



The Washington Literary Society and Debating Union
Student- Alumni Newsletter



May 2013

A Society Update

By Krista O'Connell , Spring 2013 President

This semester saw successful installments of its spring traditions including the Original Literary Contest and Smith Simpson Debate. Member and Lead Historian Aimee Lacasse won the Original Literary Contest with her story entitled "The Cruise." Sam Carrigan and Secretary-Elect Ben Harris competed in the Smith Simpson Debate, arguing in support of the following resolution: The U.S. should impose unilateral sanctions on China for cybercrimes. Despite Ben's artful use of Reductio ad Hitlerum, the Jeffies took the prize.

With the help of current members, alumni, and provies, the Wash hosted two debate tournaments this semester which attracted schools from up and down the East Coast. In February, the Wash hosted the Second Annual Rotunda Classic for high school debaters with leadership from Tournament Director, Stevie Chancellor, and High School Debate Chair (and President-Elect), Maggie Goodman. In April the Wash ran the APDA Robert E. Lee Memorial Tournament. There was fried chicken.

The Wash and Jeff also duelled in a debate in response to Secretary of State John Kerry's speech at UVa. The University's Center for International Studies and the Vice Provost for Global Affairs hosted the debate in which Vice President-Elect Scott Tilton and I participated. They declared no winner, but seeing the Jeffies' look of confusion and terror when we said the word "neo-imperialism" was a glorious moment.

This semester also witnessed several smashing parties, including the revival of the Toga Party under Sergeant at Arms Lauren Willis, as a result of the Society's surplus. Washies toasted to the ancient gods with their golden solo cups ("chalices") brimming with Everclear. *cont. p. 2*



The Spring 2013 Officer Corps

Krista O'Connell (President), Jeff Barger (Reporter), Lauren Willis (Sarge), Troy Singer (Treasurer), Ben Vander (VP), Jacob Farrell (Secretary)

Photo Credit: Nora Neus

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But nobody got my joke when I came to the Toga Party dressed in yoga clothes.

On a more altruistic note, Special Projects Chair Lara Howerton, led a campaign to raise money to buy books for a school associated with Wash alumna Andrea Arango, who is currently teaching in Puerto Rico. To show her dedication to the cause, Lara joined Treasurer Troy Singer, in volunteering to each take a pie to the face in exchange for donations. I pried Troy in the face, and it was perhaps the most awkward thing I've done in my life. In addition to the proceeds collected at the pie-palooza, the Wash will also donate some of the profit from its debate tournament to the book drive.

The Wash also passed two landmark Constitutional Amendments. Following the failure of the "Xe" amendment, Reporter Jeff Barger, proposed a successful amendment which addresses the use of controversial pronouns in the Constitution by eliminating them entirely.

The second successful amendment includes moderate changes to the medals process and was the result of long collaboration and contemplation from Wash leadership. The amendment moves voting to the first meeting of the Spring semester, requires nominations to be submitted a week in advance, allows commentary in floor speeches, and requires two votes on the three undergraduate medals (the first on whether to award a medal, and the second on the recipient).

Washies also valiantly spearheaded the resurrection of Book Club and the unveiling of the Debatatabase, which you can read more about in their respective articles in this newsletter. Alumni Chair Jamie Miller and alumna Lindsay Parra also worked diligently to conceive the tradition of publishing a student- alumni newsletter, for which I *pound pound pound*.

To top off the semester, the Society inducted 30 new members this April. Vice President Ben Vander, toasted them with champagne that he sabered with the Wash's new sabre. During his Inductions minutes, Secretary Jacob Farrell awarded provies and members with exceedingly meaningful awards. Mine was for "Excellence in Disapproval," for which I end this post with a >:-/. ★

Submit to the Newsletter! E-mail your article, announcement, or job listing to Lindsay Parra: Lindsay.parra@gmail.com. Make sure to check your email for deadline announcements.

It's Time to Pack Your Bags

By Eliza Quanbeck, CLAS 2010

Last October Zev Lebowitz (my boyfriend and fellow 2010 Wash alum) and I, quit our respective jobs, sold our furniture, gave up an amazing apartment in DC, and started living out of backpacks. We spent our first two months backpacking through China and Burma and arrived in Bali just after New Years. 4 months later, we're still in Bali and are just finishing up our Divemaster certification, a silly pipe dream made reality.



Scuba diving in Nusa Penida, Bali.

Some people think we're crazy, and others tell us we're 'living the dream,' which is also a codeword for crazy. We've been on the road for 6 months now; it will be another 8 months before we turn for home permanently.



Zev mugging with a grandma in Yunnan, China. This lovely lady dragged us into her home, fed us a home cooked meal and then charged us an extortionate rate.

We've developed some backpacker skills along the way. Haggling has become second nature. I have seen the most harrowing of bathrooms and survived to tell the tales. I can pack up my 65 litre backpack in ten minutes flat, and apparently picked up British spellings along the way. Zev and I speak enough pidgin Bahasa Indonesia to make the ladies in the market crack up.

This whole adventure began while I was interviewing for my second job out of college. It was an impressive sounding position at a company well known for its dynamic work culture.

During the final interview with the company president, he asked me what I would choose to do given the opportunity and freedom to do anything. My mind began to reel with a million answers, none of which involved being in that office building. I didn't get the job, but I let them know how much I sincerely enjoyed the interview process. I immediately went home and planted a seed in Zev's mind, 'if you could be doing anything right now, what would it be?' For the next six months we organized our life to make this yearlong sabbatical possible.

Traveling abroad is not unlike being in the Wash. It's a bit of a leap of faith, but it calls to you. It is best done when you are young and don't mind drinking shitty beer or hanging out with weird people. Always be prepared to play the court jester, people love to laugh at someone else's expense, bonus points if you just don't give a shit. Most of the time, you only pretend to know what is going on, otherwise someone might rob you. And of course my mother's cardinal rule, which continues to hold true on the other side of the globe; *never sit on the toilet seat.* ★



Hiking in Tiger Leaping Gorge. It was one of the most breathtaking places I've ever seen.

On the Board of Trustees

By Vadim Elenev, Chair, CLAS 2009

Were you sober for your swan song? To many of us, it was a speech subconsciously semesters in the making, driven by the desire to say something important, to recount old memories and to give unsolicited advice. It was a moment, which marked our transition from active members – a term that describes who one is – to alumni – a word that defines one who once was. Recognizing this context was tough. A drink or four certainly helped.

But the delineation between past and present, offered by our swan songs, is less clear than we thought at the time. The Wash gives us more than memories and college friendships. As we get older, we are not just keepers of the Society's past, we can retain a connection to its present and future. We are eager to offer support and advice to current members. They seek and are grateful for our contributions, rhetorical or financial.

The Board of Trustees is here to provide a channel for this interaction.

Much of our work is done at the semiannual meetings, Ghosts of the Past and Banquet weekends. We hear about the Society's successes and challenges over the preceding months and provide valuable institutional memory. This helps to preserve the Wash's traditions and spares the current members from having to reinvent the wheel. Having more experience and longer time horizons, we work on long-term projects such as the annual medals. Equally as important, we figure out ways to pay for them, monitoring and protecting the Washington Society Endowment, which is approaching forty thousand dollars. The meetings serve as a forum for both current and alumni members, Trustees or not, to exchange thoughts about the Society's recent record and future plans.

Outside of the meetings, the Board continues to be a resource for both current and alumni members. When Wash officers want to hear "what the alumni think," Trustees are the first people they turn to. When alumni want to learn more about recent goings-on in the Wash, Trustees are often in the best position to answer.

The Board of Trustees provides one channel for the interaction between current and alumni members, but the strength of our Society relies on the existence of

other channels as well. Trustees are but a few alumni and one current member (the President of the Wash). Your continued involvement in and passionate support is what makes the Wash strong. The Board cannot and should not control the unique relationship between past and present generations of Washies, but we can and do help.

As we continue a conversation about using Endowment interest to support long-term, substantial projects, your input is as crucial as ever. Join us at our next meeting, or contact Trustees directly: Mike Nye, Mike Dindoffer, Charlie Mason, Vadim Elenev, Lindsay Parra, Bryan Henning, and Maggie Goodman, the President of the Wash.

Get involved and speak out!

Quam Fluctus Diversi, Quam Mare Conjuncti! ★



Washington Society Alumni at Foxfield Races, Spring 2013

Photo Credit: Carl Pierre

Introducing the Washington Society Debatatabase

By Chris Jones, Webmaster

At the beginning of the Spring 2013 semester, the Washington Society rolled out its first release of "The Debatatabase," the new Washington Society administrative website.

While the Debatatabase is primarily a tool that will be used by the Vice President to track provisional requirements, it also takes attendance, calculates quorum, allows the Alumni Chair to keep up-to-date contact information on alumni, records all lits and debates presented by members, and generates objective reports about each member's involvement.

This functionality has already saved the Washington Society officers a significant amount of work.

The application is hosted by the Computer Science department's servers and is accessible to anybody at pegasus.cs.virginia.edu/~wash or via the link on the newly-revamped Washington society's website at washingtonsociety.org. Current and recent members can sign in using Netbadge, but older alumni without access to Netbadge should contact Chris Jones at cmj7gh@virginia.edu for access.

The society will work within the next several semesters to back-fill the debatabase with as much historical data as possible.

Anybody who is interested in learning more about or helping to maintain the debatabase should contact Chris Jones. ★

Washies in NYC

By Rachel Carr, CLAS 2009

The Washington Society of Greater New York and Other Territories, a group of Washington Society members living in or near the city of New York, plus one currently in South Korea, has held at least ten meetings in its first two years of existence. Literary presentations have ranged from contemporary fiction to death notices from a Long Island newspaper printed in 1889. Debates have included such resolutions as: "Contrary to popular belief, Michael Bay is in fact not the cinematic personification of the devil." Like the original Washington Society, our society has a president (elected at the beginning of each meeting), a motto ("Excelsior!"), and a procedure for fining negligent officers (applied chiefly to Secretary Adam Moore, whose accrued fines rival the sovereign debt of many European nations). We welcome all Washies in our region. If you would like to hear about our upcoming meetings, please tell Rachel Carr (rachel.carr.e@gmail.com). ★

Constitutional Amendments

By Chris Jones, Webmaster

This semester the Washington Society has made an effort to revamp the constitution. Although the society

spent much time in and out of OC discussing the role and value of the constitution and considered many amendments, the debate focused primarily on gender and medals.

As of the beginning of the semester, the constitution had 27 male-gendered pronouns. This was seen by many members as contrary to the makeup and the spirit of the Wash. One member sought to correct this issue by amending the constitution to include the gender-neutral pronoun "xe." After many lengthy conversations, a 140-email long thread on the Wash-Soc, and a series of spirited floor speeches, the amendment received about 1/2 of the votes, which fell short of the 2/3 requirement to amend the constitution. In response, another member submitted a draft of an amendment that removed all pronouns from the constitution and thereby eliminated the problem of gendered pronouns altogether. This amendment passed unanimously.

The society also spent a significant amount of time this semester discussing the annual medals given to graduating members and alumni in recognition of meritorious lits and debates and extraordinary service to the society. The discussions centered on defining the goals and significance of the medals and how the society should choose to award them. These discussions resulted in an amendment that increased the chances of awarding each medal, moved the medals nominations to the Spring Topics Meeting, and required nominations to be submitted in writing before the meeting. This amendment passed with a significant majority.

The updated constitution is available on the society website. ★

Welcome Spring 2013 Provie Class

By Ben Vander, Spring 2013 Vice President

This semester I had the absolute pleasure of serving as Vice President, and so was in charge of handling the provisional membership process for thirty provisional members ("provies"). Recruitment at the beginning of the semester was smooth sailing, and working through the semester was a lot of fun. Aside from their attendance requirements, each provisional member participated in at least one debate, gave at least one

literary presentation, and was required to accumulate 10 "provie points" for their service to the Society. Some went above and beyond—Susan gave four literary presentations, and Kris earned 32 provie points. I was the guinea pig for using the new Wash Database to track these requirements. I only encountered a few hiccups; for the most part the new system was of great assistance to me in keeping all of the Provies on track to become full-fledged members.

We heard some marvelous literary presentations and debates from these new members, and they were instrumental in helping to put on the two debate tournaments as well as generally providing service to the Society.

To promote social engagement, we split the provies into smaller groups or "houses," named for our founders: Fleet, Harnsberger, Perkins, and Lewis. Within their houses, the provies participated in many activities, including a scavenger hunt, cooking for the history dinner, and even some inter-house "mixers." At the end of the semester (during the Inductions party), we crowned a "King of the Provies," to recognize a new member for excellence during the provisional membership period. Though they were all great, this semester's King of the Provies was Maura Carey.

Overall it was a great semester with the Wash, and it was great to get to bring in these new Washies. I look forward to seeing what they bring as regular members! ★

Congratulations to the Spring 2013 Provie Class!

Matt Hurley	Patrick Steiner
Ashley Spinks	Katie Lake
Cori Bedois	Brennan McElhone
Rolph Recto	Guillaume Bailey
Caitlin Levine	Niki Olson
Maddie Bartel	Quang Pham
Savannah Thieme	Kris Atterbury
Tom Hische	Zunaira Arbab
Laine Heidman	Matt Alibozek
Emily Williams	Ludvig Sundin
Jillian Carrigan	Shelby Clark
Zac Skyring	Nick Shahbaz
Maura Carey	Cassie Cosans
Eric Sidelko	Sasan Mousavi
Julia Tazelaar	Nader Ahmed



Spring 2013 Inductions
Photo Credit: Katie Labgold

Some thoughts. From China.

By Phil Baughman, CLAS 2009

1. Turns out the internet feels pretty much completely broken without reliable Google searching. (It exists, but the results are full of broken links, and the whole thing feels quietly sabotaged. In related news, Bing is terrible.)
2. Paying for a reliable VPN fixes #1, and it allows me to waste time nearly as efficiently as I did at home. Thanks PandaPow! (www.pandapow.co)
3. #2 is essential, as spending 40 hours a week in front of a computer working for a dysfunctional company in China feels about like it does in America.
4. As a “foreign expert”, I teach English to kids aged 2-14 at a training center called Pumpkin English, in Chongqing. I teach about 15 hours of classes per week, which requires about 1-2 hours of preparation. But it’s essential to my company that, as their white foreign person, I sit around the office for another 24 hours or so, lending their school credibility in the eyes of the paying and prospective clients.
5. MLB.tv has proven invaluable, except that the Nats are hovering around .500.
6. I had to come all the way to China to discover the joys of being an Instawhore. (instagram.com/philtograph)
7. I have a blog: <http://www.chongqingaling.com>
8. Spending an entire work day witnessing the Marathon Bomber Manhunt unfold overnight in Boston

via twitter and police scanner from my cubicle in China was surreal.

9. Does anyone else love Jonah Keri’s MLB coverage on Grantland.com?
(grantland.com/contributor/_/name/jonah-keri)

10. The food in Chongqing is excellent, if consistently greasy. But the world-beating spiciness is, to my taste, overrated. If you can handle very spicy food elsewhere, you can probably handle pretty much anything in Chongqing. That being said, the pervasiveness of spicy food is definitely superlative. And more than the chili pepper, it’s probably the “Sichuan pepper” or “prickly ash” (*huajiao*, in Mandarin), that contributes most to the legendary reputation of fiery Sichuan cuisine. This little guy, along with the chili pepper, is added to just about everything. It looks a bit like a common black peppercorn, served either ground up or whole, and mixed into whatever you’ve ordered. It has a very aromatic, almost acrid taste, and produces a numbing sensation in your mouth, the severity of which is heavily dependent on the amount that has been used or whether you’ve managed to bite into a whole peppercorn unexpectedly. The numbing effect and acrid taste on its own isn’t particularly pleasant in my opinion, but in moderation and in combination with the more familiar heat and kick of the chili pepper, it can add a satisfying dimension to a meal. It’s a flavor party, regardless.

11. Squat toilets: I’m torn. Squatting on a pissed-on floor is much less unpleasant than sitting on a pissed-on seat, to my mind. However, if you ladies back home think us gentlemen are a little liberal with our aim, or negligent in addressing splash-back, just imagine a target twice as far away, with walls half as high. The choice between privately emasculating oneself by squatting to pee, or accepting a bit of splash-back onto one’s be-shorted legs and be-sandalled feet, is a choice without an easy or obvious answer. Personally? I emasculate myself at home in order to avoid pissing all over a floor I am responsible for cleaning. Anywhere else: spray and pray, and let the piss fall where it may.

12. Yes, I just spent about 600 words detailing my life in China, and all I talked about was pissing, shitting, eating, and surfing the web.

13. For a more refined take on life in China, I highly recommend Peter Hessler’s literary reportage in *River*

Town (2001), *Oracle Bones* (2006), and *Country Driving* (2010).

14. *Quam fluctus diversi, quam mare conjuncti!* ★



Phil finds a familiar face in China.

2013 Original Literary Contest Winner



The Cruise

By Aimee Lacasse

Aunt Sarah and Uncle Jack had guilt-tripped Hannah's dad into going on the cruise. And, probably, rightfully so. Hannah's family didn't make it to the ski trip the previous winter, nor to Mémère's birthday party that March. And they'd missed the last three Burlington Thanksgivings.

Of course Hannah's dad had his reasons. The drive up to Vermont from Southern Pennsylvania was a long one, and it's not like he had a job that allowed him to take time off any day he wanted. But then again, his parents only had one 50th wedding anniversary, and he'd promised his wife and kids a real vacation. So Hannah's dad gave in.

The cruise was Mémère and Pop's anniversary gift to the entire family—their three kids plus the in-laws, and the seven grandchildren. Mémère and Pop never stayed in one place longer than two months. Sometimes they liked company during their travels.

On the day the cruise set sail for Bermuda, Hannah—two weeks past her middle school graduation, was occupied by feelings of regret and a Jane Austen novel. She wore a *Doors* t-shirt, faded *Converse*, and an unapologetic scowl.

"Aunt Sarah told me that Celeste is looking forward to hanging out with you this week," Hannah's dad said, as they drove into the ship's parking lot. "Did you bring your Harry Potter trivia game?"

Hannah looked up from Austen, exhaled, and rolled her eyes. "Celeste wouldn't care about that, dad."

"Okay, honey," her dad said. "I just remember that you two watched Harry Potter together when you were little." Hannah's mother turned around and gave her daughter a look. The kind that said, "Watch your tone, young lady." Hannah resolved not to.

The little ones would have it easy. Megan, Hannah's five year old sister, was signed up for six days worth of splashing in baby pools with her little cousin, Uncle Jack's son Michael, who was four and wouldn't even remember the trip. Except for when he met a real-live pirate on the beach, because that's something a kid never forgets.

Hannah's brother Peter was completely ignorant to the fact that James and Adam wanted nothing to do with him, so he also had a lot to look forward to. James and Adam were both sixteen—the Sperry's and backwards baseball cap wearing type. When everyone met aboard ship, Peter gave them fist pumps and said, "Whaaat uuup??" Hannah caught James and Adam mocking him behind his back just ten minutes later. She wanted to call them out, but she couldn't decide what to say.

She was busy surveying her other cousin.

Celeste looked just like her facebook pictures—soft and cheerful, working all the right angles everywhere she walked. She and Hannah were often mistaken for twins as babies. Their faces still sort of looked similar, but Hannah's body was thinner and paler and not as well dressed. The girls exchanged only one awkward smile before parting ways until the evening.

At dinner the older grandchildren sat at a table together. Peter pretended to know all about smoking marijuana, even though the most adventurous thing he'd ever done was drive to Maryland with his friends instead of going to the mall like he said he would. James and Adam had always been trouble makers, but Hannah never thought they'd become drug addicts. She imagined what they would be like in ten years, probably unemployed and growing weed in their parents' basements, if not in prison. She wondered if she should make them read *Go Ask Alice*.

Hannah got considerably less enjoyment out of listening to Celeste talk to Uncle Jack and Aunt Karen about the starting the French immersion program at her fancy new high school. "I really want to be bilingual," Celeste said. "Besides that it looks great on a resume, I feel like knowing another language really enhances one's life experiences."

"Are you hoping to study abroad in France someday, love?" Aunt Karen called everyone "love," which was pretty annoying.

"*Oui*," Celeste said, and then added, "*J'espere!*"

Hannah looked down at her lap and pretended to vomit. And she could tell her mother noticed because coughed a little while chewing on a bite of her steak.

Surprisingly, Hannah found the first two days on board rather enjoyable. She slept in past eleven, ate lunch at the soda parlor, and read Austen by the baby pools next to her mother, while the other kids enjoyed the water park and the rock wall, and the aunts played the slot machines and lounged around the spa. After dinner, Hannah took her book closer to

the hot tubs so she could spy on James and Adam, who had managed to pick up two blonde girls within the first five hours of the trip.

(These girls were also cousins, and coincidentally also celebrating their grandparents' 50th anniversary. They giggled and splashed around while the boys bragged about themselves.)

"I have my own sailboat," Adam announced on the second night. "My dad gave it to me for my birthday."

"Yah if I was home right now," said James, "I'd so be riding my motorcycle. That or smoking a blunt on Vince's roof."

"How come you pronounce it like that?" one of the girls asked.

"What like what?"

"Roof like 'ruff.'"

"Because I have an accent," James said. "I'm from Vermont, remember?"

"Yeea... But how do you *spell* it?" James stared at her for a solid minute, like he was trying to see the inside of her brain.

By the third night, Hannah was finally sick of the cruise. They'd spent the day land- shopping, snorkeling, talking to pirates. It was so nice to be outside in the fresh air, walking on the earth and interacting with actual civilization. Going back on the boat felt a lot like being buried alive.

"What's the matter, love?" Aunt Karen asked Hannah during dinner.

"You look down tonight."

Before Hannah could reply "I'm fine," Aunt Sarah chimed in—"Hey! I heard that there's going to be an ice skating show tonight!"

"Ooo, doesn't that sound like fun?" Aunt Karen said.

"You and Celeste should go together!" Aunt Sarah suggested.

Celeste shrugged. "Sure."

Hannah nodded and figured it might not be so bad. They wouldn't have to talk to each other during the show, and maybe afterwards they could go to that ice cream place she'd been meaning to try.

"So what time does the show start?" Hannah asked Celeste as they exited the dining room.

"You know actually, I was thinking that we could go to Club Teen instead."

"Club Teen?"

"Yah... you know..." Hannah knew what Club Teen was from the travel brochures, but she didn't think she'd ever end up there.

"Yah, I guess that's fine."

"Awesome! I hope we run into some hot guys," Celeste said. "I'm so jealous of James and my brother. Meeting someone you like on a cruise is so romantic. I've always wanted to kiss someone on a boat. Like in *Titanic*. But without the drowning, of course."

"Yah me too," Hannah said smiling. It wasn't a lie.

"Cool beans!" Celeste said. "Meet me in my room at 9."

While Hannah was getting ready, she imagined having fun with Celeste. They'd be at the club for a few minutes, and then leave to hang out with a couple of Leonardo DiCaprio look-alikes, who would take them out for ice cream and kiss them on deck. Years later, when Hannah and Celeste were both pretty and successful, they'd look back on the night as one of those "life-enhancing experiences."

But when Celeste answered the door to her bedroom, looking flawless in a pleated skirt a layer of make-up, Hannah's fantasy disappeared.

"It took me *forever* to decide what to wear," Celeste said. "I just didn't bring a lot of nice stuff on this trip." She ran her fingers through her hair and grabbed her sparkly purse off the bed. "All right, let's go! I'm so *excited!*"

Club Teen was on the very bottom level of the ship, distinguished by a big cursive sign above its entrance. The inside was polluted with blue and purple strobe lights. A dance floor took up the majority of the room, the rest a few tables and chairs and a bar cramped in a corner.

They played the kind of music Hannah pretended not to like. "*Tik Tok on the clock...*"

And it was crowded, like everywhere else, except there weren't any books to escape to.

Alcohol obviously wasn't allowed at Club Teen, but the kids on the dance floor certainly acted like they were drunk. (To Hannah's knowledge of what drunk looked like.)

"Do you wanna dance?" Celeste asked.

"Not now," Hannah said. She couldn't think of anything she wanted to do less.

"Okay, let's get drinks." Celeste went up to the bar and ordered two Dr. Peppers.

Hannah grabbed the first table she saw.

"So... this is fun..." Celeste said. Hannah didn't answer. She didn't even nod.

"I ruin everything," Hannah thought. "Everywhere I go."

After a few minutes of silence, an older boy with a buzz cut walked up to Celeste and without hesitation said, "Hey, I'm Dave!"

"I'm Celeste! This is my cousin, Hannah!"

"Cool! So do you want to dance?" Celeste nodded and followed him onto the dance floor without saying a word. Hannah wanted to grab hold of her arm and pull her back. No. Stop. Don't leave me...

The song changed. "*Tonight. Give me everything toniiiight...*" Hannah thought about all the friends she never made and all that she wouldn't make in high school. And all the clubs she wouldn't join, and all the sports she wouldn't play, and all classes she would fail because she'd be too afraid to try. She

heard her little sister's voice, "you're no fun anymore." And her mother's, "Just try, Hannah. Just try." Sweat rolled down her face. Her heart began to race.

She thought if she tried to leave she would be trampled to death. But if she stayed she'd be trapped. It was as if she was in the basement and the ship might sink.

"For all we know, we might not get tomorrow..."

Or maybe she'd just stop breathing. She pictured herself slumped in her chair, a blue-lipped and lifeless ragdoll.

On the dance floor, Dave pulled Celeste closer to his body and rocked her hips side to side. His hands moved lower.

Hannah gripped the edges of the table. She felt like no one would ever touch her again.

Dave took Celeste by the waist and kissed her against the back wall. She had no room to move.

After a few deep breaths, Hannah gathered the strength to run out of the room. She turned right and threw up in the nearest trashcan. Then she sank to the floor and clutched her legs, and started to feel normal again.

After what felt like forever, Celeste finally came out. Her eye shadow was smeared onto her cheeks, her skirt a bit lopsided. "C'mon, Hannah. Get up off the ground. Let's leave."

"Okay."

They walked down the long hallway towards the elevator. It was quiet. Hannah hadn't experienced that kind of quiet in over three days. It was scary, but strangely peaceful.

Celeste stopped walking. "My purse is gone."

"Did you lose it?" Hannah asked.

"No! No! I didn't lose it! He *stole* it! I know he did. I just... I just put it down on the floor for two seconds..."

"Well, I'm sure you can buy a new one."

"I can't believe...", Celeste murmured as she covered her face with her hands and started to cry. "He... He..."

"People can be really mean." Hannah truly felt bad for her. She knew Celeste must have lost a lot of money and other things. What else could she say?

"We're going to tell my mom I lost it, okay?" Celeste pleaded.

"Okay," Hannah agreed.

Suddenly Celeste's tone changed. "We never met that boy. He never stole anything. We *never* met him. Understand?"

"Yea."

"Okay." Celeste pushed the button for the elevator. It was just the two of them. If someone else was here, Hannah thought, they'd probably think we were best friends.

Celeste reached over and stroked Hannah's back. "It's all right, love," she said. "It's gonna be all right." ★

Cowboy, killed

By Tyler Slack

When I turned ten, my dad said it would be a big year, a year that would change everything. I got a sleepover birthday party and a TV in my room and an allowance of \$10 a week to save for whatever nefarious purpose I could dream of. Despite these riches, I was losing the race to coolness against a peloton of over-deodorized, spiky-haired fifth graders. But I had great, manly ambitions, and no day that year was more important to my image than this one: a September morning to split my life in two halves, simple and dangerous; when a few clouds of smoke would obscure the innocence of my old world and usher in a new, more mysterious one; replacing ordinary me with that popular kid, who would lean casually against the bricks with that girl, head swimming and lungs burning.

The girl I refer to—a woman, if there ever was one at Kittredge Elementary School—was Jordan West: hair-color pioneer, bona fide bra-wearer. A formidable specimen and early smoker. She was too cool to dabble in friends and she toyed with us in an early streak of sadism that must have terrified our counselors. Perhaps she offered me that cigarette because she thought it would be funny to watch me choke on it

or burn a hole in my yellow Chaps polo shirt. I'll never know. Girls who smoke in fifth grade should come with the same type of government disclaimers that come on the packs they steal from their moms' purses. Hazardous to your health.

Jordan taught us a new word the day before.

Saunter. verb, from the middle French, as in: Jordan West saunters up to the table, unfazed by the vicious rumors whizzing about her, pouting in an entitled, bitchy way that only stopped being sexy like, last year. Sauntering into melodrama: Jay Cromwell boasting in a stage whisper about how he had kissed Lizzy Kelly, and Neil Rivera asserting that he had already kissed Lizzy, with tongue and everything, and was going after Andrea Adams during the Hawaiian-themed dance in October.

The lies and clattering forks ceased once Jordan wondered aloud why none of us men would smoke a damn cigarette with her. What? Silence held. Genitals twitched. Something happened. How I, the chubby kid who had never kissed Lizzy or been kissed by anyone ended up with the job escapes me to this day. But there she went, sauntering away lasciviously, and there I went, eating my turkey sandwich and trying to look composed, natural, smug.

September 11th arrived uneventfully for most people, to whom it was just a Tuesday. I suppose it was a restless night for 22 amateur pilots in New York City, and maybe Jay-Z, set to drop *The Blueprint* the next day, but I was also anxious.

How do I hold the thing? What do cigarettes taste like? What does Jordan West taste like? Why did I agree to this?

I told my mom I had a hall monitor thing that morning so she could drop me off early. Jordan and I rendezvoused near the dumpster behind the school. Just us. I didn't know which end to light, so I guessed, and ended up burning off the

filter, eliciting a satisfied snort from Jordan. After three matches I got it right, took a drag, and instantly contracted whooping cough. I tried to emulate her every move: holding the thing vertically, exhaling through my nose, glaring nonchalantly at everything. I quickly understood that I had nothing interesting to say, so I just sat and looked dumbly at her unnecessary leather jacket which made her look like Cruella DeVille in her rebellious youth. Two cigarettes smoldered. For a moment, everything was quiet, still, and somewhat perfect.

And then, adult footsteps. Teachers moving in to bust us. Our fate was sealed: to the Juvie Archipelago for decades of correctional treatment.

Fuck, said Jordan, stubbing out the cigarette on the bottom of her right Doc Marten. Fuck.

Normally I would have taken a moment to marvel at her use of such an extraordinary word, but I was panicking. Sam Prochansky went to Juvie last year and, last I heard, ended up in the Army. I didn't want to go into the Army. For the first time in my life, I was running from the Fuzz, on the Lam. Jordan West: May cause serious health problems.

Mrs. Rudert, a septuagenarian math teacher, was waiting for us on the other side of the dumpster. She quickly directed us inside, to imminent expulsion. An escape was formulated then abandoned; Rudert's grip was as strong now as it was during the Roosevelt administration. But then, oddly, she didn't lead me to the vice-principal, but back to the classroom. How could she not have smelled the tobacco or heard my tuberculosis sounds? The old hag shoved us into the room, which appeared to be the site of a tornado drill. Every kid on their butt, under a desk, knees to chest. Girls tried to readjust their skirts into less compromising positions; boys sat and looked at their penises, with whom many had just recently become friends. I took my spot among my sheltered peers. The blackboard presented a set of conversions for English

units of volume; the lesson today was supposed to be on things like tablespoons and quarts and gallons. Useful stuff.

But it wasn't a tornado drill. It was a Cold War response to a 21st century war; far outdated, foolish even, but somehow comforting. The news of the attacks had sent the teaching faculty into full bomb-shelter mode, and plastic desks protected every kid in the building from the shrapnel and businessmen and Western dominance that was falling 1750 miles away. Chaos reigned in the teachers' lounge, but the classroom was standardized-test quiet. Confused, nervous, fingers still trembling embarrassingly, I decided to learn my measurements. Three teaspoons in a tablespoon, sixteen tablespoons in a cup, four cups in a quart. The system, like everything else that day, didn't make any sense. The whispers, so finely practiced in the lunchroom, began anew in the makeshift fallout shelter—there had been a plane crash apparently, or something, and some kids parents' came and took them home early, an unconscionable injustice to the rest of us. But selfishly, I wasn't thinking about those going home early, or hurt in what was then just a plane crash. I was thinking of the smoke on my body, the dirtiness inside it, the ashes on my hands. The purity of my world, it seemed, was diminished. And nothing would ever be as beautiful as it was before that cigarette.

Nearly a decade later, sitting outside a cafe in Puerto Colon, Panama, sweat rolls down my unshaven face and stings my eyes. The heat crawls underneath my clothing and surrounds my skin, reminding my pores they will have to work a little harder down here. The smells of the hemisphere's second-most dangerous city float down the dirty street: fuel, sewage, weed, oily beer over the vanilla smoke of a Cuban cigar. I hate smoking, and the cigar is probably counterfeit, but I like to dress myself up and pretend. And I am not alone in this pretense. A North Philly-girl with an attitude like Allen Iverson, a smoky-eyed brunette from Oklahoma, and an Ivy-League

daughter of an American senator share the heat and the humidity and the Cohiba with me. At the bar, several sex-starved sailors from the tanker docked next to our ship slur at them in an Irish brogue.

Again in the company of dubious female company; again holding strange tobacco; again with little explanation to offer regarding how I ended up in the situation, I experience a Pavlovian tightening in my throat before I realize why. Surely there are better things to think about:

The crushing poverty of this shitty port city.

The blatant American imperialism that caused this mess.

The girls' saliva-borne diseases festering on the end of the cigar. Maybe not.

The waiter arrives with Oklahoma's mojito, which comes in a pint glass, the standard serving size of alcohol down here. Seconds later she has instagrammed that shit and googled the recipe; the juxtaposition of high-speed mobile internet and people shitting in the street does not seem to have struck her. She snorted away most of her powers of deduction in high school. Oklahoma draws:

"Rum. Sugar, water, a tablespoon of mint. And lime, Jesus, everything in this country has fucking lime in it."

A tablespoon of mint. What a meaningless phrase. English units, another wonderful export of the developed world, right next to mercantilism, small-pox, and the Panama Canal. I wonder why I never learned them properly, until I remember exactly why and choke down more alcohol. The next day I would learn the gastrointestinal effects of drinking rum on the rocks when the rocks are made with impotable water, but that's another essay entirely and one you probably aren't interested in.

After the attacks, CNN didn't cut to commercial for three days. My parents both worked there; and those three days gave them the longest shifts they ever worked, which gave me the longest time span in which I had been kind of home alone. Those days started with a cigarette and ended with a family dinner of Chinese takeout and have completely bisected my life.

Feral dogs brawl nearby. I snap out of my idle introspection to a glimpse of normalcy: the senator's daughter is talking about political action committees and Philly girl is stoning herself with great fervor, sucking down that tobacco-leaf phallus. The Irish sailors have, predictably and with great circumstance, stepped up their drinking efforts and will soon begin the catcalls. College kids and sailors abusing substances? A story as old as time. An impossible gulf between first and third worlds? Just the way Teddy Roosevelt envisioned it. The predictability and familiarity of it all was starting to cheer me up; sour rum warms the cold sweat and tobacco sets the table spinning slow and friendly. My ridiculous JFK cigar glows and the ashes of communism fall onto my Banana Republic shorts; the twentieth century has a sense of irony. Philly-girl is looking better and better with each passing minute; I suppose I still have a thing for girls who smoke. My pathetic musing slides into the back of my head, giving way to contentedness, until a man limps up to the table.

The man is homeless or close; he holds an armful of colorful woven bracelets which he might hock for a dollar apiece or tell you about his child's cleft lip until you bought four of them. He has red eyes and several teeth, visible through a wide smile.

North Philly jumps into action.

No nos molestes, viejo verde. Afuera! Ahora mismo!
I wince as she employs the phrases they teach you your first day of Semester at Sea. The bracelet seller holds his ground.

Voy a llamar a la policia! Squeals Oklahoma, stupidly.

There aren't really any police.

The man speaks slowly, smilingly, in slow but correct English: Thank you for killing Osama bin Laden. Thank you for making the world a safer place.

I forget to breathe for a second, leaving hot smoke in my throat. I would have told him I wasn't actually the one who shot the guy, but the Spanish just won't come. Senator-girl starts to say you're welcome, but that doesn't make sense either, so she aborts mid-squeak. Allen Iverson recovers first, and with characteristic saltiness, explains to the Panamanian that we didn't want any damn bracelets. The toothless man looks hurt, but stammers one more "Ok, thank you much" and staggers away with an injured smile, towards the drunken Irishmen. Maybe they'll thank him for potatoes.

That happy illusion of normalcy crumbles, collapsing on itself like the "North Tower": leaving the reality of a world shaken and left to a generation of kids unable to adapt quickly enough. The kids who still make up lies about pretty girls at lunch, who still don't understand English measurements, who still go drunkenly to exotic locales and live out absurd Ernest Hemingway expat-writer fantasies like this one; a population woefully unable to see the beauty of the world even when it walks up to them on a nice afternoon and thanks them for killing terrorists. We're still scared of the world, listening to that Jay-Z album and smoking bad cigarettes, posturing like fifth-graders at lunch. No one really knows why, but we are the soldiers everywhere, and I know one of them should be back in Atlanta with his two kids and his wife, Jordan. Our parents lost two Kennedys and a King; their parents saw Europe flattened and an atom split. But we lost our sense of place. This fractured decade has changed the world, but not the kids corrupted by it, and all of us deflowered by September 11th are

rediscovering what many of the world's victims already know:
Sometimes it's just easier to pretend like it never happened. ★

Job Opportunities, Contacts, and Announcements

Greg Tilton, Class of 2012, History DMP

I live in New Orleans and am involved in "Hollywood South" on a small but concrete level. (New Orleans is now the 3rd largest producer of films in the US.) People interested in film can talk to me. In addition, those interested in New Orleans as to live in or work in, I can be a good resource.

Contact: gdtilt@gmail.com

Tanim Islam

I am currently a staff scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories.

Contact: tanim.islam@gmail.com

Chelsea Cantrell, Class of 2010

Hello to all alumni and recent grads,

I work for a company called Cvent located in Tysons Corner, Virginia. With over 1,200 employees, Cvent is the world's largest meeting and event management technology company. We offer web-based software for online event registration, meeting site selection, event management, mobile apps for events, e-mail marketing and web surveys. <http://www.cvent.com/en/company/>

Cvent recently announced that it's been named to the "Best Places to Work in Greater Washington" list by the Washington Business Journal for the fourth year running. The list honors the D.C. metropolitan area's leading employers that go above and beyond to foster an enjoyable and meaningful work environment for their employees. <http://www.cvent.com/en/company/awards.shtml>

But more importantly, we're hiring! Cvent is growing and looking to hire talented and driven professionals for positions in sales, marketing and technology starting in August. Check out our open positions

here: <http://www.cvent.com/en/company/careers.shtml>

Cvent has been my answer to the question, "Is there life after college?" I've been at the company just over a year, but I couldn't be happier. It's truly an inspiring, vibrant and unique place to work. It's refreshing to work for a company with such motivating leadership and that puts so much emphasis on the success and development of its employees.

In fact, our founder and chief executive officer Reggie Aggarwal was selected as a 2013 Top 100 "Tech Titan" by Washingtonian magazine, which recognizes the Washington region's top 100 technology leaders based on their proven track records of success and influence as a leader and visionary in the tech world.

So if you have recently graduated and aren't sure what your plans are or maybe you've just been wondering what else is out there, I would definitely check out the opportunities at Cvent.



Jason Shore and Katie Gresham are happy to announce their upcoming marriage on June 8, 2013. The ceremony will have an unconscionable number of Washies in attendance.

The Washington Society Fall 2013 Officers

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