the ADHD prescription drug: adderall.

The consumption of adderall seems to be the cutting edge study-party-organization pill that helps us endure long periods of time without fatigue or sleep. We just keep going on and on and on... while we become our own worst fantasy in the process. We transform into those vampires on Twilight and go against the natural process of sleep while attempting to stay up all day and all night long. This older-than-you-think trend creates one of the largest underground networks of prescription drug use across college campuses nationwide. Burlington is no exception and aids in the fact that adderall has officially become one of the most omnipotent college fetishes.

Adderall usage and abuses has become synonymous with college exam week. There are the students who take it because it's been prescribed for medical usage and help with ADD; then there are those who take it to cram out a 10-page paper in two hours. While these contradicting methods of taking adderall have raised eyebrows with parents, teachers,

and some students, many students don't see the problem. "It helps me focus on my work and get it done faster, regardless if I have ADD or not, it works for me," an anonymous student said. This may be true for students everywhere; however, this rise of unprescribed usage must beg the question: Is the work being produced actually good work, or just work done on speed?

Adderall contains amphetamine and dextroamphetamine, both stimulants that, in a sense, gives one a high and consequently allows one to focus on certain things more intently. While adderall is not technically "speed," it doesn't contain many ingredients linked to that and other drugs such as methamphetamine. And what exactly happens if you take this drug recreationally? Does your take-home essay miraculously get done in half the time?

Well, for some it does. "I took adderall last year during spring exams and wrote a paper in half the time; it was amazing," Lydia states. "It wasn't that great of a paper, and I only got a B on it, but I was just so thrilled I didn't have to pull an all nighter." As much as students use this pill for papers, some also use it for every day homework. "I took Concerta once and took so many notes I didn't know what to do with them. Half of them didn't make sense but I got the work done I needed." Marie, a junior explains.

But what is this actually telling us? Are students taking this drug because it helps their work? Stephen, a sophomore, doesn't seem to think so. "I was productive, and did things faster, but I was much less creative, my work wasn't nearly as good as if I put more time in to it without adderall."

The truth of the matter is that adderall has made its mark on college campuses around the country aiding students during finals week and has created a whole new generation of prescription drug abusers. What does this mean for the future? There is the possibility of adderall dependence later in life, and an addiction may arise where one could get little done without taking adderall. Teachers and even employers may start to pay more attention to details and quality of work rather than how much one can do in a small amount of time. However the outcome, adderall indeed helps to get work done faster; but think twice before you pop those blue pills, your paper with rushed spelling errors and never ending tangents may hurt your grade more than help it. ■

surfing the stars

with lizcantrall

Sagittarius November 23-December 22
Capricorn December 23-January 19

Capricorns take heed:

You are ruled by Saturn, which imparts wisdom and serenity on you in these stressful times, and as finals approach, you find yourself more industrious, diligent, and focused than ever before. You are also extremely gullible if you believed all that. Sorry, Cappies, but you're no more likely to succeed than the rest of us. Actually, you may fare worse: if you have an exam on the 17th, you will be in for surprise!

The earthly skies see that you have been hiding something from a close friend, most likely a Taurus, an aggressive sign who will have no problem butting heads with you, goat vs. bull. Avoid the color red. In the end, you will settle your dispute through a ball of yarn, string cheese, and an obese Calico cat named Princess. The stars wish you well.

4

reflected the water tower beardventure competition

the real deal

winner: Joe Ainsworth



We're a little skeptical that the beards on these other guys are actually one-month old. However, we have us convinced that you can go from smooth-faced to suave in one easy, shave-free month. We wanted to give him some sort of prize since it looks like he might backhand us if we do.

best in show

winner: Ben Minden



Now here's a beard we would like to run our fingers through! Almost anyone can grow a haphazard mass of crap on their face. Not everyone can walk around with a true work of art protruding from their chin. Plus he looks kinda like that guy.

top 5 most annoying phrases ever:

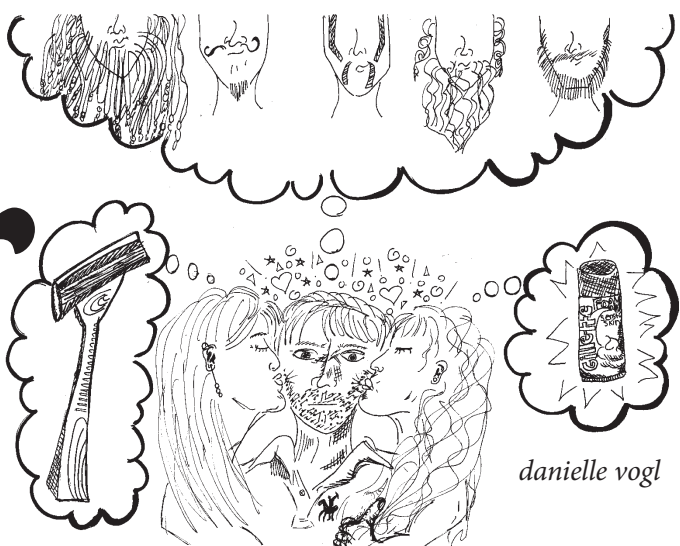
5. Saying "Hate to be a dick, but..." when requesting something that's not actually unreasonable at all.
4. Putting "-gate" at the end of any remotely scandalous occurrence. Balloon-gate? Seriously?
3. When called on in class, saying "Well, I was just going to say..." instead of just saying it.
2. Exclaiming "That is so gay" if you're older than 13.
1. Yelling, "I can't talk, I'm on the third floor of the library!" into your phone when you're on the third floor of the library and can't talk.

the existential WTF

Was Old Mill ever just...
Mill?

tions.

wer ber n



danielle vogl

beard brothers

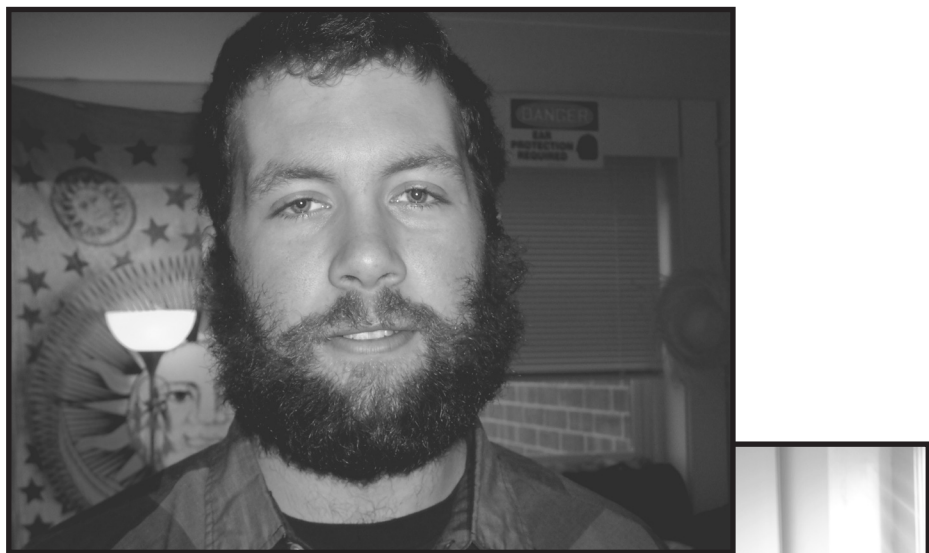
winners: Tal Battat (right) and unidentified friend



Ever feel like just hanging out with your bro, sticking pens into each other's beards, eating Funions, and taking Photobooth pictures on your Macbook? These guys do, and we support it. Friends who grow beards together also are awesome.

the wookiee award

winners: Tim Daley (top) and James Barthel (bottom)



It's a tie! James Barthel obviously has the depth, but Tim Daley clearly has a leg up on breadth. Maybe these two should hang out. But then again, maybe all that hair in one place could trigger the apocalypse.



beards: for the benefit of all

by georgeloftus

Hagrid. Ulysses S. Grant. Two-thirds of ZZ Top. Jesus. Beards are fucking sweet, no matter the domain. Be it pop culture, fantasy fiction, or politics, Beards are an amalgam of dignity and wisdom: they're as much character as the person who wears them. I don't know if you've been paying attention, but every time I've said Beard it's been capitalized. That's not an accident. As of print, Beard isn't a proper noun... but it should be.

Beards are synonymous with masculinity and they absolutely should be. Think of a lumberjack right now. If he's sans Beard then you're being a smartass, but worst of all, you're lying to yourself. There's a reason that when you think of a miner, he has coal in his Beard, or when you're thinking about pirates, the Bearded one is always the captain. There's a reason for that: Beards carry a certain weight that 5 o'clock could never hope to match. What weight? Maybe it's being a leader, in Abraham Lincoln's case, or maybe it's being an international sex magnet, not unlike Sir. Sean Connery. Either way, there's no denying that these are examples of the greatness man can achieve. Common factor? Beard.

If you're good at shaving, you can be done in five minutes. That's if you shave every other day and you don't have to take breaks to stop bleeding. At least with guys there isn't a protruding mis-shapen sphere in the middle of their throats where hair grows exceptionally thick. Oh, there is? Well I'm sure then the skin there won't be extremely sensitive, nor riddled with capillaries that'll cascade blood at the slightest miscalculation of blade angle or pressure. That's not the case? Snap. At least a guy's face isn't usually a mixture of angular and rounded surfaces that inhibit any bold and deliberate stroke that could easily cut or trim hair. I'm bored of sarcasm so I'm just going to say it: shaving sucks ass. When you do it right you look like a twelve year old, and if you mess up you could slice your face up easier than an apple. Where's the win? If men were meant to shave it'd be fun, easy, and we'd have found a way to put it on ESPN already.

It's just plain practical to grow one. Santa Claus didn't grow a Beard to look cute, he grew it because he knows scarves fall off, but Beards don't. It seems to be serving him well, otherwise he would've gotten rid of it by now. St. Nick? No, more like St. Genius. Not only are Beards like a carpet for your throat, they're like a cactus for your face. It's pretty much the closest a man will ever get to carrying a child. He'll feel it grow, and kick and itch. He'll carry it, and protect it when it can't protect itself, like from jokes when it's just starting out, or coming in patchy. There's the myth that women have an internal biological clock counting down and I argue that men have a hairy, external, biological timer counting on, letting them know just how long they've stopped caring what their girlfriend's friends said behind their back.

I'm not saying every man should stop shaving and grow a Beard but I am saying that if that happened it would be pretty fuckin' awesome. I know that a lot of guys can't grow Beards, and I also know that a lot of girls really hate Beards, but there's no denying the pleasure you get when you see someone rocking a Beard that goes past their nipples. Oh, they're itchy and dirty? They don't have to be. If it's itchy that just means it's not long enough and if it's dirty it's because the guy is dirty. So girlies, stop judging, and guys stop being jealous. A man wears a Beard for everyone, and the Beard he wears is innocent. Innocent and rad. ■

beards: the cock block that grows on your face

by leamcclellan

I think I understand the whole beard thing. After all of those horrible, awkward, pimply-chinned, pubescent years in middle school, a budding outcrop of facial hair must seem like some sort of god-given gift. A consolation prize if you will, for having to feel weird at 8th grade dances and pick Oreos out of your braces. You're a man now! And the beard proves it. But just because you *can* do something, doesn't always mean you *should*. The new twenty-one year old often drinks until he or she can drink no more! But the mature twenty-two year old reaches a crucial realization: just because you *can* get shitfaced and wake up on your couch, half naked with a little puke on your left sneaker, doesn't mean you should. Likewise, just because you are physically able to cover a perfectly good face with coarse, unattractive hair doesn't mean it's the way to go.

Osama Bin Laden has a beard. Fidel Castro has quite the beard as well. I'm not saying the beard necessarily bears any connection with their evilness, but I will say that Fidel and Osama aren't exactly what you would call hotties. Maybe I'm not being fair. Not all people with beards are evil masterminds. Plenty of nice guys have beards. Santa has a beard, Colonel Sanders has one, Emile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud, Moses, King Tritan, the list goes on. But there aren't too many people dying to hop in the sack with Karl Marx. No, life isn't all about sex. I'm not saying that attracting a sexual partner is the be all end all goal in life. There is certainly something to be said for celibacy. So if you're not getting all hung up on the getting laid issue, maybe a beard can be your thing!

"Remember when Al Gore grew a beard after he lost the 2000 election? We all thought he was either off his rocker or lost in the throes of a deep depression."

Not only are beards unattractive, they are also dangerous. Ever hear a conversation like this? "Holy crap! Is that rug-burn? Did you take your face and rub it up against a rug!? What happened to your friken face?!" To which the victim replies, "No. My boyfriend has a beard now. So. Yeah." Beardburn happens and it isn't pretty. Even if the friction and beardiness of the beard aren't powerful enough to create an actual oozing red rash, the prickliness factor is never a plus. Try making out with a pineapple and tell me how you like it.

Taken together, the pain-inducing quality and the overall hideous-ness of a beard make it an inconsiderate choice if a man has a significant other, and a poor choice for those who would like their face to touch another's some time in the future. Like the pinky toe and the wisdom tooth, the ability to grow a beard is a unfortunate vestige of our ancient past. Unless you're trying to get with Lucy the Australopithecus, you should shave.

Finally, prospective beard-growers need to think about their future. Most of us aren't eager to get our big break in the lumberjack industry upon graduation. Beards are a political and professional liability. The last president to have a beard was Benjamin Harrison and he died over a century ago! Remember when Al Gore grew a beard after he lost the 2000 election? We all thought he was either off his rocker or lost in the throes of a deep depression. Think about those poor bearded guys who work for Sodexo and have to put that weird hairnet over their faces. They look ridiculous!

Also, beards conjure up thoughts of sociopathic, lazy, unemployed hermits. Just sayin. ■

trash.



i want you so bad

someone on campus catch your eye?
couldn't get a **name**?
submit your **love** anonymously
uvm.edu/~watertwr/iwysb.html

I am tall and not from round here. You are petite and appear rather lovely. We can't seem to take our eyes off each other. Would love a chance to get to know you sometime.

When: All the time
Where: L/L Centre
I saw: a lady
I am: a man

You laugh at the silly jokes you make but I think Its cute. Maybe we can have some Tea some time?

When: mostly every day
Where: Davis Center, South End
I saw: A pretty woman
I am: A handsome man

I saw you all glammed up standing there in the hall pink boa and looking hot with your gorgeous friend at hand
I said you looked good and you said that I did too
We should get together and be the glam queens we are

When: 1:30 Thursday
Where: Waterman Building
I saw: 2 Queens
I am: fabulous

I just discovered you in my archaeology class.
You are beautiful and have luscious flowing brown hair.
I noticed you were reading one of my favorite books, Life of Pi.
And I could not keep my eyes off of you.

When: MWF Prehistoric Archaeology
Where: Votey 105
I saw: the most amazing looking man
I am: an amazing looking woman

I had to prove I wasn't stealing anything in my empty take-out container.
You were in line with a silver heart on a chain around your neck and a gorgeous smile on your face.
I was at a loss for words with my breath taken away.
I would love to know you.
Next time I'll find the words.
See you around?

When: Friday, December 4th
Where: Davis Center Lunch Line
I saw: the prettiest girl I've ever seen
I am: a hopeless romantic boy

You shower me with compliments every chance you get. Yet all I want is for you to pause and let me tell you for once how wonderful you are, because I don't think you realize that. Next time let me tell you how amazing you are - from your stunning good looks to your hilarious personality. If you weren't hooking up with that other girl, we could have a really good time, guaranteed.

When: All week
Where: Lafayette, Davis Center, Downtown
I saw: an attractive man
I am: an interested woman

I never really thought much about because you're my R.A., but I saw you walking down the hallway from the shower this weekend and you have a HOT BOD! Why you been hidin' that the whole semester under all those clothes? You can come in my room and give me a violation whenever.

When: Every now and then
Where: WDW
I saw: A hot R.A.
I am: A hot resident

the ear

overheard a conversation in b-town?
was it hilarious? dumb? inspirational?
tell **the ear** and we'll print it.
uvm.edu/~watertwr/ear.html

In the doorway to Davis:

Girl 1: I didn't wash my hair for like seven days over break.
Girl 2: I don't need to hear these things.

Outside of CWP:

Bro 1: I wonder what she's studying.
Bro 2: The Kama Sutra.
Bro 3: That'd be sweet.

In the Marché:

Girl 1 (facing window): OMG it's snowing!!!!
Girl 2 (not facing window): It's snowing!?!?
Girl 1: Well...it's like, rain, but it's white.

Davis Center Comfy Chairs:

Guy: ... You don't know what Steez is??
Girl (genuinely concerned): No, what is it? ... You're seriously not gonna tell me what it is? (*pause*) Something to do with ... weed? Something to do with your jacket?
Guy shakes his head.

By the salad bar in Simpson:

Red Head Guy: I've never told anyone this before, but I slept with a prostitute when I was in Prague with my cousin.

The Toys Take Over Christmas:

Little Boy in audience: No way. His dad was an elf, and his mom was a fairy. Santa Claus is a FELF!

eats.

if bland was good, bove's would be terrific

with colbynixon

Burlington, Vermont is home to some of the most interesting people and events in New England. There is the "End-of-the-World" guy, the South End Art Hop, the Naked Bike Ride, and pretty much the entire North End. This makes you wonder how Bove's Italian restaurant on Pearl Street has been able to maintain such a presence in the Burlington community for so long (the website proudly claims that Bove's first opened on December 7, 1941, a day they call "fortuitous"). Known for its retro façade and 15 minutes of fame on the Food Network's Throw-down with Bobby Flay, Bove's appears to have some solid potential. However, the meal I had was more bland than the evening news with Jim Lehrer.

Recently, some family friends came to visit, one of whom was raised in Burlington. They wanted to go out to eat, and she suggested Bove's, recalling how much she had enjoyed the restaurant as a young child. Entering the restaurant, she claimed that it hadn't changed a bit, and judging by the décor it probably hadn't since that "fortuitous" day in 1941. The only out-of-place item in the entire res-

taurant is a TV that plays the same video on a continuous loop. Upon closer inspection, we could see for dinner this evening we would be joined by Bobby Flay. After settling in, I ordered the chicken parmesan, which I believed would be a

sound decision. Although I was enjoying the company of my friends, in the time I waited for my food, I probably could (and maybe should) have run to Shelburne and back. There's an old expression that suggests "hunger is the spice of life;" however, my appetite did nothing to increase the taste of my food. The chicken tasted like regular chicken, definitely nothing exciting, and the pasta sauce might as well have been water mixed with ketchup- actually that probably would have

been more flavorful. One of my friends had ordered the spaghetti with vodka sauce, which although he managed to eat, he joked that the vodka sauce was so bad, the chefs must have used Popov. His wife, the Burlington native, was so

disappointed in her meal that she apologized profusely to us for the blandness. We might as well have been eating paper maché. Needless to say, we did not order dessert. ■

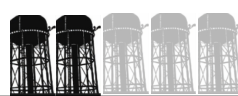
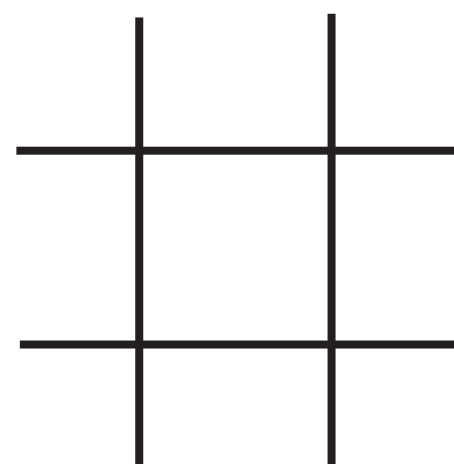
"Although I was enjoying the company of my friends, in the time I waited for my food, I probably could (and maybe should) have run to Shelburne and back."

Logistics: Located at 68 Pearl Street, Burlington, VT, open for lunch and dinner. Prices are reasonable, on average \$7.00-\$9.00 for an entrée. Bove's receives 2 out of 5 WT's.

editor's note:
we commonly get complaints that there's not enough crossword puzzles or sudoku in the water tower.

well, screw sudoku!

you can have some tic-tac-toe instead:



créatif stuffé.

Feeling a little *créatif*? Wishing Vantage Point was published more than once a semester? Well now you can submit your creative writing, short stories, poems, drawings, black and white photos, and any other *créatif* things to the water tower's new section, **créatif stuffé**. Send your submissions to thewatertownnews@gmail.com by Tuesdays at 4:00.

may 4th, 2241

by joshhegarty

According to the computer, today is May 4th, 2241. That means it's Julie's birthday. I sent a message for her back to Earth. It will be impossible for her to send one back to me. At month six, it became impossible to have live feed with Earth. At month seven, it became impossible for them to contact me. I'm in month ten of this seventeen-month journey. When I land, I will construct and program the first beacon from the new planet to Earth. Phase One of Step One of colonization is on my shoulders. Since I will not return, the government said they would name the planet after me. I told them I wanted it named after my wife instead.

She will be well taken care of by the Institute of Air & Space. This is not the first one-way space mission they've conducted. The families are always well taken care of. Most likely, my son, Ralph, will be given free tuition at the most prestigious of academies. Maybe he will go into space like me. I know he will not have to toil. I wish I could see his face now. He is six years old. Someday, he'll understand what I've done for him. Someday, he'll step foot on Juliannas and he'll know his father was a hero.

I spend most of my time asleep in a machine, which exercises for me, ensur-

ing my muscles and bone mass do not deteriorate. The ship mostly flies itself, but sometimes I need to enter commands. The computer alerts me when I'm needed. I eat vitamin pellets and water. The computer tells me when it's time to eat. Without the computer, I doubt I'd still be sane.

"When I land, these very words I am typing will be sent back to Earth. The first few men that were sent to colonize planets had their records published as inspirational memoirs. I wonder how much had been changed from their original words."

When I land, these very words I am typing will be sent back to Earth. The first few men that were sent to colonize planets had their records published as inspirational memoirs. I wonder how much had been changed from their original words. I doubt they were as positive as the books make them seem. I haven't had a positive thought in the past three months. I pass my time writing. I mostly repeat myself. Today I could write something different. Today is Julie's birthday. I love Julie with all my heart. When I die, my last words

will be her name.

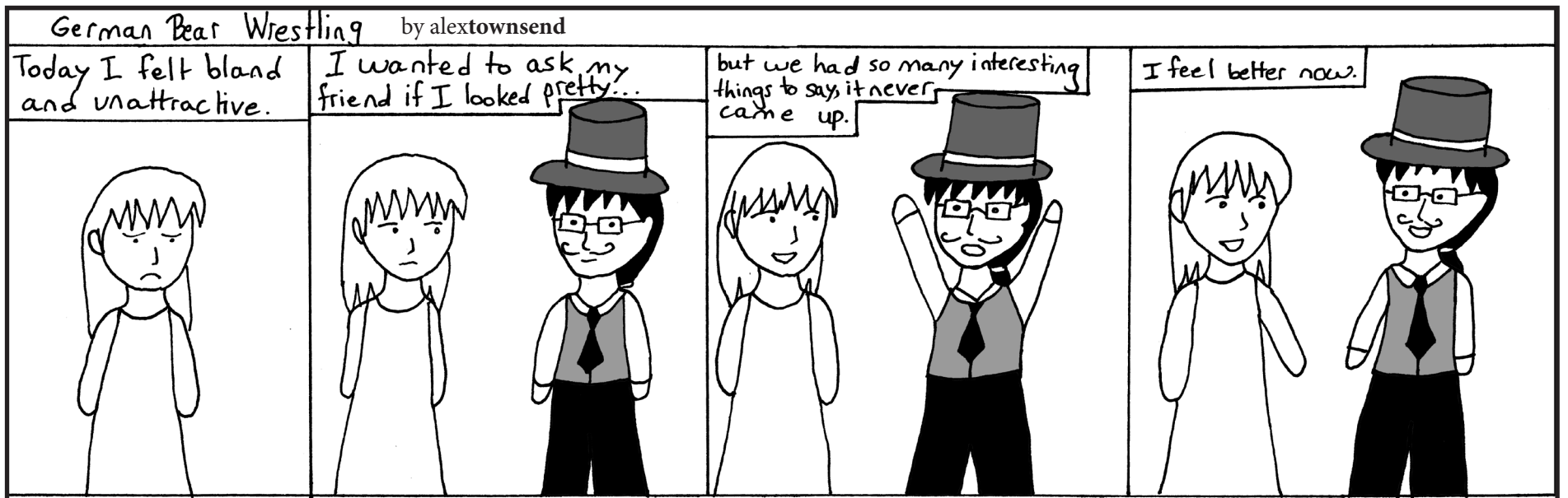
They told me that the cold vacuum of space could end a life quickly and painlessly. In eight months I will be dead. But today I am still alive. I am still alive and I love my wife and I love my son. Everyday I think about when I will die. In eight months, the calendar on the computer

out of me.

Today is Julie's birthday. I hope that Julie can step foot on this planet before she dies. I pray that this planet can be colonized. If it cannot, it would not be IAS's first failure. The men sent to die on those planets are revered as heroes, but I'm sure their families feel cheated. I don't want my family to feel cheated.

I have come to pray more and more. I look out into space and talk to God. They say space can change you, and I suppose I'm changed. I believe God will protect my family. I believe this new planet will habituate life.

Today is May 4th. Today is Julie's birthday. Before her next birthday, I will be dead. If I could ensure she could see the new planet, I would do this all over again. I love Julie with every fiber of my being. I wish I could see Ralph's face. In eight months I will be dead, but my love will not be. My love will be a beacon in the night sky. My love will be a legacy, written in the history books. My love will inspire men to continue the exploration of the cosmos. Today is May 4th. Today is Julie's birthday. Before her next, I will be dead. The cold vacuum of space will tear the air from my lungs, but not the love from my heart. ■



chocolate coconut

by georgeloftus

The perspiration is a second skin now. It takes me over and destroys any semblance of concentration that I had before. My mind is in ruins, shambles. I know what I have to do, but I can't follow through. It's too hard. All I want to do right now is take a shower. I don't think I smell but that's not really the point. I feel like I just went swimming. It shouldn't be this hard. I say something but can't even make out my own words.

As I step forward I have trouble moving my feet. Their weight is immeasurable. They have detracted from my balance and I stumble. It's embarrassing but I shake it off. My pace is steady now. My feet lighten, but nowhere remotely close to something comfortable. I inch forward in hopes that I can hear her but I know I won't be able to. My teeth chatter and drown the outside world. The cadence is deafening.

My fingers dance and find a pattern. Amidst the chaos of this moment, my hands find peace and moves to the rhythm set by my jaw. Amazingly, I am collected. I remember there's reason, and logic, and although they don't exist inside me, remembering they're real is a reward. I realize all at once that everything has an ending, especially this doubt.

I feel confidence reluctantly swim through me. The shower I desperately craved comes and I am clean. I've made my decision; it's out of my power now. I told her how it was going to be and now the rest is up to her. I stand taller. I stand

braver. Self-doubt is erased from my mind

And then she looks at me.

I am thrown into the sun. Intense pressures and a violent heat bake me and leave me speechless. I shake my head. She shakes hers. The entire room is confused and I can feel the stares of everyone around me. I've been here for five minutes, said two words, and everyone now knows my secret: insecurity is a sweatshirt and I am wearing it. I want to take it back.

And then she speaks.

"So, you said two scoops of chocolate-coconut in a sugar cone, right?"

"Yes... That would be... Great."

Moments pass.

"There you are, sir, have a nice day!"

"Thank you, miss."

I wish I said heath bar crunch. ■

autumn flower

by henrykellog

Flowers shouldn't grow in Autumn Or at least they're not supposed to But from time to time one does It forces it into the world by the power of its desire

Then the frost comes and kills it where it stands

Making its bud a tiny crystalline testament

To a Beauty that never was.

human

by hannahmelton

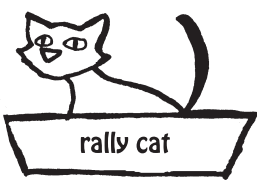
i am
feminine
nor
masculine
i am
black
nor
white
i am
ordinary
nor
extraordinary
i am
janitor
nor
ceo
i am
harvard
nor
community college
i am
miss america
nor
ugly duckling
i am
bureaucrat
nor
anarchist
yo soy
español
ni
ingles
i am
i
nor
you:
i am human.

untitled

by chandlergodette

Why am I here?
This is pointless
Killin 2 birds w/ one stone
Is it really worth it?
The voice runs n the opinions cum
But mine remains silent
Betta yet I'll speak once to cover my ass
since participation is 20% of the final grade
It's like playin a card game and he holds the ultimate spade
He controls what's right n wrong
In hopes we'll all become
Good a discussion and comprehend
But as I look around I see blank faces n heads down
So im not the only one
N she participates destroying my 1 and done ideology
Point is this class sucks!
Too abstract, too lifeless, to full of it!
N yet I cannot drop it
In the end the 2 birds fall as the stone hits both
Maybe it's worth it, but what stress have I wrought?
Have I bought my degree? Or is there a deep seeded decree...
The point is survive!
As the semester truly begins, keep your head up and push on
N always remember, You are not the only one!

cat litter.



can't we all just get along?

cat litter:
by mac smith, greg francesce, and george loftus
artwork by kelly macintyre

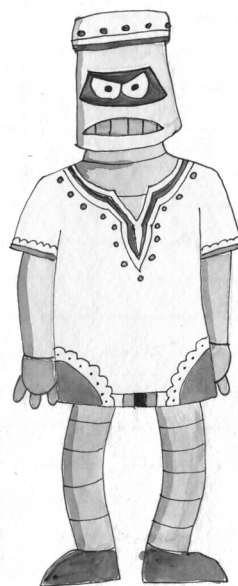
The Holidays are here, and Americans take great pride in their efforts to not offend anyone in any way by wishing everyone a big ambiguous "Happy Holidays." How effective is this strategy? **the water tower** managed to gather a panel of holiday representatives for their thoughts on the topic. Disclaimer: **the water tower** in no way endorses or supports the real comments made by these real people. Happy Holidays.



Santa Claus I'm sick of this bullshit Wal Mart 'Happy Holidays' culture revolution. This country was founded on a set of moral principles that are constantly being eroded by gay atheist Mexicans. America was a much better place when everyone just said Merry Fucking Christmas and went on with their day. Seriously-how many people are actually Jewish? And is Kwanzaa even a real holiday? It's everyone else's fault for this mess. It's *Merry Christmas*, okay?



Hannukah Harry I don't like Happy Holidays either. I'm even more pissed off than that fatass on the left. People should just say Happy Hannukah when it's Hannukah and Merry Christmas when it's Christmas. And Happy Kwanzaa whenever the hell that is. I'm officially *not* down with this charity holiday bullshit. Jews are not happy about a consolation prize. *Happy Hannukah, bitches!*



Kwanzaa Bot Obviously it's only the white holidays debating the merits of 'Happy Holidays.' What ever happened to 'Happy Kwanzaa?' Does that even exist? Everyone naysays the black holiday, but what about the fat white piece of shit breaking into your house and stealing your milk and cookies? And seriously... 'Happy Hannukah?' For eight days? Jews are like 2% of the population, African Americans are 14%! Kwanzaa Bot wants some respect.



Elmo Elmo loves to say 'Happy Holidays!' to all of his friends and family! Elmo thinks that 'Happy Holidays' is just the good old American way to put our differences aside. Who cares whose holiday gets you more presents or whose holiday last longer? Or whose mascot is more real? Or if Kwanzaa exists or not? Can't we all just agree that we all deserve time to give thanks for our families and friends? Can't we all just have a laugh as we sit by the fire and tell stories of holidays past? Elmo says all Americans should unite under the American flag for the holiday season! Except for those people that celebrate Ramadan. Elmo doesn't like them.

tunes.



rock 'n' roll never looked so beautiful

by bridgettreco

"I've been magnetic since I was a baby!" screams lead singer Justin Tranter on Semi Precious Weapons' first single, "Magnetic Baby." The Brooklyn-based glam-rock group is set to go on tour with Lady GaGa this winter during her anticipated Monster Ball tour—naturally, they are a band you need to watch out for in the coming months. I know what you're thinking, "Lady GaGa? Oh no, are they gonna be another bunch of weirdos screaming about disco sticks?" For those who feel that a ride on the disco stick is an unreliable source of transportation, do not be afraid to embrace these guys. Instead, you'll find a mix between David Bowie (Ziggy Stardust phase), Sammy Hagar (Van Halen's better era, duh) and Hedwig & the Angry Inch (obscure musical theatre reference). Throw them all together, and you've got Semi Precious Weapons, a band that will scare you into keeping them on your radar (in a delightful way!).

Only a few years old, the band has out three EPs, the latest being "We Love You," containing by far their greatest tracks. The only way you can really decipher what the band's all about is by watching some of their music videos. The opening lines to "Magnetic Baby" will scare you shitless, but Tranter's androgyny will simultaneously turn you on and disarm you completely. The best way to describe Tranter's appearance is Tim Curry as Dr. Frank-N-Furter in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*—scary, but also alluring. You don't know why you're turned on, you just don't question it. But the last lines of the song are the most telling of a bisexual glam-rocker in a postmodern world; "It's not my fault some people wish I was dead / It's not my fault my precious little hands are red / It's not my fault they pushed so hard they made me" is almost heartbreaking. While using this song as an anthem for the misunderstood transgender youth may be a little far fetched, you'll forget all about it when you're rocking out—seriously, you won't be able to get it out of your head.

"Her Hair Is On Fire" expresses a different sentiment: "She don't want no wa-

ter, let her fucking head burn." Another one of SPW's more radio-friendly jams, you can sense influences from pop-punk bands across a broad spectrum (think Green Day and screamo—except good). On top of that, you can feel the urgency in the ultra-sexualized vocals that are quite comparable to Iggy Pop (circa Stooges; think "Your Pretty Face is Going to Hell"). It's more than obvious that Iggy and Bowie are sexually-ambiguous icons of Tranter—but the rest of the band's members look like totally normally dudes, surprisingly.

Semi Precious Weapons are not just a band, they are an entity. No wonder they named a track after themselves that oozes the influence of classic hair metal such as Van Halen, Quiet Riot, even Alice Cooper. The song's catchphrase? "I can't pay my rent, but I'm fucking gorgeous. Tell me something I don't know." This tongue-in-cheek self-obsessive behavior isn't something we haven't seen before, but the ambition is admirable in lyrics like "scream, Semi Precious Weapons, or you might get hurt!" I'll oblige to the former. Not all of the tracks come across so in-your-face hard rock as the first singles; tamer songs like "Bleed to Heal" and "Jesus" give a better sense of their musicianship and range, the latter evoking the sounds of Cheap Trick. But just as quickly, we go back to songs like the awesomely explicit "That's Kunt" (sample lyric: "She threw up in her wine glass / That's kunt") that exercise excessive, but commendable self-indulgence.

Why are Semi Precious Weapons an important band to have in our time? Sure, we're luckily (or unluckily) past the heyday of two-dimensional singers like David Lee Roth and (cringe) Jon Bon Jovi. But calling that hair metal is just plain cruel in comparison to SPW. Tranter's androgyny is relevant today just like the bed-hopping misogynists were relevant in the 80's. In fact, he's probably more socially relevant in pop culture than Iggy Pop will ever be. SPW is not just hair metal, or punk, or glam, or pop—it's as indefinable as our current musical sphere. You may disagree; you may think that glam-rock is dead, unable to be resurrected. But as Tranter wails on the final track ("Rock 'n' Roll Never Looked So Beautiful"), "just cause I'm dead don't kill the party." Touché. ■

shuffle.

with julietcritsimilios

Just a few more tests lie between you and winter break. Try and ignite your holiday spirit from under all those books and papers.

Overture (Nut 60) Duke Ellington
Last Christmas Cascada *Tell me baby do you recognize me/well it's been a year it doesn't surprise me*
Wrapping Paper Cream *Wrapping paper/in the gutter/moving slowly as the wind on the sea*

Let It Snow Frank Sinatra *When we finally kiss goodnight/how I'll hate going*

good/bad of 2009

by jeremyklein

It's tough to narrow down a whole year's worth of good and bad music to just two songs, but hey, someone has to do it.

Good Song: Animal Collective- "My Girls"

Who would have guessed that the best song of the year would come off of what is probably the best album of the year? The second track on their album "Merriweather Post Pavillion," released way back in January, this song has proven impossible to top. The music, the voices, and the lyrics, all come together to form something of sheer beauty. Noah Lennox, aka Panda Bear, one of the band's vocalists, sings very simple lyrics but they hold much meaning on Lennox's feelings about the bonds of the family. He doesn't need nor want the material things in life. All he wants is to provide a home for his wife and daughter. ("I just want four walls and adobe slabs for my girls.") The music in the song combines a vast array of melodic sounds, which along with Lennox's voice make the song both a catchy one and one that is capable of inducing a hypnotic trance. It is quite the experience. And then before you know it, the song is over, at which point the only thing left to do is start it over and enjoy again, and again, and again.

edit/undo

In last week's Shuffle, we said that California was the Sunshine State, when it is actually the Golden State. After intense research, the **wf** has learned that Florida is actually the Sunshine State, which can be easily confused because both states are very Sunshiney. Mystery solved. You're welcome.

winter break

out in the storm

Holiday Weezer *Let's go away for while/you and I to a strange and distant land*
New Year's Day U2 *All is quiet on new year's day/a world in white gets under way*
The Chanukah Song Adam Sandler *Chanukah is the festival of lights/one day of presents hell no we get eight crazy nights*
Winter Vivaldi

Christmas Tree Lady Gaga *Light me up put me on top/let's fa la la la la la la la la/ the only place you want to be is underneath my Christmas tree*

Bad Song: The Black Eyed Peas- "I Gotta Feeling"

It would appear that The Black Eyed Peas have become so popular that anything they put out, no matter how terrible, becomes a hit. Such is the case with "I Gotta Feeling," which managed to top the Billboard Hot 100 for about three months. Now, I get that pop songs are supposed to be mindless, catchy tunes for us all to party to, but this song just takes it too far with the mindlessness. They literally must have been without a mind when they came up with it. The backing music is standard stuff, being an overall catchy beat and melody, whatever. But the combination of the song's lyrics with this simple backing, however, is what elevates it (lowers it?) to the status of worst of the year. "I gotta feeling that tonight's gonna be a good night" is all that is sung for approximately the first 90 seconds. If you keep telling yourself that, it has to come true right? "Lets do it" is also repeated many times before the song's end, to the point where the phrase becomes meaningless. Other offenses include rhyming "up" with "up", trying to pass the days of the week off as lyrics, and using the traditional Hebrew phrases "Mazel Tov" and "L'Chaim" in the completely wrong context. I guess all of the original ideas were already taken. The album is called "The E.N.D.," but I fear this is only the beginning for them. Happy New Year, everyone! ■