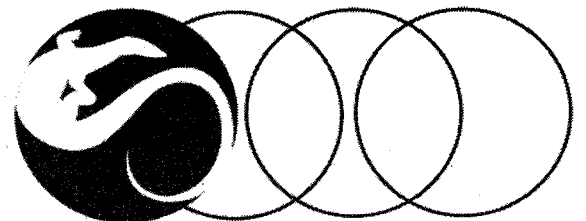




# the monitor.



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a campus collective.

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The Monitor is published every other Tuesday.  
We meet every Thursday at 9:00 p.m. in BH 312.  
Each writer is responsible for his or her own work.

"Among people who have learned something from the 18th century (say, Voltaire) it is a truism, hardly deserving discussion, that the defense of the right of free expression is not restricted to ideas one approves of, and that it is precisely in the case of ideas found most offensive that this right must be vigorously defended. Advocacy of the right to express ideas that are generally approved of is, quite obviously, a matter of no significance."

--Noam Chomsky

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the monitor doesn't censor submissions. we only edit for spelling, grammar, and clarity. short of libel, if you want to be explicit, profane, or just downright mean, you can. we don't necessarily encourage it, but we'll leave the decision up to you.

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our practical limits of space and printing format are our only restrictions on types of content. we regularly feature things like news, opinions, photos, and comics, but we'll gladly include your recipes, manifestos, sketches, and anything else you can come up

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we're all in this together. the monitor is put together entirely by whoever volunteers to help out. the people who take on the responsibility of making sure everything gets done are called "editors", but it's a title of appreciation, not authority. if you want to get involved just show up to BH 312 any Thursday at 9pm or send us an email.

**Editor's Bocks**

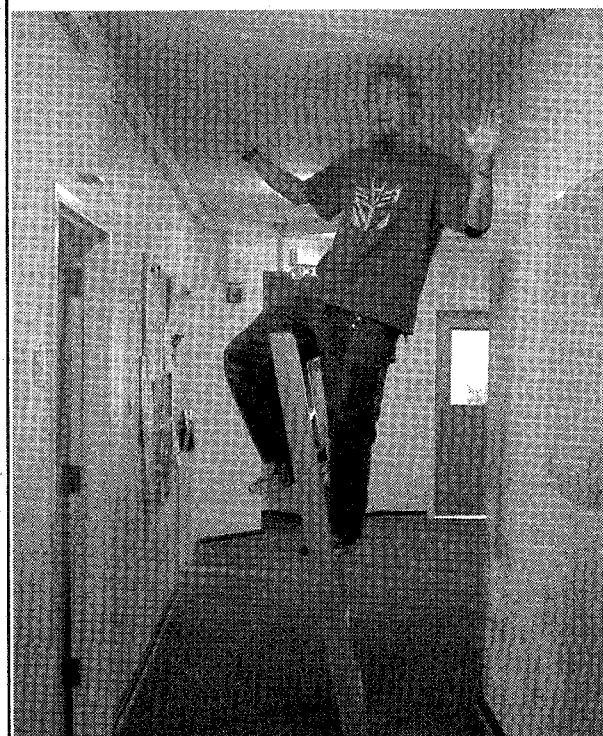
Well, another day, another dollar, but the Monitor's still free. And I mean free in a couple of ways. I mean the dollar amount is free, but also the possibilities. Which is really why you should read it. But why take it from me? There are plenty of reasons in this very issue why you should submit stuff to the Monitor. We don't mean to toot our own horn around here, but we got opinions on timely issues, reviews of great things, news items from around the world, and a healthy dose of satirical silliness.

So sit back and relax, 'cause we've done all the work for you. I hope you enjoy this thing, 'cause I like to put it together.

Oh, and by the way, look at this guy on the side. Is this what we've come to, people?

Love,

Jon, Tim, Ian, and Annie



Dear mom and dad,  
Phew, college sure is hard. Love, your Son.

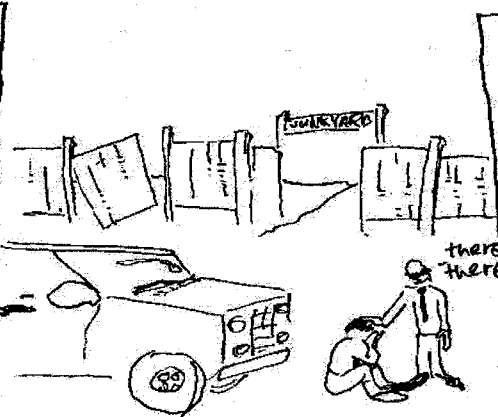
photo by >> Brian Poppe



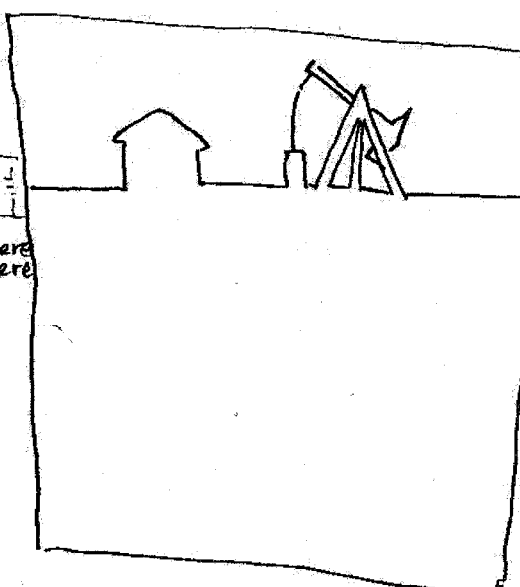
President Bush gave a speech today outlining" his plan in response to the "oil addiction which has suddenly gripped the nation in its, um, oily grips. His plan contained several measures, including:

Professional Psychiatrists available for "grief counseling" of SUV owners,

and a, erm, "diplomatic" visit to the Alaskan Wildlife Refuge, where he struck gold.



comic by >> Tim Linn



## World News U.S. vs Venezuela news by >> Jeff Keeling

Relations between Venezuela and the United States continue to worsen at a recent pro-President Chavez rally. Chavez spoke of the need to order more rifles from Russia in order to protect the country from invasion. He also would like the country to have one million men and women to be armed with these weapons. This is the latest military build up in which Chavez has engaged. In January, Spain sold Venezuela twelve military planes despite US objections to the sale. Spain decided to go through with the trade after removing all US technology from the planes. Spain also cited that these planes would be used to stop drug trafficking on the Colombian border. The US diplomat in Venezuela's capital has recently been expelled on charges of spying at the US embassy there. The white house and Chavez continue to make accusations about each other. Defense secretary Rumsfeld recently compared Chavez to Hitler and Chavez compared President Bush to Hitler at this past rally. The US claims that Chavez is destabilizing the South American region, while Chavez says the US is trying to destabilize the Venezuelan government.

## Europe vs Islam news by >> Jeff Keeling

In one of the most violent retaliations against disrespectful cartoons about Islam, the Danish embassy was torched in Beirut. One of these cartoons depicted the Prophet Mohammed with a bomb shaped turban, which originated in a Danish newspaper. The Muslim population was outraged, as any depiction of Mohammed is said to be offensive. However, in a move to display freedom of expression, other European newspapers republished the cartoons. This has brought about mass protests in the Middle East, Muslim neighborhoods in European countries, and the boycotting of European goods in the Middle East.

# The Vagina Monologues



by Eve Ensler

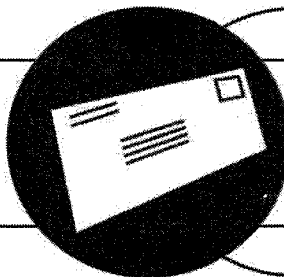
Friday & Saturday February 10 & 11

7 pm in Baldwin Auditorium

\$3 - Proceeds benefit Victim Support Services and [www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org) to end violence against women

Sponsored by the Women's Resource Center and The Monitor

## letters



### Former Monitor editor gives props for article current editors doubt existence of

I just opened an envelope with a whole stack of Monitors from this semester. It was a wonderful surprise. Thank you, Monitor fairy. I can't wait to read through them, and find out about things like sabotaging a mountain lion trap or that I got eaten by wild dogs. Speaking of

mountain lions, I just wanted the readers to know that that's a big deal here in Arizona. There are all sorts of flyers up at my school to go down to the trial in Tuscon. The day I read that article, I was talking to my friend Francisca, who said she was going to skip class to go to that trial this Tuesday. And I suddenly realized I knew exactly what she was talking about, because I had read about it in the Monitor. This paper from Kirksville, MO. Way to be worldly, Monitor people. I've also been learning a lot new things about Venezuela and media while I've been here. First off, Venezuela is setting all sorts of presidents for sophisticated local media. Their privately-owned media is owned by people with lots of money

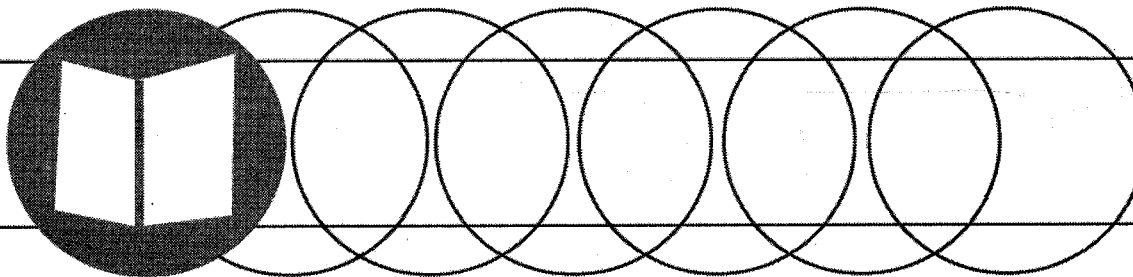
just like ours are, but President Hugo Chavez only uses Public Broadcasting. And it is public knowledge that he does not censor or manipulate the privately owned media at all. He made sure people knew that. He even has his own show on public broadcasting where Joe Schmo Venezualan can phone in and ask questions like "my neighbor and I are fighting over where my land ends and his begins, what should we do about it?" And then the President of their country answers them. On National Television. Also, here in Prescott, AZ, I'm working at an Infoshop in town. I've learned that Infoshops exist all over the country, from coast to coast. They are worldly. And they're opening up a new one in Flagstaff

(N. Arizona University) this month. They inspire people. So here's to the people running the Infoshop in Kirksville. You are not alone. Way to be progress in the Midwest. You have lots of support from Arizona.

To new spaces.

--Frances Collins-Dusseault

Send your letters to  
[monitortrm@hotmail.com](mailto:monitortrm@hotmail.com).



## The Four State News

news by >> Ian Florida

KS

### Kansas To Increase Budget For Education

Current Kansas gubernatorial candidate Jim Barnett has outlined a brand new \$400 million education package for his state. The new package is in response to the recent Kansas Supreme Court order to increase K-12 education spending, while at the same time not raising taxes or expanding gambling. This new plan would put in place a \$125 million increase in spending for the upcoming fiscal year of 2007. This would start at the beginning of July. This would be a \$50 million increase over the \$75 million increase which is already required by Kansas state-law. The plan would institute increases in spending of \$100 million for 2008, 2009, and 2010. Financing the State's K-12 programs has become a major issue recently as legislators try to comply with a Kansas Supreme Court decision which required the state to spend more money to meet constitutional obligations. Last year's budget increased K-12 spending by a total of \$290 million dollars, making total funding for education over \$3 billion.

### Kansas Warned To Accept Science Or Be Sued

In 2005, Steve Harvey, Eric Rothschild, and Richard Katskee filed suit in Pennsylvania in representation of several parents of children in the Dover school district soon after the Dover school board voted to require the teaching of intelligent design. In January these same lawyers who challenged the Pennsylvania school board over "intelligent design" have turned their attention to the Midwest, Kansas in particular. They have recently announced that they believe that litigation may be required to overturn the similar decision of the Kansas Board of Education to treat evolution as a "severely flawed theory." They have stated that legislation or even a correction from the Kansas Board of Education would be preferable, but that litigation is definitely an option at this point, and may be inevitable if nothing is done soon. A political decision would be less costly and divisive, however, these lawyers, and Eugene Scott, who is the executive director of the National Center for Science Education, are prepared for a vicious court battle.

Five members of the Kansas State Board of Education are up for reelection in 2006, these include four of the six conservatives who supported the standards. Each of those incumbents has at least one opponent challenging them for their seat.

### Iowa Students Must Pass Classes Before Passing the Ball

Iowa is setting new standards for students wishing to compete in athletics in high schools throughout the state: they must pass all of their classes. This new requirement would be in addition to the minimum GPA's already in place throughout the state. The proposal from the Iowa State Board of Education is raising eyebrows among many of Mid-Iowa's athletic directors and coaches. The Board of Education will vote on the proposal, which includes a 20-day ineligible period for any student failing any class, next month. If it is passed, it will be made into legislation which will take effect beginning in the 2006-2007 school year. Right now, athletes in Iowa high schools are required to pass only four classes to stay eligible for athletics. Some feel the current rules are fine and don't need changed.

### Who Knew Killing Was Cruel?

Late Wednesday recently appointed Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito heard his first case and it directly involved the state of Missouri. The high Court stayed the execution of an inmate in a Missouri prison who argued that lethal injection amounts to punishment which is cruel and unusual. The split decision occurred in the case of Michael Taylor, whose execution was set to occur on midnight on the night of the trial. The split decision put Alito on the opposite end of the aisle from his fellow conservative jurists. He voted with the majority in turning down a request from Missouri authorities to carry out the execution.

### Hard Knocks In Knox

According to the 2006 Report on Illinois Poverty, released recently by the Illinois Poverty Summit, only eight counties are below the poverty line in Illinois. This can be compared to 13 in 2005. The trend has seen a reduction in counties falling into poverty across Illinois for the past few years. However the total percentage of residents falling into poverty has been steadily increasing from 10 percent in 1999 to 12.4 percent in the most recent account. Most of the counties which have been labeled as falling below the poverty line lie in the Southern region of the state. The Poverty watch list also claims that nearly 25 percent of Illinois workers made less than \$9.27 per hour last year, which is equivalent to poverty wages.

## Ford announces 30% cut to unionized workforce

news by >> Adam Dorhauer

Recently, GM announced plans to cut up to 30,000 jobs. Ford just called their bet.

Despite its smaller size, Ford has announced plans to match GM's cuts while shutting down up to ten plants, including the St. Louis plant, one of two that produces mid-size SUV's. The cuts could represent 30% of Ford's domestic unionized workforce compared to the about 22% cuts at GM. Many of the cuts will not take effect until the company's contract with the United Auto Workers expires in 2007.

The cuts are part of a new plan dubbed "The Way Forward." In a press release Monday, January 23, Ford Chairman and CEO Bill Ford focused on the innovative nature of the plan and the long-term thinking that led to such massive cuts following the third straight profitable year for the company, a year that took in \$2.5 billion net income, second only to 2004 in the company's 100 year history. Chairman Ford implied that the cuts came in part because "the demand for SUVs dropped sooner than anticipated" and admitted that his company had run into trouble with an "over-reliance on SUVs."

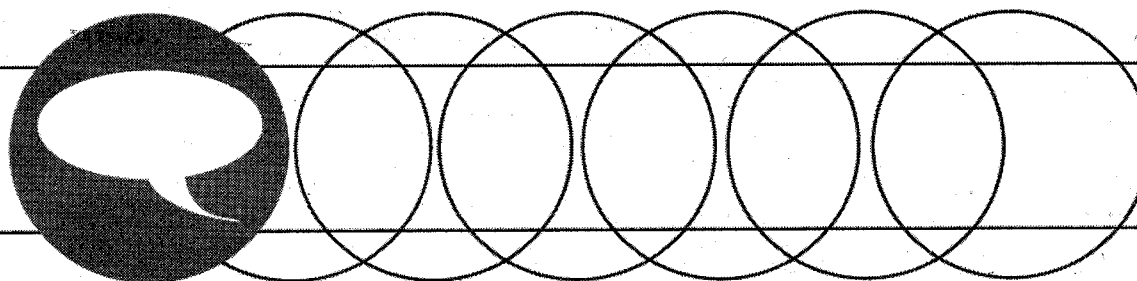
He seems to have realized that it is no coincidence that the cuts that have hit SUV- and truck-heavy GM and Ford have been avoided by companies more committed to fuel efficiency, such as Honda and Toyota. The short-term thinking that Chairman Ford vowed his company would no longer stand for led to aggressive pursuit of bloated SUV profits in recent years at the cost of producing more viable options in a world of \$2.50+ gas. Why did Ford not turn to the innovative thinking that competitors have used to stay afloat sooner? Chairman Ford conceded, "Because we didn't have to."

He also said of the cuts, "They're going to affect many lives, many families and communities - and we're going to do everything we reasonably can to ease the burdens." What exactly Ford plans to do to ease these burdens was not addressed, but the company gives some insight in the Full-Year Highlights section of a 2005 financial report on its website:

- Reduction of total automotive personnel by more than 10,000 during 2005, through personnel reduction actions and attrition.
- Ratification of an agreement with the United Auto Workers (subject to court approval) to reduce the company's health care costs primarily through modifications to the hourly retiree health care plan. These actions are expected to reduce Ford's overall retiree health care and life insurance (OPEB) obligation by \$5 billion, with a projected annual cost savings of about \$650 million on a pre-tax basis.
- Establishment of a company contribution limit set at 2006 levels for health care benefits and a reduction of life insurance benefits for U.S. salaried retirees. These actions reduced Ford's overall retiree health care and life insurance (OPEB) obligation by about \$3 billion, with a projected annual cost savings of about \$400 million on a pre-tax basis.

In his closing, Chairman Ford compared the new direction of the company to a start-up business, saying, "We're going to be a big company that thinks like a small company."

I've never been less a fan of irony.



## Is religious disrespect always reprehensible?

**opinion by >> Jon Lawinger**

Last September *Jyllands-Posten*, a Danish daily newspaper, printed a series of 12 cartoons depicting Islam's holy prophet, Muhammad. The conservative paper, sparked by an incident in which artists refused to illustrate a children's book about the Prophet unless they could remain anonymous, printed the cartoons to defy what it believed to be a standard of self-censorship on issues relating to Islam. According to Islamic tradition, any depiction of the Prophet Muhammad is forbidden.

The cartoons vary greatly. Some poke fun at the supposed gravity of the cartoons themselves, or at *Jyllands-Posten* for orchestrating a deliberately provocative PR stunt, but others negatively portray the prophet - most notably, one depicts Muhammad's headpiece as a bomb with a lit fuse. (You can see them all for yourself at <http://www.brussel-sjournal.com/node/698>.) More recently newspapers across Europe have reprinted the cartoons in support of press freedom, causing the issue to explode into an all-out cultural war. There have been boycotts, death threats, protests, and riots, which at their most extreme resulted in the burning of two embassies in Libya and the Danish mission in Lebanon. Meanwhile many Islamic leaders have urged followers to avoid violence.

There are numerous questions and top-

ics of discussion involved in this controversy. How has Muhammad been depicted in art throughout history? Who is responsible for the West's negative image of Islam? Has the prohibition of images of Muhammad made him even more iconic? Are these protests indicative of general Middle East sentiments or are they merely a small but vocal minority? And where did protesters find so many Danish flags to burn? I can't take on the whole gamut of issues involved in this controversy, so I'll stick to just one narrow question: Is it necessarily wrong for a non-believer to publish images depicting Muhammad, knowing that doing so violates Islamic law?

Since it is difficult to gain a sense of perspective in an issue like this, analogies are often the argument of choice. Sure, disrespecting Islamic tradition might not offend you, but what if it was something more personally meaningful? Something closer to home? Reuters quoted U.S. State Department representative Sean McCormack echoing a popular position on the matter: "Anti-Muslim images are as unacceptable as anti-Semitic images, as anti-Christian images or any other religious belief." And I agree. Except for the "un" part.

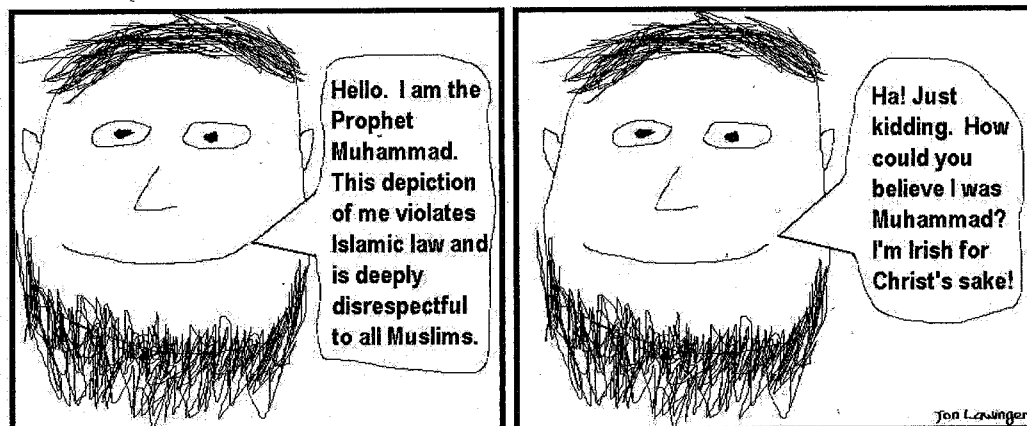
You see, I don't need to look very far for an analogy. Two years ago I contributed a series of four sex-

focused comic strips to *The Monitor* entitled "Jesus and Freud: Roommates" (which later featured Paris Hilton as well). No embassies were attacked. Copies of *The Monitor* were not burned in effigy. In fact, to my surprise, I only received one angry email accusing me of disrespect, intolerance, and sacrilege.

When it comes down to it I can't really deny that my comics were disrespectful - of Jesus, of Freud, and of Paris Hilton - but not without purpose. My depiction of Jesus was not only meant to draw laughs. Among other things, I hoped to also call attention to Christianity's depiction of Jesus as fully human yet devoid of sexual drives - a depiction I believe is not only absurd but is part of a harmful Christian ideal of asexuality.

Were my comic strips anti-Christian? They did not promote hatred of Christians, but they did offer criticism of Christianity. Religion is not, like ethnicity, an innate trait. It is, like a political ideology, a set of beliefs an individual chooses to embrace. Satire is a valuable tool for pointing out an ideology's inconsistencies, absurdities, and other faults, and I see no reason why religious beliefs should be exempt from such criticism.

This does not mean that I believe the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons are necessarily defensible - some appear counterproductively inflammatory or inaccurately stereotypical - but rather that I believe disrespect is at times a productive component of effective criticism.



## Bagwell has earned the right to play

**opinion by >> Adam Dorhauer**

I know I'm not the only one on campus awaiting February 16 more ardently than February 5.

Don't get me wrong; I'll watch the Super Bowl (and by this time, already have). But there are those of us who will not rouse from our metaphoric 4-month hibernation until Chris Carpenter and Yadier Molina drive into Jupiter, FL in their rented Cadillac convertibles to report to spring training.

For people of my ilk, there is little worth noting in sports from November to a couple weeks from now. Which is why we write about Manny Ramirez trades and the World Baseball Classic. But the dawn is upon us; it's so close we can smell the fresh-cut grass in left field, and I can't help but write about something baseball.

Fortunately there is such a story (because believe me, we don't want to write

about Manny). Jeff Bagwell has given his career to the Houston Astros, and it's been a great one. He's been a Rookie of the Year, a Gold Glove, and an MVP for the Astros. He hit 40 homers in a season twice playing in the Hitter's-Hell Dome before Enron Field opened in 2000. Perhaps most impressively, four times he played all 162 games of the season in an era when most teams don't have a single player start 162 games.

Now, because of an arthritic shoulder that kept Bagwell out of most of last season, the Astros want to declare him unable to play baseball so they can collect \$15.7 million of his \$17 million salary in insurance money. This would effectively end Bagwell's career. The problem is, Bagwell still wants to play.

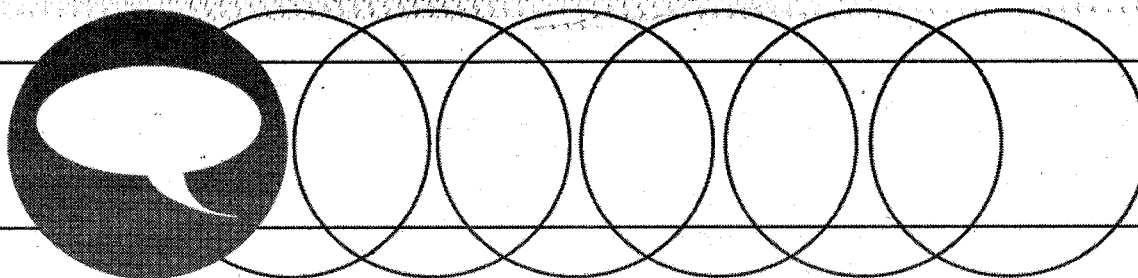
Why should Bagwell be allowed to spend another season on the bench for \$17 million? There are a lot of reasons. Foremost, nobody knows Bagwell can't play. He has been training vigorously to try to return to 100% by

spring training. The Astros certainly owe him the opportunity to try. After all, his arthritic shoulder has been a problem since 2001, but he played through it without going on the DL until 2005, playing in 161, 158, 160, and 156 games respectively in the 2001-2004 seasons and hitting a total of 136 homeruns over that span. Additionally, the last time such an insurance policy of this size was collected on was in 1999 (on Albert Belle's contract), even though many high-paid players have suffered worse injuries than Bagwell's since. And the money is not an issue to Bagwell; he will get paid whether he plays or not.

Of course, you might think it unreasonable for the Astros to pay \$17 million (one of the top ten salaries in baseball) to a player of waning ability. The issue is more complicated than that, however. Back in 2000, Bagwell signed a 5-year contract with the Astros that was heavily back-loaded. This means that Houston paid Bagwell far less than he was

worth when he was putting up his best numbers, instead deferring much of that money to the end of the contract when they knew he would be less effective in order to free up salary to sign other players. Keep in mind that Bagwell will be 38 this year, and the average MLB career lasts only 2.7 years ([vaview.org](http://vaview.org)). The Astros knew all of this when they signed him. Effectively, they are not paying him to play this year, but for playing for cheap in his prime.

All of this makes Houston's attempt to prevent Bagwell from playing in order to collect on his salary fraudulent at best and downright malicious at worst. After all Bagwell has done for this organization, for them to tell him he can't play is an outrage. Fans of Houston have shown overwhelming support for Bagwell, and, as his agent Barry Axelrod said of public opinion on the issue, "The thing is, he doesn't deserve the 25 percent that are against him. He *hasn't done anything wrong*."



## Got STAT 290 on my mind

**opinion by >> Joey Puricelli**

I am a Math major. Some of you may know this, some of you may not. Math majors are required to take Statistics 290 to graduate; this replaces Stat 190 in the LSP, so we only have to take 290. Truth be told, there's little difference between the two courses. There's a different book, a prerequisite course, and a handful of integrals, but aside from that, it's more or less the same stuff. But enough beating around the bush; here's the dramatic one-sentence paragraph of the day:

Statistics is evil.

"But Joey," says...well, says more or less everyone, "Isn't stat just math? I thought you liked math! Why would you major in a subject you think is evil?" Well, everyone, statistics is NOT math. My stat professor said

this on the first day of class, and he turned out to be completely correct. Despite its heavy reliance on mathematics, the field of statistics is almost the complete opposite in every way.

First of all, math is an art. Some proofs are of equal prose quality to some of the great poets. Some formulas are artworks that could be hung in your dining room. Stats are nothing but science, nothing but cold, hard calculation with none of the aesthetic value that can be found in almost any other scientific field.

Mathematics is about precision, making sure that the answer obtained is as accurate as is humanly possible to express. Statistics is about estimation, rounding off anything and everything at random convenient (and often arbitrary) places, and sometimes resorting to flat-out guesswork. Some "science" that is.

Math is inclusive, all-encompassing.

Mathematical laws and theorems are designed to account for every possible situation, no matter how bizarre or unlikely. The only event excluded from math formulas are impossibilities, like dividing by zero. Stat is exclusive. Statistical formulas leave out not only impossible situations, but also many that are merely improbable. Where math strives to account for everything, stat is more than happy to exclude outliers and anomalies as though they didn't exist. This, needless to say, has dangerous ramifications when applied to everyday life; imagine what would happen if society's nonconformists were not just ridiculed as they are now, but ignored completely, as though they didn't exist, or as though they weren't even human.

Math views the concept of infinity for what it is...namely, it is infinite. Infinity is not a number, but rather a name for the fact that numbers go on forever, and that patterns

sometimes change as larger and larger numbers are reached. Statistics is content to "round" infinity down to about thirty. THIRTY. 30. This is an idea that would drive most mathematicians outside of their minds, because it's so incredibly WRONG.

Which brings me to the final point: Mathematics is about analyzing and understanding the true workings of the universe. Math cannot be falsified to achieve a desired result. Statistics is about generalizations and is quite often manipulated by the statistician to say what he or she wants to hear. In short, math is truth, and statistics is a lie. Samuel Clemens and Andrew Neilsen would back me up on that, in spite of John C. Clemens and A.C. Nielsen.

Statistics is a lie, and lying is evil, so by the transitive property, we reach the mathematically sound (and thus true) conclusion that statistics is evil. Quod erat demonstrandum.

## Multiculturalism must be rooted in reality, not abstraction, to survive

**opinion by >> Larry Iles**

Resisting the dreaded despair urge upon return to rural Kirksville from sophisticated Sorbonne, Paris visiting History researchers last semester via coastal beautiful Eastbourne UK father's homestead, what have I more optimistically learnt from 2005? That might cheer all we progressive MONITOR type enthusiasts fully up yourselves similarly en retour for 2006 opening semester! After all, frankly politically, we need the spirit non-sexistly of erectile orgasm, emphatically not impotent reaction to the ultra-conservative puritans in control of both this campus administration and pathetic White House with its uncritical TV, sycophantic male overweight bully boy white editors and trivialised female scandal reporters.

Firstly, having personally lived barely a few miles for nearly half last year from some of the worst race riots antagonistically in this century so far in PARIS history, I have learnt to vehemently distrust the consequent, exaggerated pessimism of those from our Anglo-Saxon egocentric own afar about them! From, that is, those who do not really, evilly want "multiculturalism" to more peacefully work at all in 2006! Therefore, they see the car burnings and manifest but occasional subway, metro system race hatred fights I have personally aghast witnessed in Paris. To be, what? Proofs of the "failure" of such harmony efforts as represented by multicultural housing co-existence, public provided as we in Europe have more in site abundances of than here in wealth, worst-segregated FORTRESS, dog-guarded North American private enterprise sink or swim quagmire land.

Don't be mistaken, FOLKS! Such bigots and idiots in their pundit, glib opposition to multiculturalism do not patently come out into the accountable open! To gleefully say "YAH-BOO, YOU LIBERALS, SOCIALISTS, ANARCHISTS, PROGRESSIVE RELIGIONISTS AND MINORITIES HAVE FAILED, YET AGAIN!" That would be too dangerously an open display of racism and sexism against the impoverished. Even in smug Kirksville, as far as we know, the KKK ceased PUBLIC presence at NMSU commencement and homecoming festivities, thank god, by the late 1940s, in deserved lack of any further viable PUBLIC respectability for their hatred and scoffing of early multiculturalism in its NAACP integrationist, economic equality post-WWII phase!

No, such scoffers today against such healthy things as interracial sex in basic, vital multiculturalism, as one can see in places as various as Birmingham UK or Marseilles France recently, both visitingly celebrated, are more astutely adept! At disguising their futility impulses about we humans such progress in more coded negativism of attacks (ie not your average J. Burns MISSOURI STATESCHAUVOMAN hysteria!). Last fall, thus, the US/UK ECONOMIST had frontispiece covers and even superiority mongeringly the UK INDEPENDENT in similar media coverage, depicting burnt Paris cars as not bad of THEMSELVES. But instead, more subtly, conservatively as indicative of INSIDE, editorial-alleged failed economics (ie, too socialist or etatist Europe, one supposedly too weak to combat Muslims!!!)

Back here in our own provincial close-mindedness, THE INDEX carried a characteris-

tically ridiculously buffoon statement from a publicity hungry TSU overseas student-Americanised administrator for his silly part. In which without consulting us in actual touring France he scoffed, that US students would be as safe in Paris as "Kirksville," provided they kept well away from certain well-known, usual "UNSAFE STREETS". As I failed to get the INDEX to print in rebuff response, TOSH!! I was in some of those very same streets in popular tourist bookshops at their VERY riot times, and they were far safer for whites than for blacks, given heavy policing, SOLELY in the more northern, actual banlieue-deprived districts in schools he never sullied. PLEASE!

In my native Britain, too, such complacent rich scoffers were also more snide, leaving out vital cooling factor things. Like how, Socialist French mayors defused many riots elsewhere in French riot centre 300 towns by their refusing central, right wing government artificial, anti-Arab youth curfew orders in our UK TV reports! Trying to use these riots for neo-conservative foul ends, a Blairite head of the shortly to be wrongly disbanded, UK Race Relations Community Commission, middle class Trevor Phillips caused uproar in UK's huge Black and Asian communities he is supposed to be statutorily protective towards fiducially. By his arbitrarily attacking all such ongoing multiculturalism efforts as even his own as sustaining falsely "a flawed dependency culture". A piece of sick US style Reaganite rationalisation. That rightly brought down the condemnatory, Uncle Tom wrath of another Laborite comrade with whom I have debated personally these issues, DAVID LAMY MP, our Black Culture Minister, who

said he was not abolishing the youth culture, such multicultural clubs he's Tottenham slum area familiar with, in state subsidisation harmony effort. Even to placate the dying authority, in code lingo, of US admiring Tony Blair, his PM, or Trevor Phillips!!!! BOTH men, though, have denounced French right wing interior minister Sarkozy for inflaming his situation by calling most French black youth "SCUM", to get Missouri rural type French non-Parisian votes!

In conclusion, more hopefully, I am left with two 2006 thoughts. Yes, LAMY types need our support for their multiculturalism, as they represent the only hope for economic healing and historical truth. Or, as my esteemed friend, former UK-US Labour MP Dr. Oona King put it to me, "we need the bread", in so many words! But, too, we need to defend with such history, herstory and solid progressive economics, such multiculturalism and anti-sexism. ITS, BLUNTLY, NOT MUCH USE COPYING ANY TYPICAL, WHITE US LIBERAL ACADEMIC JOURNAL, LIKE MULTICULTURAL REVIEW, WHICH PRETENDS OTHER PEOPLES' COUNTRIES AND ETHNICITIES DON'T MATTER! AND THAT YOU OPPOSE RACISM AND SEXISM HERE OR IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE BY ABSTRACT CONCEPTS LIKE "ANTI-ESSENTIALISM", AND "POST-MODERNIST DECOLONIALISM". Such tripe shuts off real thinking, folks, and plays into the Sarkozies and yuppie Condi Rices of these monocultural scoffer sorts. And New ORLEANS in 2005 disaster shows we in 2006 don't need any more of either pessimism, far Right or even academic ultra Left, do we?

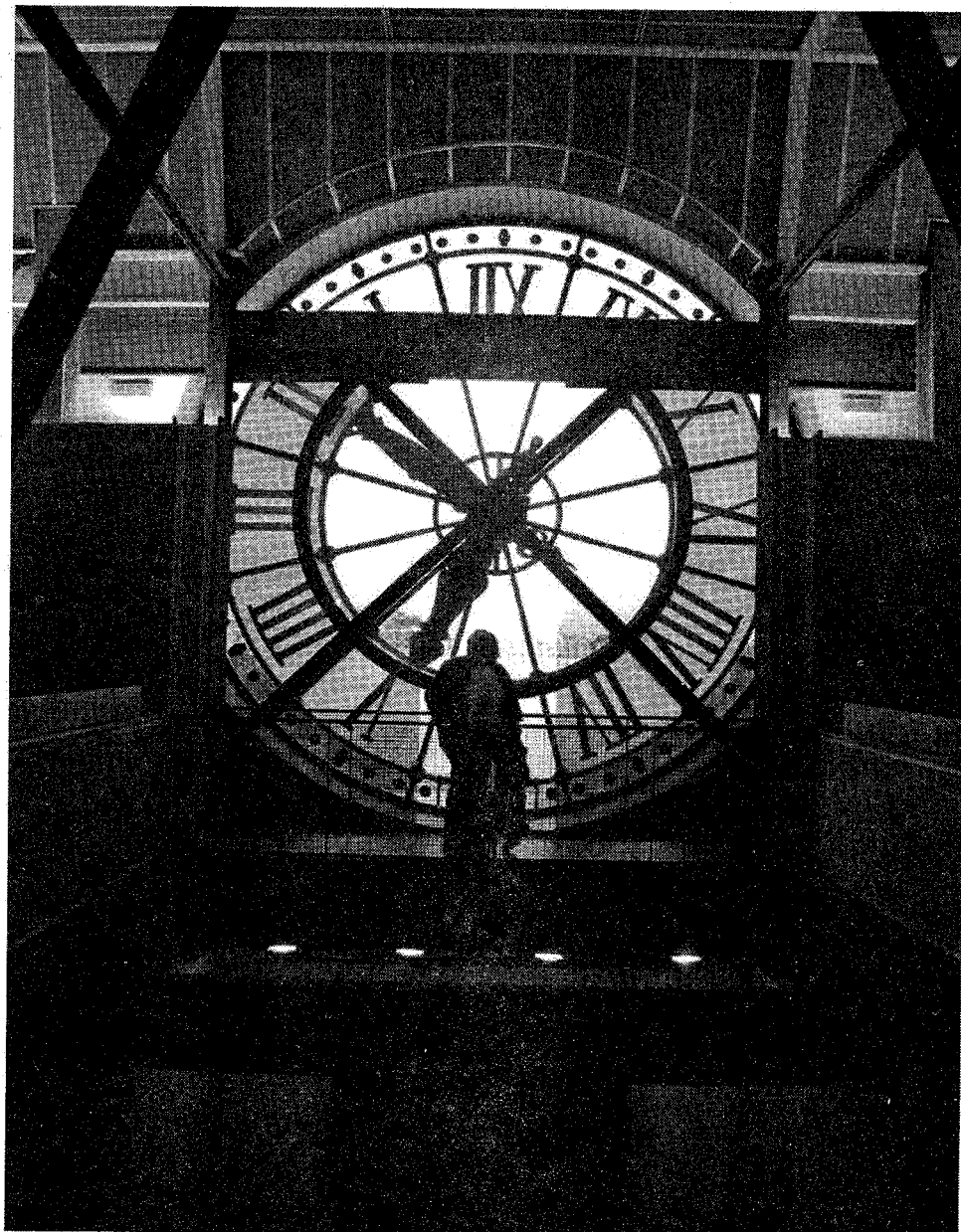


# Photography

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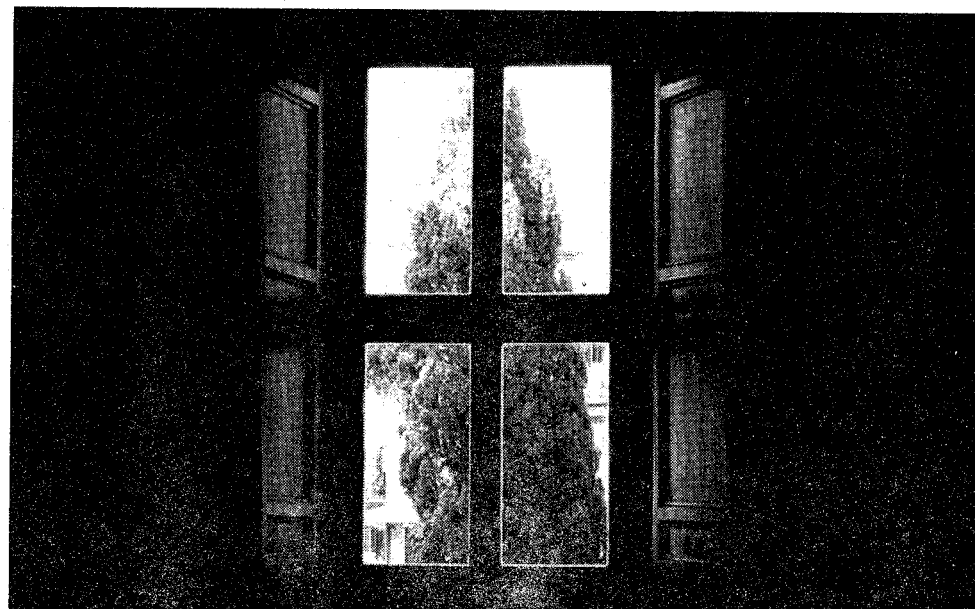
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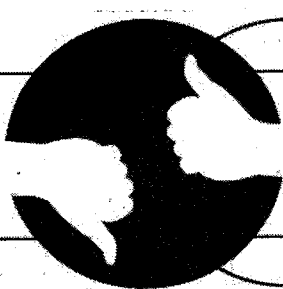
Phil Jarrett



Luke Gardener



Victoria Weaver



## Warhammer 48k debut beautifully brutal

review by >> Tim Linn

Columbia noise-mongrels Warhammer 48k have finally released an album. We should all take the time to thank whatever gods they worship.

I've begun to notice several similarities between the great rock albums out of Columbia, Missouri, Warhammer's hometown. Albums like Sabertooth's *Cadillac Soldier* and One Inch Punch's *Horsehead Nebula* feature vocals that are excitedly sung or screamed under several cakings of distortion, and also tend to emphasize the flow of an album, instead of just a good song or two. Warhammer's debut LP continues these traditions, while still making a nearly peerless album. They run through just 6 songs in just under forty minutes, taking their time to breathe a palpable life onto some plastic disc.

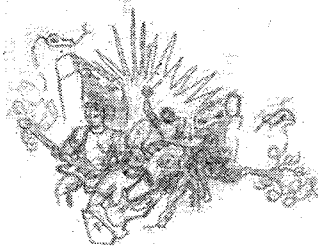


Illustration by >> Tim Linn

That being said, this record turns out to be a pretty good approximation of the live Warhammer experience. The band live is a phenom: their shows are all tensions and releases, and you fall for it every time. They teeter-totter from brutally slow hypnotics to maniacally fast thrash mindfucks. And this works, because there's really nothing like it in the area. Their self-titled album, a split release from Columbia's Emergency Umbrella and St. Louis' Collective Records, is no different really. A couple songs have been floating around for some time now, and most, if not all, have been played live. The versions here are a bit different. "Citizen Pain" is a little faster, while the breakdown on "Accidental Ultrasound Abortion" is almost painfully slow, a trudge through a vat of congealed fat of dead souls. Eww. The fifth song is

like a trudge through a swamp with a werewolf. See a pattern emerging here?

Okay, so not every song's slow. But Warhammer seems to have learned a thing or two about torture from the Swans, who I would say are a touchstone for this kind of stuff: Your whole body aches after listening to something like this. But you can't stop listening. The riffs are undeniably big, the tension is too appealing. This is the perfect album for a death obsessed culture. Flirt with your reckoning; still go to the coffee shop.

Basically, this album's better than most metal bands I've heard, maybe because they have more fun and it's still really menacing. I mean, the ending of "Accidental Ultrasound Abortion" is *four minutes long*.

Not to outdo themselves, Warhammer 48k also recently released the *Knife Hits 3*" cd. This mini-album was released by apop records in Columbia, is limited to 666 copies, and features artwork encased in wax, all inside a Petri dish. Cool, huh? And the music's good too, but a bit less coherent, probably because of the lower production quality. The songs, however, are comparably as brutal as those on the full length. The last song even concludes with the sound of an electric knife, invoking, I guess, the title, but also probably just because it's funny.

Which is essentially the point here: Warhammer 48k make the most brutally thick noise-riff abominations this side of Norway, mostly because it's the most fun thing for Dungeons and Dragons obsessed, troubled with normal kids to make. As it turns out, that's a great muse.

## Festivus offers guide to young holiday

review by >> Cory Milles

In today's politically-correct culture, one often is afraid to hand out Christmas cards, adorn the office with lights or a menorah, or even give a simple greeting to a passerby. In one Plano, Texas school, the colors red and green were even banned on the day of the holiday party, requiring students to wear white so as not to offend people who do not celebrate Christmas.

In a time of such tumult, the answer has come to us all: Festivus.

Festivus is a holiday that was made famous on the episode of *Seinfeld* called "The Strike." In it, we learn a bit more of George Costanza's traumatic and amusing heritage: that his family celebrates a holiday called Festivus. George's dad, played by the always-funny Jerry Stiller, says that during one holiday season as he was buying a doll for George, he got into a fight with another dad. "As I reigned down blows upon him," he declares, "I knew there must be a better way.... A Festivus for the rest of us!"

And so Festivus was born. But not even Frank Costanza could foresee the extent to which it would be ingrained in our culture. And so arrives a book celebrating the celebration of Festivus.

In *Festivus: The Holiday for the Rest of Us*, author Allen Salkin traces the "historical" roots of this holiday, even back to ancient Rome itself. Obviously, this is all fake, but it's all in good fun.

The book goes into detail about the key components of the holiday of Festivus. For example, while the *Seinfeld* episode showed that Festivus is normally celebrated on December 23 by the Costanza family, there is no true date for the celebration of Festivus. Some people celebrate it several times a year, and not only in December.

The most important part of Festivus is the

Festivus pole. Usually made of aluminum, for its "high strength to weight ratio," the pole embodies whatever you want it to. The pole has no true significance, and yet Festivus would not be the same without it. The pole itself can be any size or girth. In fact, if you are short on aluminum or metal poles,

you may simply spray-paint a cardboard tube silver to use as a substitute. Most importantly, it is forbidden to use tinsel with the pole. Tinsel is a representation of the commercialism that Festivus avoids.

The book goes far beyond the pole, of course. Another important component of the holiday is the Airing of Grievances, a ceremony in which people tell each other how much they have been disappointments throughout the year. Many such examples are given in the

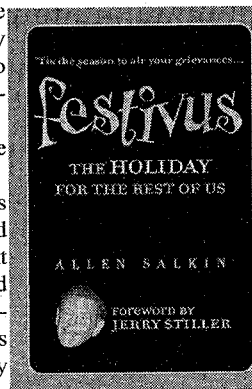
book, and others can be found at the web site [www.festivusbook.com](http://www.festivusbook.com). The book goes into depth about how the Airing of Grievances lets us release all of our pent-up frustration, and to really let others know what we think of them.

A third major component to Festivus is the Feats of Strength. The book gives several examples of what can be accepted as a Feat of Strength, but those who have watched *Seinfeld* know that Festivus cannot truly be over until the head of the household and oldest male wrestle, and the former is pinned to the ground.

The book overall is fairly funny. There are several ideas for Festivus-related activities, recipes, and even Festivus carols. Some of the stories are real; others are obviously not. Overall, it is fun to see how real people have started celebrating Festivus as a non-religious alternative in the holiday season. The best thing about Festivus is that you don't have to give gifts, and you don't have to worry about receiving them. No pressure to give, no feelings hurt.

Those expecting a strictly humorous book might be a little bit surprised at the historical/philosophical nature of some parts. While it is funny, it portrays itself as an authoritative guide to the history and celebration of Festivus. At times the comedy is lost at the expense of sounding "official." But overall, it flows well; I read through it in one sitting, laughing at many of the anecdotes, party favors, and examples of grievances previously aired. Any *Seinfeld* fan will want this book, with the foreword being from Jerry Stiller himself, who waxes poetically about the virtues of aluminum.

At a time when we must be tolerant of all religious and cultural holidays around us, Festivus stands in the gap with no religious significance at all. Just an aluminum pole. And we can all shout, like Kramer, at the most obviously non-miraculous times, "It's a Festivus miracle!"



## Hostel falls short of even horror flick standards

review by >> Ian Florida

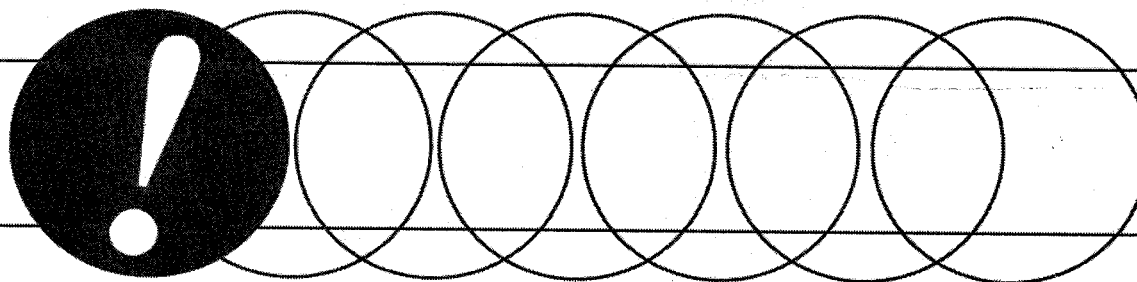
While staying in Amsterdam during their summer backpacking trip through Europe, three young men find themselves locked out of their youth hostel after returning past curfew. Luckily another young man lets them stay with him overnight. Over the course of their stay at this young man's house, he tells them of a paradise he stumbled across while engaging in travels of his own in Eastern Europe. This erotic Eden is filled with beautiful women who throw themselves at foreigners, especially Americans. Always looking for adventure, the three strike out to find this hostel, but what they find is far more than any of them expected.

The movie begins as a soft core porn, and ends with about as much plot. It progressively moves itself towards its one great goal of growing up to be a horror flick. The sex scenes are prevalent in the beginning of the movie, and help to keep your attention away from the 5th grade script and shoddy acting. The movie claims to use over 150 gallons of blood, even more than in director/writer Eli Roth's first film, *Cabin Fever*, however not even a full tank for a semi truck seems to have been enough to cover up many flaws in this film.

The movie is filled with sexism and xenophobia, as well as a poor knowledge of geography and society. The characters claim to

head to "eastern Europe," but in fact travel to Slovakia, which is in Central Europe. Also, Slovakia is portrayed as filled with criminals and poverty. In reality, the crime rate in Slovakia is much lower than the United States, and the poverty is not nearly as bad as it was under communism. When viewing a horror film, it is proper to dispense with one's concept of reality for the couple of hours over which the film takes place, however basing a movie in our time, in our world, and billing it as "based on actual events," and then screwing up something as simple as geography reveals why the movie was written and shot in only 12 months, 1/3 the time the average movie takes.





## Wal-Mart: who pays for the low prices?

feature by >> Rachael Hogan

While we all enjoy low prices on shampoos, tee shirts and candy, as consumers, it is up to us to make sure that our savings aren't coming at the expense of others. In a town the size of Kirksville, there are not very many choices besides Wal-Mart. But, the situation isn't hopeless because Wal-Mart has a choice in how it treats those it employs. Wal-Mart is the most well known, cheapest priced, and frequently shopped "Super-center" in the United States. It has a much different reputation in other parts of the world. For the factory and farm workers that supply the chain, Wal-Mart is the worst exploiter of their rights. Unjust



photo by >> Meaghan Quinly

R.A.F.T. President Katrina Brink (center) with Wal-Mart workers Damaris Meza Guillen (left) and Flory Arevalo (right)

labor practices run rampant in their factories. These include Wal-Mart paying significantly less than the country's established minimum wage, denying maternity leave, forcing workers to work overtime hours, threatening dismissal if the workers try to unionize, providing inadequate or nonexistent bathroom and lunch breaks, and little to no safety equipment or chemical protection. Being the world's largest

retailer, Wal-Mart sets the standards for other corporations' labor policies. As long as the international community and local com-

munities like Kirksville do nothing to pressure Wal-Mart to change, the inexcusable exploitation of workers will continue. Our inaction is as good as an unspoken approval of Wal-Mart's actions.

On the upside, we have seen a drastic change from passivity into public protest in recent years. Within the U.S., states like California have filed lawsuits against Wal-Mart in response to the poor working conditions. In addition to the U.S. outcries, labor groups worldwide are mobilizing against their oppressive employer. The International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF) collaborated efforts with grassroots organizations in several countries to successfully raise legal complaints against Wal-Mart. The ILRF has also created a nationwide campaign to raise awareness about laborers' rights; bringing Wal-Mart employed garment workers from places like the Philippines, China, Nicaragua, and India to campuses across the U.S.

On Monday, with the help of several professors and student organizations, the Wal-Mart Workers Tour made its way to Baldwin Auditorium. A large number of students and faculty attended the event. Flory Arevalo, who has worked in

Wal-Mart sweatshops for twenty years in the Philippines, discussed the company's abuse of her country's workforce. The other worker, Damaris Meza Guillen, a Nicaraguan apparel worker, also had first-hand accounts

to detail Wal-Mart's abuse. Both women are active leaders in worker rights' campaigns in their countries. After each worker, with the assistance of a translator, explained the need for reform, the IRLF representative Trina Tocco fielded questions from the audience. Above all, Flory and Damaris simply reminded the audience that the request is for the inherent rights of workers to be provided.

In order to give support to this justified demand, Ms. Tocco outlined three things we, the consumers, can do now to force Wal-Mart to improve. First, support the International Labor Rights Fund and other organizations by donating or joining in the campaigns. Visit [www.laborrights.org](http://www.laborrights.org) to find more information. Second, use your money wisely. Buy fair trade when possible. You can find online catalogues at [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org) or purchase from Sugar, located in the square. Fair trade certified products mean that the laborers receive fair and livable wages, healthy/safe working conditions and that sustainable environmen-

tal practices are implemented. Third, use your voice as a consumer. There are simple steps to take to hold these corporations accountable for their unjust policies. When you go to Wal-Mart, you can fill out a cus-

tomer complaint card requesting more fair trade products available in the stores. You can write to the Wal-Mart CEO, letting them know you will take your business from their stores unless they treat their workers fairly. Finally, you can become involved with organizations on campus like Students for Social Change and R.A.F.T.

(Responsible and Fair Trade) to actively contribute to the effort. Wal-Mart puts profits before people but we will change their priorities.



photo by >> Meaghan Quinly

Panel member Florry Arevelas and her translator

To email Wal-Mart or sign a petition sent by the ILRF, visit the website [www.laborrights.org](http://www.laborrights.org). To write directly to Wal-Mart, the address is:

Wal-Mart stores  
702 SW Eighth Street  
Bentonville, AR 72716

For more information about fair trade or what you can do to help, please contact [reh024@truman.edu](mailto:reh024@truman.edu) or visit [www.responsibleshopper.org](http://www.responsibleshopper.org).

## VVN's white supremacist dating tips: finding that special subservient someone

feature by >> Robin Sommer

According to Elizabeth Bennett, strong, idealistic, demanding, white supremacist men have one major flaw... they are too good for most women. The intelligent, Northwestern European male finds it hard to fall in love because today's culture is going about the whole thing all wrong! Dating is a waste of time, men need to be more aggressive, and women need to know that they *will* be housewives who provide their husbands with numerous children.

Ms. Bennett provides tips and lessons on how to find a high-quality woman in an article for the Vanguard News Network. You may be familiar with the VNN, a white supremacy propaganda organization based in

our very own Kirksville, MO.

Apparently Ms. Bennett wants to teach men how to attract smart and obedient woman for the purpose of marriage and ultimately to be a subservient baby-maker. Bennett offers her suggestions in the form of a numbered list. Some are more outstanding than others:

**Take your girlfriend to work.** Apparently women get turned on they see their man take control in the work place. A man should remember to let a woman help, so that she is able to visibly compare how little she is able to do compared to him and see how insignificant she is.

**Withhold physical contact until she can't stand it.** You will know a woman wants you when she averts her gaze and

trembles at your touch. Bennett also suggests that men should take a dominant and violent role when they engage in contact with their woman of choice, quoting "sex is violence and women want to have sex with a violent man. That's why all paperback romance novels have rape fantasies..."

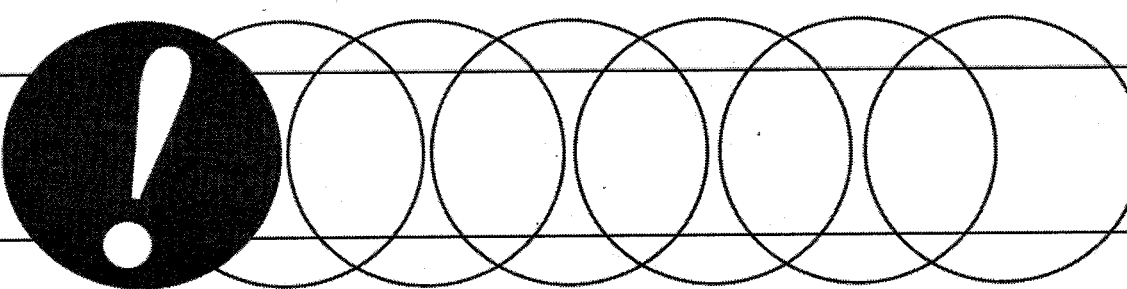
**Don't waste time after you are engaged.** Long engagements are death sentences to any marriage. If a woman wants to have a long engagement it just means she wants to own you while still living the single life for the next year.

**Tell her you want to be in charge.** A woman has to know that you expect her to have your babies and stay home with them. No beating around the bush here guys, establish your dominance and don't let go! You

wouldn't want you wife to do something stupid like have a career or make her own choices would you?

And perhaps the best piece of advice given by Bennett is **have pride in yourself**. Remember that as a good looking, intelligent European male, you *are* God's gift to women.

Bennett's words aren't going to help men find their perfect white woman; rather, they most likely will only make already emotionally unsound young men even more pathetic in their pursuit for the perfect lives. Despite what she has to say, women do not yearn to be dominated, we don't particularly enjoy spending time with chauvinistic pigs, and there is no such thing God's gift to women (except oral contraceptives; let's hear it for Margaret Sanger).



## World Social Forum meets in Venezuela to work towards "Another World"

feature by >> Marc Becker

As has happened every year for the last six years, at the end of January people from around the world gathered for the World Social Forum (WSF) under the slogan "Another World is Possible." The goal of the forum is to provide a space for social movements and civil society to reflect and strategize on ways to confront neoliberalism and militarism.

After meeting four of the last five years in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the forum moved this year to a new "polycentric" model of meetings in Mali, Venezuela, and Pakistan. The meetings originally were planned to be held simultaneously, but finally the Mali and Venezuela meetings were held sequentially with the Pakistan meeting postponed until March.

The Venezuela forum (also known as the second Americas Social Forum, after a similar hemispheric meeting in Quito, Ecuador two years previous) began on January 24 with a massive march through the streets of the capital city of Caracas. Over the next five days, delegates gathered for about 2000 workshops, panels, and sessions to discuss and debate a wide variety of issues.

About 80,000 people representing 2,500 organizations from around the world attended the forum. The largest delegation came from Brazil where the forum started, with the next largest group from the host country of Venezuela, and then the neighboring country of Colombia, and the United States providing the fourth largest with about 2,000 delegates. United States participation in the forum has been small but growing, and this was the first year that the U.S. had a significant presence.

In Caracas forum was much more monolingual than the previous forums. In Porto Alegre, the official languages were the four main colonial languages in the Americas (Portuguese, Spanish, English and French), and anyone who was merely bi-lingual was at a distinct dis-

advantage. In Caracas, the lingua franca was Spanish, with most people from Venezuela and neighboring Andean countries speaking only that language and expecting conversations to be in Spanish. Furthermore, a growing United States presence also introduced a sizeable mono-lingual English audience who increasingly felt alienated in

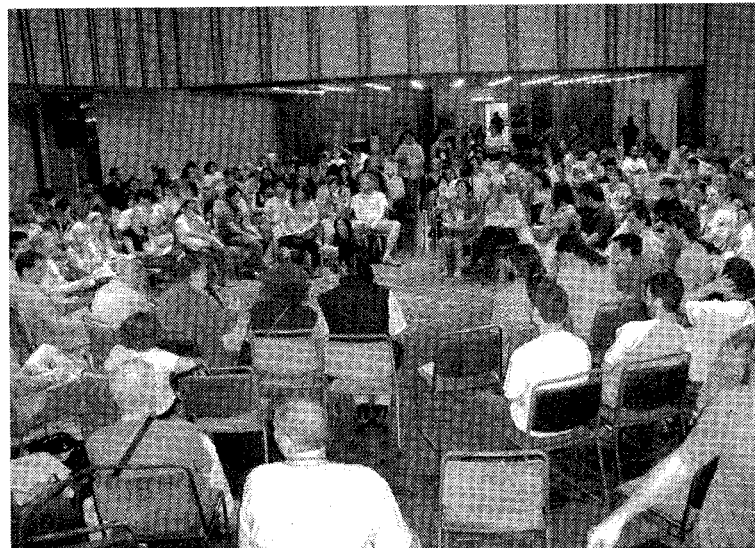


photo by >> Marc Becker

the Spanish environment.

Reflecting these language politics, IPS's forum newspaper Terraviva that previously had been published in several languages appeared exclusively in Spanish in Caracas. For the first time, the youth camp had its own newspaper called El Querquerre (named after a local bird that dies if held in captivity) that published almost

entirely bilingually in Spanish and English.

Setting the tone for the forum and reflecting its central issues, the leading slogan was "no to war, no to imperialism, another world is possible, another America is possible." The dominant discourse at the forum, however, has radicalized. Rather than talking about war and globalization, the language increasingly shifted to one of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism. Reflecting this, volunteers greeting delegates at the airport sported shirts with the slogan "a better world is possible, if it is socialist." Another common slogan proclaimed "another world is necessary, and with you it is possible."

Holding the forum in Venezuela was controversial, and reflects long debates within the forum over the relationship between civil society and party politics. On one hand, Hugo Chavez's government is engaging in a process of social change in line with the goals of the WSF. As such, Caracas was a logical venue for a debate on how to construct a better world. On the other hand, from the beginning the WSF was designed to be an expression of civil society that explicitly rejected the participation of political parties or armed groups and statist solutions. These debates over the role of state structures in fostering social justice have long run through the political left.

For Venezuela, having the forum in their country was an excellent opportunity both to exchange experiences with others as well as to build international understanding and solidarity for the Bolivarian Revolution. Venezuela does not historically have a strong civil society, but under Chavez it appears to have grown significantly. A fourth of the 2000 panels in Caracas were organized by Venezuelan organizations.

Some people feared that in Venezuela the WSF would turn into a Chavez forum. In reality, Chavez was present everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Few Chavista banners or chants made their

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## democracy, conflict, and identity

feature by >> shaine griggs

it's time for the birth of a new movement. or at the very least, the moment has come to voice our criticisms, value conflicts, and constructive alternative possibilities against some predominant forms of American life (e.g. the consumer lifestyle). we must become self-consciously political, swearing off ignorance and unhappily complacent behavior. our turning point is the realization of *democracy*. democracy is not, as most have learned, the simple aggregation of primarily economic self-interests into a cohesive society. in some respects, "the people" is simply a misleading fiction which falsely implies a deep degree of social uniformity.

our leaders cite "the people" as the justification for their policies, but do they act in alignment with *our* values, do they consider *our* criticisms, or will they listen to *our* constructive alternatives to the status quo? just exactly who are *we*, if we are neither an undivided social body nor a simple aggregation of self-interests?

the question is deeply political, because the question inquires about identity.

the political sphere of human co-existence should be a forum in which the contest of identities can occur. while consensus, unity, oneness, bipartisanship may have limited merit, *the political is an arena of conflict*. conflict and its expression through differing identities rightly pertains to the political because we may have, in good faith, legitimate disagreements with adversaries. when engaging in conflict, we assume different identities-"we" define ourselves over and against "them". yet the boundaries of identity are never perfect or impenetrable. "we" should find ways of co-existing with "them", even if "we" and "they" are never finally reconciled. as such, the political should permit conflict between friends and friendly "enemies"-*not, i must stress, between friends and enemies*.

we all should struggle with each other and prevent the struggles from escalating into the brute violence of war. wars require unflinchingly certain forms of identification:

the "good guys" must be thoughtlessly separated from the "bad guys", although both resort to the same violent means. whether we happen to face enemy soldiers or adversaries from a competing political party, we should not neglect the complicated paths which led to conflict. in the political, it is an ordeal to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, just and unjust. regardless of our ultimate judgments, let us reach them with care, critical thought, and the utmost responsibility.

conflicts of the political are not restricted to "official" institutions, such as the state and its branches of government. the political extends to the many social customs and rules which we enact daily. in this sense, the political is concerned *with order*. what are the forms which human co-existence can legitimately take in provisionally-defined spaces/areas/locations? for example, even if "official" rules do not ban gay couples from holding hands, do some or most actors in the public social environment effectively prohibit such behavior?

democracy is valuable, but not primarily as an electoral process which allows "officials" to quantify "the will of the people". instead, democracy is the way of life which openly

acknowledges that forms of life and the values which they express *are plural*. but in this respect democracy needn't advocate passive tolerance of others. democracy instead compels us to be more fully engaged in our efforts to co-exist. this is especially relevant because the political institutes social order. some values and corresponding forms of life are expressed more loudly than others. *from a critical perspective, the political never permits neutrality*. both individuals and their social order face basic, inescapable decisions concerning orientation. why should certain behaviors, certain forms of life, and certain values be effectively instituted instead of others? *furthermore, who decides?*

such questions underscore the agony imposed by the political. human life involves difficult decisions, even if we simply conform to the decisions of others without asking critical questions. in this respect, apathy is perhaps the most unfortunate way of relating to the political. failing to consider what forms of life and corresponding values are best does not liberate one from the force of the political. it merely ensures ambivalent conformity to the status quo. in this sense, there is no escape from the political.



# World Social Forum...

continued from last page

way into the opening march. Although several panels focused on building solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution, overall the discussions retained their broad ideological and thematic diversity with Chavez being a minor and relatively insignificant footnote.

The one exception, however, was Chavez's personal presence at the forum. As in 2005 at Porto Alegre, Chavez headlined the largest event, although this time as leader of the host government. WSF regulations permitted and sanctioned his presence. His speech reflected the consolidation and radicalization of the Bolivarian Revolution. Continuing his religious language, Chavez declared that "we are realizing the utopia dream that Christ did not see during his life." He proclaimed that "this century we will bury United States imperialism." Capitalism is destroying the planet, which leaves only two alternatives: socialism or death.

Chavez argued that the forum should take advantage of its momentum to build a political struggle, and that it is important to support governments like that of recently elected Evo Morales in Bolivia. He noted that the concrete advances in Venezuela would not have been possible without taking political power. Some participants resented Chavez injecting himself into one of the key debates in the forum. Chavez, however, argued that even if he were not president he would still be present advancing these ideas. "I am just one more person like the rest of you in forum," he stated.

Lining the streets around meeting spaces, vendors sold all sorts of Chavez memorabilia-hats, t-shirts, watches, and even dolls. Was his omnipresent image on the edges of the forum merely a reflection of opportunistic informal economic actors motivated by profit, or a manifestation of gung-ho supporters determined to use the forum to advance their political agenda? In either case, by their purchases many participants demonstrated their interest in, and support for, the Chavez agenda.

More significant, however, was the logistical and institutional support that the Chavez government provided to the forum. A week before the forum was to open, a bridge on the freeway between

the airport and Caracas showed signs that it was on the verge of collapse and had to be closed. The government diverted traffic onto an old winding road through the mountains and poor neighborhoods separating the airport from Caracas, turning a safe and quick fifteen minute trip into a potentially dangerous trek of at least two hours and often much longer.

In response, the state oil company PdVSA provided free and safe shuttle service between the airport and the city. Once in the city, the government provided free transportation on the metro system, tents for the meetings, and even bottled water for participants. The government also waived visa requirements and airport taxes, facilitating the participation of as many people as possible. Chavez seemed to recognize this balancing act. "We have helped with forum and are willing to do so in future," he stated, "but its work is completely autonomous."



photo by >> Marc Becker

Although an expression of civil society, the forum could not succeed without external support. While the forum also received official support in Porto Alegre, due to the polarizing nature of the Chavez government this collaboration became even more apparent and controversial in Caracas. Some argued that the forum should return to its original vision of providing non-governmental alternatives,

while others maintained that governments are not inherently good nor evil but value neutral and that Chavez demonstrates how state structures can be used to advance goals of social justice. Who should be responsible for organizing and administering an enormous event continues to be a pressing issue.

Without governmental support, the forum would need to be scaled down significantly. And perhaps this would not be a bad idea. The forum has grown so large that it has become a logistical nightmare-with delegates often arriving late and missing speakers and discussions. Spread across a congested and polluted city, it was difficult to travel from one event to another. With an additional 80,000 people dumped on the metro system, all hours seemed to be peak hours with riders often having to wait for several trains before finally squeezing onto one. The organization of the forum was often lose and chaotic, with events starting late or being canceled.

As with the bridge into the city, the forum seemed to be on the verge of collapse under its own weight. Larger is not necessarily better, and cannot be used as a measure of success.

Others, however, found encouragement in the chaos as people joined together in good spirits to overcome adversities. It reflects a certain amount of

flexibility, both on the part of the government and the forum, to adapt to changing circumstances. It is this creativity that brings a good deal of strength and power to the WSF.

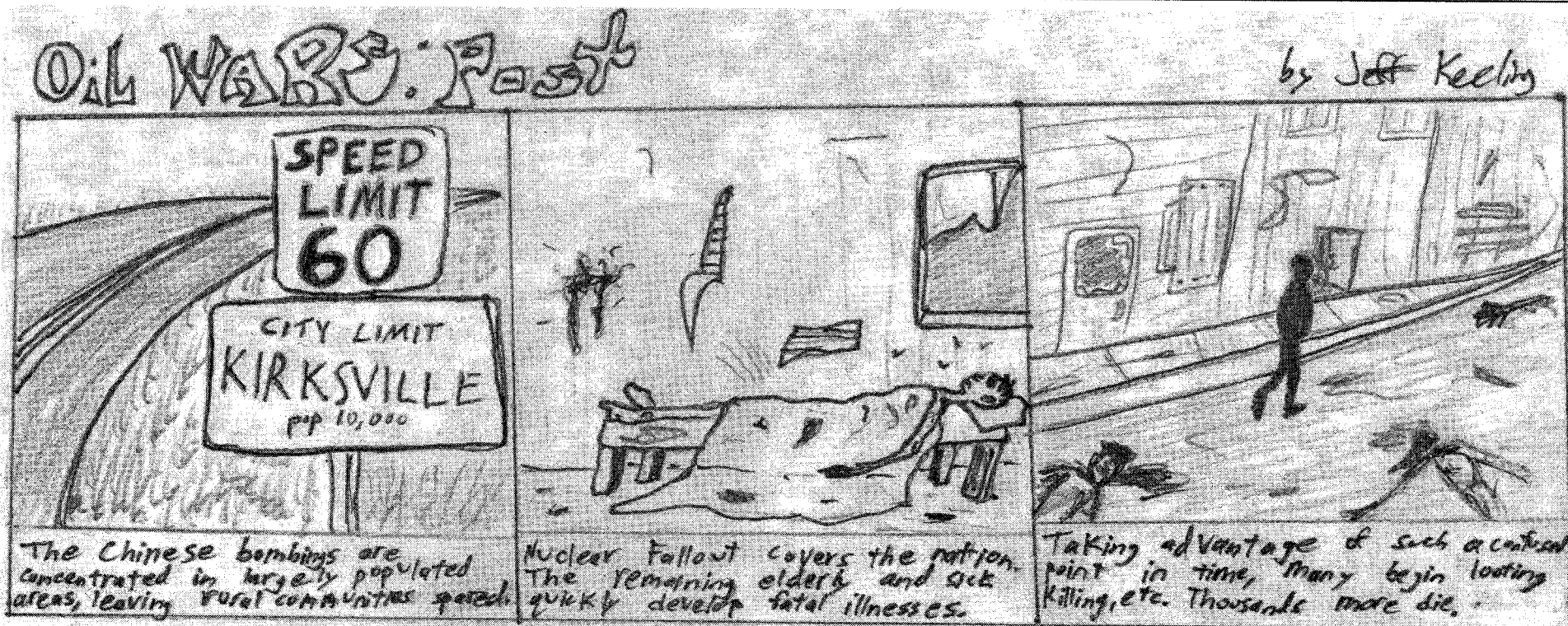
After having a good five-year run that significantly advanced the agendas of social movements around the world, perhaps the WSF has served its purpose. During its tenure, South America has

taken a significant swing to the left. While the conditionality programs of international financial institutions helped lead to the birth of the WSF, recent announcements that Brazil and Argentina will pay off their International Monetary Fund (IMF) burdens signals a need to rethink and reorient social movement strategies. Civil society has become empowered and revitalized with new ideas. Even in the United States, the fundamentally subversive notion of organizing a social forum has taken hold and led activists to rethink fundamentally how to organize civil society. As Chavez noted, the goals of social justice expressed at the WSF are well on their way to being the dominant discourse in the world, and those who advocate putting capital before people will soon be seen as the dissidents.

What role will the forum play in that process? The WSF has become a place where organizations quickly organize events but then fail to realize its potential to network and connect with other movements and struggles until the next forum the following January. Participating organizations and movements must engage in an evaluation of how they can realize meaningful articulations of these struggles throughout the year. At this point, the most important and interesting initiatives are emerging not at the annual global meetings of the WSF, but in the local, regional, and national actions inspired by these meetings.

Perhaps at this point the World Social Forum has served its original purpose of altering the discourse around economic and social policies. It has been a wonderful place to break out of the isolation of solitary local organizing efforts, connect with others around the world working on similar issues, and regain energy to continue the struggle. It has realized the goals of the slogan "globalize the struggle, globalize hope." No matter what shape it takes in the future, the WSF has been a historic experience with a lasting impact on social movements around the world.

Marc Becker teaches Latin American History at Truman State University. He has attended the last four World Social Forums, including this year's forum in Caracas. More information and pictures are available at <http://www.yachana.org/reports/ws06/>.





# My Back Pages....



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(and now, the conclusion)

the white folks think we not ready?  
you a fool, we ready on this west side of town  
i'mma tell ya  
we got plenty-a supplies  
blankets  
water  
food  
heat  
generators  
we gonna live off the land goddamnit  
that's what we did for--for a long time  
it's on and poppin for this 2000  
white folks  
i'm down wit y'all  
y'all got a lotta money?  
i do too  
the only thing about it  
i'm used to havin nothin  
you used to havin' a lotta goddamn things!  
have you ever stayed in a place where the chicken  
place ain't got no hot  
sau'?  
where the gas station ain't got no gas?  
what about mac donald's wit no ketchup?  
what about the car wash wit no chane?  
yeah we fucked up motherfucker  
but that's all right  
mad maxx, baby!  
mmmmmmmaaaaaaaad maxx!  
ahhhhhhh!  
stack yo gats  
stack yo ammo  
keep it pumped  
y2k  
y2k  
y2k

-Madd Maxx, "Y2K" submitted by Ben Dansby

stained carpet, cigarette ashes  
are all that we have to eat  
we are what we eat.  
rotting away in our inner organs  
death and rotting and death  
with sunlight poking through the clouds  
a walk in the light  
sheilding my eyes, staring ahead  
wearing a tea shirt  
die my love!

-Rosemary Pini, John McDonough, Seth  
Gamble, Gina Cook

Epiphany... lost

The eye of my mind opens  
-Jagged jaw-like-  
venus flytrap gaping visions  
spewing forth inky cold  
-Lamentably leaky-  
And then slams shut

-Zia Luehrman

There's nothing better than a blue-eyed girl  
with brown hair and twigs growing out of  
her body.

-Meghan Hauser

)) <> ((  
-mj

sometimes I wish for  
a scar,  
a blotch;  
a perpetually blackened eye,  
a permanently busted lip,  
something crooked,  
something cut,  
everything distorted,  
everything marred,  
so I don't think I'm just the best thing there is.

-Hazel Green

Rubix cube correspondence- A mystifying overview of a family split...

Sam,  
We really need to have a long talk as soon as you get your phone  
fully charged (did you think of trying some else's cord?). I can't go on  
giving you money and still giving you your "independence", that is  
unfair to me. I can't constantly find out all about your "plans" from  
five other people. You will have to make a concrete plan very soon. It  
can't change by the day, if you are all grown up then pick a direc-  
tion and stick with it!

It's time Sam.

I would love to tell a story about you when people ask that makes  
sense...but I honestly don't know what to tell them.

I think now you know it was a bad idea to go against us and move  
out of the dorms because "it's cheaper" and you get more privacy.  
Living with four guys?! Yeah, I bet you get a lot of quiet time.

I also want you to promise me that you are taking care of yourself.  
You rarely go to the clinic when you are sick and bathe once or  
twice a week, THAT is not healthy! When people can smell you, its  
overdue. It's not cool, its gross. Grown-ups bathe, so they don't  
offend people as they walk past. PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOUR-  
SELF!!!

Get a plan together Sam, and do it soon.

Dad

-

Dear Sam,  
We are very glad to hear that you are feeling better and doing well  
getting on with LIFE! I am glad to hear that you like your classes,  
and that you are sorting out what kinds of classes to take to help  
you in the future. I hope you will continue asking questions and  
talking to people as you move forward with these decisions.  
I hope you will give your Dad a call one of these days. He seems a  
little frustrated about the CELL phone when I asked him about you,  
Much Love,  
Tesora

-submitted by Sam Pounders