testing the good samaritans

by lauragreenwood

First of all, I want to apologize at the start of this article, to all those who may have been duped by our setup and to anyone who will be disturbed by the findings. I’d also like to apologize to the young man to whom I made a promise last week that I didn’t keep. I hope everything turned out okay, and that you are not currently brooding in hate over your potential loss. You are the event that finally inspired this article, the motivation behind the scheme.

This is the confession of how the editors-in-chief of the Water Tower broke, tested, and explored the validity of an age-old question: “Excuse me, could you watch my laptop for a second?”

Three years ago, I came up with the idea of conducting an investigation into the effectiveness of our community’s most overused form of “campus security.” Testing the responsibility of the average student was tricky, and the fear surrounding engaging in definitely skeptical and possibly criminal experiments was a major factor in the delay of this article. At every opportunity that the stage was set to test my hypothesis, my quasi literary partner-in-crime would become nervous and chicken out.

As the assigned “thief” in my recent experiments, I empathize with the panic of how other library-goers may react. My confidence (or lack thereof) in their surroundings, unless they are forced to be more attentive: such as by a simple, anonymous request.

My confidence (or lack thereof) in the trustworthiness of strangers comes from a pessimistic opinion of blind faith. However, I was surprised by what I found in testing the theory of laptop security.

Attention. With the hustle and bustle of friends, coffee lines, and librarians, the average studious worker is surrounded by distractions. For many, myself included, these distractions inspire a trance-like state in which one retreats behind their head. Distracted.

How much can you trust the person who knows you aren’t near your belongings?

...continued on page 3

poppy seed halts healthcare discussion

unrelenting by staceybrandt

White House efforts to prevent Congress from sending Obamacare back to the Supreme Court have been halted by an unforeseen obstacle.

Wedged between his upper left canine and lateral incisor, it was the presence of a tiny black seed which kept President Obama from regaining popularity for his Affordable Care Act.

Possibly the remnants of morning refreshments, or of a late night snack followed by poor hygienic practices, the miniscule speck could hardly be ignored during this morning’s conference for healthcare reform.

The President addressed a room full of staunch Republican leaders, who have tirelessly opposed the eponymous Obamacare since its very inception.

About three minutes into the President’s opening remarks, Speaker of the House John Boehner was one of the first to take note of the minute, circular object peeking in and out of view from between the President’s pearly whites.

“At first I thought it was a freckle,” said Boehner, “But sure enough, it moved down about half a centimeter and that’s when I knew I had something to say.”

The subject of the conference quickly moved from the billions of dollars young Americans will save from Obama’s healthcare legislation to the solitary food fragment, which White House aides now confirmed was left over from the President’s morning bagel.

Analysts estimate the single seed was one of thousands of identical entities and believe the probability of other seeds being present at the time to be high.

It was Democrat and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, who finally raised her hand to point out the distraction.

“I felt I owed it to the President to be honest, and I expect the same honesty in return.”

Pelosi went on to say that she often discovered prominent lipstick stains on her own teeth only after hours speaking with colleagues who left the issue unaddressed.

...continued on page 5

get inside me:

#freethenipple by mikaelawaters
eating (your feelings) locally by mollyoshea & katelynpeine
quiz: winter relationships by katraritchie
takeout for christmas by zackpensak
We, uh...well, we wrote you this ode. We hope you like it:

O you, who from New Hampshire send us words,
The ones we write, but you so sagely toil
To lay them one by one like newborn birds.
Whose hatch has marked you with the press's oil,
Are you not like some Gutenberg today?
Without whose craft our thoughts would die with speech?
And we, the Martin Luther, given say
Through saintly paper, carrying our speech?

Thanks for all the hard work this semester, truly, from ourselves and whatever percentage of UVM that picks up the oh-so-soft, off-white paper that you make that reality. We've never known if you read this paper, but hopefully you will this week, because this last issue of the semester is for you!

Happy Holidays,
The Whole Happy water tower Crew

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

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Waterman - Main Lobby
Williams - Inside Steps
Online - uvm.edu/~watertwr

join the wt.
New writers and artists are always welcome.
Weekly meetings
Tuesdays at 7:30 pm
Jost Foundation Room
Davis Center - 4th Floor
Or send us an email

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

the news in brief

“Most people I talk with, even in the intense water community, view themselves as Coloradans first and members of river basins second.”
—James Eklund voices his optimism about his home state's willingness to share its limited water supply. Colorado water politics are contentious, with about 80% of its water west of the continental divide and the bulk of its people and agriculture to the east; 2.5 million Coloradans will be parched by 2050 without more massive underground pipelines. I like Colorado and everything but...my river basin is just objectively superior.

“I went to school for one year. It was the best experience but the worst experience. The best experience because I was, like, ‘Oh, now I know why kids are so depressed.’ But it was the worst experience because I was depressed.”
—Willow Smith, daughter of actor Will Smith, shares wisdom in an actually insightful joint interview with her older brother Jaden. I would love for my kids to replace school with writing novels, climbing trees, and studying Eastern philosophy and quantum physics...but I'm not Will Smith. Maybe if I name them Kerryow...

the shit list

Birds - These winged creatures are kind of scary when you think about it. It might also be something with their eyes and the way they always look like they're staring into your soul. But I'd like to give a shoutout to the bird that I hit with my car on the way back to school. I'm really sorry for yelling at you and your friends when you flew out in front of me. Maybe if I hadn't, you'd still be alive. Rest in peace, sparrow.

Getting dark at 4 o'clock – Sometimes, I just want to come out of my class and see the sun shining in the distance. It's like a glimmer of hope that maybe, just maybe, my microeconomic theory homework won't actually make me want to cry into a pail on the side of the street. Instead, thanks to Earth's moving axis, I get out of class and tears well up immediately.

Winter hair – When the air gets dry come December, the hair starts to stick up. You can do almost anything to prevent the static, but all your efforts are useless. I cut my hair over break (I know, how original), but not even my new look can stop the static monster from flinging to everything, not to mention the nasty shocks I get when I open my door.

Letter to the Editor/General

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Our generation stands at a crossroads. With sincerity and humor, we strive to make you reexamine, investigate, question, learn, and maybe peer your pants along the way. We are the reason people can't wait for Tuesday. We are the water tower.
the current volatile climate of gay marriage rights

by lauragreenwood

At the beginning of October, the United States Supreme Court began its session and was immediately faced with a variety of appeals addressing the constitutionality of same-sex marriage bans. Instead of accepting any of these cases, this Supreme Court decided that the constitutionality of marriage bans will not be addressed in their docket this year—rather, let the federal circuit courts handle the issue.

And one by one, these circuit courts have almost unanimously deemed individual states’ bans on marriage unconstitutional, even in conservative states like South Carolina, West Virginia, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah. Of the 35 states where gay marriage is now allowed, 3 were decided by popular vote, 8 by state legislatures, and 24 by court decision. Parts of America have rejoiced at this critical opportunity for gay rights. By not acting, the Supreme Court essentially just made gay marriage possible in any circuit, right? Right!!

Well... hold on a second. The Supreme Court’s indecision has let the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals—which represents Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee—go through with their decision to uphold the constitutionality of gay marriage bans. This ruling says that these bans do not violate the equal protection and due process clauses of the Constitution, and thus if a state in the 6th Circuit rules to keep a ban on same-sex marriage they have every right to do so. This is possible because the Supreme Court’s lack of action allowed for both constitutional and unconstitutional marriage ban rulings by lower courts to be permitted on a state-by-state basis. And now proceeds the Supreme Court’s “Oh shit, maybe we should reconsider this” moment.

The four states in the 6th Circuit (again, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee) have the option to uphold their same-sex marriage bans. Differently from how the other Circuit Courts ruled in October, the 6th Circuit changed their precedent rules on marriage bans and allowed for bans to fall in either direction. Yet again, we’re presented with the age-old issue of contradicting interpretations of the Constitution and their legal consequences throughout the nation. The inconsistency of gay rights can be clearly mapped across America, and their effects create an unstable climate for the future of couples nationwide.

Someone needs to step up and create consistency in our judicial system in order to prevent these intercircuit conflicts. Although the Constitution is meant to be a flexible and adaptable document, it is supposed to help to unite and protect the citizens of the United States with some predictability.

Who is this omniscient someone that should be vested with the jurisdiction to resolve the same-sex marriage ban once and for all? The judiciary is a reactive body, their role limited to interpreting and responding to policy and law with justice, not creating the law off of which justice will be based. Lawmaking on marriage rights has largely been left to each state, thus it falls on We the People to push for the legislation we want where we live. My home state Massachusetts has already allowed same-sex marriage for over ten years, as the result of a Massachusetts State Supreme Court decision; I’ve been to three glorious gay marriages that had me weeping just like the rest of us. We’re lucky to be at a unique juncture in America, in a region of America that has been more proactive about addressing the civil liberties of homosexuals in order to leap into the modern age. But, these recent 6th Circuit barrings demonstrate that America is not yet unanimous about the future of our nation. Each of the four states where bans have been upheld had voted on these bans prior, with millions of citizens in support to restrict gay marriage, and without any national pressure to change their minds, they are not likely to do so.

Hopefully, the Supreme Court will eventually open up to hearing these cases later this session, and will help to resolve these national contradictions. But the present situation demonstrates how the great, complex, overlapping nature of our government can also occasionally find itself in knots. Until the Supreme Court does act, the issue falls on the pro-gay marriage advocates of these states to appeal to their state’s legislature, state courts, circuit courts, and the rest to help spread a liberal social change that’s sweeping across America.

boobs online: free the nipple, transcend porn culture

by micaelawaters

Earlier this year, comedian Chelsea Handler posted a photo on Instagram of her riding topless upon a horse, Picstitched alongside Vladimir Putin, also shirtless atop his Red Square steed. The photo was removed by Instagram for not following their community guidelines, Handler moved to Twitter, posting the same photo and a tweet stating, “Taking this down is sexist. I have every right to prove that I have a better body than Putin.” Challenging Instagram and the “community” which the photo may have offended, Handler remarked, “if a man posts a photo of his nipples it’s okay, but not a woman,” effectively engaging in double standards and the Free The Nipple movement.

Aside from being the call of intoxicated college males, Free The Nipple is a movement against female oppression and censorship, seeking to address the issues of equal rights for men and women, and a more balanced system of censorship. The movement has manifested in two ways: through their feature-length documentary Free The Nipple, and through the hashtag #freethenipple.

While this was Handler’s intent, “if Instagram takes this down you more dangerous to their community than Putin. (They’re...)

“a nipple is a nipple, so why then is it sexualized and effectively criminalized when female, but deemed decent when male?”

The censoring of nipples on apps like Instagram is not ostensibly done in the name of sexism or gender oppression, but in the name of decency to create a family-friendly cyberspace. However, Instagram neglects this goal by failing to monitor comments and captions: homophobic, racist, threatening, sexist, and profane language all remain uncensored, while a woman’s chest is swept under the rug (so to speak). As such, Instagram is inadvertently making a statement that a nipple is more dangerous to their community than words of hate, bigotry, and violence. Maybe I’m naive, but who knew a nipple was so powerful as to trump all of that? Here I was thinking they were just human anatomy.
house of lies: stranded at quarry hill

by marytaylor

“Where’s that?” is the usual response after telling someone I live at the Quarry Hill apartments, often accompanied by a look of shear confusion with a hint of curiosity. It’s the end of the fall semester, yet the building I live in with over thirty other students remains completely anonymous.

Until last month, when it was suspiciously altered, the ResLife website described Quarry Hill as being a “5-minute walk to campus.” Try 15-minute walk to the outer-most edge of the farthest point of campus, where the closest shuttle stop is.

They’ve also retracted their original description of the coin-operated laundry machines being “convenient”: since the building also lacks coin machines, they are anything but.

UVM promised residents a fully-furnished apartment and reliable transportation to and from campus upon signing the contract. At $950 per month, there’s a high price to pay if that doesn’t come through. You’ll probably forget all about your poor exam grades and eat them wherever else at your leisure.

The shuttle, which runs every 3 hours, lacks weekend and Friday night ride times. I can forgive a 5-minute delay, but walking out of my building to see the shuttle driving away on a Monday morning is extremely unsettling, given that the next shuttle isn’t for another several hours. Contrary to popular belief, these Bean Boots were not made for walking.

When I brought this up to the driver later that same afternoon, I got the same fleeting response I’m sadly all too familiar with after so many calls to ResLife: “Yeah, I was a couple minutes early.”

On top of that, the mailing system was not established until our second month living here. After being told multiple times that it was sorted, textbook deliveries were still delayed past the first week of classes. My roommate and I resorted to renting a car to pick up packages at a UPS warehouse.

Many residents have expressed disappointment, myself included. So it was only a matter of time until we got some sort of response from a university employee. The week of October 13, residents received an updated shuttle schedule with an additional two early morning pick-up times, along with answers to many burning questions.

One “explanation” I found especially interesting was that UVM claims not to have known they would need a shuttle until two weeks prior to our move-in date, leaving them with little funding to afford a shuttle service. The bus company, however, claims they didn’t know until one week before, and did the best they could with the employees that were available. But why did UVM promise its unknowing new students with transportation if it wasn’t in the budget?

UVM claims to consider their students’ safety a top priority, yet they continually fail to live up to those claims. With the amount of money we’re paying for our education and housing, where is it all going? From where I stand, there’s plenty of money to buy custom American Apparel shirts for UPB to give away for free, and even more to invest in fossil fuels, but not enough to provide students with safe transportation to and from campus.

I’m now in the process of terminating my contract with UVM for the apartment and fighting the $750 fee for mid-year contract ending. I’ve found I’m not the only resident looking to do so; approximately half of the residents currently living at Quarry Hill are subletting apartments at Redstone next semester and tirelessly trying to get answers about having the fee waived.

ResLife has yet to respond to the many phone calls and e-mails regarding the concerns about the unfair charge for terminating a contract they failed to live up to. Our requests were not extravagant, nor were our complaints arbitrary. In fact, where are our concerns really stem from is the fact that we were lied to. I would gain an incredible amount of respect for UVM should they choose to admit their wrongdoing and waive the fee this year. We forgive you, Quarry Hill, but we won’t forget.
crunch time: surviving a night in the cyber café

by kerrymartin

There is no worse feeling than planning on staying up the entire night and still being unsure whether you’ll get all your work done. I have already done this twice this semester (granted, once with a brief nap) and will likely do it more. But I’m not telling you this to glorify my busy; I’m just saying that I know how it is, and that you should use my play-by-play account as a preview if any night like this is in your near future.

The strange happenings recorded here are quite normal in Late Night Cyber Café society, so be prepared.

11:27pm: You settle into a desk with everything you need: books, notes, the Macbook Pro paired with the desktop Dell that makes your setup look like an incongruous double monitor, and your now-cold-and-non-refillable Speeder & Earl’s coffee. There is no coffee pot, microwave, or IV drip available to put it to good use.

11:29pm: Music—you need something that’ll drive you forward. You’ve just put in a good four hours of work on Floor 2 B/H, listening to piano concertos by Beethoven and Debussy, but now you’re tired, plus that’s pussy shit. Start bouncing The Glitch Mob, move later to Pretty Lights, Gramatik, and Bass Physics.

11:53pm: After working through your open tabs of the Guardian, VICE News, Wikipedia, and Clickhole, you have more tabs than you started with, and you remember that your paper is due in 10 hours.

12:04am: Someone who has apparently never heard of headphones asks you to turn your music down. You slightly obligre. Another fresner asks you who you listen to, assuming you’re an EDM guy, which emasculates you and you oblige more.

12:10am: The shoes come off and stay off.

12:39am: You start to notice the growing insan-ity of those around you. “You know what I could do for right now? A crying shower beer.” Yeah, that does sound pretty good.

1:12am: Your nose-picking becomes truly shameless.

1:47am: The nighttime employees think they’re so cool setting up their fold-out tables.

2:05am: You begin to stand up and realize that instead of writing your PoliSci paper, you’re describing your half-waking dream about a giant hamburger-man in a tux, laughing at you as he fondles your grandma.

2:24am: The girl working at the far table whips out five fatty decks of Magic: The Gathering cards.

2:45am: Out of cash, you spend your limited CatScratch on some caffeine at the vending machine and then realize you have no money left to print your paper until they open up the rest of the library in the morning. Any faint idea you once had about going home now disappears, and with it all notions of showering or brushing your teeth.

5:28am: That One Guy has to ask whether going outside through the Cafe door will set off the fire alarm. Asshole.

5:45am: Daylight Savings Time begins, then ends, then begins again.

3:36am: All information reaches a flat plane, and you are unsure whether or not your paper about Boko Haram is actually about Romeo and Juliet, or the laws of physics, or three old ladies ripping a bong. (Meanwhile, you watch the internet as a video of that very act goes viral throughout the night, planning that it must be getting tons of views in Japan.)

3:50am: You grow convinced that everyone around you is a hired actor only there to uphold your perverse reality. Or that they are just normal people who aren’t actually doing work.

4:14am: You’re really not sure whether it’s AM or PM anymore.

4:20am... SMOKE WEED...

4:33am: Deliriously exhausted and 70% done with a paper that really could be straight awful, you pull your jacket over your face and attempt a nap. Minutes later, you’re awoken by the guy next to you talking, possibly to you, possibly telling you not to breathe so loud, but you’re so tired that you’re really not sure. Regardless, you despise this guy for the rest of the night.

5:00am: At the hour, you suddenly enter a combat-like state of mind, keenly aware of every disturbance within a thirty-meter radius, time slows, you look at the guy next to you and consider snapping his neck without explanation or hesitation, until you realize you’ve been drooling all over your shirt for the past seven minutes.

5:12am: Already falling asleep on your keys and fearing you won’t finish, you make a final push, ignoring the law that fine-toothed paper-editing doesn’t really happen at this time of day.

5:19am: The early morning crew starts pouring in, with all their sleep. Pricks.

5:30am-9:00am: You’re not really sure what happens during this time. Honestly. But you come about in the main part of the library, editing an allegedly completed paper, and drinking coffee that is obviously not working.

9:16am: Printed, first of four classes in fourteen minutes, and the jammed front desk stapler is thwarting your plan to leave the library in the next twenty-five seconds. It’s gonna be a good day.

LAPTOP THEFT—continued from page 1

Simon results. Again and again, wade stage the heist and I’d find myself on the recieving end of questions, or simply dirty looks, about why I was grabbing “that girl’s stuff.” Luckily, my partner was never far off, always reminding me just in time to assure the stranger that I wasn’t stealing.

It seemed irrelevant whether my partner looked deep into someone’s soul, requesting in all kindness that someone keep a watchful eye over her laptop, or just gave a jaded nod of “you got this covered, right?”; students proved to be very watchful. Even if I just lingered by her laptop, I could feel the curious, keen eyes of the prescribed Laptop Keeper searing into the back of my head.

At this point, even I was shocked. Surely, I wasn’t the only person who occasionally didn’t pay full attention or had to run off before the MIA owner returned. Like most, I tend to just pass the buck, so to speak, shrugging the responsibility off on another stranger to keep watch. I realize now that this method presents an obvious flaw, seeing as the unassuming recipient of my shirked duty has no idea who needed their stuff watched in the first place.

Our next conquest was the third floor. I wanted to see just how far I could really take these thefts. Surely, everyone would be too distracted here to keep watch on others’ possessions—or would I again be pleasantly surprised?

No such luck. This time, we decided to switch up the game a bit: I would pose as the stranger to whom my accomplice would entrust her computer, and then see if I could get away with stealing it myself. So my partner asked if I’d watch her stuff, I said yes, and then, minutes later, I got up and just walked off with her laptop. Easy as that; not a single word was spoken.

We were shocked. Okay, maybe other students were oblivious when they hadn’t been specifically asked to do this; students were the only response.

Someone who has apparently never looked were the only response.

9:46am: The early morning crew starts pouring in, with all their sleep. Pricks.

At the hour, you suddenly enter a combat-like state of mind, keenly aware of every disturbance within a thirty-meter radius, time slows, you look at the guy next to you and consider snapping his neck without explanation or hesitation, until you realize you’ve been drooling all over your shirt for the past seven minutes.

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Before Thanksgiving, I woke up to register for my final semester of college. The experience has changed ten fold since I first undertook this venture in my early years. This final registration ritual is new discovery that I was not aware existed as a freshman. I spent two classes away from fluffing my schedule and aligning it with my course of study. It was a blessing in disguise, I was able to start fresh.

Four years ago, I foolishly stalk the Registrar’s page for the weeks leading up to finals so I could know when to start planning for next year. I have finally learned my lesson. I usually get one of three responses, the best one being three Words.

“Which one is Vermont? Which one is New Hampshire? Is that one?”

I was considering UVM, I usually got one of three responses, the best one being three Words.

“You have to put actual layers on. That’s been working out fairly well for you so far. I’m from Texas, the home of Willie Nelson, greasy burritos, and blistering heat. I lived there for 18 years before moving across the country to start my college life at UVM. When I told other Texans I was considering UVM, I usually get one of these responses, the best one being three Words.

“I obsessed over my newfound educational independence and my ambition to be the most ‘well rounded’ student”

by katja Ritchie

You’re still disentangling your pent-up tension to work out. Like, now. You were last romantically committed to a person who was too busy to call you back even though they messaged you a picture of a kitten falling down some stairs yesterday, so you were imagining your own sweater are everything. Midnight you would call in this situation to a friend and ask them to walk outside at the end of fall. You have to put actual layers on. That’s been working out fairly well for you so far. I’m from Texas, the home of Willie Nelson, greasy burritos, and blistering heat. I lived there for 18 years before moving across the country to start my college life at UVM.
Akin to the glaze of the classic Christmas ham, will line your stomach with absolute happiness.

When I open the Tupperware containing this poultry that is sesame chicken tops the list.

When I think of the wonderful festivities that accompany the 25th of December, I envision the thought of a family sitting under the tree, coupled with bedhead, audible nasal congestion, and a clammy, feverish pallor.

Now that we’re all eager to haul ass to winter break while retaining as much sanity as possible, it’s likely that some among us have noticed how all the stress has taken its toll. Nits of lice and filled with flurries on a dreamy white Christmas. Inside the house, may the tasty soup fill you with warmth and love to share with everyone around. The unique blend of both spice and sour provides even the most adventurous of Christmas eaters with a very peculiar delight.

Pumpkin spice season always seems too short lived; it feels like it started only a month or two ago, and its already gone. In that brief time the wonderful spice had managed to capture the love of so many. The delicious flavor spread from coffee drinks, to treats, to beer, and became so big that even Oreo had to get in on the pumpkin spice fever and create a new seasonal cookie.

Alas, all good things must come to an end and we all will miss pumpkin spice dearly. We will think about the delicious spice every time we passive aggressively sip on peppermint mochas, or ginger-maple pales in comparison to the wonders of the delicious spice. No other flavor can ever create as much excitement as pumpkin spice.
i want you so bad

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

You were wearing a scarf at the E.P.
You didn't remember me
Oh ok. No, it's fine... really. Don't worry about it.

In a few weeks time, we had found our rhyme
In Vauban finding vegan friends and foes
That girl named Marketa who goes and goes.

Neighborhood cats and crepes
Felizes all over the place.
Wir wandern im der Schwarzwald
That indecipherable techno song ... what's it called?

We are back in the mountains that are green
And I don't wanna make a scene...
But now you remember my face
My best friend; I just want to give you an embrace

When: Last year and a few minutes ago
Where: nice places
I saw: A friendly tall boy
I am: A happy friend

Out of sheer frustration,
Or maybe it was procrastination,
I moved my furniture.

I've been down and fatigued
And totally not intrigued
With all my class materials.

My mind strays ahead
Where I’m laying in my bed
With my dog, in my house.

I can’t wait to eat
All the stuffing and meat
Thanksgiving has to offer.

As far a school goes,
I'd rather not be there though,
I'll miss all my friends.

Vacation is less than one week away
So let me just say, "Hip-hip, hooray!"
And drive home.

When: Daydreams
Where: Classes
I saw: A world of wonder
I am: A homesick joe-schmoe
People are always going to hate on Taylor Swift. This is a universal truth. However, 1989 has brought a change of heart for some, leaving diehard fans to reappraise their red lipstick and winged eyeliner while chanting a chorus of “I told you so.” I’ve been with Taylor since her “don’t let anyone find out I’m from Pennsylvania and not Nashville” days. Swift is putting more and more distance between herself and her country roots. If 2012’s Red was testing the waters, 1989 is a cannonball: there is not a single shred of banjo, forced Southern drawl, or acoustic midnight yearning to be found. Thank god.

Don’t get me wrong, homegirl is still prone to delusions of grandeur. Since stalking and befriending model/human scarecrow Karlie Kloss (even SoulCycling side by side at the same posh gym), Taylor decided her next move was to open her newest album with an ode to the city that never sleeps (seeing as she’s spent like the past six months there or whatever).

“Welcome to New York” boasts with surging synthesizers that “it’s been waiting for you,” “you can love who you want,” and basically that it’s the most freeing place in the whole world. The whole thing smacks of overblown, unfounded fantasy. She is, however, donating all the royalties from the track to benefit NYC public schools, which is fortunate because it’s the most positive thing that could be said about the song.

For those who were hoping Swift’s evolution would spread to her subject matter, my condolences. This album is about Harry Styles. Once you get past the fact that Taylor is pointed breakup references to please the longtime Swift lovers and a musical departure Taylor. Snaps.

Overall, the feel of 1989 is airy but bold, confident yet dangerous, with enough relentless autotune gets some people off, along with beats that squirm like the ultimate earworm into the folds of my brain? Is it because no one can think of something that rhymes better with “who” than... “G6?” It is my belief that we can fight said madness with music that gets stuck in your head without any sane human wanting to gouge it out once it’s there. To this end I present Love’s Crushing Diamond, the sound of the summer in a kinder world.

The album, Mutual Benefit’s first full LP, is a well-constructed melodic canoe ride of auditory pleasure. If you’ve ever listened to Fleet Foxes and thought, “wow, this really isn’t melodic enough,” or “damn, I think I could be brought to tears with staggering audible gorgeousness a little more thoroughly,” then you should seriously give Love’s Crushing Diamond a listen.

“Style,” which is the honest-to-good track title because Taylor does not give a fuck, is about getting roped back into the “on-again,” a dark drive home that ends up winding down a much more tantalizing road. You’ve got that James Dean, daydream look in your eye, and I’ve got that red lip, classic thing that you like starts us off easy, but by “You’ve got that long hair, slicked-back, white T-shirt, and I’ve got that good-girl faith and a tight little skirt,” the world has been divided into two types of people: ones that are dizzy with thoughts of their own dangerous someone, and fucking liars. The song contines with the uncertain and fast-paced “Out of the Woods,” and finishes with the ethereally refreshing “Clean,” a sure favorite on the album.

“Blank Space” is the masterpiece with the delicious, beautiful-disaster, Great-Gatsby-plus-iPhones video. There is always respect in my heart for those who can own their insanity, and even more to Swift for responding directly to the bullshit that women should be wary of their passion, lest being labeled “crazy”—but, of course, wandering too far to the other end of the spectrum makes you a frigid bitch. Misandry, hookers, and lyrics that bring everyone—everyone—back to those times they definitely felt like they were pulling an Orange is the New

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Overall, the feel of 1989 is airy but bold, confident yet dangerous, with enough pointed breakup references to please the longtime Swift lovers and a musical departure to ensnare unwitting new fans. Call it industrialized or mainstream all you want, but don’t you dare say Taylor Swift doesn’t know exactly what she’s doing.
creative stockings
grant daverson: ace detective
by leonard bartenstein

“I know how this place works,” said Daverson. “Remember, I used to be a cop here, too, before I left the force…”“And remember how none of us really want you back anymore for this exact attitude?”“1 just need the public records.”“Then you need to speak with Carol, who catalogs the public records, okay? I think she worked here. Don’t you remember Carol? Don’t you remember that, at least?”Her words stung deep, like a wasp who overestimated the amount of force it would take to break a person’s skin, and plunged half their abdomen into the larger creature’s arm in a belligerent attack at ferocity, ending only in the death of the wasp itself and some minor irritation on the part of the human—that is, unless they were allergic to wasp stings, in which case the outcome would be much different.

Grant straightened himself out and walked down the hallway to the office, leaving the hurtful words of his ex-department-mate behind him. He instead turned to Carol, who, in her hiked-up khaki slacks and flowy printed blouse looked absolutely stellar, the makeup caked on her face giving her just a bit more color than would otherwise be necessary to convince someone that she wasn’t just a fleshy corpse. Her wrinkles moved more than her head did when she turned to watch Grant enter the file room. “Grant,” she said in a low, scratchy, monotonous, librarian-esque voice. “What a surprise and… pleasure.”And the same to you, as always,” returned Grant. “Look,” he continued, leaning on her desk as if he and she were great old friends, though there was no doubt, by her mannerisms, that they could not be considered more than old acquaintances, or perhaps old work-chums. “I need all you have on Rachael Valence. If you…”Before he could finish, she produced a thick file and plopped it on her desk in front of him. “Here,” she growled. “After that whole bang-up with her sister, I figured you’d be coming for it.”She slid it across the desk to him, where it brushed his fingers, like the tendrils of seaweed on a timid swimmer’s leg in a dirty lake where they didn’t want to go swimming in the first place, they were just pushed into it by their friends—but not literally, just the peer pressure kind of push, not the physical kind of push. “Have fun.”“Oh, well,” said Grant, picking up the sizeable folder. “I do love our conversations,” he said, and I look forward to seeing your resplendent form sometime very soon.” He winked at her and it was not a good thing for either of them. They were both uncomfortable with this. So he left. ■

Made out with a boy on a bed,
Our next meeting I did most dread.
Wearing each other’s clothes,
To express our love and to differ.
Not wanting to risk searching the web,
I turned to movie night instead:
Under the radar I passed
Ogling ScarJo’s sweet ass
And thought of it later in bed.

My first boyfriend was but two weeks,
The least of my dating streaks.
He was the first to kiss,
My face turned all red.

So he left.

My second’s a touch of the other,
My face turned purple.
He was the first to see me
Under the radar I passed
Ogling ScarJo’s sweet ass
And thought of it later in bed.

An unexpected clothing mishap
Got dressed, couldn’t make my jeans snap
Seemingly overnight
My hips had expanded, out of sight
Body changes deserve their bad rap.

I once used my brother’s laptop
What I found surely made my jaw drop
Files of porn
"O" faces of scorn
Curious, I hit “play” instead of “stop.”

Are you still listening, UVemcees?? Hip-hop hamstrings feeling limber? ‘Cuz it wouldn’t be another week at the water tower without some wicked spittins! Still feels lonely up here on center stage… waiting for others to snatch the mic. Send me your raps, on my topics or on any topic! Even on no topic! Just go off! But until that happens, I’m still here, and this week, we reject Grad School.

I woke up this morning in a puddle of my own piss
Muddlin’ my own wits, flesh but I feel boneless.
What the fuck world is this? Must be soulless.
Tryin’ to be what I can be but cash is what bestows bliss.
I know my brain has grown fit, fuck it, I ain’t worth shit.
Diploma built on blunt facts, so roll it up and burn hits.
Cuz I’m worthless, job market doesn’t serve kids.
Without degrees that cost an arm and leg and cervix.
I take the GRE, it takes a pee on me.
Like porn from Germany, but at least their school’s free!
M.A., M.F.A. M.E., M.D., J.D., Ph.D., when will we really be free?
The machine is broken, here’s how you steal it’s tokens:
One, find work that pays you to keep school-soakin’
Two, take twenty years off, I ain’t jokin’
Three, fuck ambition, hit the beach, and stay tokin’.
Don’t let the system make you feel less than your worth,
Cuz there are infinite things that you can do on this earth.
by unemployed wonder-grad Kerry Martin

Next issue, we light up Half-Assing Religious Holidays.
Please write raps and contribute, however long or short they are! Send your lines to thewatertowernews@gmail.com with your favorite rapper in the subject line. Submissions are due by Tuesday, September 16th. The best student rapper of the semester gets a fabulous prize! ■

I leaned to retrieve a book.
Everyone at the table looked:
“Girl look at that ass,”
I ran off to class,
The butt of the comment I took.

Off I snuck to my parents’ shower.
In haste, I crept in a dark hour.
Wielding the blade,
Anti-hair attack made:
My legs, how they bled, and I cowered.

in the morning, to the mirror I shot
On my forehead, a glaring red spot
Under my skin, felt it cooking
I’m sure everyone’s looking
The disgrace on my face, one gross dot.

The vocal cords play their own game
The highs and the lows went and came
My body’s changing
My voice re-arranging
Being thirteen really is lame.
Lyric of the (Bi)Week:

"Here I stand
In the light of day
Let the storm rage on,
The cold never bothered me anyway!"

-"Let It Go" (So this is originally from Frozen, but my favorite version is by Oney and Psychicpebbles. Look it up on youtube)