

The

POSH

Fortnightly

Letter from the Editor

Boom! Bang! Plop! So ends another semester for the Fortnightly. Once again I write this letter, and once again I am proud of the accomplishments of our magazine. I believe this is the semester we can finally say we have become a welcome member of the Washington Society. This is the semester we recruited new members, gained Society funds, and contributed greatly to the literary works of our dear Society. It's been fun, but it's not over.

Like any other magazine, the Fortnightly seeks to grow. We wish to expand out into the University community and draw upon the collective talents at UVA. While doing so, we intend to spread the honorable name of the Washington Society. We wish to give it a magazine to be proud of and let the student body know what our humble society can do. Of course, we cannot do this without your help. Our magazine is still small. The valiant efforts of our members produce much, but not enough, to propel this magazine into a new spotlight. We need contributions, we need new members, but most of all, we need your support. Spread our name. Tell your friends about us. Give them a copy. Do your part in making our magazine the most respected on grounds.

I shall end this piece with hearty congratulations. Having spent two semesters as the Editor-in-Chief, I have relinquished my position to the newly elected head-honcho, Keith White. He has earned his new position, so congratulate him if you see him. Sarah New, Rachel Mulheren, and Katie Bray return to once again provide us with a pool of talent and knowledge unmatched across the university. Dan Wiser has stepped up to new responsibility as our fourth editor and I am confident he will bring new insight to the position. Finally, I congratulate Patrick Lee for his amazing work as Printing Editor and his assuredly continued high performance. Looking to our new editors, I can only think that next year will not only be a good year, but a great one.

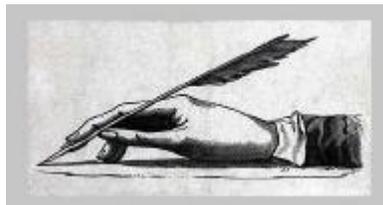
Signing off,

Evan Stewart

“Former Despot, Always King”

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A REQUIEM FOR MULBERRY

or, An Occasion to Mock Camus *and* God

These were the initial notes—"the profound shock and sadness"—scrawled so I would not forget—"the demise of 'expunge', the passing of a beautiful and terrible thing"—recorded to preserve the soul-deep wallop of the news. "Perhaps it is the contemplative cooling of the (lower) atmosphere, the recent passage of a cold front—this tracked on Intellicast, as daughters of meteorologists are wont to do—that makes the entirety seem more steeped in meaning... such that the bankruptcy of an email client assumes existential significance."

I was ashamed to discover it was yesterday's paper, embarrassed like I had slept through someone's funeral—which I had, really, reading the elegy, as it were, a day late. "*Aujourd'hui, Mulberry est mort. Ou peut-etre hier, je ne sais pas.*" Of course I thought of that.

Then I discovered it was not yesterday's Wednesday. It was Wednesday two months ago. And this time I felt betrayed, bewildered as to how the news of September 23, 2005 could have gone so unmourned.

But the date was misprinted—this confirmed by the header of the B section—which begged another question. Accidental? Or are we to search for symbolic meaning in that too? (And why not?) A premonition from the past—a forewarning for the future? Fate? Destiny? Should we expect a two-month warning before we go too?

~~But~~ Alas, I have strayed from my notes. "Profound shock and sadness"—yes, that was the immediate sentiment. The sort of preemptive jealousy of something that will soon be wrenched away, and inevitably missed terribly. Mostly I thought of "expunge," and what I would do without it. I recalled our original meeting. It was, indeed, "beautiful and terrible" (words that should always be used in concert). This thing: unknown, and seemingly unneeded. But it grew on me—the ability to delete, but only penultimately, and then, then to invoke the final command, which carried such monolithic commitment and *permanence*—expunge.

Once I wanted to use that word in an email, but I couldn't. It meant too much.

And here, dead.

Mulberry, would it be too ironic to say you too have been expunged?

~~Yet~~ But there is no irony in destiny. Email or email program or man, we are all marching toward the same fate. Back to our humblest origin. In my notes, Ecclesiastes-style: "This means: A time for everything under the sun. Cycle of life-death-life, sowed and plowed back under. Back to the one-celled beginning."

Incidentally, four days post-conception, we are up to thirty cells, a tiny hollow ball called a *morula*—Latin for mulberry.

We all start out as mulberries. No doubt we die the same as well.

Perhaps it is the shortening of days (the lengthening of nights?) that makes everything, even newsprint, look like death. Or it is the particular scent of decaying leaves, the organic reek of another cycle. As it should happen, the leaves of mulberry trees are unusual. They come in three shapes: simple tapered ovals, mittens, and three-fingered gloves. But in the fall they all turn gold, and they all drop alike.

~~Now~~ But alas—I forget my notes again. "Cold front." *That* was the reason for all this talk of death, the muse for this terrible, beautiful dirge. "Intellicast." The chain of miniature blue triangles I watched drift, beadlike, across the eastern seaboard. Oblivious to us, to the trees dropping leaves, to the berries of seeds and cells and bytes.

It is probably right that the power of "expunge" be taken from us.

Driving Fast.

by Meg Weckstein

Sick and twisted slaves to consumerism, they just want to get in their cars and drive. Fast. They are a generation of escapists with nowhere to escape to – so they are a generation of fast drivers alone on twisty mountain roads at night with the music playing too loudly. It's an escape into a cocoon, surrounded by car and music and blurry landscape with only your mind or your own tuneless singing. It's a common phenomenon, clichéd at best – the trademark of a generation of kids with too much time and too much money and more problems than they themselves will admit to. The escape is so delicious that I have to wonder, would all generations and socioeconomic levels drive too fast at night with the music blaring if given the chance? Everyone, throughout all eternity, writes bad poetry. Really, really, really bad poetry.

Sometimes, when I don't have a car, I try listening to music too loud and surfing the internet. Fast. It is not the same.

The web may be our newest form of anonymity and escape, but it does not hug the curves of the Blue Ridge Parkway at one in the morning. On the net, you cannot stop at an outlook, breathe in the twenty six degree air and marvel at the millions of stars; you are not deafened by the wide-open silence. Your mother taught you to fear rapists in both places though, so there are some commonalities.

I know one girl who spends hours roaming through the blog entries of an untouchable boy. In front of a glowing computer screen she cries tiny, shuddering, frustrated tears. She is so close, yet so far, from a beauty she cannot pet or hold or envelop. These are the impenetrable electronic windows created by our generation; faux introspection for would-be voyeurs. Weblogs make me want to get into my car and drive. Fast.

Try as I might, it's not really an escape; it's still my life and my laptop and my Blue Ridge Mountains. How many hours have I wasted googling away my pain? How many eons of petroleum have I wasted crying and driving? Not even fast.

Defining the 21st Century's Musical Taxonomy: An Argument for the Superiority of Electronica

-Peter Trauernicht

Music by the Genre

According to a reliable internet-based source¹, there are approximately 25 music genres. For the purposes of this article, define genre as the broadest sense of classification for music, in the same sense that kingdom is used in the classification of life. Upon closer inspection of said genres, it seems that there is only one worth anything at all. Electronica. That's right, this oft under-appreciated genre is undoubtedly the best. Take a look at how it compares to some of the most popular genres of music today.

Bluegrass/Country vs. Electronica²

Bluegrass originated from Country music, diverging from the direction mainstream Country was going in an attempt to stay 'pure'. Of course, over time the genre has grown and changed, making it hypocritical. No one likes a hypocrite unless they themselves are one. Also, Bluegrass has strong followings in places where the population is not very dense. If your music requires you to be away from major population centers to enjoy it, then there's something wrong with the music. I could produce tomes of evidence proving Country's inferiority to Electronica, but seeing as how people who like Country probably won't (or can't) read this I'm not going to bother.

Classical vs. Electronica

Classical music is one of the oldest genres of music still listened to and expanded upon today. The list of its historic titans is as impressive as it is long: Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart are just a sampling of this genre's impressive idols. Almost as amazing as the contributions such immense artists made to the genre is the continued contribution of artists today. Unfortunately for the genre though, most Classical music can be made exciting and danceable (in a modern sense) by remixing it in an Electronica style. Most people are familiar with if not fans of (to a greater or lesser degree) Dance Dance Revolution. This popular game gives people the opportunity to experience Classical masterpieces such as Beethoven's Ninth in a more energetic Electronica fashion. Based on DDR's success and numerous other examples it is my conclusion that Classical is simply a feeder genre for Electronica; a test bed for melodies of sorts. As long as Electronica grows from the presence of Classical, and Classical benefits not at all by Electronica, Electronica is going to logically be the superior genre.

Gospel vs. Electronica

Who would have thought the same thing could be done so many different ways? Any fan of Electronica is familiar with the criticism that all Electronica sounds the same. This is just a fault of the untrained ear. Electronica actually has many subgenres and variations, which are all differentiated based mainly on mood and larger overall themes as well as concrete musical attributes such as tempo and harmonics. Modern Gospel on the other hand, is effectively the exact same thing over and over again in mildly different shapes. Whether you're listening to Jesus Rock (how creative is that?), Christian Metal, Christian Rock, or Christian Rap, you're still listening to a person or group of people tell you about why their god is so great or how much some dead guy loves you. Providing a specific example in this instance is pointless; simply listen to anything in the genre and you will understand. Music is as much about what it tells you as how it makes you feel, and while the 'stories' of Electronica are usually more subtle, that's better than getting the same damn thing all the time—especially if you don't care for the story.

Rap vs. Electronica

Rap is technically defined as a style which deconstructs familiar songs and sounds and builds them up again as unpredictable and new songs (with a set of vocals added in). This is also generally known as remixing, and is a standard aspect of Electronica. Remixing in Electronica focuses mainly on conveying a song again but with a different medium or in a different musical atmosphere. Rap (as a remix of other songs and sounds) emphasizes most the vocals that are added into the remixed (or sampled) rhythm. The resultant lack of any concrete musical value (that's right, there's more to music than rhythm and rhyme) in most Rap indicates that it is simply an outlet for those who have something to say, but don't really have a clear sense of how to say it. Furthermore, Electronica gave birth to and refined the concept of remixing, even though it is a relatively new genre. This would make Rap, a genre based entirely on remixing, an offshoot of Electronica, which brings doubt to the validity of its status as an independent Genre. To use an analogy tremendously threatening to any credibility I have, Rap is to Electronica as Romulans are to Vulcans; the pretentious offshoot that proceeded to run around getting beaten up by everyone with even the slightest bit of musical legitimacy.

WHO IS THE KING?



Rock vs. Electronica

Electronica establishes superiority in this situation due to a commonly overlooked but significant flaw in the Rock genre. 'Rock' is no longer representative of a type of music with common unifying features. Originally Rock and Roll came into being when artists combined elements of Blues and Country. That should have made Rock a subgenre right off, but it's tough to be subjugated to two genres at once, so Rock was granted status as a whole genre. It retained a characteristic sound for only a handful of years, and for all intents and purposes should have died when it lost this unity. It didn't though. While being sustained by a devoted (if small) fan base would have been praiseworthy, Rock stayed on the scene because people who had difficulty classifying music would simply call something rock if it didn't fit anywhere else. This has led to Rock containing over 100 recognized subgenres. This isn't admirable diversity though. Upon closer inspection one realizes that Goth Rock and Euro Pop have practically nothing in common, yet they are still both classified as Rock in a broader sense. The same applies for Indie Rock and Pop Metal, Garage Rock and Teen Idol Rock, and many others. Simply consider artists like Fred Durst and Justin Timberlake. Both fall under the genre of rock, but they bear little resemblance to each other musically. This makes rock and roll the lost and found bin of music, where everything that doesn't fit into one of the other genres ends up. Because music is the type of endeavor heavily influenced by the personality(ies) of the creator(s), the bin tends to be quite full of overflow music, thus resembling more of a garbage dumpster (thus lessening the already minimal value of the contents). Rock doesn't stand a chance against a legitimate and coherent genre like Electronica.

Reiterated Thesis

In conclusion, Electronica is tough to beat as a musical genre. Not only is it actually musical, it achieves an elusive goal as well: remaining coherent while fostering diversity. While it is commonly argued that Electronica lacks mass appeal, the amount of refined Electronica and events focused on Electronica that exist³ prove this a flawed and jealous criticism. True ecstasy is not a pill, it's found in countless hours of tremendously danceable music.

(Footnotes)

¹ Allmusic.com. Part of the All Media Guide, provided a wealth of information. Without this website, anything resembling actual knowledge would not have made its way into this review.

² While this seems an unfair comparison to most (even those not keen on electronica it seems!), please bear with me as my alphabetical ordering forces this particular point of departure.

³ An exact estimate is difficult, but regular events (Dance Nation, ARS Festival, and the World Party Tour) in the United States and around the world have tens of thousands of official attendees. Additionally, there are hundreds of artists, enough to make a Top 100 list (allmusic.com) appropriate. Furthermore, clubs like Glow in Washington D.C. that are devoted to specific subgenres of Electronica exist across the country and in other nations as well.

Vampires, Porphyria and Royal Families

by Chen Song

A severe sensitivity to sunlight, a strong disdain for garlic, and unusual cravings for blood - symptoms that are usually associated with vampirism may in fact be the result of porphyria, a genetic disease that affects that body's production of hemoglobin. The disease has been noted since ancient history, found predominantly in groups prone to inbreeding. Famous royals with porphyria include Queen Victoria of Great Britain and King George III.

Porphyria was also rampant in small villages of Bohemia and Transylvania, where geographic isolation increased the presence of genetic diseases in the population. The symptoms of porphyria manifest themselves at puberty - about the time a girl in medieval Europe married. Girls from small villages would marry and become pale and anemic as the symptoms of porphyria set in. Since the incident would occur shortly after marriage, the husband was often suspected of harboring supernatural evil. Rumors would spread quickly throughout Bohemian and Transylvanian villages concerning such suspicious incidents, often revolving around cruel and isolated aristocrats. These rumors would soon become myths. For example, the Countess Elizabeth Bathory of Transylvania would torture and kill young virgin girls to drink and bathe in their blood, thus soothing the pains of her disease. Eventually, her actions were discovered and she was brought before the courts for the torture, slaughter and consumption of over 600 virgins. Since she was rich and famous, the courts (then, as now) merely placed her on castle arrest.

One hundred years before the Countess Bathory, Vlad Tepes Dracula, the King of Wallachia, surrounded his castle with a forest of thousands of impaled bodies that he had slayed, mutilated, and supposedly eaten during his reign of terror. Dracula's rule included a medieval War on Poverty in which he invited all the poor and crippled people of Wallachia into his dining hall. After much drinking, Dracula addressed the people in the crowd, asking if they wanted to end their suffering and leave behind their squalid existence. When the crowd assented, Dracula locked them inside the hall and burned the building to the ground. As for wealthy nobles who potentially challenged the throne, Dracula had them impaled. (For those unfamiliar with Vlad's preferred method of execution, impalement is like a cross between crucifixion and anal sex gone wrong. The pointy end of a twelve foot pole was jabbed up the rectum of a victim. The pole would then be erected with the unfortunate person on top, thus allowing the weight of the impaled to do its work and slowly drag the body down the pole over a period of six hours). At least 50,000 men, women and children died this way. Such actions eventually angered the people of Wallachia and neighboring Transylvania. The impaler was eventually cornered and killed by an angry mob. Transylvanians incorporated Dracula into its local folklore, forever tying his name to vampirism.

Porphyria occurs when the production of hemoglobin is impeded. The hemoglobin molecule is comprised of 4 protein chains, each with a heme group. The heme group includes an iron ion (usually 2+, 3+) surrounded by a network of organic molecules known as a porphyrin ring. The iron in the center of this heme group is bonded to the surrounding porphyrin group in one plane, while bonding orbitals remain open for atoms such as oxygen to bind perpendicularly to the plane of the porphyrin ring. There are 8 known steps and corresponding enzymes involved in the production of hemoglobin. If the genes that encode any of these enzymes are defective, hemoglobin production is hindered and the patient develops anemia. The remaining intermediates of hemoglobin production, known as porphyrins, then accumulate in the skin and liver. These porphyrins often exhibit aromaticity with energy levels corresponding to electromagnetic radiation within the visible spectrum. Porphyrins that have accumulated in the skin can readily react with electromagnetic radiation such as sunlight. The conjugated electrons become excited before eventually returning to a lower energy level, releasing heat in the process. This thermal radiation (emitted by porphyrins) accumulates in the skin, causing its victims to severely blister and burn. The accumulation of porphyrins may cause a receding of the lips and gums: teeth morph to fangs.

(continued page 12)

Two Pieces of Lighter Fare:

Patrick James Lee

So I was reading a book for class the other day and it was discussing cultural differences that force Asian-Americans to be considered foreigners in America. One reason derived from the fact that in many Asian cultures it is acceptable to eat cats and dogs. Since these animals are highly revered in the United States, almost to the point where some people are considered humans, Americans believe all Asians are barbarians because they are eating man's best friend. I say fuck that—eat as many cats and dogs as you possibly can. Cat and dog taste like heaven—if heaven were a juicy meat—according to my friends. Friends who share a unique and cherished experience: devouring the tender meat that is cat, or the succulent meat that is dog.

Now why should we start considering eating cats and dogs. Reason one: mad-cow disease. If a true mad-cow outbreak occurred within the United States, the United States would need to find a new meat to use to make all those burgers that we all like. And guess what? For those acquainted with ground dog, it appears identical to ground beef. In fact, the difference is so uncanny that one probably could not even taste the difference. Most people probably would say that the ground dog they are eating is just beef prepared with a different spice. Thus if mad-cow truly did empty supplies of beef country-wide, there would be one simple and palatable solution: breed the nation's stray cat and dog population. Better yet, this emerging livestock could be feed by the very meat now toxic to our way of life (there has been no case of mad-cow jumping to cats or dogs). Not only is this solution economical, it offers financial protection to our American farmers. I am going hungry right now. For the good of your country I encourage all of you to take your gun, shoot your dog (in the head), bleed it, skin it, and finally cook it.

Now cats and dogs also need to start being eaten because the humans need to redefine who they are in this nation. People have given these animals a status where they are basically equal to you and me. In California, they passed a law that makes the eating of cats and dogs a misdemeanor. And with all these animal cruelty laws being passed, cats and dogs have as many protections under the law than you and me do. I think there is a problem with this. I have been taught that man is better than cat and dog. That man is superior to cat and dog. Did a dog ever fly? Why yes, when Americans sent it into space to die in the name of progress—human progress! (That) Man should have the right to kill cats and dogs whenever they want, just for fun even. If we continue down this slippery slope, one day we all have to give up meat completely and become vegetarians—my grand-parents would be shaking their heads in shame if this day came. A world without meat. And all the while third world people will starve, paying the price for warped Western values. Humans die, canines and felines strive.

Finally there is this entire race issue with cats and dogs that I have a real problem with. Think of the differing reactions between minorities and animals in American society. When Americans find a house filled with 80 illegal immigrants, the first impulse felt is to deport these welfare sucking dirty illegal 'assholes' out of this country because they do not belong here. But when Americans find a house filled with 80 cats, the first impulse felt is to help these cats find a new home. I am saying what the fuck is going on here??? At least with the 80 illegal immigrants they are doing jobs that you white-collar posers would never want to do, but yet you still hate them for revealing the dark side of your American dream. All the while, you coddle your cats and dogs who perform no useful service for American society. And not only do you choose to waste precious resources, you through people who make use of these resources—consuming their juicy nourishment—into jail Kill cats. Kill them all. I need to be fed. I do not have discriminating tastes, and you do not either as much as you want to say you do, you rich poser. If you want to be racist fine: don't eat cats and dogs. But if you want to be diverse, eat them. Eat them for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Eat them for snacks.

(continued page 12)

Ode to Katie: Poor Joycean Recollections by a Loving Brother

Right now I am listening to Miss Independent by the vivacious Kelly Clarkson in my room with my sister dancing with her shoes on my bed. I am about to freak out. But I need to write this piece. Oh my god I am going to shoot her. I love my sister. She is the nicest person in the world or at least when she was between the ages of 0-14. Then she just become jaded. She just told me to go to hell. What is wrong with this? Oh my god. Her burp is louder than mine. I am so jealous. Now I wonder why she does not have a boyfriend? I originally thought it was because she had 3 older brothers and a father who played Division 1 football. But no that's not it. She is just quirky.

Now we are listening to Since You've Been Gone by Miss Clarkson. She is pointing at my computer screen in a very violent manner now. Her hair swaying every which way. I remember the days when my mother refused to let her grow out her hair and it was nice and short and none of this swaying ever happened. *Abh the good ole days.* I just told her not to go into my bathroom. But like the little kid that she is she just went in there. She never listens. I am an old man. The reason my blood pressure is skyrocketing right now is because she refuses to listen to me. I want to hit her right now. My sister has a Beauty and the Beast pillow case that she always sleep with. I just found out that she can only sleep on the Belle side of the pillow case because if she sleeps on the other side which features the Beast and Belle she feels like she is having a threesome and everybody is invited. It violates her. Her pillow case violates her. She just said a lot of people feel the same way about her pillow case. Where is the pipe when you need it?

Now that she knows that I am writing my article about her she demands that I start to list various facts about her: like the fact that she has to have everything in pairs. (For example) She always has to have an even amount of Goldfish. Why? She doesn't want a single Goldfish to be alone in her stomach. She tells me now that she also likes to sleep in the bath tub in the middle of the night. She sleeps there for like an hour. Nobody knows. I never knew this until she told me. I am mildly disturbed right now. The bathroom that she uses is connected to my bedroom, which means she has to go through my room to go to sleep in the bathtub. *Damnit.* She knows she should not be violating my special space like this. She also believes that when you stand in front of the microwave she will get radiation poisoning. I told her this when I was 10 and I am shocked she still believes my boldfaced lie. She also stopped drinking soda because she is afraid of the carbonation—*only the carbonation.* Nothing else. Not the sugar or whatever else is in soda, but the god damn carbonation. *My god. I raised a freak. Not that I raised her per se. But I raised her because she is my little girl.*

I can't believe she is graduating. She is a girl that laughs hysterically when you say the word penis or poke your nose in front of her. I honestly have no idea how she has survived this long. She is one of those people that I look and think: you are going to get mugged within the next five minutes. Now she is pissing me off. She just took my wallet out of my jacket and took \$5 out of it, saying that she needs the money for the football game tomorrow. *I'm going to hit her.* I cannot hit her. If I do she will tell dad, dad will yell at me, and then I will get hit when I go home. She knows this too. That manipulating bitch. I hate her. Honestly I worked my ass off for the \$5 she just took. I mean I literally had to mow the lawn at 2:00 pm on a weekend in July for that money. I hate her.

(continued on next page)

Vampires, Porphyria and Royal Families (continued)

Garlic and hemoglobin consist of similar compounds. However, the presence of such compounds from the ingestion of garlic would put the body of a porphyria patient into a painful, even fatal, shock – which explains the myth surrounding a vampire's aversion to garlic. As it turns out, the heme groups in hemoglobin are quite durable; they are able to survive digestion and absorption into the intestines. Therefore, drinking large quantities of blood, an obvious source of hemoglobin, may have provided temporary relief for early sufferers of porphyria. This macabre remedy could account for the historical records of vampires. Even today, blood transfusion is the preferred method for treating victims of porphyria.

The Truth about Cats and Dogs (continued)

That is the true cat's meow.

Cats and dogs are animals and nothing more than that. We are their better in every possible way. Thus we need to eat them. It makes economic sense, social sense, racial sense. Nothing says I love you like a nice juicy 10 lb slab of cat meat or dog burger. Eat dogs. Eat cats. Right now.

Farewell and remember at elections, the first person to give me a picture of a dog and cat gets a free lollipop.

Ode to Katie (continued)

Now she is telling me to wrap this up right now because she wants to watch Sex & The City. I do not know if I should get up for her. She is annoying me and this is my computer. She's now telling me the computer is not mine because father bought it for me, which means it is his and thus I have no control over it. I hate you Katie. I hate you. You know what? You are not getting into college. Put it down Katie. Katie, put the bottle down. If one drop of that soda hits the ground I am going to kill you. Meaning I will tell mom, who will then take away all your jewelry at home over break. Don't do it. My sister just took my soda out of my hand to go spill it all over my bed and floor. I hate her.

I remember when I was little my sister would wrap herself around me so that my dad could not beat my insolent ass. She was the only person that prevented my father from sending me to military school. My brothers did not care and my mom was ambivalent. I owe her so much, yet she abuses it so. I should stop coddling her and show her the real world. Wait you need what? You know I have to leave in like 10 minutes and now you say you are hungry. Here take my goddamn card and order some pizza. I hate you Katie, I hate you. Using my fucking plus dollars on your belly. What a waste, what a waste. Also, as I conclude this piece, my sister wants to share a fun fact for you. By pressing down your nose you will discover how a woman's cervix supposedly feels. She learned it in health class.

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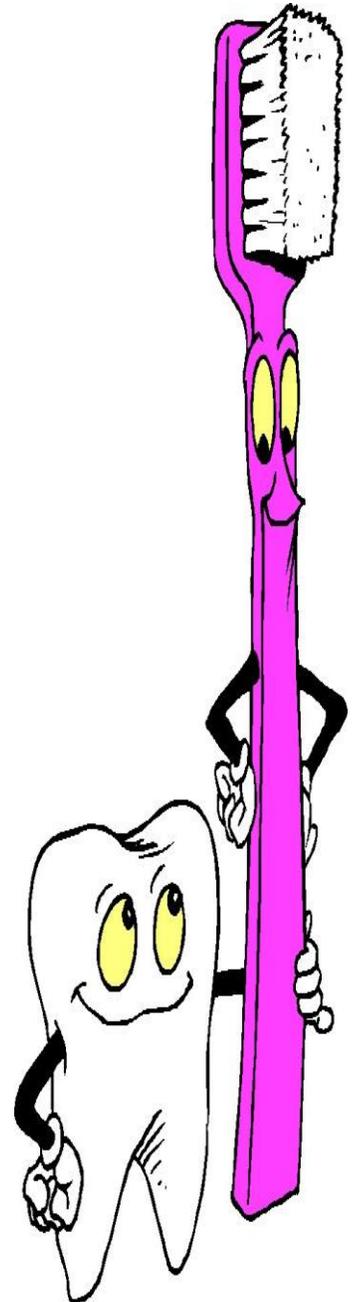
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The Selected Pre-Posthumous Ponderings of a Summertime Preston

By Preston Gisch

June 13th, 2005 | 12:23 a.m.

We all know that they change hole location every once in a while on mini-golf courses — we've all fallen for the thought-it-was-the-hole-but-is-actually-a-filled-in-old-hole trick before.

But what if they want to make a totally new hole?

Do they have to drill into the cement bed beneath the plastic turf? Is it cement under the plastic turf? Do they have to plan out every possible alternative hole location as they pour the cement base?

I do know this: If they made new holes, the device would have to be like a fencepost-hole-maker, but for mini-golf, not fenceposts.

June 24th, 2005 | 12:05 p.m.

If I were a sofa-maker or some other sort of goods-maker with a product on *Price Is Right*, there are a few ways I could interpret contestants' bids.

If they bid spot-on, I could assume that my product is reasonably priced and that consumers understand the value of the good. And if the occasional bid were way over or way under, I could reasonably blow off the bidders as idiots.

But I'd be most concerned with repeated, severe under-bids — that would tell me that consumers think my product should be much less expensive than it is.

Most interesting, however, is the severe over-bid — it's good because the contestants value my product much higher than it's worth. But at the same time, I'd be worried that I'm not charging enough for my product; that consumers would be willing to pay more.

When is Bob Barker going to die?

June 30th, 2005 | 1:37 a.m.

I need to make a shirt with the text, "I am away from my computer right now."

July 28th, 2005 | 3:22 a.m.

I heard an advertisement on the radio the other day. It was a radio station promo. "You never know what you'll hear next" was the catch phrase. So I asked myself, "Self, is this catch phrase good or bad?"

After all, do listeners want to know what's coming (like a sense of predictability and familiarity) or do they want to be blown away by the radio station's spontaneous playlist? I think it's a mix of the two, but it certainly is a question worth further consideration: Why do we listen to radio stations? Is it to be surprised, or to have our music tastes reaffirmed?

Surely, we listen to certain radio stations to hear new music, but there's also an element of comfort; the knowledge that we'll recognize some of the songs. Because there's nothing as alienating as turning on your favorite radio station and finding every song foreign and distasteful. Oh, HFS...

August 8th, 2005 | 1:09 a.m.

What if instead of "Finish", a computer program's clickable button at the conclusion of a program install read "Finnish."
That'd be something.



August 22nd, 2005 | 12:44 a.m.

In my estimation, there are two primary ways to eat an apple. (I am considering a whole, normal apple, not any fried, sliced, or sauced variants thereof.) The apple is most effectively eaten on a tilt, whereby the core of the apple — from the stem to the belly button, or apple-equivalent — is approximately parallel to the ground. Upon this, we can agree.

But my consideration of apple-eating asks the following question: Which rotation — inward or outward — provides the optimum eating experience?

Naturally, there are pros and cons to both. Curling the bicep towards the chest will induce a toward-rolling in the apple, a biophysically sensible movement. However, this may result in apple liquids precipitating onto said bicep. The alternative method is an outward curl, an admittedly awkward movement, but one that encourages liquids to roll away from the ingestor. This method is sound for consumption out-of-doors, but in a furnished area, would likely be frowned upon by social companions.

From my observations, I have noticed that most eaters choose the inward curl, risking dampness from active mastication.

12:15 p.m.

Q: What is the evolutionary advantage of the human ability to lock one's knees?

And it sure is awesome that humans have evolved such that our optimal bowel movements exit our solid excrement excretion orifice in a tapered fashion — like a torpedo — thus minimizing water splash, thereby reducing noise and motion in our time of utmost vulnerability.

Ruminations of a First Year

by Evan Jessica Monez

Once upon a time, a little girl promised her mother that she would never grow up. How short-sighted of her. In high school I wanted to break that promise as fast as possible, being bound by the confines of parental rule and a 12 o'clock curfew imposed by the state of Virginia. Now I am 18 and in college, free, mostly, though still dependent, which is better than the alternative, trying to support myself through college. But now I am stuck in that transitional period between adolescence and adulthood. When I had out-matured high school, which happened a year too early, I assumed once I finally got out of the house the transition would be instant. I was a bit afraid of the unknown, but the fear was negligible, relative to the intensity of my desire to leave.

College has been fantastic so far. I have made great friends, had great times, and had the freedom to do more introspection than is good for me. I thought I understood everything about myself and my mind and emotions and the tangled web of relationships I had weaved throughout the years, and then I let it all change, and I welcomed the change. Now I have new things to contemplate, new aspects of my life that give me insight into my personality. Not everything is as it seemed before and I have to come to terms with that.

Then, I went home. And as this holiday week comes to an end, I am once more reminded of my propensity for complication and my intense fear of change.

My parents moved to a new house, and I was once again faced with the task of unpacking all of the crap I have accumulated over the years. I was told to throw things away, and my own aversion to the task of organizing made me feel obligated to rid myself of some clutter. But I am a sentimental fool and the decision to throw away anything with the slightest connection to my past is agonizing. I was also faced with the fact that my family cannot function all together. When my sister went to college 4 years ago, everything was put into a balance that has worked well. One daughter in the house at a time is a good system for my family. And now, when I come home, she's here, at this house that I cannot call my home. I always hated how she would pick fights with me when she came home from Charlottesville because she felt there was some kind of rivalry for our parents' attention. I, on the other hand, have proven to act the opposite. I would rather be in our old town hanging out with my friends than in the new house with my family. When with my family, I can only think of the inadequacies of my life and a mess I seem to have made of some parts of it, and I try to avoid being home as much as possible. My friends distract me and make me feel loved in the way that I need it: conditionally. Unconditional love is good and important, but I'm happier with the people that have chosen to love me because I'm so awesome, rather than those who have loved me since before I was born and had a personality, who would love me even if that personality turned out to be vacuous.

Unfortunately, no one will ever know me as I know myself, which is particularly bad because I find I don't know myself as well as I once thought I did. And as I get older and relationships with my peers become more meaningful and important, I am struggling to understand how others fit into my life and add to who I am. Some old friends may need to be left behind, and recently made acquaintances may turn out to be life-long friends. But it's so hard to drop people I once loved, even if we have grown apart to the point that the connection is detracting from my happiness. And as we grow and change, I wonder if certain people ever really were who I thought they were, or if they ever will be.

Growing up is a bitch.



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