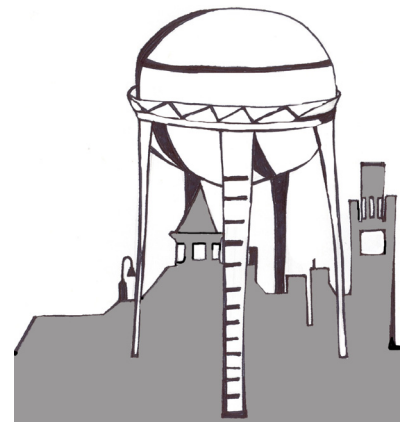


the water tower.

uvm's alternative newsmag



volume 8 - issue 9- tuesday, november 2, 2010 - uvm, burlington, vt

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beverage breeds unlikely heroes: four loko saves the day!



katie gagliardo

by calebdemers

Some call it “blackout in a can,” others call it “really gross tasting,” but the caffeinated malt beverage Four Loko may need a new nickname. Ever since the arrival of a new year at UVM, members of the Burlington community have been reporting a slew of odd occurrences. Students that appear extremely drunk have actually been helping people in times of crisis. This new breed of -- dare I say it -- superheroes, may be just what Burlington needs to topple the crime syndicates and wipe the streets clean with the faces of the Queen City’s criminals.

Though many students just report “another blackout night” after drinking between one and five cans of Four Loko, their evenings may be much more than that. Quentin Black, a resident living on Loomis Street with his two children shared this story: “I awoke in the night and realized Binx, the cat, was missing. I went outside to look for him and found him up in a tree. I am scared of heights so I didn’t know what to do.” Black continues, “Hearing a noise behind me, I turned to see another drunk college kid stumbling towards me. Great, I thought, just what I need right now. Not.” What Black didn’t know, was that this drunk individual *was* indeed what he needed.

“He was so drunk that he seemed to not even notice me. But then he proceeded to climb the tree, which was pretty scary to watch, and put Binx down his shirt. When he jumped to the ground Binx leapt out

of his shirt and ran to me. I don’t know who this kid was, and I am sure as hell he doesn’t remember me, but I thank him and whatever he drank for making my life a little bit easier.”

The mystery concoction is a “premium malt beverage with artificial flavors, guar-

The surprisingly nonalcoholic taste and high levels of caffeine makes for a cocktail fit for the fist a classic college partier and, evidently, for a new breed of superhuman.

na, taurine, [and] caffeine.” It comes in a 24 ounce can and may be purchased at local convenience stores in nine flavors ranging from lemon lime to fruit punch. Not only does one Four Loko cost only about \$3.00, but it also boasts a hefty 12.0% alcohol content. This, combined with the surprisingly nonalcoholic taste and high levels of caffeine, makes for a cocktail fit for the fist a classic college partier and, evidently, for a new breed of superhuman.

Dave Guttered, a police lieutenant from the Burlington Police Department, reported: “Recently we have been seeing local criminals left unconscious or tied-up at the door of the police station late on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.”

The lieutenant continued: “The odd thing is that they normally appear to have been puked on. One time, a drug dealer

was left for us with his hands tied behind his back. What’s even stranger is that he was accompanied by an unbound UVM student passed out with a crumpled Four Loko can in his sweatshirt pocket.”

Burlington has seen its fair share of vigilantes over the years. “The Champ,”

a man that appeared on the Burlington crime scene in the late eighties, was a local favorite. The man was instrumental in the arrests of several hippies that appeared to have been on an acid binge that began the late sixties. He was, however, eaten in his houseboat later that year. No solid evidence supports this, but it is said that the real Champ ate him due to copyright infringement.

Though these mystery heroes have yet to be given a name, and not one has been identified, they all fit a rather common description: they wear flannel shirts and Nikes and display a general “scruffy” appearance. Most importantly, they are always extremely inebriated. Don’t let their appearances fool you. Though it cannot be confirmed, and the local law enforcement struggles to acknowledge it, some believe

that these students have assisted in the arrest of over 50 local criminals.

Not all Four Loko drinkers acknowledge (or even have the capacity to know) that they are a part of this growing phenomenon. Carrie G., a sophomore student said: “I first drank [Four Loko] the second weekend back to school and it resulted in a trip to Blackout City so I honestly can’t tell ya much.”

However, she does know that something intense must have gone down that night, saying: “The next morning, I woke up with a knee that looked like it got attacked by a bear.”

Was it a bear? Or an angry criminal trying desperately to escape Ms. G’s superhuman grip?

Theodore Ritz, a first year, had this to say about a foggy night that occurred several weekends ago: “Part-way through the night I knew something was really wrong when I looked at my ankle and it was all swelled up after I must have attempted to jump down a stair set in Mercy Hall. Pretty dumb, huh? There were also these weird scratches all over my chest. Maybe I hooked up? I don’t even know.”

Was it a set or stairs? Or could it have been a certain tree on Loomis St. and a cat named Binx that resulted in his swollen ankle and scratched up chest? What Ritz identified as “pretty dumb” may have just been pretty courageous. ■

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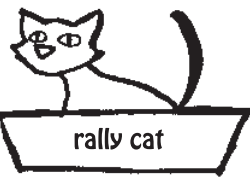
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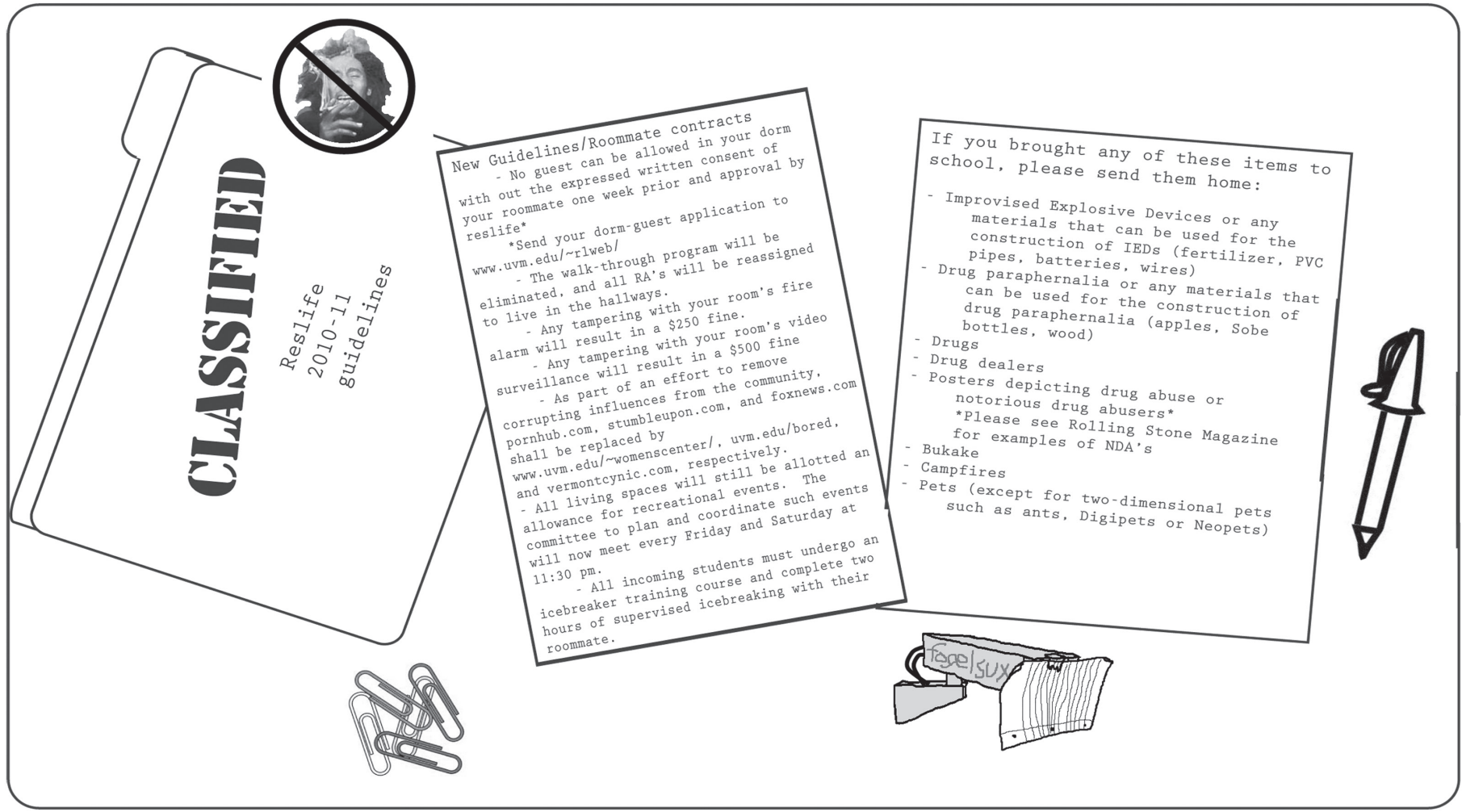
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sufjan stevens' *age of adz*: long awaited - up to snuff?

by jeremyklein

One album for every state in the union; that is what the ever-ambitious Sufjan Stevens promised us with the very appropriately named "Fifty States Project." His third and fifth albums used the states of *Michigan* and *Illinois*, respectively, as focal points for their songs. *Michigan* and *Illinois* were both well received by critics (as well as the public, with *Illinois* topping several "best of the decade" lists). However, with the daunting task of an album for each state on Stevens' plate, there was speculation over which state would be the next to get the Sufjan treatment.

Unfortunately, despite the hype, nothing new materialized. So much time passed that fans probably would have been satisfied with a note-for-note cover album of Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska*. 2010 marks the end of a five-year period without a proper follow-up to *Illinois*. Stevens has released music in the interim, but they have either been not completely made up of original songs (*Songs for Christmas*), outtakes from a previous album's recording sessions (*The Avalanche*), an orchestral suite (*The BQE*), or not a full-length release (*All Delighted People EP*).

Finally, news came that Stevens' long-awaited LP, containing completely all-new material, would be released in October. But we would not be getting "Wyoming" or "South Dakota," or any state for that matter. Instead, Stevens would give us the *Age of Adz*.

The album opens in his familiar territory with "Futile Devices," as gentle guitar picking accentuates Stevens' soft, whisper-like voice. After ending on a quiet, understated note, the next song, "Too Much," begins with a surprising splash and clang of electronic noises. Electronic sound plays a huge role throughout *The Age of Adz*—but I'd be wary to label the album as "Sufjan goes electronic." Instead, then electronics complement Stevens' already established sound—"Too Much" is electronic-based, but also contains a horn section. "I Want To Be Well" mixes glitchy electronics with

a choir chorus. "Get Real Get Right" contains, as far as I know, the first ever pairing of full-scale orchestration and a vocoder. Then there is "Impossible Soul," a song that, at twenty-five minutes long, makes up one-third of the entire album's length. The song is made up of several sections, ranging over various styles. One utilizes auto-tune, one utilizes cheerleader-like call and response, and one features a completely different lead singer (Shara

"it contains, as far as I know, the first ever pairing of full-scale orchestration and a vocoder."

Worden of My Brightest Diamond). With about three minutes to go, the song fades out—only to fade right back in with a section that echoes the earlier "Futile Devices," both lyrically and musically. While this reprise gives the album an all-encompassing, full-circle sentiment—and even though the track is one of the better ones on the album—its length definitely raises some issues.

The *Age of Adz* is comprised of eleven songs, seven of which are over five minutes long. Stevens likes building his tracks to a climax, but the building process causes there to be some tracks in the middle that just drag. At those points, it seems as though the album may fall apart, but this is eventually salvaged by its final two tracks. Stevens has always had trouble with simplicity and brevity, yet he appears to have no qualms that the length of his releases may intimidate unfamiliar listeners. If Stevens were not so obsessed with making each album of epic lengths, he may have even been able to put more of a dent into the Fifty States Project before becoming disillusioned by it.

But the positive aspects of *The Age of Adz* outweigh the negatives. Cut out some of the filler in the middle, and it could have been truly an epic in not only Stevens' oeuvre, but in the modern indie "canon" as well. The great songs will be remembered, and the not so great ones probably forgotten, and Sufjan Stevens will remain the respected artist that he is.

Top Tracks: "I Walked," "Age of Adz," "Futile Devices" ■

i've got my tunes to keep me warm

by sarahmoylan

As the penultimate month of the fall semester falls upon us, the weather is getting more frigid by the hour. You might think that the only way to combat the cold temperatures is by wearing lots and lots and lots of (and even more) clothing, but fear not: there are ways that music can keep you warm, too.

1. Listen to songs you would normally associate with the summertime.

By revisiting summertime music favorites, you can trick your brain into thinking it's July again! Personally, I think surf music is choice—and who doesn't have at least one song by the Beach Boys on their iPod? For a modern alternative, try a surf instrumental by Los Straitjackets. Or you can stick to artists with beach inspired names, like Surf City or Wavves!

2. Get funky to electro at a Metronome dance party.

It's always too hot in there, which can really suck in the summertime—but come the cooler months, it feels kinda good. Burlington is home to a surprising number of competent club DJs, so you can carelessly dance the night away. And at the end of the night, there's nothing like a freezing cold breeze on your sweaty body to keep you awake for the walk home.

3. Wear yo clunky headphones!

Yeah, they might look ridiculous (or really cool, if you have an affinity for hipster culture), but big headphones keep your ears 100% warmer than those diminutive little earbuds—not to mention the sound quality is far superior. For the classic "winter hipster in Vermont" look, try layering your clunky headphones atop a loose-fitting knit hat.

4. Burn lots of CDs.

Oh, wait...this type of burning actually won't keep you warm at all. ■

SEEKING: UVM'S BEST BAND (/ARTIST/WHATEVER)

A reminder that our contest is open to pretty much anyone affiliated with UVM, and submissions will be taken throughout Fall semester. Submit online by sending your stuff to thewatertowernews@gmail.com, or dropping a hard copy at our desk in the SGA. Fame and fortune are guaranteed for the winner!!!

wt obituary

compact disc: 1978-2010

by gregfrancese

After losing a long battle with popularity, the Compact Disc passed into eternal rest last Thursday. She was surrounded by her loving friends the DVD and Blu-Ray and was reportedly "at peace" with joining her friends the Vinyl Record and the Cassette on the shelves of used music stores across the world.



Known for her colorful glares and high quality sound, the Compact Disc lived a life of ups and downs. Born out of a Japanese lab experiment in 1978, she was perhaps best known for her mysterious personality that could only be read through the use of a laser. By the 1980s, the Compact Disc began her rise to popularity when it was revealed that she could store sound of a higher quality than her bulky, less sophisticated cousin, the Cassette. Her popularity was severely impacted, though, by the introduction of the MP3 computer file and Apple's iPod. The iPod could store more music than thousands of Compact Discs, rendering her somewhat obsolete.

After struggling to compete with the new technologies, the Compact Disc decided it was time for a life of retirement. Recently featured as the next hipster obsession, the death of the Compact Disc will forever find its place in the realm of the alt-world. ■