

MiRT

Spring 2008 Volume 14



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MINT MAGAZINE

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A new semester begins for MiNT Magazine, and with it the promise of change. We are building ourselves into a Geneseo staple. The future looks very bright.

As you will first notice the whole layout of MiNT has changed, we are pioneering new techniques that will stretch the capacity of this magazine, from a literary phenomenon to a campus event. With a little luck we will become something that the entire school can identify with--we are very excited.

Furthermore, our distribution methods are changing, from being passed around throughout Geneseo in a rather scattered manner, we are concentrating our efforts in Milne, Brodie, and the Union. In these places you will soon notice the tell tale white wire frame that will hold the future copies of MiNT. In the area of simple publication we are stepping up as well, this semester we have four issues of MiNT planned, more issues than ever before, giving us the ability to cover movements and ideas that are being brought to Geneseo each semester.

We are honing our skills, this is true, but we will always need new members, and as you enjoy this MiNT think about what you would like to see changed within this magazine. Any ideas or visions that you have we would love to implement; meeting times this semester will be Thursdays at 5pm in the Harding Lounge. It would be great to see you there.

All of these changes and even the structure of MiNT magazine would not have been possible were it not for our previous editor, Sara Germain, through her leadership alone was MiNT allowed to survive in Geneseo. We should all be thankful that she chose to lead MiNT for the many semesters she did. With that, enjoy this MiNT, all the articles presented are of the highest quality around!

Editor-and-Chief

Will Sankey

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We welcome responses to our editorials
Send your letters to:
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ELEGY: A MEDITATION

By Patrick Morgan

You are a puff of smoke that appears briefly and then disappears.

— James 4:14

I was about to hammer through the expected trendy, upbeat, look-at-me-I'm-witty article, but I couldn't. My grandmother — the last of my grandparents — died four days into January 2008, three days before her 84th birthday. And with her died my closest family connection to the Greatest Generation, that bullet-biting, rubber-rummaging, war-time letter writing group of Americans whose school years encompassed the Great Depression, and who graduated from high school just in time for the second World War. To me, she was Grandma Morgan, that quick-witted Yankees lover who plowed through books like a seasoned graduate student; she was a bird-watcher and neighborhood math tutor, who somehow remembered — verbatim — her 1942 high school valedictorian

address. She told me that she couldn't help but remember it: she was so petrified at public speaking and at stumbling in her speech that it just never left her memory.

I wish we could bottle up that transitory sense of life that exudes minds dealing with death — that

ing for an article fleeced of all banter, read on, but if the residues of childhood immortality still linger in your veins, please lick your thumb and turn the page.

How does a modern American deal with death?

At first, I tried to be a good little Stoic. I was reading the Sayings of Epictetus after New Year's Day, the recorded contemplations of a Greek philosopher, who Saint Augustine called "the most noble of stoics." Living from about 55 to 135 A.D., Epictetus had this to say about death: "It is not things, but the opinions about the things, that trouble mankind. Thus Death is nothing terrible; if it were



trimmed-down, Buddha-under-the-Bodhi-tree serenity that pulses through our veins somewhere between that numbing knowledge of death and the funeral tears. It's during these moments that life seems the most life-like, when we shed our petty concerns from day-to-day, finally realizing our priorities, the miracle of a thumping heart. Reader, if you're look-

so, it would have appeared so to Socrates. But the opinion we have about Death, that it is terrible, that it is wherein the terror lies."

After overlooking the uncomfortable syntax, arrogant tone, and Epictetus's tendency to truckle to Socrates (along with the conspicuous errors in his reasoning), I admired those words and tried to live up to them; that is, until

the funeral. It's one thing to be a Stoic in your armchair, and quite another thing to be a Stoic while your right arm is straining to carry the heavy oak coffin that encloses your dead Grandma. And so my hard-nosed stoicism left me.

After my brief Stoic stint, I began to recognize strange patterns in the deaths of relatives. For example, it dawned on me that my Grandma died in 2008, my Grandpa in 1998, and my Great Grandma in 1988. All I needed was a soothsayer to say "Beware the year of eight" and I would have moved my bed to the basement and started wearing a padded helmet. On top of this, my dad pointed out that Grandma was 83 years old when she died, Grandpa was 73, and my Uncle Tom was 43. This pattern-finding would have continued for weeks had I not – thankfully – realized something important: my Grandma herself showed me how to deal with her death; she might not have realized it, but she was preparing me for her death every time I saw her, and she was doing this through the way she lived.

Humor: my Grandma never lost her acute sense of humor, even in her last few weeks. In December, she was fitted with a feeding tube; this is an uncomfortable process that includes pushing a tube down a patient's nose and into the stomach. Normally, you'd think a person would be humiliated to go through such a process, but my Grandma took it

with her own brand of humor. The doctors asked her to say "heeee" so that they knew she could speak up if something felt wrong. Grandma said her "heeee," and immediately followed it with a resilient "hawww," which, for you young'uns out there, either alludes to the Hee-Haw Show or to It's a Wonderful Life.

Forgiveness: closely tied to love, this is a trait that my Grandma held in abundance. Her tongue cancer went undiagnosed for months because of one reason: her dentist didn't recognize it. She went to a dentist because her tongue was bothering her, and being the bright bulb that he was, he automatically reasoned through a profound philosophical syllogism: All teeth are sharp and can bite; Grandma has teeth; therefore she is merely a doddering old lady who bites her tongue. Eventually (emphasis on the eventually), the dentist sent her to a mouth specialist that just happened to be his own friend, and who likewise failed to see what I've since discovered is a tell-tale sign of cancer: a wound that does not heal. In enduring all of this, she never once blamed the dentist or harbored bitter feelings, which is far better than I can do at the moment. This is an example of stereotypes being deadly; if the dentist hadn't assumed that my Grandma must be a forgetful old lady that doesn't remember biting her tongue – if he listened to her and treated her like a human

being – I probably would not be writing these words right now (in reality, she probably had a better memory than the dentist).

Faith: for my Grandma, this was intertwined with everything. She was a Catholic who faithfully taught her own children how to pray. She prayed the Holy Rosary every day, which is something I only recently discovered because she also possessed what is now a very unpopular characteristic: humility. It was faith that allowed her, after her first stillborn child, to go on and have eleven children; this happened despite the army doctors' news that her husband, due to World War II shrapnel wounds, would only live for a handful of years. (They were wrong, of course, like her own doctors, but in a different sense: he lived until he was 73). There is so much more I'd like to say about Grandma, but I'll end with this: she always had that efulgent zest for life – that sense of delight, mystery, and wonder – that is so particular to Catholics. For me, this could be seen in the way her eyes lit up when she saw you, the way she delighted in the sparrows and chickadees out her window, along with the joy of a simple car ride. To me, she was Grandma Morgan.

JUNO: A BREATH OF FRESH AIR IN A STALING INDUSTRY

By Kim Perrella

As a media major, I've been finding it increasingly difficult to enjoy media products. Learning about the media industries and the negative effects they have on society puts a damper on watching or reading their products. I don't watch too much television; I mostly ignore the onslaught of "reality" pouring into the homes of our nation. Personally, I tend to prefer movies to television. I never used to count myself as being picky or critical, but as time goes on, and I learn more about the industry and the way it works, I enjoy fewer movies.

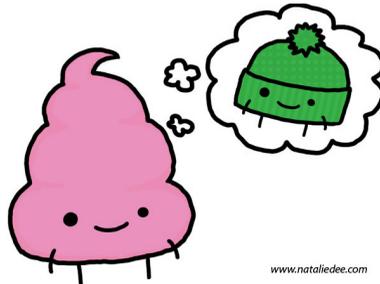
Big companies hire directors and producers who have historically made financially successful films, which leads to less originality and variety, as fewer people have the opportunity to get into the industry. An alarming number of movie screenplays are recycled from other media industries; how many book or comic book to movie conversions have you seen or heard about lately? Not to say that it cannot or has not produced high quality films, but it is still a little tiring to hear about one book after another turned into movies that don't always translate well. The sequel and franchise trend (think *Saw* one through four) is even worse. Interestingly, the United States' biggest export is entertainment, which means that a movie does not have to do well in this country to make money. It is, of course, easier to translate action or thriller films than it is to translate a film with a lot of nuanced dialogue; hence the lack of wit we find in a large number of scripts today.

Lately, I feel like there's been at least a marginal revival of the spirit that creates great personal movies. Comedies like *Knocked Up* and *Superbad* did very well, both financially and with critics; I think largely because they fly in the face of the current

trends in the film industry. The latest of these is *Juno*. Admittedly, *Juno* does have a pretty conventional plot (teenage pregnancy aside): girl and boy like one another, something happens between them, they stop talking, realize they love one another, and live happily ever after. However, the film is funny, honest and original. *Juno* doesn't go for cheap laughs; the humor is sarcastic, cute and very human. It isn't unbelievable like a number of comedies that I could think of.

The main characters are funny, likeable, earnest and for the most part believable, if a little offbeat. These characters are naturally developed; the audience learns about them slowly, even as they change and learn about themselves. There are times that the dialogue may seem a little forced, but I do have funny, snarky friends like *Juno*. *Juno*'s characters are mostly dynamic. None of the characters are bad, but none are without his or her shortcomings. Even the "jock" that picks on *Juno* has another side to him, as revealed through her witty commentary. The convenience store cashier and the girl at the counter at *Women Now* were the only characters that I could not feel at least a marginal connection with, but they quickly fall out of mind and don't really detract too much from the film on the whole.

My first instinct is to say that *Juno* is more in depth emotionally than say, *Superbad* or *Knocked Up*, but on a second thought, I'd say that they are just very different films. *Superbad* may be full of raunchy lowbrow humor and ridiculous plot twists that you don't find in *Juno*, but both films speak to a deeper purpose and look for humor and meaning in personal relationships. I'd say the same goes for *Knocked Up*. That, I believe, is what has been missing in the today's comedies and the film industry as a whole: earnestness, authenticity and heart.





TRANSFER-UNCOMFORTABLE

By Deborah Bertlesman

T*ransfer* (trans'fər)
verb: to convey, carry, remove, or send from one person, place, or position to another; noun: a thing or person that is being transferred.

Undergraduate transfer students are in an odd predicament. “Transfer” in itself is an uncomfortable word that ruins smooth train rides, complicates bank accounts and increases lost calls. This discomposed verb becomes even more wretched when it is turned into a noun and applied to college applicants. Trans-

fers in undergraduate institutions have doubled in the last year. To see these diverse young adults as objects and then force them into a new position seems trite and slightly insulting. But for the sake of organization and the honor of Webster, defining certain characteristics in the Transfer helps to better understand the complex mind of the student in motion.

Transfer students can be placed into four basic types that are divided mostly by the reason for the movement. Statistically, most students transfer because

of educational reasons: students choose a different college for their newly-chosen major or for higher academic standards. With this increased pressure on intellectual and financial success, transferring for educational purposes is the most common and most practical reason for switching schools; majors are continually becoming more specialized at certain colleges, which makes the decision of where to attend crucial to an undergraduate’s future.

For students who do not see academia as the sole or primary purpose of their four year degree, social life is often the fuel behind their decision. Socializing, a word which compliments the awkwardness of “transfer,” is one of the more difficult pieces of the college experience. Once the “meet and greets” disintegrate and introductions just “aren’t cool anymore,” making acquaintances is a tedious task.

**“TRANSFER” IS TOO TINY
OF A WORD FOR SO
MANY DIFFERENT PEOP-
LE TO BE SQUEEZED
INTO.**

Some students, because of a lack of human connection, decide to start from scratch and shove themselves through the awkward phase of creating relationships. Such students may choose highly academic-focused colleges and be disappointed at the lack of frat houses, cheap liquor, and bad beer. These are three obviously important aspects of the college experience, and they may be the driving force to send a human being halfway across the country in

search of these golden riches, or perhaps to run away from them. Whether those who are driving full force towards enchantment are doing so in rebellion, or because the undergraduate degree has become necessary for success, they must be admired for their zealous determination to ignore the rise in tuition and the cost of alcohol for the sake of memories.

These sorts of soul searchers who find honesty in the bottom of a bottle can be consid-

ered a small subset of the spiritually confused. Those who find little hope in the mundane,

shuffle in and out of institutions, searching for themselves. They hope that the slight change in location will prompt their other half to align or that a great change in atmosphere will force them to find the soul they have been searching for. Cross-continental humanitarianism seems to be the answer to their prayers. By devoting a semester to volunteer work, they may return with a new found determination to change the world with their BA in English and Theatre.

Unfortunately, transferring outside of the student definition, is rarely a choice. But even in this confined term, there are those who are more the moved than the mover. These Transfers develop in both personal and global situations. Family illness, long-distance relationships and natural and social disasters all force students to transfer. They should be admired not only for their cohesiveness with the true definition, but also for their outstanding determination when they are pushed and pulled by external forces. Admiration is most deserved here. Force is definitely not awkward, but it can certainly be uncomfortable.

“Transfer” is too tiny of a word for so many different people to be squeezed into. Compressing students into eight little letters does not seem mildly appropriate for the brave souls that dive from great heights into the shocking college waters. They deserve a proper title, an all encompassing inscription to describe their multiple facets: Humans.



TOWN V. GOWN

By Will Sankey

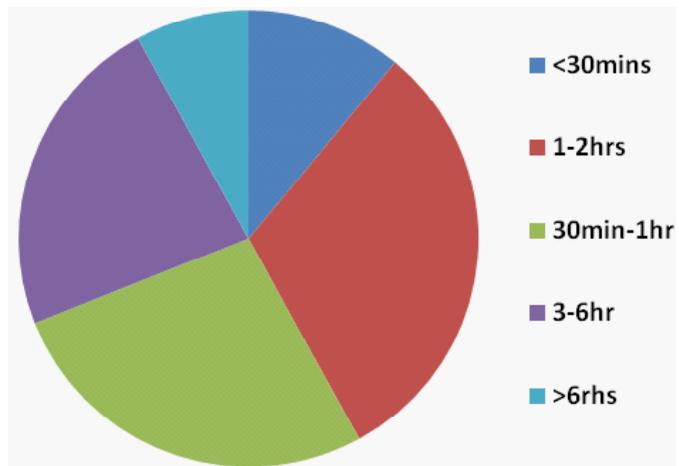
How many times per week do you walk down Main Street? How about anywhere past Main Street, within the town of Geneseo—when was the last time you talked to someone who lived in the town? If the answers to these questions are less than 5 days a week, less than 3, and “don’t remember,” you are an average Geneseo student. Most students spend less time within the town of Geneseo per week than they spend doing laundry. Not too surprised? According to a study comprised of all Southside students, during the fall of 2007, most students do not belong to any organization which directly impacts the town of Geneseo. This survey centered on the general atmosphere of Southside students with regard to the town of Geneseo. These discouraging results were not altogether anticipated. Assigned to come up with a research project for a certain INTD class, I began to think about the relationship commonly labeled “Town and Gown.” The problem of community which Geneseo seems to face, namely, where and how students interact with the town, is as persistent as the bronze bear.

It was the geography of Geneseo that first aroused my interest. Geneseo lies on a vast stretch of hillside that begins

with Holcomb field and the track, sweeping uphill to the Union, and to most of the dorms from Wayne to Ontario. Then the ascent becomes steeper as you reach the Library, Erwin and Welles, and finally, the outer limits of campus: Brodie, Bailey and Greene. The tide of Geneseo ebbs with Main Street; it’s like a great levee holding the wave of the student body against the world. Is there a reason for venturing past Sundance books, aside for a slice of pizza, or a tan? Within just minutes of realizing the extent to which students are cut off from the town, I began an inquiry which led to unpredictable ends. Though focused on Southside students, I believe this study can be used as a template for every Geneseo student. The chart below shows the amount of time Southside students said

they spent on Main Street.

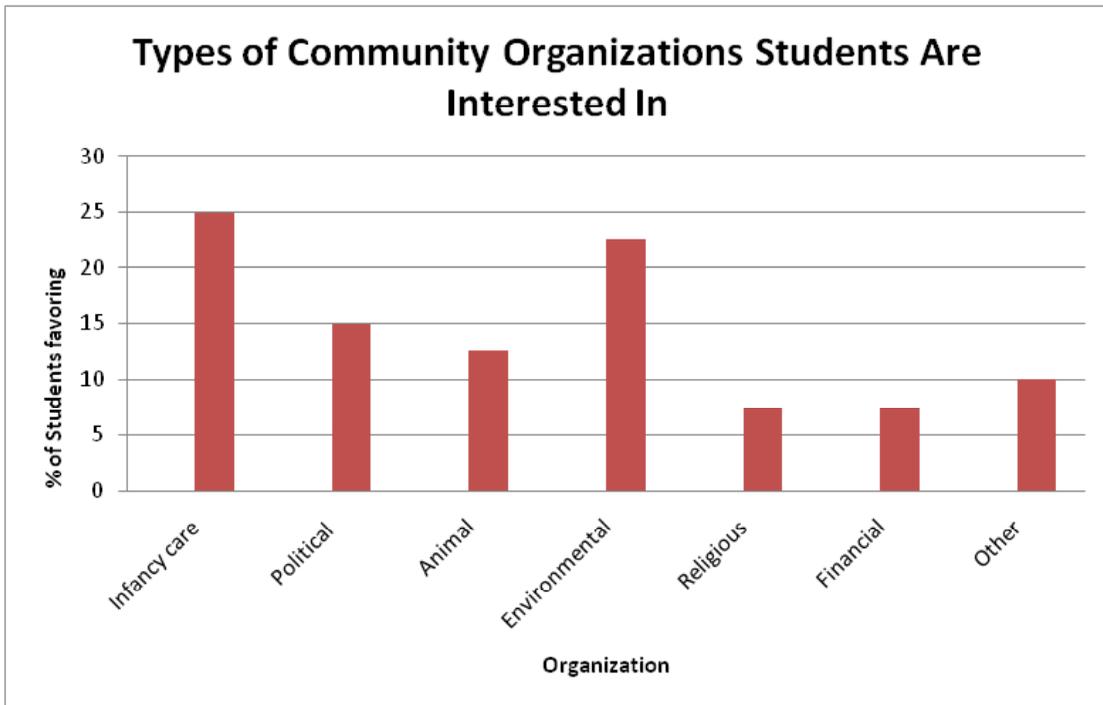
It is in the school’s best interest to keep students on campus, and to that end the school has been distressfully successful. Every extra semester that a student spends living off campus costs both the school and CAS. Although the school may not be intentionally isolating students from the town, its projects and policies do strain this relationship. This is evidenced by the rumored three-year mandatory stay on campus and the expansions currently being made at the Big Tree Inn (which is run as a for-profit project by CAS). Resident Assistants, along with those at the College Union, strive to provide activities that are for the most part centered around on-



campus activities. With few exceptions, students are encouraged to become involved in mostly on-campus activities. Furthermore, an enclosed campus may be lucrative for officials who desire to make Geneseo an “honors college.” Such a college would generate students who, though lacking in experiential influence, would excel in intellectual matters. To stimulate academic pursuits, the school would cut its ties with the town.

Yet, some people argue that it is not within the students’ best interests to isolate them from the town. Mike Sauter, the Catholic Campus minister of five years, explained that enticing students to remain on campus breeds “hyper-immature” graduates who lack the basic skills required in handling life situations. Others point to the town’s businesses which serve the students and are now being hurt by reduced traffic. Students who venture onto Main Street indirectly promote the kinds of services that Geneseo’s thoroughfare can handle. It was not long ago that a grocer stocked shelves on Main Street and the Riviera played matinees. The relationship between the town and the school should be symbiotic.

The second largest majority of students felt, when asked about their disposition toward the town, that they would become more involved if there were organizations to support them. If students are willing to engage the town, what can they do? The graph below shows the distribution of activities that students would be excited to see installed within the town:



Moreover, many students responded favorably when asked about a possible re-opening of the Riviera. Louise Wadsworth, the Director of the Alliance for Business Growth for Livingston and Wyoming counties, is doing her part to encourage students to venture off campus. A Fall Frenzy booklet describing the many attributes of Geneseo will circulate next fall. This booklet will be aimed at the needs of the Geneseo student. She also has an exciting plan to reconstruct the Riviera as a coffee house detailed in her office—an idea in-

culated by students. However appealing, this project has not— as of yet— been considered viable.

Overall, the relationship between the town of Geneseo and the student body is in poor health. More can and should be done. What is disheartening to consider is that it remains in the school’s best interest to pressure us—the students— into remaining on campus, spending our money, our time and our energy within the few square miles of campus. We must realize that what is good for the town is good for us; seeing businesses and organizations dry up due to a lack of involvement not only hurts individuals, but also the whole of Geneseo. Opening the Riviera as a college-funded town and student initiative would greatly impact the town and the campus in redirecting traffic, opening new avenues of experience and ideas. Although the project faces serious complications, I remain optimistic that changes can occur. Only four percent of students felt that they should not get involved with the town because of their limited stay at Geneseo. It is a worthwhile endeavor to engage Geneseo and hopefully we shall see more student involvement in the community in the near future.

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IN THE LAND OF MILK AND CRYSTAL METH

E: Eric/ Fl: Floyd/Fr: Franklin/ Hz: Hazel

By Eric Metz

E: So 2003 was shit, huh?

Fl: A pile of it. Franklin was over in Afghanistan huntin' Alqueda in the Tora Bora, Hazel was Prozaced under a patchwork quilt watching the same *Bewitched* tape all day and I had my second annual Big Mac Heart attack in April.

E: So who was running the farm?

Fl: Nobody. Well, I guess me, but I was laid up in bed. I just told Manuel to keep doing like I showed him, but I guess I never really taught him. That queer Chicano couldn't have known more than 15 American words and none of them had to do with cows, and even if he did understand how to run those dairy machines, he would have failed. I couldn't afford to keep anyone else on to help with the herd or maintain the machines.

E: That's hard to believe.

In 2003 the farm was a supplier for a major upstate dairy. The sometimes-functional milking equipment was there on a foreclosed 17% A.P.R. loan. Half of the barn roof collapsed under February lake effect, so the cows took turns. But when I rolled into Cream Junction U.S.D.A. Organic Farm last Sunday, there was a cow-spotted Prius parked below the cedar gables of the, what must have been recently built, barn.

But back to the kitchen table...

Fl: Well, everything changed when Frank got back; though at the time (blushing), I thought my heart might just as well popped after that second heart attack.

Flipping his anodized-gold wrap around Oakley sunglasses up onto the amber crest of

a well-regulated crew cut, Franklin opens his eyelids to reveal two gnarly maroon drumlins.

Fr: I left my baby blues in Afghanistan. Well, Sgt Washboardson - I was with the guy since basic training up at Fort Drum - took'em. One night back in January '05, we had all chewed a few post-op Ambien to kill the Dexedrine, it was our first shut eye in 50 hours and I couldn't have been dozing more than a quarter hour before I'm blinded by the last light I'll ever see. (smiling) Washboardson had a touch of Tora Bora psychosis, or maybe he just popped a few more Dexies before we laid down, but he tossed his flashbangs around the tent before he wrapped his teeth around a frag grenade.

ImayhavebeenblindwhenIgotbackhere,but I didn't need two eyes to tell that this place was rotten.

Breezing in the backdoor with an eye-searing chemical perfume, and a gallon Ziploc of yellow rock candy in each hand, Hazel rushes into the room.

Hz: (laughing) We were no sight for sore eyes: I was still a little Prozac puff wiggling my nose with Samantha; and Floyd had Manny running down 81 three times a day for McDonalds.

Fr: I guess we were all actin' a little crazy. I was tweakin' like a rabid wolverine: brewing that Red, White, and Blue (phosphorus, ephedrine, and iodine) and polishing my .45 up in the ravine, just listening to Manny fumble with the remains of dad's herd. Then it hit me: why don't we just fix the farm?

Ofcourseitwasjustoneofthoseamphetamine epiphanies, but I took it for providence to run out of the bushes with my cane raised and my .45 roaring and tell Manny he should run the low road to ol' Mexico.

Fl: Jesus, I watched it all from my bedroom window: poor Manny, he always tried; with his cane raised like Moses, Frank was slipping through cow shit and steadying shots on the cow flanks he collided with; then he comes thundering up the stairs and kicks the door off the hinges babbling like a drunken turkey.

Fr: Yea, Yea, I was ready to jump start this farm and

Fr: We spent the rest of the day running circles round the kitchen table. Mom drifted into the kitchen around 7 to take her prescription and I ripped it out of her hands and ground the pills into the kitchen floor with my heel; she wobbled over to the counter and slouched into the sink.

Hz: I didn't know what to do. I'd been watching the same



dad was just laying there like those opium junkies in Urgan. So I fixed him; before he could swat my hand, I jabbed the needle somewhere in his forearm.

Fl: First time I ever slammed the stuff - thought my heart was gonna motorboat right through my ribs - I threw off the quilts and jumped into my overalls.

half-hour magical melodrama for the last two years, and when Frank jumped on my pills, I just started to cry.

Fr: (blushing) It had just been killing me to see you sitting like a cup of warm molasses in front of that stupid witch all day; I remembered how strong you used to be.

Hz: Oh, I knew you loved me. If it wasn't for him, I'd still be on those horrible drugs to-

day, but that night in the kitchen he saved me: he fixed me up that sunflower shot and I was racing around the kitchen just like when he was little.

E: So the three of you just tweaked in the kitchen all night?

Fr: Not just that night, we were bouncing off those walls until we hit on the solution.

Hz: We were probably in there for three or four days.

Fl: Some people say that meth will make you a monster, but it just electrifies my feelings. I felt so bad about the way Manny left; I couldn't shut up about it.

Hz: Then I got talking about how maybe it wasn't Manny at all, but those stupid machines that they were going to take anyways. I thought about how Samantha never needed a machine, and now that we had this meth magic, maybe we didn't either.

Fl: That's when it all kind of came together. I'd heard about Organic farms cashing in; we didn't have much left, but we did have cows and tons of energy.

Hz: So we changed the cows' diet, started milking the cows by hand and selling the un-pasteurized milk to dairy connoisseurs:

they lap the stuff up and pay top dollar for it.

Fl: Within six months we started to expand, but our business model isn't exactly legal, so we needed to find other tight-lipped speed freaks to tend our growing herd.

Fr: (smiling) We needed more people like me, so I started calling some of the guys I met in the Veterans Hospital, all of us got a good taste for the white light in the Army; so far five of them answered the call to be crystal cowboys.

Hz: We're just one big family now; all Frank's buddies call me mom. I bake whole-wheat bread, brew bathtub crank and squeeze fresh orange juice: that's about all we eat out here these days.

Fl: Between Hazel's health food and the speed, my heart's beating like a bull's. I'm out in the barn at dawn seven days a week with Frank's dairy battalion.

Fr: (laughing) It feels good to be back with the boys again. We've got bunks for all the returning amputees; Uncle Sam doesn't give a rat's ass about us, but this is what they deserve: they work here as long as they want and they're always welcome.

E: How about a tour before the cows come home?

*Names and locations altered to keep pigs and politicians out of the milk.



THE OLD AND NEW PICTURE OF MISERY

By Ashley Wool

There is a beautiful child out there. She is worth all the love in the world, and yet the world as a whole remains ignorant towards her needs. She has died and been resurrected thousands of times, only to suffer and die again for new eyes and ears, and tear at the strings of new hearts. I wonder if her soul realizes its own purpose: to inspire charity and bring about emotional change, even if sufficient physical change seems to be an improbable dream.

I am speaking of the Little Match Girl, Hans Christian Andersen's young tragic heroine, who freezes to death on New Year's Eve after a day of unsuccessful attempts to sell matches to support her family. Passers-by are either indifferent to, or ignorant of her plight. As they retreat to their homes, which are full of light, warmth, food and comfort, they don't no-

tice her bright, pleading eyes. When the little girl dies, she joins her grandmother in a heavenly place where there is no winter chill, misery, or fear.

Children were subjected to miserable lives of begging on the streets in order to support their families.

While this is no longer the case in developed countries, it is still a harsh reality for those living in poorer countries. Today, it is estimated that ten million children die before age five every year. While the public's focus falls heavily on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, most of these children actually die from preventable causes—diseases for which most of us obtain routine vaccinations, and even seemingly simple

conditions such as diarrhea. Others die from malnutrition, or from a lack of adequate drinking water.



Compared to some of Andersen's other stories, such as *The Little Mermaid* (in which, unlike the Disney adaptation we know so well, the mermaid dies and loses her prince), this is a happy ending as far as the rest of his life's work is concerned. However, its original publication in 1848 served as a wake-up call to wealthy Europeans. Those who could afford Andersen's books were often unaware that one out of two impoverished children died before the age of five, and that these chil-

We complain about CAS food, and we are told not to drink Geneseo's tap water, but for these children and their families, that food and water could save lives. We complain about early morning classes, but these children may not live to see their college years, even if their parents can afford primary

school. We complain about the bitter wind chilling our bodies and chapping our lips, but we can remedy this situation with coats, heating systems and lip balm. We complain about the hours of our part-time jobs, but we are guaranteed payment for our work, which does not involve walking barefoot through snowy streets on New Year's Eve peddling homemade matches. It is not that we are all heartless Scrooge incarnations; it's just that we, as a student culture, and as a popular culture, lack perspective on such things.

Thus, I do not write this to inflict guilt on anybody, and it is my belief that Andersen did not write *The Little Match Girl* to make his audiences feel guilty. He wrote it to inspire compassion and charity in the hearts of those who would listen, and to find those who would care to take in a shivering child from the cold, if only they knew she was out there.

It is for this reason that I have begun an official chapter of the ONE Campaign on campus (www.one.org). The aim of this campaign is to increase awareness of world poverty, and there are campus branches that help college students to take the necessary steps to remedy the situation. Please look for flyers advertising an interest meeting in the coming weeks (one will feature the *Little Match Girl*), and join the Facebook group "ONE Campaign Geneseo" for more information.



CAS is proud to support
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and its efforts to voice
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BEING TREMENDOUS

By Nate Northrop



The sun shone, as if it were a perfectly ordinary morning, because it was. Despite our every instinct about how the weather should behave according to the celebrations and tragedies of our lives, the weather does what the weather does, and on this day, the weather was quite nice. There was snow on the ground melting gently under the sunlight and not a cloud in the sky dared to block any of its warmth. My father, my stepmother and I ar-

rived at my brother Jon's house to have breakfast and see my brother Timmy off. Tim moved out to western New York in September to rent the dairy farm which now houses his two hundred and ten cows. He and his girlfriend Kirsty came home for Christmas, but they could not leave their respective farms for very long (Kirsty works on her parents' fifteen hundred cow dairy farm) and now it was time for them to leave.

Breakfast was good—

we had flaxseed pancakes and bacon from the pigs that Jon and his wife Jen raised that year. We had all finished eating and were sitting around the table talking when Tim's phone rang, for about the third time that morning. He said it was Amos (Kirsty's brother and Tim's fraternity brother from Cornell) and excused himself from the table. Tim stood up and started to walk away from the table when he made a gut-wrenching noise that sounded like "Oh my God!" My immediate thought was that Tim was in physical pain—but

that made no sense in the context. As Tim collapsed on the couch in tears, I thought that someone must be hurt, but quickly realized that it was much worse than that. Death is the only one thing I know of that can produce such a rapid and cataclysmic change in a person—it is sharp, world-shattering, and absolute. It is with the deepest self-revulsion that I admit that, as I watched—stupefied and silent—my brother experience the most intense pain I have ever witnessed—pain so intense that it still brings tears to my eyes even now just knowing that anyone, especially Tim, is capable of feeling such pain, my next emotion was relief; since it was Amos calling, this geographically distanced the tragedy from me. This was Tim’s tragedy, not mine. We believe the fiction that tragedy is a function of proximity. It took several helpless minutes for anyone to elicit a response from my brother. He finally managed to tell us that Collin was dead. He was run over by the feed truck.

I sat on the couch next to my brother with fresh tears on my cheeks, rubbing his shoulder helplessly, like my hand contained some sort of healing salve to numb the loss he felt—as if a firm squeeze on the shoulder could bring back the dead. I cried too. I cried for Tim, that he should have to feel so sad, but mostly I cried

for myself. That I should have to see him feeling so sad. No one said much for the next twenty minutes, as we all either cried or hugged whoever was crying. I wanted to write poetry. Because that’s all I could think to do when faced with real life—to make it all make sense by obfuscation, to turn tragedy into art. I’m aware of the irony as I write this now, but it’s unavoidable. “I am the artful voyeur.” I think I finally understand these words that I have quoted and misquoted so many times. It is a declaration of self-reproach, but a cunning one. It is an acknowledgement of the offense and impropriety of aestheticizing tragedy, but also a conceited declaration of daedal skill- “I write it out in a verse”. It is a recognition of the absurdity of even attempting redress in the face of such tragedy—“all art is quite useless,” and also

would like to believe that Christmas did not have the audacity to come this year, but it had. We opened our presents and tried to be happy about it. We pretended that there was nothing outside the room—tragedy is a function of proximity, and it is elsewhere. For a moment, it seemed to work, until I looked over and saw Tim quietly crying into his presents. My smile shamefully dissolved.

We said our goodbyes, which were a bit more emotional than usual. It’s funny how it often takes a tragedy to elicit an “I love you” between family members. That is not to say that I don’t have a loving family, because I do, but we often neglect to say so because we assume it is implied and unnecessary. With Tim and Kirsty out of our helpless

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of the intent to carry out that attempt. “I can’t go on, I’ll go on.”

What followed was one of the most surreal moments of my life. Since Jon and Jen went to Jen’s parents for Christmas, we had not yet exchanged gifts, and since Tim and Kirsty were leaving in less than an hour, now was the only time to do so. We

reach, we said goodbye to Jon and Jen and left for home. Along the way, I was surprised to see that the rest of the world was oblivious. I was still under the delusion that nothing existed outside of our car, yet here were people enjoying the warm and beautiful weather: buying groceries, eating lunch, and checking their mail—the Post Of-

face was even open. My surprise turned to anger as it dawned on me that these people, too, thought of tragedy as a function of proximity. To them, this was our tragedy. Nothing I could do would make the rest of the world care about the pain that I felt. This does not

make them bad people; it's just the way the world works. No one has the time, the energy or the mental fortitude to investigate every tragedy, to learn about the aspirations and regrets of the victims, to understand what their lives meant to the people they touched, or to

recognize what the world has lost now that they are gone. If you had the capacity for compassion like that, you would not last a day.



