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The Purple Press

Official Publication of the St. Paul Open School

<http://purple-press.dyn.ml.org>

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In Their Own Way Art Triumph

Lee Moua
Staff Reporter

Even though most Hmong-Americans have been in this country for many years, they still have their own New Year celebration. This year, in fact, there were two Hmong New Year celebrations, one in Minneapolis and one in St. Paul.

In Laos, the Hmong New Year is celebrated after the rice harvest. Rice is the most important food staple for the Hmong in Laos and remains an important part of the Hmong diet in America. The actual date of the rice harvest varies year to year, but it usually falls in December.

In Minnesota, the Hmong New Year takes place in late November and has been celebrated for more than ten years at what is now the St. Paul River Centre. Important activities at Hmong New Year include the ball toss (a traditional courting game), the Miss Hmong America Pageant, traditional folk songs, and dancing. Ap-

Mina Blyly-Strauss
Staff Reporter

There is a small, diverse group of Open School students who have been working hard . . . no, make that very hard, on something that is neither school nor employment related. These seven students have been working on art. Not just art, digital art.

When Michele Anderson, Erin Boyd, Sai Thao, Krysteenah Garcia, Tom White, Gwendolyn Richards-Pierce and I signed up for a digital photography workshop this past summer we didn't know what we were getting ourselves into. As it turned out, we were not just learning how to use digital and/or video cameras to express ourselves, we were also going to come up with a T-shirt design, help plan a youth media center, design a web page, and have a month-long show of our finished work.

These tasks have proven a little more difficult than you would probably expect. No one could agree on a design for the T-shirt. Brainstorming was done for the media center, but getting things from paper to reality is taking quite a bit of time. The web page is progressing slowly, but progressing none the less. And the show, well, that's a whole paragraph by itself.

The people who are making all of this happen is a small group of Open Schoolers, and two students from Highland. The facilitator, or the main person that the group talks to, complains to, explains why they couldn't do something to, asks help from, and reports to

MEDIA Continued on 3

NEDC Team Goes To State

Brigette McKern
Staff Reporter

Almost everyone here at Open knows about our successful Odyssey of the Mind teams, but many are unfamiliar with a new team competition, National Engineering Design Challenge, or NEDC. This was Open's second year participating in the competition and students are just beginning to

understand what it's all about. Most people will tell you, "It's like OM, just not." If you're still a little fuzzy, here's a quick description.

Each year, a new problem is given and students (ninth grade and above) present their solutions at the competition. There is no limit to the number of students per team, but only five are allowed to present at competition. This year's problem was to design a device that would help assist an elderly person in getting out of a chair. The outside assistance rules are more liberal than those in OM. The team must design it themselves, but getting help in the building process is legal.

NEDC Continued on 2

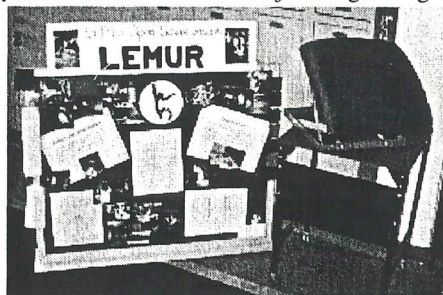


*Hmong New Year celebration at
Wilkins Auditorium*

proximately 30,000 people celebrated Hmong New Year at the River Centre this year, including many Open School students and staff.

Yang Ly, a new educational assistant at Open School, looks forward to the New Year celebrations. "You get to meet new people and wear Hmong clothes," she

HMONG Continued on 2



Open School's design, the Lemur

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NEDC From 1

The team has ten minutes to present their design to judges, most of whom are engineers. In that time, they have to explain the design of their product and take questions from the judges. The winning team goes on to Nationals in Washington D.C. and the winning team at Nationals gets \$10,000 and a patent for their product.

This year's team was coached by Connye LaCombe and team members included: Ben Peterson, Bridgette DaSilva, Jon Lubke, Per Olson, Gwendolyn Richards-Pierce, Notah Gyorgak, Aimee Gervais, Anna Karl and Aaron Izaksonas-Smith. On January 8th, Open School competed against seven other teams and came in second place. The winning team was one of four from Benilde-St. Margaret.

Next year's team will be formed at the beginning of next school year. If you are interested in getting involved, speak to Connye LaCombe. ♦

HMONG From 1

said.

Tenth grader Jon Yang said he has attended the celebration "ever since I was a little boy."

This year, an additional celebration was added at the Metrodome in Minneapolis. The Minneapolis celebration had many of the same activities as the one in St. Paul, but there was also a takraw tournament. Takraw is a popular Hmong game that looks like a combination of soccer and volleyball. This celebration was the subject of some controversy. The Lao family, who sponsors the St. Paul celebration, feels that the Hmong community should celebrate one New Year together. ♦

La Niña: The Next Spanish Inquisition?

Dan Skelley
Staff Reporter

La Niña is this year's weather phenomenon. You might remember last year's, El Niño. So what's the difference?

Both refer to large changes in the temperature on the ocean surface across the central and eastern tropical portions of the Pacific. Usually, the ocean surface temperatures off the South American west coast range from 60 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. They exceed 80 degrees in the "Warm Pool," which is located in the central and western Pacific. The "Warm Pool" expands to the east during El Niño, but shrinks to the west during La Niña.

Ocean surface temperatures are monitored with data buoys and satellites. NOAA (National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration) operates a network of more than 70 buoys along the equatorial Pacific.

La Niña has made impacts all over the World. In the U.S., La Niña caused drier-than-normal conditions in the southwest in late summer. Drier weather also occurred in the midwest in the fall and in the southeast this winter. La Niña winters are warmer in the southeast and colder in the northwest. It also causes the jet stream to move over the eastern Great Lakes and causes more extreme weather in the north. Minnesota should expect colder than normal weather and more snow than normal.

Why is predicting La Niña so important? Having better predictions of possible extreme climate episodes like floods and droughts could save the U.S. billions of dollars in damage costs. Predicting the oncoming of warm and cold phases is critical for water, energy, and farmers to prevent large losses. ♦

Interesting Goings-On...

February 2-5: Minnesota Basic Standards

February 8-12: Sno Daze Week

Monday: Dress-Up Day and Sno Daze Coronation

Tuesday: Pajama Day

Wednesday: Culture Day

Thursday: Teacher-Student-Dress-Like-Each-Other Day

Friday: Blast From the Past Day, Valentine's Day activities

March 9-11: Minnesota Basic Standards Testing

March 16-18: Minnesota Basic Standards Testing

Jeff Loots: Hall Monitor for the New Millenium

Desmond Hicks and Maura Shramko
Staff Reporters

Perhaps some of you may have noticed that there has been a recent addition to the Open School staff. His name is Jeff Loots, and he's our hall monitor, taking the place of James Bush who left us towards the end of October.

Jeff is 28 years old and a Minnesota native. He went to Southwest State University for three years, with a degree in sports management/

business management. After college he played on a variety of different pro-football teams. Overall, he played football for about six years.



Jeff likes Open School and enjoys the two months he's been here. He likes the staff and students. Also, he is planning on finishing his teaching license which will take about a year. ♦

International Space Station A Strong Step

Terry Schanno
Staff Reporter

Thirty years ago, who would have thought that the Americans and the Russians would be working together on a space station? But the International Space Station isn't just a collaboration between the Americans and the Russians; Japan, Brazil, Italy, Canada, and the European Space Agency will be working with them on the station.

The space station represents a major step forward in both science and diplomacy. Once completed, the space station will provide space for up to 7 astronauts and scientists from various countries to perform experiments in micro-gravity. The station could also be used as a blast-off point for another trip to the moon, a first trip to Mars, or beyond . . .

On December 4th, 1998, the Shuttle *Endeavor* took off from Kennedy Space Center for earth orbit. *Endeavor's* mission was to bring the first American piece of the international space station into orbit. This piece, named *Unity*, will be joined with the Russian-built, American-funded *Zarya* module. *Unity* is designed to join early modules with each other. It provides a docking hatch for the space shuttle, as well as storage space for food and supplies.

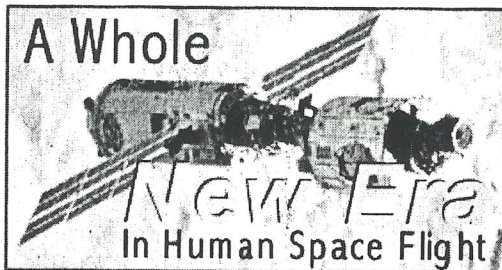
The Russian *Zarya* module took off from the Russian space center in Kazakhstan on November 20, 1998. *Zarya*, which loosely translates to "sunrise" in English, will provide early power to the station, and will provide a docking port for both manned craft and unmanned resupply ships sent from Russia. In July, when the Russian-built service module is put into orbit, many of the functions of *Zarya* will be obsolete, and *Zarya* will be used primarily to store fuel and power.

The next major piece of the puzzle will be the Russian service module, which will be put into orbit by a Russian proton rocket in July, 1999. The service module will provide the station with its long-term power supply, and will provide living spaces for astronauts on the station, as well as the first primitive experimentation spaces.

In October, 1999, a shuttle flight will equip the station with communication equipment and storage facilities necessary for the station to support its crew. The station will then be ready for a crew to come aboard. The scheduled date for the first crew of three is January of 2000.

Some of the more interesting pieces of the station are not yet ready to be launched. They include a robotic arm built by the Canadian Space Agency, a logistics and experiment support module built by the Japanese Space Agency, and a reusable escape ship built by NASA.

Of all of these projects, the emergency life boat is probably the most interesting. Designed and built by NASA, the X-38 is a lifting body re-usable space ship. It will re-enter the atmosphere much like the space shuttle. Once inside the atmosphere, the ship will open a steerable parachute, a technology recently developed by the United States Army. The X-38 will be used as a kind of utility truck for the space station. It will also serve as a lifeboat in case of an accident on the station. ♦



Senior Profile

Sai Thao



How many years have you been going to Open School?

I think seven.

If you could be any animal, what would you be?

I'd be a dragon. Never be seen.

What are your plans after high school?

On to college. Minneapolis Community College.

Where do you see yourself in 30 years?

In a coffin. I don't know. I don't plan ahead that far. Otherwise, I'd be very old.

What will you miss most about school?

Everything. Friends, teachers, classes, etc.

MEDIA From 1

is Kris Sorenson. Responding to the artwork being produced, educator Kris Sorenson commented, "I think the work is ground-breaking," and, "I'm most impressed by the diversity [in the artwork]." Many, if not all, of the Open Schoolers in the group met Kris through the PASS class last spring.

All of the aforementioned events lead up to a digital photography and video show, curated by three Open School students, that will take place from January 21st through February 18th, 1999. The show includes self-portraits, collages, a giant mural, and modified graffiti. All included colors range from psychedelic to soft and quiet to dark and dingy. All of this artwork was created using digital cameras, scanners and Adobe Photoshop, giving it a digital twist.

The show is at Intermedia Arts, 2822 Lyndale Avenue in South Minneapolis. It's sponsored by the Center for Arts Criticism, and funded by both the Medtronics Foundation and the Caroline Foundation. ♦

Opinions 'n' Stuff

Jawa Fever Sweeps Nation . . . Again

Since the **Star Wars: Episode One** trailer came out, I've seen four movies and caught the trailer five times. Ooh, bad math? No, bad self-restraint.

Yup, I paid \$5 for a ticket to **A Bug's Life**,

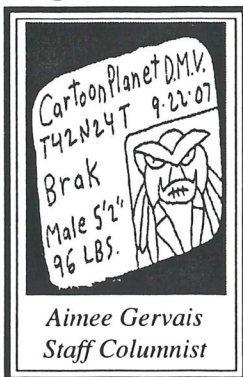
walked in the theater just as "Every saga has a beginning . . ." faded in on the screen, watched the trailer, and left. I didn't even bother to find a seat, I just stood in the aisle on my tiptoes, just about ready to start jumping and cheering. I spent the rest of the day with a huge grin on my face and a distinctive **Star Wars** buzz filling my head and overriding all normal brain functions. I don't know, I don't understand it either. I'm not even going to try to explain it.

My original plan to see the trailer made more sense. I was going to see **Very Bad Things** that weekend anyway, so I just hoped the trailer would be shown there.

But no, it wasn't to be. For the very first time at the movies I heard the phrase "Can I see some ID?" What? Sure, they say "Under 17 not admitted without parent" but how many times has anyone actually been carded at the movies? I remember seeing the rather gory movie **Seven** in eighth grade with no questions asked when I bought my ticket. What, I passed for 17 when I was 13, but they can instantly tell that I'm only 16 now?

I didn't really want to stay in my "Let's blow up the mall" mood all day, so as a last resort I broke down and paid full price for just the **Star Wars** trailer. I had actually promised not to do that, fearing all the excess nerd points such a thing generates. Oh well. I guess I was in too deep already.

Speaking of nerds, I also saw the new **Star Trek** movie **Insurrection** on opening night. It was pure coincidence that I saw it that night, I wasn't even planning to go at all. But it started to seem like a good idea, **PREQUEL Continued on 5**



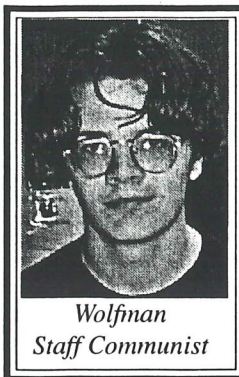
Aimee Gervais
Staff Columnist

Shopping Cart Blues

4:00, or as the time clock puts it, 16:00; but military time or not, it's time to pass through the gates of hell, or whatever equivalent you would like to give it. I start work.

Now, let me explain my situation. I work at Rainbow Foods. I'm the guy you see throwing away bags upon bags of trash, mopping up jars of mayonnaise which have magically flung themselves from the shelves, and (shudder) pushing carts.

You see, I've had this job for seven months now, and pushing carts has never been a problem until recently, when the snow started falling. Somehow, I managed to get a job at the one place in town that doesn't



Wolfman
Staff Communist

have motorized cart pusher-thingies. So I'm left to humiliate myself in front of old ladies as I struggle to get a half dozen carts through snow a mere inch thick.

I believe the original designers of the cart are watching me from somewhere and laughing maniacally. It's probably some sort of sadistic vengeance enacted by a kid I picked a fight with in first grade that causes carts to have no traction in snow.

In addition, being as tall as I am means the carts fall just below my waist. As a result, I'm beginning to grow a hump and the knots in my lower back have baffled and frightened every chiropractor I know.

Well, I don't spend all my time outside, freezing my toosh off. I get to come inside on occasion and interact with my more fortunate co-workers. Now that I think about it, frostbite isn't so bad. You see, Rainbow employees aren't exactly the cream of the **CARTS Continued on 6**

The Chores of Insanity

I can understand the need for a clean house. Perfectly understandable. Nothing suspicious or unwelcome about that. Perfectly reasonable. An altogether reasonable necessity. No one wants to live in a dirty place.

But I fear there are those that, in their extreme desire for a clean house, go just a tad overboard. These poor souls spend so much of their time and energy worrying about keeping their house squeaky clean at all times, a feat which is near impossible. Since everything seems to have a tendency to disorder, things that were once clean will, somehow, regain their former state of dirtiness, causing Obsessive Cleaners to become crabby and entirely concentrated on the one thing that brings them joy in their life. Cleaning.



Maura Shramko
Staff Columnist

While these so-called Obsessive Cleaners are most definitely victims, there are other less guilty victims. Take, for example, children of Obsessive Cleaners. Kids who have to do whatever their parents tell them to because they are their parents. These children are subject to their parents' every cleaning whim.

Sometimes, in worst case scenarios for Obsessive Cleaners and their offspring, they start to experiment with methods of making sure chores are completed. It starts out simply, as do many things. "Suzy, vacuum the living room," or, "Freddy, do the dishes," or, "Kelly, clean your room." This stage is more or less harmless. If it is not communicated to someone what chores they have to do and when, then how are they to know? (Even though in most cases they would rather not do any chores at all.)

Of course, one thing leads to another, and a stressed and temporarily unstable parent may see themselves with no other options. The given chores assigned verbally are not done to the parent's satisfaction. **CHORES Continued on 6**

In the Army National Guard, You Can

I find it particularly strange that people and organizations have a way of convincing people to do things that would normally be morally wrong. I was recently talked into taking a test to see where I would be placed if admitted into the Army Reserves.



Marlene Ottersness
Staff Columnist

Recruiters use every possible angle and hook to lure you into becoming a soldier for the United States Army. I am a young woman, opposed to war, but am considering joining the Army Reserves. I was informed that this program would be a commitment of one weekend a month, and two weeks a year. The Army Reserves would pay for my work and also help with financial assistance and scholarships while I attended college.

Since I was little I have considered myself to be a fighter, but never a killer. I don't know if I have enough guts to propel

the arms off any G.I. Joes with the swing of a grenade. Imagine a young man standing in a stream drinking water and filling pails for his village. Beneath the trees on the other side of the stream, I stand watching. Because his culture and background are not of my own and my country can't negotiate properly, I was sent here to destroy him and his village until his country surrenders. Still I have no right to assassinate this man or his family. When suddenly I feel breath on my neck, I turn only to see my troop is behind me waiting patiently for me to issue the attack.

I am aware that anyone is capable of murder in the hands of war and with their country behind them praising them as heroes and heroines. Still, to me, it is just what it is: murder, and I do not want to be placed in battle, with my war face painted on. Because no matter how much I practice in the mirror, I have no war face. The possibility of me having to go to war is very slim, but what would I do if the time came? I was thinking I would run further than I had ever run before; and I would eventually outrun

my skin. I could then feel the hot South American hills beneath my bare feet. I thought that this might not be the best idea considering that the Army has eyes all over the world. Where could I run without being caught? I know exactly what I would do. I would become an actor and check myself into a mental institution. They couldn't send me anywhere if I was detained in an institution. So now you see how much of a chicken I am.

Considering my phobia of war, I assume you wonder why I would contemplate the military in the first place. My contemplation begins because I am greedy. I am struggling to survive through high school and I wonder what I will do financially when I want to learn more. When I consider the benefits of this opportunity, it almost seems justified. Money for school. Also a chance to prove to myself that I can accomplish anything by surviving basic training. It would be the opportunity to grow and become stronger emotionally, physically, and mentally. I don't, however, want to have to

ARMY Continued on 6

PREQUEL From 4

and the movie looked pretty interesting. Of course, the theater was full of rabid Trekkies. Hoo buddy, that was scary. Really.

The next day saw the continuation of my previous adventure. Being carded trying to see **Very Bad Things** just made me more determined. I tried a different theater.

"One for **Very Bad Things**," I said casually. The kid on the other side of the glass started ringing it up. That's a good sign, right?

"I just need to see some ID."

Argh! I just started laughing this time. "I'm 17," I lied, with only a little hope. No dice. I grumbled a bit, bought a ticket for **Star Trek**, and slipped into **Very Bad Things** anyway. Geez. I think the most annoying part is that I'll be 17 in March anyway, it seems like I've been 16 way too long. Maybe I should have used that Jedi mind trick. "You don't need to see my identification..."

Oh yeah, the **Star Wars** trailer. Yikes, I think that's the first time I've forgotten that I was talking about **Star Wars**.

Luckily for junkies like me, we don't have to go see a movie every time we want to laugh at how goofy Threepio looks without the gold plating, or hear Yoda's "Fear is the path of the dark side" speech again. The trailer can be downloaded in many formats from the official website, www.starwars.com. Of course, it was meant to be seen on the big screen with the big sound for the whole experience of it, because this is one trailer that really is an experience. Even on the tiny little square on the computer screen it

gives me goosebumps, but it's nothing compared to seeing it in a theater. Despite all the excitement, I've still managed to avoid too much information on the actual movie. The official magazine, **Star Wars Insider**, has a prequel update every issue that I flip past. The website has plenty of info that I refuse to look at, and there are a ton of "spoiler" sites out there that I have been very careful to avoid. The trailer was shown on the TV news on the day it came out. I was pretty upset that I wasn't able to avoid the commercial for it, in which they gave away one of my favorite parts. "Anakin Skywalker, meet Obi-Wan Kenobi" just doesn't have the same effect on the little TV screen.



Young Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor)

Now I understand all the stories I've heard about George Lucas keeping Area 51-type security on all the sets for the original trilogy. I've even heard that he purposely leaked a lot of false information during the shooting of **The Empire Strikes Back** and **Return of the Jedi** to throw people off track. It certainly would have been disastrous if everyone knew about the "I am your father" line before they even saw **Empire**. I'm quite pleased that Lucas is

still so adamant about security issues. Like many **Star Wars** fans out there, I don't want to know anything until I see it for the first time on the big screen.

So, until **The Phantom Menace** actually comes out, all I can do is wait and get even more excited. And impatient. If you think I'm silly now, just wait till May 21st, opening day. I apologize in advance for never shutting up about it. Until **Episode Two**, that is... ♦

CHORES From 4

faction, and are therefore incomplete or invalid. Some might come to the conclusion that maybe oral communication was not enough. The realization might strike them that sometimes things just look better written down.

A stressed but motivated person can be dangerously creative at times . . . Hence, the chore chart, color-coded, so as to avoid any confusion that might arise. To children, a nightmare; to parents, an answer to their prayers, or so they think . . .

What the Obsessive Cleaners do not know, cannot know, is that if their chore-

“Sally, however, did not perceive these cards with the same joy as her unfortunate parent did. These cards represented a threshold in household cleaning that should never be crossed.”

assigning method hasn't worked yet; chances are it's not going to work. Ever. And so a color-coded chore chart, however helpful it may appear, will go to no avail, as always happens.

Sadly, the Obsessive Cleaner parent types seem doomed to not only an unsatisfiable tendency, but to blindness in addition. And from there who knows what evil things can be dreamed up by desperate people, ever-searching for the unattainable . . .

An example of what can happen follows: A girl (who we will call, “Sally” in order to conceal her identity) has a parent afflicted by this Obsessive Cleaning Disorder. Her parent had tried to no end to find a method of getting cleaning done to her standards with no favorable result. It went from one thing to another until this miserable parental unit found the messiah of all chore systems. Better than chore charts, oh far better! Chore cards. Yes, it's true. Individual chore cards with specific chores written on them so that chore-doers can physically have this card and know what chore they have to do. To this parent, it all seemed simple now.

Sally, however, did not perceive these cards with the same joy as her unfortunate parent did. These cards represented a threshold in household cleaning that should never be crossed. Ever. Sally had always

been a good girl, doing basically what her parents told her, doing the chores assigned to her tolerably well . . . But any reasonable person can see the absolute ridiculousness of these chore cards. It's just too much effort for something that isn't worth it anyway. With cleaning, after putting a certain amount of energy into it, you begin to waste energy. Because in the end it all reverts. Everything gets dirty again. And if you spend all your time cleaning, maybe it will be cleaner than it would otherwise, but you'll be too exhausted to notice it.

Perhaps Obsessive Cleaners loathe their incurable cleaning-urges. Or maybe they value it. However parents may feel about their longing for cleanliness, basically all kids have no problems with the apparent messiness that follows not cleaning for increasingly long periods of time. (If your child has a problem with not cleaning, they may have the beginning symptoms of Obsessive Cleaning Disorder, and should be looked into) It has been said that children often take after their parents. In the case of Obsessive Cleaners and their children, this is not usually the case. In fact, a parent's overly-needed cleaning efforts can often spur a spark of rebellion in children of the right age (anywhere from 5 to 27), causing

parent and child to clash frequently, another occurrence of displeasure surrounding Obsessive Cleaning.

In conclusion, while perhaps it is not an asset for someone to have an excessively messy room, it is far better than the alternative, which is obsessing over cleaning to the point of complete and total insanity. As in all things, moderation seems to be a good thing. ◇

ARMY From 5

use basic training for anything else but assurance and fuel for myself. I am at war with myself over this issue. Should I make money, further my future and help people in the case of a national disaster? Should I push myself to the limits and be proud of my achievements? Who knows, I may possibly even dodge a war or two.

Or should I stay away from it all? I have problems with an organization that sends my peers to war to risk their lives three years before it trusts their judgment enough to consume alcohol, and I still don't believe in the slaughter of animals or of men. But really I stand in-between, until the greedy war inside me finds its end. ◇

CARTS Continued from 4

If you ever met the majority of our employees, you'd understand why our polo shirt uniforms have blue collars. These folks are about as working-class as white bread. Whenever anything close to a social issue comes up as topic of conversation in the break room, I whip out the duct tape and apply it firmly to my face until the whole thing blows over. My educated opinions would fall on deaf ears, and I would soon find myself greatly outnumbered if I spoke at all. To tell the truth, the staff is so uneducated I can actually feel my vocabulary being sucked out of me whenever I'm there.

Now this wouldn't be so bad if I had any position other than my own. However, I had to let myself get stuck in maintenance. I bet on the other side of those surveillance cameras is a team of biologists who are stunned that anything could

fall so low on the food chain. I mean, I have to get promoted if I'm to be called a peon.

This, in addition to the fact that I occupy myself with games of “What Meat Product Causes the Juice Which Is Running Down My Leg?” has led me to the conclusion that remaining employed at Rainbow would only serve to degrade me further. After all, it was only supposed to be a summer job, and what better birthday present to myself than to give my two-week notice?

So, in conclusion, a lot of jobs available for the adolescent crowd are downright disgusting. But, if you ever want to go to college, you're probably going to need the money, right? Besides, as long as you keep telling yourself it's only temporary

while the folks from the deli talk about the uselessness of funding the arts or while your chiropractor friend is “adjusting” you for the umpteenth time, (that's what they call it, really) you'll be fine. ◇



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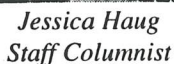
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The End Comes, No One Cares

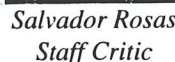


I mean, there was the year 1000. Everyone thought that the world was going to end then, too. But here we are. And the chances are pretty good that when it gets close to the year 3000, people are going to think that the world is going to end. Again. And there are probably people out there, the sensible ones of course, that are going to say, "Hey, everyone thought that the world was going to end in the year 1000 and then again in the year 2000, but here we are." Besides, the year 2000 is just a number on a calendar that we started 1,999

APOCALYPSE Continued on 9



Where Has All The Music Gone?



I've heard a lot people bad-mouthing great artists this year. However, more often than not, these

MUSIC *Continued on 11*

So Much to Watch, So Little Time

As 1999 begins to pick up steam, it is time for me and the rest of the television addicts to look at the year that was in the TV world. Come with me as I take a look back at the big newsmakers of 1998:



Ehren Stemme
Staff Columnist

Roughly one fifth of the American population watched as we said goodbye to our favorite Thursday night companions. "**Seinfeld**" – the famous show about nothing – ended its nine-year NBC run by pulling down an unheard-of 41.3 rating/58 share for its series finale. The four main cast members – Jerry (Jerry Seinfeld), George (Jason Alexander), Elaine (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) and Kramer (Michael Richards) – all echoed the same sentiment: although they were still having fun, it was definitely time to move on. Seinfeld returned to stand-up comedy with a 90-minute HBO special in May while Louis-Dreyfus, Alexander and Richards will concentrate on their movie careers.

The world was shocked to hear that **Phil Hartman** was shot dead by his wife shortly before she killed herself. Hartman, who was a former member of "Saturday Night Live" and a regular cast member on both "The Simpsons" and "NewsRadio," was found dead in his bedroom with several gunshot wounds. Their two children, also in the couple's Los Angeles home during the shooting, were unharmed but severely traumatized. While no plans have been announced to replace Hartman on "The Simpsons," fellow SNL member Jon Lovitz had been cast into Hartman's role on

"NewsRadio."

In its third year of existence, **The WB** (broadcast locally over KMWB Ch. 23) has solidified itself as the new network for teens. With three WB shows in UltimateTV.com's Top Ten Shows of 1998, ("Felicity," "7th Heaven" and "Dawson's Creek") the fledgling network took the November sweeps with a 9.6/24 share among 16-20 year olds. Among the highlights: the premiere of "Felicity," "7th Heaven's" two part season finale, and the developed cult following of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." Fox, which owned the teen group since 1990 with shows like "Melrose Place," does not seem to want to regain that demographic.

With the hype of the James Cameron movie "Titanic," the **Discovery Channel** held their own spectacle in the spring. "Titanic Live" aired in February as a two hour special where a Discovery personality took a camera crew on a salvage boat and actually took a deep sea dive to see the famous wreck.



The program featured real-time pictures of the ship, interviews with the salvage crew, computer animation and other assorted things, all transmitted live. The program was a huge ratings success and Discovery was runner up in a prestigious education award.

Ziff-Davis, Inc., one of the world's most recognized authorities on computers and video games, launched the very first fully integrated cable TV channel and internet website. ZDTV, which focuses mainly on computers, launched on August 1st on the DirecTV satellite network. The channel already has an estimated subscriber

base of 10.4 million households, thanks to additional agreements with the DISH Network and TCI Cable Systems. The channel can be seen locally only on DBS and C-band satellite, but MediaOne of the Twin Cities plans to offer it in their digital tier in the summer of 1999. The channel's website, <http://www.zdtv.com>, offers



full integration with the channel, featuring real-time video and audio streaming of shows being broadcast on ZDTV, as well as allowing viewers to participate in call in and debate shows over the internet via the ZDTV NetCam Network.

In a surprising move, **Keith Olberman**, who is best known for his anchoring on the 10:00 edition of ESPN's "SportsCenter," left NBC in December to join the news team at Fox Sports Net, the main distributor of programming for regional sports networks. Olberman, who left ESPN 15 months ago because he "was tired of doing sports," signed a multiyear, multimillion-dollar contract with NBC to host his own news show on the MSNBC cable channel called "The Big Show with Keith Olberman." But in an arranged buyout between News Corp. and NBC, Olberman returned to sports by joining Van Earl Wright in anchoring the 10:00 edition of FSN's "Fox Sports News." Fox Sports Net can be seen locally on MSC.

All in all, it has been an eventful year in television. Even so, 1999 looks very promising and will undoubtedly keep us entertained until the nuclear plants melt down on New Year's Day 2000. Until then, be sure to have plenty of water on hand and happy viewing! ♦

APOCALYPSE From 8

doesn't matter. Take yer money out of that there bank and put it in Switzerland. Or in a really cool bookshelf safe. OKAY?! GOD! UGH...

Armageddon could be very near us. It could be sneaking up on us this very moment. It could start right on your block and you would never know it. But these are all "it could's," and not definite "yes's" or "no's." My advice to you is to worry about it when it happens instead of wasting your time now just wondering and supposing. It's not likely to happen. But it's possible... ♦

Question of the Month

If two gophers got into a car with the British Prime Minister, heading East, then how far does the rope attached to the Empire State Building have to be in order to entrench the French Foreign Legion while phoning the Russian Premier, who is engaging in a conference call with the Australian hockey team, while they drink tea extracted from endangered pandas who had escaped from their sanctuary in Michael Jackson's backyard while the airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow is being clocked by the ghost of Turkish nationalists in Djibouti?

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Lookin' for Iraqis in All the Wrong Places

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to inform you of recent events surrounding the Crisis in the Gulf. It has come to my attention that we are currently engaged in military operations in the Middle East centered around the destruction of potentially dangerous weaponry that could at some point be focused somewhere to do damage.

It has also been brought to my attention that the United States is still actively searching for one Saddam Hussein, leader of the Iraqi people. In light of this fact, I would like to inform you that he is, indeed, not in the Middle East at all.

It seems rather obvious to me, but perhaps it has been overlooked in lieu of the recent Presidential scandals that the safest place for Hussein to hide would be, in fact, in the backyard of those who are actively searching for him. He is hiding in Minnesota.

I have been doing some investigation on the subject, and I can happily report I have narrowed down his possible position to one building. This building is the St. Paul Open School, 90 Western Avenue South, St. Paul.

The St. Paul Open School has four floors, three of which are actively used. The 4th has been left virtually unoccupied. I have reason to believe that Saddam has infiltrated this floor and is using it for a base of operations.

He has been kidnapping members of the school population to use in his own twisted, evil purposes. He has replaced them with spies, referred to as "pseudopeeps" by the few of us who are aware. The Independent School District #625 and the FBI have also been engaged in this pseudopeep activity, but whether there is any connection, I am not sure. It may be that the two sides are engaged in a covert war, using Open School as a battle ground.

I do not mean to belittle the current political turmoil on Capital Hill, but I am hereby requesting immediate military assistance to ensure the safety of our school, and of myself. While I do not fear my immediate safety, my prolonged exposing of recent events may lead to an eventual attempt to terminate me.

Please respond swiftly, as this battle cannot go unchecked on Open's grounds. To do so would be to promote anarchy.

Thank You.

Ben Peterson

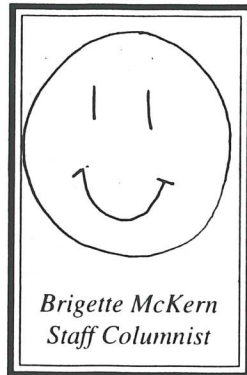
Staff Schizo



Of All The Stupid . . . !

Over the past year, I have seriously begun to question human intelligence. It started when I saw people at a local gas station trying as hard as they could to push a door clearly marked pull. Then it got a little worse. This past summer was one of the worst hurricane seasons, so what do I see on television? Weathermen and women standing on a beach warning everyone to stay indoors because of how dangerous it was. Perhaps one of the more puzzling examples is that the Smithsonian says that the most common question they are asked is, "Do you have any photographs of real dinosaurs?"

While flipping through a newspaper, I found that things were at their all-time low. The first story I read was about a man who was arrested after he asked a policeman for directions. The man had stolen a car and several car stereos, and then asked a policeman how to get back on the freeway. The policeman noticed



that the car had been reported stolen and arrested the man immediately.

Another story was about a four-year-old that was in serious condition after gluing his eyes shut. The child's father dozed off while watching him, and the child got his hands on a bottle of super-glue.

There are people out there profiting from our stupidity; psychic hot-lines for example. How psychic can they be if they ask your name, birthday and credit card number?

What does this mean for the future of humankind as we approach the new millenium? Stupid people aren't anything new, simply more common. I guess, like most people, I thought advances in technology would lessen the number, but it seems to be quite the opposite. Maybe it's not a question of stupidity, but of losing common sense. I'd like to think that someday (right about here is where the patriotic music would strike up, but it's a newspaper, so just pretend) we'll live in a world where weathermen and women stay indoors, criminals will travel with road maps, and we won't pay people to tell us things we already know. We can only hope. ♦

Top Ten Predictions for New Millenium

1. Jesse "the President" Ventura with Michael Jordan as vice-president (Jordan resigns shortly thereafter to continue his basketball career)
2. Twins stadium is finally built, three months after professional sports have been outlawed for disrupting the economy
3. Prince Charles marries Cher, TV show follows
4. Elvis
5. School lunches will become edible
6. 4-square becomes Olympic sport. New Zealand wins first four competitions
7. The members of REO Speedwagon form a cult in Utah awaiting the arrival of their UFO
8. Sinbad stars in "Ghostbusters III"
9. Celine Dion learns to project
10. Absolutely nothing

Competition in Time for Dinner

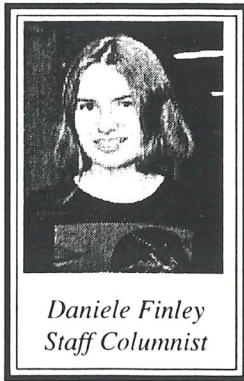
Brainerd Expected to Come Home With Gold

The first annual Minnesota Nice Olympics have started. These Olympics are very important to those who are truly nice. Come one, come all Scandinavians, for this is where you find out just how people shall rank on the scale of nicety. To those who win, a lifetime supply of hot dish.

The first competition is the Borrowing Sugar event. The nice contenders on this first event are Janet Smiley, Gary Friendly, Susan Gooddoer, and Ed Personalitiless.

The Borrowing Sugar Event is composed of a series of challenges, in which the four contestants go to their neighbor's house to ask for sugar for the cake you are making for your sister's friend's aunt's cat.

Our four contenders start at Doorway 1. The first task is letting in the cat. Janet has started out a little rough here, having forgotten her cat food in the kitchen, but smoothes it out by bringing out some choice ham from the previous night's dinner.



Daniele Finley
Staff Columnist

Gary seems to be an expert at grooming and smoothing out the cat's fur, correcting any flaws with a soothing hand, and expertly comforting the cat while removing any ticks or burrs.

Both Susan and Ed took the extra bonus points option, having lost points for failing to smile when the cat defecated on their shoes. The bonus points come from mopping up the cat's hairball.

All four of the participants then very carefully made their way, while avoiding stepping on any grass, weeds, or insects, to their other neighbor's front door. Susan and Janet stand out especially in this, having smaller feet, and a more modest stride.

Ed seems to be an expert at politely knocking, for he knocks loud enough to be heard, and yet not too forceful, lest he frighten the neighbor.

This is where the real challenge comes. All four of our Olympians are presented with a different challenge. Janet's problem was neighbor is sleeping. After the first three customary knocks, she waited the appointed 1.7 minutes, and then took a quick look in the door's window, only to see her neighbor resting on the couch. After a few minutes of careful consideration, she decided to take the inoffensive route, and went

back to her home, to make a new non-sugar recipe for cake. Better luck next time, Janet!

Gary's challenge was interrupting dinner. In that challenge, he had to find the nicest way to not break off dinner, while interrupting long enough to complete his mission. He pulled this maneuver off with ease; however he tripped on his way back, and killed a colony of ants, horrifying some Buddhist passersby.

Susan was faced with the problem of a grumpy neighbor with a Doberman. Luckily for Susan, she keeps a steak in her purse for times like this.

Ed's performance was spectacular. His challenge was to deal with overly talkative neighbors. While making sure to listen to everything, and dispute nothing, and assure constantly, he had to leave in order to get home to make sure the hot dish didn't burn. He managed to not only console his neighbor about his problems, recommend a psychologist, and get the sugar. As if his performance wasn't already fantastic, he poured some sugar next to the ant hill, pacifying the Buddhist passersby. Kudos to you, Ed!

And this is reporter Karl McRough saying keep helping those old ladies cross the streets, and we'll see you at next year's Nice Olympics! ♦

MUSIC From 8

people insult the music before listening to all of the artist's work. They make an assumption, and when you assume you make an... You know how it goes. And although I insult a lot of groups, I research beforehand, so you can't touch me. I try to be as lenient as possible, believe it or not.

Anyway, I've heard people insult Marilyn Manson on his whole new glam look and how his new album is more Marilyn than Manson, but when asked if they had listened to the whole album, oftentimes the response was no. Beck has been called dirty and weird on more than one occasion. Billy Corgan from Smashing Pumpkins has been shunned for declaring that "rock is dead" and making a very good album that wasn't at his usual "rat in a cage" volume. Courtney Love has been called a sell-out for sounding professional. Metallica has also been called sell-outs, despite being in the music biz for well over 15 years; oddly enough these were the same people who used to lis-

ten to them.

However, it was a double-edge sword for these artists, because all of them tried to step in a new direction artistically and they got burned for it by former fans. On the other hand, if they made an album that sounded like their old stuff they would have been criticized for lack of creativity.

In all of these cases I've heard the term sell-out used at least once by people who really don't know the meaning of a sell-out, but if they were real sell-outs they'd wear Tommy Gear and remake songs from the 70's with crappy lyrics. Oh, and as far as my current position on Rap music, it still sucks and it will always suck. I say this because all of those idiots you see on MTV griping as if they had something to say, are not in the music biz for the music or even the fans. They are in it for the money and that's not cool. I wish they could at least talk about something worthwhile and not about smoking crack and having sex.

Hopefully 1999 will be a better year for music, with more highly anticipated albums set to come out from Nine Inch Nails, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Chris Cornell (from Soundgarden), Stone Temple Pilots and Smashing Pumpkins. The gigantic rock-fest Woodstock is planned to take place in the summer, but specifics are pretty sketchy as to which bands will be there, where it will be, etc. etc. Also, I read in an article on the Backstreet Boys in *Entertainment Weekly* and from what I gather, it sounds like the Backstreet Boys probably won't be around for much longer due to the fact that the vocalists might consider going solo in the (near) future. C'mon, who are they kidding? Without each other, they might as well kiss their butts goodbye. Also, it was reported that they are trying to learn how to play instruments. It's hilarious, I tell you. The last thing I would like to add is if Iraqi terrorists plan to blow up more buildings in America, the least they could do is blow up MTV. ♦

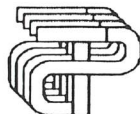
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