DECONSTRUCTION
Pop Culture Politics Student Life and the like Spring 2009
FROM THE EDITORS

Amy Saltzman

I don’t even know what to say. This is our largest issue that we’ve printed. Ever. The whole process from start to finish feels like a comradeship of artists, writers, and designers all rowing our asses off in this tiny boat (we don’t have the luxury of a yacht or anything just yet) to try and make it to the top crest of a wave. And then there is this moment, where we ride the tide of the insane amount of effort and heart we’ve put into it all, and just smile and feel the mist. It’s refreshing every time we print an issue. Something is created beyond us, from us.

This particular issue is all about Taboos. Those things you hide in shoeboxes under your bed, in your underwear drawer, or whatever hiding spot has worked to provide a small cove of protection from the critical eyes of society. However, after brainstorming and tackling a lot of these taboos, I began thinking: What’s the big deal? Why are these things taboos in the first place? Only cultural standards make us self-conscious about the things we do or say or think or eat. I’m not saying everyone needs to go out bashing taboos left and right, but it never hurts to ask “why” or “why not.” Hell, that’s the reason we’ve grown as a magazine as much as we have. And we love it. Enjoy.

Wallace McKelvey

There is real power behind the taboo. They often go unspoken. They’re the things you keep to yourself or joke about, nervously, with friends. Whether it’s something as silly—but no less embarrassing—as masturbation or as distressing as domestic abuse, people place a great deal of importance on what is “normal” and “abnormal.” And these taboos reflect our fears and anxieties. They continue long after our fears of the boogieman in the closet and the dark at the bottom of the cellar stairs have been put aside.

Because taboos have the power to silence us when we need help the most—when we’re in abusive relationships or contemplating suicide—we must speak out. A lot of this issue is dedicated to doing just that: shining a funny, irreverent, and thoughtful light on the things we’re most uncomfortable with. The concerted effort of dozens of people converged on this issue and I hope that you, the reader, can find entertainment and maybe acceptance in these pages.
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Nervous but excited, I feel my fingers tingle as they touch the knotted waistband of my terrycloth robe.

*I’ve wanted this for a long time.*

He looks at me as if I am nothing more than scenery – another creaky easel, a soft pink eraser warmed from constant use, a cold tile on the floor.

*Just...Stay...Still.*

That’s his advice. They will do the work for me.

*Piece of cake.*

They all look at me, expectant yet unenthused.

*No big deal, right?*

Some listen to their iPods, others take final bites of sandwiches or chips, and most seem consumed with thoughts and concerns entirely independent of my existence.

*I’ve wanted this for a long time.*

I close my eyes, take a deep breath in, drop the robe, and feel a gust of unfamiliar air hit unfamiliar places as my chest heaves out. I open my eyes.

My eyes got me here in the first place. I remember walking down the brick pathway of the North Green my freshman year of college and seeing someone holding a sketch of a naked girl lying on a large tire. It was so beautiful, I stopped to compliment the artist and ask who the mystery girl was. When she admitted it was just a friend who offered to pose as a model, I became hooked. I don’t know whether it was vanity or the desire for extreme liberation, but I wanted to be the kind of girl who could strip in front of strangers and hang out with inanimate objects while acting as a source of artistic inspiration for others. They say those who can’t do, teach. In the art world, I suppose those who can’t draw, pose - or at least that’s how the obsession began with me.
FIGURE MODELING IN THE NAME OF ART

By the time I decided I was going to go through with figure modeling, I was standing in the art office of Recitation Hall, waiting for the secretary who would book me an appointment to model for one of the classes. Since I already worked another job on campus, my information was in the university’s payroll system. I would be paid $13 an hour, but the pay would be increasing to $15 an hour soon, she said, smiling. When the secretary suggested I work the following Tuesday for Peter Williams’ figure drawing class, I agreed without thinking about the mental preparation that would be involved. All I could think about was how the three-hour class would equal almost $40, which could pay for a nose ring or new boots.
All my friends were supportive when I revealed my new occupation, but gender tended to split them into two groups: intrigued and perverted. My girl friends initially responded with a mix of slight horror and intrigue, as though I just told them I had a tail.

My guy friends revealed much creepier sides to their personalities with comments like, “Can I sit in on the class?” or, when told they couldn’t sit in on the class, asking “Does the classroom have windows?”

“To them, I would be nothing more than a series of curves and a balance of lighting. Let the liberating begin.”

The classroom was a large, white studio room, empty except for a sink, some shelves, and 12 easels arranged in a semicircle. The professor, Peter Williams, was a large man who would have been intimidating if not for his casual demeanor and white T-shirt and jeans. Despite a limp which caused him to use walking supports, he had the physical build of someone who might have once been an athlete. His graceful mannerisms, like the way he gestured with the wide sweeping of his hands, were the only hints of his artistic background.

As the only professor who teaches the figure drawing classes, Williams easily detected my nervousness and assured me there was nothing to worry about.

“The best thing I can say to you about this, I guess, is that after a while you’re just an object to us,” explained Williams.

Davina Kuh Jakobi, a fellow student and artist, agreed with her professor’s sentiments. Students aren’t expecting models to look like, well, models. In fact, physical attractiveness plays second fiddle to more important artistic details.

“It’s not about how beautiful or skinny the model is,” she said. “It’s more about how interesting the lighting is, or how interesting the posing is.”

To them, I would be nothing more than a series of curves and a balance of lighting. Let the liberating begin.

Williams instructed me to follow him towards the step ladder that would accompany my first pose. It was about three feet high, wooden, cold, and splattered with dried paint.
By the time I went to the bathroom to change into my robe, a few students had already begun unpacking their art supplies and claiming easels. While changing, I decided I might as well pee. I would have been pretty embarrassed, not only if I had peed myself from nerves, but especially if I had done it while sitting naked on a ladder. While on the toilet, I giggled because I felt kind of naughty peeing on a public toilet, in the university, completely butt naked. Then I realized a naked part of everyone touches the toilets. From the toilet’s point of view, my butt is no more naked than anyone else’s. Deep.

As my sitting station switched from toilet to ladder, I was faced with an unusual scene. 12 students stared back at me, 24 eyes were level with my waist, and yet professor Williams insisted I try to “sit casually.” I didn’t know how to tell him I don’t usually sit on step ladders. Also, the one person I recognized in the class happened to be sitting front row and center, facing me head-on. As I scanned the room, it felt like one of those three-way mirrors in a department store at the mall, except this was a 12-way mirror, interpreted through strangers.

As I adjusted into position, professor Williams put a space heater beside the ladder to keep me warm. Apparently, it kept me a little too warm. I didn’t know whether it was nervousness or the effectiveness of the small heater, but I began sweating profusely. I never sweat. Yet in that studio, I sweated so much I thought the ceiling was leaking, dripping water down my sides. I looked down briefly to discover my armpits were the culprits, causing rivers of perspiration.

Without clothes, there was nothing to stop the sweat from dripping all the way down my side, swiveling the curves of my hips, and collecting on the ladder’s surface. Eventually it became too much to handle, and I had to stop the class.

“I’m sorry, but can we turn off the heater?” I asked as I scrambled to wipe my sides with my hands. “I am like, really hot in here. I’m sorry. Sorry professor, sorry drawers. Sorry.”
A few people chuckled and the space heater was silenced, but other unexpected issues soon crept onto the scene.

I’m the kind of person who’s easily distracted, so as I realized I’d be sitting for 45 minutes without movement, I began to get antsy. Only 10 minutes had passed, yet my mind ached and stretched to fill the silences with something entertaining. A part of me enjoyed the time to myself; I was able to think, unhindered.

I wonder if any great philosophers had revelations while posing naked. I wonder if I could.

Yet another part of me felt myself slowly dying, wasting time and muscle just to serve as an object for these students to draw.

I wish there was a TV on the wall. I should have studied my Chinese notecards before coming to class so I could make sentences in my head.

Another problem occurred whenever I flicked my eyes to get a change of scenery. I stopped staring at the wall, but then awkwardly caught eyes with fellow students. Suddenly, my head swarmed with the self-conscious re-realization that I was naked.

Do they like me or are they just drawing my eyes? What should I be thinking? Can they see me thinking?

The art students stared and pinched at the air to get proportional measurements for drawing me. I felt like my head was a grape. Sometimes they stood back from their easels, arms crossed, eyebrows furrowed, and switched their eyes from easel, to me, to easel, to me. Back to easel. Smudge, erase.
In addition to the mental anxiety, I soon learned my body was not physically equipped to handle long moments frozen in one position. My butt ached and my left calf shook in tense wiggles from having my foot in a pointed position for so long. I forgot how bad the circulation in my feet was, and my biggest toe on my left foot went numb for most of the pose. The room also got colder as my pose continued, but I was too scared to repeat another sweat attack incident, so I decided not to ask for the heater again.

Occasionally professor Williams made objective but odd comments about aspects of my body that I would have never considered.

“Those tan lines, make sure they look natural,” “don’t forget to show the tone there,” or “pay attention to where the light is hitting her shoulder,” he said as he paced the room between easels.

When a break finally arrived, I was relieved and curious about the drawings. I had a few minutes to stretch and walk around the classroom to see what the students had drawn so far. It was like an out-of-body experience. I’d never looked at my body with such intense scrutiny. In one of the pictures, my head was a lot smaller, proportionally, than my body. In another, I looked very Asian (which I attribute to my hair, which I pulled into a bun before class started). A third drawing presented my lips as two puckered fruits, ready to grace the latest cover of *Playboy*. In one, my eyes looked wide with shock or amazement. In another, my boobs were, well, pointy. Like elf ears.

Any remnants of vanity were erased with those drawings as I realized my human faults and flaunts. And even if any vain presuppositions had survived the break, they certainly wouldn’t have survived the process it took to get back into position on the ladder.

I threw all pride to the wind as I awkwardly remounted the step ladder. The squatted position required to climb a small ladder and shimmy into place is highly unattractive, even when clothed. Meanwhile, I was naked as I attempted this feat with my butt in at least 1/3 of the class’s faces. It was really weird, and I was horrified I would fart.
Luckily, my body helped me fall back into position on the ladder because the smooth wood had indented my butt as though I was a heated wax mold. Thus, when I slid onto the ladder, the indent found the corner of the ladder, and I reassumed my original position...or so I thought.

A few minutes were spent with all twelve students individually instructing me to “move your foot a little further down,” or telling me “your left arm wasn’t that bent before,” and asking “could you move your body a little this way? Yeah. Wait, go back. Okay.”

I learned the frustration between poser and drawer works both ways. The littlest movement of my body affected everyone’s drawings. It was like my limbs had ropes attached to them that connected to the students’ hands. When I moved, they were forced to redraw.

“Small movements can be annoying because when the teacher comes around and is like, ‘Oh this is not right,’ you’re like ‘Well, it was right like five minutes ago,’” said Abbey Gates, another student.

Fortunately for me, I have other redeeming qualities that made me a pleasant object. “You’re the first girl I’ve had, and it’s kind of nice ‘cause you get some gross people,” said Abbey.

Davina agreed that the variation was nice. “For like the first two months we had really skinny dudes, all the time. I was like, I’m really sick of drawing really skinny people,” she said.

All in all, nude modeling was a liberating but also humbling experience. It’s not nearly as luxurious as it looked in the finished drawings. By the end of the three hour class, the drawings depicted me as a girl casually placed on a step ladder, caught in an instant of time. The real me stood wobbly legged and tired, excited to be done with the ladder. I have a lot more respect now for the girl who slumped over the tire and unintentionally inspired me three years ago. I can only imagine how much her back must have ached from that pose. Then again, I also know we share something. I walked into a room naked, and I left with a sense of my physical self that was less serious and more light-hearted. I left with a newfound slice of self-confidence. For an undisturbed period of time, in a big studio with nothing but sinks, shelves and strangers, I had nothing to hide.
Buffy the Vampire Slayer has a thing for guys who could hurt her. Vampires, malicious humans, secret government soldiers… over and over these relationships end in pain (often physical) and heartbreak, and yet she keeps going back to the same guys.

Unfortunately, college trends might not be so different. According to the Jewish Women’s Institute, 1 in 5 college students report dating abuse (either physical, emotional, or sexual) by a current partner. Most of these are college freshmen. It’s a common misconception that domestic abuse refers only to married couples or to people living together. The truth is, domestic abuse is any relationship in which one person tries to control another through fear and emotional or physical pain.

And although nobody talks about domestic violence, 7% of women (3.9 million) are physically abused by their partners, and 37% (20.7 million) are verbally or emotionally abused, according to asafeplaceforhelp.org, a website run by a crisis center for women in need. The Riley Institute at Fuhrman University reported this year that 20-30% of adolescent relationships are abusive.

This was shocking to me. So many people? Surely this kind of thing must be less common than that. And then it happened to me. I yelled at my boyfriend because he was late to pick me up for a date. He’d had a horrible evening; he’d cut himself shaving, been hassled by his mom, and now I had yelled at him. He couldn’t take it anymore. He decided to drive over 100 mph on small residential streets, stopping incredibly close to other cars as they came up, to “teach me a lesson.” I was terrified. I begged him let to me out of the car. Eventually he calmed down and stopped, apologizing profusely. I stayed in the car with him and we went on our date.

Now that I look back on it, I can’t believe I stayed with the guy. My trust in him was pretty much destroyed. He had done it just to make me feel unsafe, to give me the impression that he was not a guy to be messed with. But at the time I thought it was just a part of his personality and that it was my fault. I thought that nobody else would put up with me the way he did.

Do you ever feel this way? Ever had a boyfriend who always managed to make you feel bad about yourself? Ever had a girlfriend who threatened to tell your coach you cheated on that one test if you dumped her? Ever had a boyfriend who kept you away from your friends?

It’s not just a man-woman thing, by the way. Gay couples are just as likely to experience dating abuse as straight ones, according to itsabuse.com, a website created to educating college students on dating abuse.

Unfortunately, dating and domestic abuse have been somewhat of a taboo to talk about. But it is a real problem and many colleges are realizing that. A number of universities have classes, training, and campaigns annually to combat this problem. UD’s is called “Consent: where do you draw the line?” and takes place during April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
College can make dating abuse much harder, because if you and this person go to the same school, you will inevitably see each other. Colleges don’t always feel like the most secure places to live, either. I know reporting something like this seems awkward and scary. What if I’m overreacting? What if they accuse me of making it up? What if the person finds out I told and retaliates? Those are the last things to worry about. At this point you should worry about being safe and happy. If you feel unsafe, something is wrong in your relationship. Tell a professor you trust, a counselor, your RA, campus security, anybody. They can look out for you. It’s their job.

Rihanna and Chris Brown: not the best example at the moment. On Grammy night, 19-year-old Chris Brown beat 20-year-old Rihanna so badly that she ended up in the hospital. Now, after weeks of media attention and a court summons, the pair appears to be back together. Brown issued a public apology: “I am seeking the counseling of my pastor, my mother and other loved ones, and I am committed, with God’s help, to emerging a better person.” He also said he was “sorry and saddened,” but he didn’t mention Rihanna at all and spent most of the apology trying to clear his name in the wake of fraudulent blog postings.

And Rihanna got back with him? I understand that Chris Brown probably needs a friend at the moment, but Rihanna probably shouldn’t be that friend. He has been charged with two felonies and could spend up to four years in prison for his actions. To me, the worst part of this story is the girls who still support Brown and say it was Rihanna’s fault. Even if Rihanna did something to really annoy Chris Brown, there was no reason why he should have hit her. Chris Brown shouldn’t, and can’t, pass this off as an accident. Being drunk is no excuse. And almost 20% of first time batterers do it again, according to asafeplaceforhelp.org.

In a New York Times article on January 4, 2009, Lenore Walker, a psychology professor at Nova Southeastern University, said most battered women typically endure three to five beatings like the one Rihanna allegedly received before they’re “willing to give up” on the relationship. I understand that feeling. It’s easy to convince yourself, “it’s ok, he was mad, or he was drunk, or he was having a bad day. He’s usually sweet… he’ll be better tomorrow.” No. He won’t. He’s going to get mad, or drunk, or have a bad day again. Eventually I realized that my rights didn’t end when he had a bad day. I matter all the time. I hope Rihanna realizes this soon.
Eric was this quiet, smart, kind of geeky guy when Allison met him. “He always had a better way of doing things, and my ideas were stupid,” she said. She thought it was just his personality. He started critiquing her hair and clothing choices. If she made a mistake he’d yell at her until she cried. “It’s easy to excuse the things he said, because I thought it was just his personality, and we just weren’t right together,” Allison said. “But I wasn’t the problem. I was the victim.”

Oprah’s words really struck a chord with me. So did the stories posted on itsabuse.com. In addition to education, the site promotes awareness of dating abuse by encouraging students to share their abuse experiences to let others know they are not alone.

Alex met his dream guy in the student center. Scott was clingy, but Alex thought that was sweet… until he found Scott reading his emails. Every time Alex got a phone call, Scott would race to pick it up first in case it was another guy. He didn’t let Alex hang out with his friends in case he tried to cheat. “It was emotionally draining,” Alex said. “He never physically hurt me, but emotionally, I felt like a victim.”

My friend’s mom has this saying: you should be a battery in your relationships. You can give your energy, but the other person must give you back some so you can recharge. Don’t be a candle, burning yourself to keep others warm. I really like that. There’s that silly song out there, “Love’s a game of give and take,” and as much as I hate the cliché, it’s right. Anybody who makes me feel stupid or worthless or drained is a taker. I don’t want a rollercoaster ride of great moments and really crappy ones. And even though Eleanor Roosevelt lived half a century ago, her words still ring true. “Nobody can make me feel inferior without my consent.”
I wouldn’t say young Americans are prude in any way, and it would be entirely weird to say we have more class and composure when it comes to the topic of sex than the Italians of our age, but I think it may be the truth. The Italians are so oblivious to the fact that it is a personal subject, and they treat it as an open and public topic. We even have supposed guidelines, PDA, here in America.

Even though few people acknowledge this, technically, we all know what is and is not appropriate to do publicly. In Italy, they truly don’t even know…

Ever see two people lying on the Green in a sex position?

Personally, I hope you just got a chill of embarrassment reading that. That’s what you see in any public park, or near any monument in Rome. I swear wherever you look, there is a couple either kissing, cuddling, or unnecessarily touching each other. It’s just a little bit awkward. Granted, in both Italy and America, some of the same ‘traditions’ do exist.

Usually, the inappropriate behaviors take place when the sun goes down. In a club, for example, wherever you go, everyone is all over each other…dancing, making out, and doing things other people would rather not see or know about. Typically, those types of actions take place when alcohol is present or in overcrowded environments.

Really, the biggest difference is how a girl would be approached. The guys in Italy are so forward, and to them, a conversation about sex can be as casual as a conversation about your plans for the following day.

Imagine a guy coming up to you (or guys, imagine going up to a girl) and asking, “Noi? Il sesso? Adesso?” Translation: “Us? Sex? Now?” It’s literally as simple as that. The girl gives a yes, no, or maybe later answer, and the conversation will move forward as if nothing awkward was ever discussed. Some people would consider this to be polite -- or the guy to ask before indulging in any form of sexual activity…but it isn’t always that polite.

I’ll share an experience from studying abroad in Italy. I’m not sure what my friend was trying to say to this Roman guy, but the words got disturbingly lost in translation, and he came up to me and said (in very broken English, might I add): “Jessie, your good friend…she wants me to do the f***.” Please. Just imagine. My response was utter shock.

These casual sexual conversations were common, but they aren’t the only proof that these young men have no boundaries of appropriateness. You could be standing in a bar, minding your own business, and all of a sudden someone is turning you around and trying to stick their tongue down your throat. Ew. I have to give the American boys a little credit here. I think they would at least say hi before attempting the first kiss.

The cultural difference is so huge with this topic. It’s amazing how everyone says American boys are sex-obsessed, but look around the world. Clearly, they aren’t the only ones, and they actually, surprisingly, are craftier with their invitations. But, as they say, when in Rome…
Pick-Up Lines
by Katie Lewis

“Pick-up lines. Come-on lines. Three syllables. One meaning: pathetic. Call them what you will, but 99% of them end up crashing and burning. From a female standpoint, such acts are seen coming from a mile away. It starts with the eye contact, or the attempt at NOT making eye contact on the recipient’s part, despite the fact that that effort goes unnoticed. Then comes the smirk, the head nod and the elbow to a friend. This is usually followed (not necessarily immediately, but shortly thereafter) by the strut. All you ladies know what I’m referring to- that “I’m too sexy for my shirt” strut as they make their way towards you. And finally… (drum roll please)... the delivery:

“Hey there!” (Add head tilt for effect.) “So tell me: did it hurt?”
If you actually respond, it will be something along the lines of:
“Did what hurt?”
“The fall from heaven. Because you must be an angel.”

Yea. No. Swing and a miss. This isn’t what gets girls’ attentions. In fact, it tends to have just the opposite effect, because then we have no interest whatsoever in continuing the conversation. Ditch the pick up lines fellows- stick with the not so sleazy openers. Like the ones that simply start a conversation. Some of them are actually cute:

“Do you know how much a polar bear weighs? Enough to break the ice. Hi, I’m [insert name].”

Or when all else fails, how about the good ‘ole stand-by:

“Hi, I’m [insert name]. Can I buy you a drink?”

And do yourself a favor by not adding “Hey there” in front of anything you say.

“Anything beginning with ‘Hey there” automatically goes in one ear and out the other, if I even stand there without walking away while he’s in mid-sentence,” says Stephanie Pizzuli. “It just oozes cockiness. It’s also the fastest way to lose my interest.”

Just say “Hi”! It’s uncomplicated and doesn’t sound like you’re just looking for a roll in the sack. Girls are more likely to engage in a conversation (or even a hook-up) if you come up with something original. You need to make yourself stand out. Individuality is a beautiful thing-try embracing it and running with it. You might surprise yourself.
E ven doctors say that it’s okay to do,” she said quietly, looking concerned. “People are so ashamed of it, people don’t talk about it, and to rock this shirt is going to be extremely bold.” Nyasha points to a t-shirt behind her labeled with the words: “EX-Masturbator.”

“We’re going to really break the silence with this.”

The video is almost an hour long, but it makes one point: masturbation is wrong. Posted on p4cm.com, homepage for the Passion for Christ Movement (P4CM), the “EX-Masturbator” t-shirts have garnered attention from online favorites, such as The Huffington Post and FARK.com.

Though the taboo that enshrouds masturbating is obviously not something new, its sudden reappearance on the public’s radar is nothing less than shocking.

The t-shirts are a part of P4CM’s “EX” campaign, which includes other slogans such as “EX-Atheist,” “EX-Fornicator” and “EX-Diva.” The masturbation t-shirt is the latest in this line, and has received much negative feedback.

“We need to stop teaching young people that their bodies are shameful and that any pleasure they get from it is immoral,” says a writer on Feministing.com. “Seriously, I wish I could gift wrap Betty Dodson and send her to the person who wrote this.”

Dodson, a pioneer in second-wave feminism and author of Liberating Masturbation (1974), would probably not object. Together with Carlin Ross, a younger but equally enthusiastic über-feminist, Dodson runs doddsonandross.com, a female sexuality website that claims to assist in “empowering women one orgasm at a time!”

The tension between P4CM’s anti-masturbation campaign and Dodson’s self-pleasure messages is palpable. Since when did masturbating become both more and less taboo than it has been in centuries?

The difference lies in the interpretation of masturbation itself. Originally linked to Onan, who “spilled his seed” and was subsequently brought to death by God in Genesis 38, masturbation was, for a long time, seen as sinful in the Western world.

This persevering belief led to the concept of onanism, popularized by the 18th-century Swiss physician Samuel Tissot. His book, Onanism or, a treatise upon the disorders produced by masturbation, published in 1766, brought masturbation to the world of science, where it was carefully observed, researched, and quite frowned upon.

Not only was it thought to “produce languishing disorders,” but also to foster the onset of diseases, prevent healing and cause “a defect in the natural powers.”

A P4CM member sports an Ex-Masturbator t-shirt.

After a terrifying century of experimental treatments and anti-masturbation devices, several figures during the 1900s explored the ubiquity and benefits of masturbation: Alfred Kinsey, with his reports on female and male sexual behavior in the 1940s and ’50s; William Masters and Virginia Johnson in the 1960s, with their seminal report on orgasms and sexuality; Martin Goldstein, Erwin Haeberle, and Will McBride, authors of The Sex Book, published in 1971.

Yet the Christian fear of Onanism persists. Having put a slightly modern twist on it, current anti-masturbation advocates emphasize not the wasting of a
man’s seed but rather the emotional and psychological problems with masturbation’s “filth,” as one P4CM member calls it in a blog entry.

“I felt so dirty and so full of despair after I gave in to my own sinful lust, that I’d pull the cover over myself to hide. I didn’t want God to look at my filth. I hated it. It was like an abusive relationship that I couldn’t get out of and didn’t know how.”

This particular member sought help from her church, where she eventually confessed and has been masturbation-free for over two years. What she did exactly, in Nyasha’s terms, was “break the silence.”

This phrase is commonly associated with various forms of abuse—sexual, social, and self-inflicted. “Breaking the silence” refers to an emotional outpouring of both acceptance and confession, helping bring to light those topics that are too embarrassing or socially unacceptable to discuss with others: rape, suicidal tendencies, sexual discrimination.

By its very nature, “breaking the silence” is in itself violent, a fierce phrase used mostly by women to directly combat personal and collective oppression. Perhaps unknowingly, P4CM has effectively grouped masturbation in with some of humankind’s most universal atrocities.

But here’s the catch: redemption. The P4CM church offers masturbators the same type of freedom from torment as do Dodson and Ross, using terms like “liberation” and “freeing yourself.”

An 18th-century anti-masturbation device for males.

One group may “come out of the chains of masturbation,” as one Christian website puts it, by abstaining from the practice entirely; the other may offer encouragement to keep trying, with the goal of attaining true sexual pleasure. Either way, the end product is the same: satisfaction.

So where does this leave the modern-day masturbator? Literally alone in the dark grappling with options of transcendence? Both groups agree: there is no use for a half-enthusiastic masturbator. Either give it up completely or improve your methods.
For the past few months, I have been anxiously awaiting the release of Kevin Devine’s fifth album, *Brother’s Blood*. Though I’d already heard the majority of the tracks on the album, whether through live shows or Kevin’s Myspace, this did not take away from my delight when hearing the complete listing of songs. *Brother’s Blood* has everything that an avid Kevin Devine fan would want, stories involving love, politics, dogs and Irish women, but the album still offers a lot for those unfamiliar with his music.

As a whole, it is beautifully produced, by a tiny record company founded by Jeremiah Edmond and Andy Hull of Manchester Orchestra (Favorite Gentlemen), and has a clean and fresh sound. Each song is unique, which is quite a feat given that Devine has released four other full-length albums and three EPs.

One of my favorite tracks on the album, titled “Tomorrow’s Just Too Late,” tells the story of an Irish woman who can’t gather the strength to leave her emotionally abusive husband. Devine writes, “So you’ve got a choice to make/ Shut him out, save yourself, or sit and wait. But you’re waiting on a man who will not move/ So you must move for him and do what he can’t do.” The song is eerily reminiscent of every short story or film depicting a middle-aged Irish woman who tolerates a husband who abuses her physically or emotionally. It is a beautiful acoustic track that exemplifies Devine’s ability to write music that conveys an emotion better than any other medium could.

As an artist who is wholly comfortable with expressing his very liberal views, it’s only fitting that Devine would also include songs on this album addressing political issues pertinent to our time. In “Time To Burn (Another Bag of Bones),” Devine writes “And it’s a flag-draped casket down an oil well/ It’s an Argentine schoolgirl, gagged and bound/ It’s a torture camp/ It’s a long way down/ It’s the constant bracing shock of now/ It’s the whole damned world turned inside out.” Later in the same song, Devine sings about global warming, conflict diamonds and “African militia kids with sub-machines.”

In a completely different turn, both in terms of lyrics and music, Devine’s “Fever Moon” is a sexually explicit track unlike any other song on *Brother’s Blood*. Musically, it sounds like a song one might hear in a small, authentic Mexican restaurant, but lyrically it is something else entirely: “You’re hot fog/ The bad decision that I lie here waiting on/ Staring down your next mistake can take so long/ When I hear your footsteps, babe, I don’t care that it’s wrong.” The song is a nice contrast from the other more serious tracks and is something not really expected from Devine.

Overall, *Brother’s Blood* is impressive. Devine’s guitar playing has only improved as he’s aged and, with each new album, his lyrics continue to inspire and haunt listeners. From the electric guitar-heavy title track to the Jazz-inspired “Murphy’s Song”, Devine’s most recent album has it all.

Review by Jessica Eisenbrey
Come play TABOO with DEconstruction at UD’s first ever Meet the Media Festival!
April 24th
North Green
The idea of college as a fresh start gets rammed into our heads from the moment we enter high school. After four years of waiting (or getting involved in hometown activities, being prom queen, playing varsity sports, whatever you want to call it) we finally meet the day where packing up and shipping out to a new, better life is the main agenda. Most kids enter college wanting to make a good impression, or at least stay enough under the radar that no one notices them, but the awkward and embarrassing moments that often accompany new situations can make presenting the image of who you want to be a challenge.

Living in arguably one of the most social dorms on campus (are their any amens for Dickinson?), awkward or humiliating occurrences basically dominate my every waking moment. The list below details some of the most extreme cases of cringe-worthy behavior, but in reality, it is safe to say that we have all been there. Social interaction inevitably leads to moments where people don’t quite click, and the awkward situations that ensue can be universally comical learning experiences.

Set the scene. It is move in day. This is the first day of the rest of your life. You have debriefed your parents for hours on what to do and say (i.e. unpack your stuff and get the hell out of there as fast as possible). You think they have got it through their heads that this is a critical day for you, and they seem to be making affirmative head gestures indicating their understanding. Fast forward to your hulking dad trying to shimmy a refrigerator through the hall and into your room. You never noticed what a glandular issue your father had until he started sweating from the belligerent heat present that afternoon. But, something is amiss. Your dad has stopped moving. What is going on? Peeking your small, freshman head around the corner you see your dad assaulting the boys next door with the five fateful words that will seal your destiny as future transfer student. “Yo, where’s the keg at?” Your flat-lining pulse is a surefire indicator that you have just been embarrassed beyond repair.

You learn the consequences of leaving your dorm room door unlocked the hard way when you wake up to find the resident alcoholic spooning you from behind. You knew you felt someone blowing ever so lightly into your ear.

#1

#2
This is something I like to call the Hallway Truffle Shuffle. The person coming toward you clearly sees and recognizes that you are hugging the right side of the hall. So why in the world does this person proceed to not only switch from hugging his right to his left (your right), but then make eye contact as though he knows what will happen? The unison sidesteps that follow are not only riddled with awkward smiles and apologies, but filled with contempt and rage at this person for blatantly ruining your walking routine. (Awkward Situation Made Even More Awkward: You are on your way to the shower in a towel your mother so conveniently decided to dry in a maximum heat dryer, thus turning it into no more than a mere napkin. If this walking perpetrator so much as looked at you the wrong way, the towel would probably blow off your body leaving you stark naked and embarrassed in the hallway.)

The After Hours Bathroom run-ins where the make up is literally melting off your face like an ice cream cake on the fourth of July are definitely awkward. Especially when attempts to speak are made with little to no success and incoherent mumbling is all you can hear from the stall next door (where the person has been peeing for literally a world record time).

The first time you are sexiled from your room can be a confusing and lonely time. Maybe you were just minding your own business, maybe you were sleeping, but when your roommate comes crawling in at three fourteen A.M. giggling her head off, you can pretty much bet that the shadow following her is not a harmless cousin just looking for a place to crash. Usually characterized by the carrying of a plethora of belongings such as blankets, laptop, and small emergency food supply, people who have been sexiled often seem confused, disoriented, and wearing an outfit that they really shouldn’t be caught dead in. The next day, events of the night before are rarely discussed, leaving you wondering if the whole process ever occurred in the first place.

Awkward Situation #4: Before college even begins, everyone awaits getting that email sealing your status as room mates with some unknown person. You scan your inbox daily waiting for some hint of the person you will be spending most of your time struggling for space in the room with, until one day, the email arrives. Kim Smith. Sounds pretty normal to me. And the Facebook creeping that entails turns up similar normal results. So why is it that when move in day rolls around, Kim Smith turns out to not only have a small teeth grinding issue, but also suffers from night terrors, has a collectable set of action figures that must be dusted and on display 24/7, drinks raw eggs, and is currently growing a style of hair known as the mullet?

Sally said you could go into her room and borrow her lint roller. Since you aren’t sure who is home, you knock a few times knocking on the door, knocking on the door, no one is answering, testing the handle (you really need this lint brush, there is something of a lint crisis going on), anddddd YES it is open! The room appears dark, so it’s safe to say no one is home. Flicking on the lights, several things happen at once.

1. You immediately slam the door back closed without retrieving the lint brush because

Needless to say lint does not seem like such a large issue anymore.
Thoughts on...Dating

By: Megan Richards

You want him so badly. Every ounce of flesh on your overheated body is crawling. Anything – be it a song on the radio, a score of a football game, or even a vibrating cell phone could trigger the feeling. When your stomach flips over, your heart surges into overdrive, and you put your foot on the break but it moves you faster and faster, is it love or infatuation?

When the two are so easily and often mistaken for one another, how are we supposed to know if it’s the real deal? Or if it’s just what people refer to as the ‘honeymoon stage’ of any relationship when two people can’t get enough of one another? Just a few short months ago I wrote an article that may have bashed guys just a bit – but I promise I had good intentions. I focused on how more and more people are hooking up instead of actually taking the time to get to know one another. And no sooner did the article get printed that one guy in particular took it into his own hands to prove me wrong.

It knocked the wind out of me, but felt oddly refreshing at the same time. To feel a genuine connection with someone has always been a rarity for me. I’ve had my share, as I’m sure the majority of us have, of people who pretend to listen to your every word, compliment every article of clothing you wear, and even ask how you got your hair to look a certain way, in a mere attempt to appear ‘friendly’ - or in a guys case, to get ass. Really, they don’t give a shit about your hair or what you have to say, as long as they benefit in the end. You may have something they want, be it a car ride, an old exam, or a hot bod, but one thing is for sure: they don’t really care about you, they care about themselves.

This guy was different.

We started to chat casually, hung out a couple times with friends, and then he took the initiative to ask me out on a date. Yes, a real date.

I know- it may be corny but it meant so much more than dinner and ice cream.
It meant he truly cared about who I was, not merely what I looked like or what I would be like in bed. It made me re-evaluate my original thoughts about the change of trend in dating. It made me question whether this guy could be different from the ones in my past, and whether or not I was just continuously unlucky, getting involved with the wrong kind of people.

I don’t think it has to do with being male or female, but I do think that there are two different types of mentalities that we have as college students.

There are the students that want to have one central strong relationship, and there are others who just want to have fun and have multiple (mostly sexual) relationships. Neither mind set is better than the other; in fact I feel both can be equally satisfying. It just depends on who you are, and what you want.

After experimenting freshmen year I finally know what I want and what makes me happy. Even though it may be pre-mature to call it ‘love’, I’ve found a connection with someone who understands, or at least can tolerate the weird things about me…like the fact that I still sleep with a “blankie”, save just about everything, and own underwear that have corny sayings on the back …okay, everyone has their weird quirks. You get my point.

I’ve found someone who can tolerate putting up with me when I’m cranky (I thank you for that!), laughs at my corny jokes, and even sat through a painful few hours of “Twilight”.

I guess it pays off to keep an open mind and to keep hope, and maybe there are more needles in the haystack than we ever imagined.
So you’re at grandma’s house for dinner during your holiday break, and as you’re continuing to nibble on the remainder of...whatever-she-said-it-was, you find yourself being forwarded that question that you don’t like to hear. “Tell me about college, (insert your name here)”. You swallow whatever is in your mouth and then look at your grandmother, whose innocent smile makes you realize all the more that you need to lie to her. You’re going to tell her what isn’t at all close to the truth, for her sake. You know she wants to hear that her grandchild is the standard of academic excellence, an example for your younger siblings. But let’s be realistic here: that’s not nearly the whole story.

You’ve been here before. Your parents are usually the receptors of this kind of white lying, but they probably know what’s going on anyway. They don’t need to be living with you anymore to know that you’re probably on Facebook almost as much as you’re in class and that waking up for that 9 A.M. class is optional. They’re not the ones who send you birthday cards every year with a five dollar bill nestled inside. Grandma is the one who’s always happy to see you, no matter what… provided you don’t tell her what you’ve really been up to.

Grandma asks if you’ve been studying hard and doing all your work. Immediately you smile and tell her that you’re doing good. You mention that your sociology class is giving you trouble but that you’re still doing really well. (Except for the fact that you managed to go to sleep in one class and wake up during the next class that used that lecture hall.) You also neglect to mention how you managed to pull your grades up to a respectable “B” after tanking it for half the semester. And then there’s that sociology class that you’ve been struggling in; it’s probably best not to mention the “D” you have in that, which is probably the reason that your parents are glaring at you from across the table.

But that’s okay, right? I mean grades aren’t the only thing that matters. Grandma asks you about your roommate and how you’re getting along. You know, your roommate, (insert-name-here). You reply that he’s a really great kid and that he’s a cool guy. But you don’t mention the fact that he’s genuinely crazy, and that he’s always up until strange hours of the morning doing god-knows-what and then snores to no end when he actually does sleep. And you also don’t bring up that time that he threw up in the trash can after getting “shwaysted”. Or that time when...
he brought eight people for a party in your room... 
the night before your exams. And it's not even worth 
mentioning the time that he broke the sprinkler in your 
room and got all your books wet.

Grandma changes the subject to your dorm 
room. You reply that it's okay, a little bit cramped, but 
otherwise fine. Cramped is an understatement though; 
your dorm room is comparable to a prison cell, just 
without the bars on the window. You leave out the 
details about how it's not air conditioned and that it's 
got strange insects crawling around. And then there's 
the matter of the actual residence hall itself. The 
bathrooms are horrible, what with the toilets routinely 
clogging and the showers giving you a nice blast of 
freezing cold water every time someone flushes. Finally, 
the worst part about this whole place is your RA, who 
finds nothing more pleasing to himself than slapping 
you with a noise violation for having your door cracked open and playing music at a reasonable level.

“Oh that's great!” grandma says, believing 
everything that you said. You feel as if this questioning 
is finally over, but she throws one more your way. “You 
don’t drink, do you?” she says. Your little brother nearly 
laughs up whatever he's eating, and you recall the time 
that you ended up drunk dialing your parents while you 
were at a party, on a ‘Thirsty Thursday’ no less. You’ve 
also got that vodka that your friend’s brother bought for 
you... the one that mom and dad accidently came across 
when it rolled out of your bag when you came home. 
It also probably wouldn’t be wise to tell her about the 
time that you ran the pong table for seven games 
straight. That is, of course, before you had to run 
naked laps around a house for not sinking one cup 
in the last game.

Your grandmother seems genuinely 
impressed, which is good. She then goes on about 
your dad, who was a partier, slacker, and by all 
means the same student that you’ve been trying 
to pretend you’re not. Your mom jumps in and 
starts talking about her college days, which were 
pretty similar. You come to the realization that even 
though everything that you just told her wasn’t the 
truth, or at least all of it, maybe the truth really isn’t 
that bad after all.

“...you recall the time that you ended up 
drunk dialing your parents while you 
were at a party, on a ‘Thirsty Thursday’ no less.”
“Sweatshop” is a dirty word. It tends to bring to mind a dimly lit work environment full of women and children laboring as fast as they can— and who wants to think or talk about that? We don't like to think about where our clothes are made or in what conditions. It's so much easier just to buy whatever's cheapest, whatever's cutest, whatever's most readily available. If sweatshop labor ever is talked about, it's usually just a conversation about how futile it is to fight against it. What can one person do when it comes to mega-corporations like Wal-Mart and Nike? Sweatshop labor is a very important issue, but it is also a very large one. I would like to use this article to inform you about a smaller, more manageable concern; a problem you can do something about: sweatshop labor and university apparel.

That's right: University of Delaware apparel, from sweatshirts to baseball caps, is made in sweatshops overseas. So what exactly does the word "sweatshop" mean? The Department of Labor defines a sweatshop as "a workplace that violates two or more of the most basic labor laws including child labor, minimum wage, overtime and fire safety laws." That means that the t-shirts handed out at football games were most likely made by underpaid and ill-treated workers. Do we really want our school's logo and reputation plastered on products that are unethically made?

In order to stop the abuse of university apparel makers, one must first understand the situation that has created the abuse. Universities, such as our own, allow certain companies to use their logo on products. In our case, these companies are Champion, Russell Athletic, and Jansport. These companies contract out the jobs they have received from the University to factories in underdeveloped countries, such as Honduras. The companies then often refuse to buy the goods from the factories unless they are at rock-bottom prices. This forces the factories to pay their workers low wages in poor working conditions. If workers attempt to unionize, they are fired and often prevented from getting another job. Recently, I attended a talk given by a worker from a sweatshop contracted by Russell Athletic. She and her co-workers formed a union at their factory due to appalling wages (less than 25 cents a day), forced overtime and poor working conditions, including lack of access to clean water. Her factory was shut down because of their attempt to unionize, and the workers were blacklisted and therefore unable to find work anywhere else. The woman and her coworkers were left without jobs and without options, just because they wanted fair pay and clean water. What happened to this worker and many others like her is a crime. The factories, the companies, and most importantly in our case, the University of Delaware, must be held responsible for these human rights violations.

You may be wondering what you, as a student, can do. Surprisingly, quite a bit. First of all, you can stop buying University apparel, and encourage your friends and family to do the same. Secondly, you can put pressure on the school to stop licensing out our logo to companies that produce their goods unethically. You can do this by writing letters to and calling school administrators. And finally, you can draw attention to the issue in whatever way you can. Tell your parents you don't want school apparel as gifts. Write an essay about this issue for a class. Ask administrators about the situation. It's easy to sit back and do nothing, to think of the abuse occurring as too far down the chain to really have anything to do with you. If you do that, you're not being honest with yourself. Remember, the sweatshirt you throw on before class, the t-shirt you wear to the gym, even the sweatpants you wear to bed, were all made by impoverished and underpaid workers on the other side of the world. If you allow the abuse to continue, you too are guilty of hurting fellow human beings. As Edmund Burke once said, “All that is necessary for evil to succeed is that good men do nothing.”
Together, we can make a difference in the lives of the sweatshop workers that make our university apparel.

Feel free to use the following letter as a model for your correspondence with President Harker and the Office of Communications and Marketing:

Dear __________,

As a student of the University of Delaware, I feel it is my obligation to bring to your attention an important issue. Many of the companies the University allows to use its logo are creating goods through sweatshop labor. The workers in these sweatshops are forced to work for very low wages and often are deprived of basic rights such as clean water. One company, in particular, Russell Athletic, has been known to violate workers rights continually; most recently in the case of the closing of the Jerzees de Honduras plant, in which workers lost their jobs because they attempted to unionize. This case has been well-documented and clearly violated human rights. I urge you to do whatever is necessary to end our licensing deal with Russell Athletic and to consider companies with better human rights records. Over a dozen universities have already ended their relationships with Russell Athletic due to this issue. Students should be able to wear university apparel with pride, knowing it was made in fair working conditions. Please take action on this issue and show that the University of Delaware cares about human rights. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your Name Here
It was a beautiful morning as far as I could gather. I could hear the birds chirping outside of my dorm. I was able to smell the Gillette after-shave creeping into my room (my friends had been shooting each other with it the night before.) But on that day, something was different. Very different. I could not open my eyes. The week before had been a terrible one. I had been battling a particularly horrendous head cold, and catastrophe had finally struck this particular morning. My eyes were crusted shut, and I couldn’t see a damn thing.

“WTF?” I thought in alarm as I quickly pried open my eyes with my thumb and pointer finger. As the world began to formulate around me, specks of yellow crust fell into my eyes to add to my visual discomfort. A glance in the mirror and it was confirmed. I had pink eye. Or should I say pink eyes? Yes, the infection was in both eyes.

Two watery, crimson eyes peered back at me as I examined them in the mirror. An instinctual rub to the eyes did nothing but irritate them. Even with such ailments I did what every typical college student would do. Nothing. “Whatever, its not that big of a deal, I'll just wait it out and it'll go away on its own,” I thought, and I continued my Saturday. Yet from breakfast to the library, I endured my friends’ commentaries about my latest look.

“Were you crying?” one girl friend asked.

“No. No, I’m not.” I replied curtly and went along my way.

Honestly, I did not see a problem having pink eye and not getting treated for it. But everyone else around me did.

The following week was hell, as I continued to suffer from not only pink eye, but other common cold symptoms: a sneeze, which would cause the innards of my nose to come out, and a cough that would draw up mucous from the deep caverns of my chest. Furthermore, I had an exam in my communications class that was worth 50% of our grade, a powerpoint public speech to make, a mandatory meeting in the writing center for my English research paper, and my job, which I was scheduled to work that day. As each day passed, my health slowly declined and I realized I could no long handle or endure the viral plague. Then the answer simply came to me.

“Darnell, this is enough, you’re going to have to go to student health services,” my concerned mother replied to my latest update on my diminishing health. And just as easy as the problem had arrived, it was answered. The thing is, it’s not like I did not know about health services. The thought had just slipped my mind, and being a freshman I was still learning about all the things Delaware had to offer. So with my mother and all of her motherly-ness pressuring me to go, I decided to embark on a journey to student health services for the first time.

I remember it being a particularly bright, sunny day as I plodded all the way down the green against the heavy winds.

“Laurel Hall was it?” I though to myself as I recalled the directions of a friend.

While passing Morris library, I noticed just how long the green is. It was too long. After another ten minutes, I finally arrived at Laurel Hall and entered the rear entrance. Inside, Laurel Hall was not what I expected. I was deeply impressed. I expected some rinky-dink...
ramshackle place that would be understaffed with people claiming to have some type of certified nursing background, and to be packed full of unhappy, ailing students. I was completely wrong (excluding the last part).

Laurel had a sense of professionalism about it. The nurses were all adorned in typical scrub/nurse attire, each student was required to swipe their UD id card to confirm their arrival and appointment, or see the welcoming receptionist to set up one. I had to do the latter. Moreover, Student Health Services had that particular hospital smell about it. Not to say that it is a good smell, or an enjoyable one, but Laurel hall was successful in duplicating - if not creating - the setting of a hospital.

Also, like many of the other buildings on campus, the health center had alluring architectural designs inside. Ornate wooden chairs and benches aligned the waiting room, and the entrance was fused with a modern style tiled floor and cool, painted walls. After corresponding with the receptionist I was told to wait in the waiting area with the other indisposed UD students. The waiting room was spacious; posted on almost each wall was a poster about health and staying health, or a stand filled with pamphlets. Any other information concerning bodily health, and I'm sure there was a pamphlet about it. Everything was clean and I felt comfortable. To help pass the time, I watched a very touching episode (aren't they all?) of “Full House” on the television perched in the corner of the ceiling.

About fifteen minutes later, a cheery nurse came down the hall and called my name. I gathered my belongings and followed her down the long corridor. With each passing room, I peeked inside at computer, stretchers, and typical examination rooms with all of the necessary medical amenities. I entered the room and sat down as the nurse instructed. Accompanied by a different care worker was another UD student on the other side of the room cordoned off by a sheet hung from the ceiling. He was complaining about some ghastly rash that was spreading all over his body. I was glad I was sitting on the other side of the room. Since I had a minor issue and the general practitioner was away that day, the nurse said she would be the one taking care of me. The examination was exercised with the upmost care while she probed my eyes, ear, nose and throat, and then asked me simple questions concerning the duration of my virus and what was bothering me. Eventually, she diagnosed me with Conjunctivitis in both eyes and a sinus infection.

What I liked about the examination was that I did not feel rushed. The woman was so sweet, and she actually took the time to take care of me and find out what was wrong. Many times when people see a doctor, they feel quite the opposite: rushed, uncared for and unimportant. The last thing that also positively impacted my experience was the ease of getting my prescription drugs. I assumed this process would be a long, arduous one and yet, it was quite the opposite. I just had to bring the signed prescription by the nurse to the pharmacy in Student Health Services, pay the co-pay stated on my insurance card that they had on file, and my prescription was filled. I was prescribed some thick, frustrating gel to stick into my eye that was zero fun, but other than that I proceeded on my merry way, back up the green.
Unless you happen to live under a rock, you have probably come face to face with a little uncomfortable phenomenon called Too Much Information (commonly known as TMI). Hearing about how your roommate just took the largest shit of his life after eating at Pencader, or how the girl down the hall hasn't showered in eleven straight days...now that's one kind of TMI, but the dirtiest kind of all comes straight from our creators - Momma and Pops.

Humiliation at its finest comes when parents push the limits of the conversation topic...especially in public. For instance, the last time I was in Target, my mom yells: “Honey, are you sure you don’t need anymore tampons? Look here, they’re on sale! You can never have too many!” The male cashier just gave me a half smile as I speechlessly shrugged. Bodily functions and parents just don’t mix. At the opportune moment, be it in front of your significant other, your friends, or even just in public, Dad will let one rip, or Mom will let you know how she literally just wet her pants.

Maybe talking about stuff like that behind closed doors isn’t too bad. However, there are other taboo subjects, and the last place we want to be caught discussing them is stuck alone in a room with a parent and nowhere to run or hide. Sure, there are those exceptions out there - the students who tell their parents just about anything, including how they substituted studying for a long night of 'bangin' partying, or how they just had a long night of well... 'bangin'. However, the majority, rest assured, are going to keep that little tidbit to themselves, and emphasize how they joined a bunch of clubs, passed their exams, and managed to go to office hours.

It's pretty obvious that one of the most awkward combos is Sex + Mom and Dad. MTV even made a show called Sex With Mom and Dad, a guilty pleasure introduced to me by a friend down the hall. It is very similar to other dating reality TV
shows such as Next and Date my Mom, in the sense that it is hilariously staged with ridiculous comments and conversation between teenagers and their enthusiastic parents all about sex. It makes for good TV, because mixing two subjects normally deemed as unmixable means pure entertainment! Sex and the parents is as uncomfortable as brushing my teeth and then downing a glass of orange juice. I’m not just referring to dreaded questions such as: “Have you had sex?”, “Why do you want to go on the pill?”, or “I gave you condoms, but do you know how to use them?” I’m also talking about when parents will volunteer sexual info about themselves. Any of that is definitely much better left unsaid.

Blame it on the high divorce rate, but parents are acting younger than ever. All of the popular magazines proudly advertise that fifty is now the new thirty. Mom and Dad are living life to its fullest by experimenting with dating different people and trying different age-reducing face creams or surgeries to feel the part and fit the role of their rejuvenated selves. Just because parents are dating, does not give them the right to share their sexual histories with us as readily as the Kirkbride preacher shares his history of God. It’s anything but comforting to find an unfamiliar cheetah print thong that clearly belongs to your dad’s new girlfriend when you unpack your laundry.

The only thing worse than knowing that your dad is getting laid (and fancies cheetah print) is discovering one of your parents’ sex toys. Junior year of high school I was over my friend’s house and we decided to go bowling. Since it was summertime, I was wearing flip-flops and didn’t have socks with me. Without thinking, my friend went straight to her mom’s dresser drawer to grab me a pair of socks, only to be met face to face with a pair of furry handcuffs. I remember her shrieking, “My dad’s not a cop!” She shoved them back into the drawer and tried as hard as she could to forget what she saw, but needless to say I didn’t!

It is strange to think that the subject of “sex” is taboo with parents, because if it weren’t for them knowing what it was in the first place, we wouldn’t even be here.

However, it is just a little out of our comfort zones to think that they could actually enjoy it...and use furry handcuffs. I remember the first time my mom asked me if I knew what “it” was. I was in first grade and clearly questioned, “Honey, do you know what sex is?” Stupefied I said..."Duh! It’s when a man and woman kiss a lot.” My mom smiled and patted me on the head, “Not exactly, but close! Good for now.” In third grade I was asked again, but this time I was given a more honest answer. “It’s when a man and a woman get together and he sticks his penis in her vagina.” Horrified I screamed...come on, how is that remotely close to kissing?

I have to admit that even now in college, I feel uneasy when one of my parents will bring up the topic. I feel like it’s a constant dance. We always tiptoe around it, not wanting to linger too long in fear of burning our toes. We try to avoid it in order to save ourselves from future awkward turtles and unpleasant visual images. It goes both ways, though. Even if parents may ask us the dreaded questions, it’s better to give a neutral non-inclusive answer. For parents, visualizing their kids getting it on is just as appealing as us visualizing them - not at all!
By truth I mean your truth, which is relative compared to your neighbor’s truth. “Do I look fat in those jeans?” your roommate might ask after eating a few chocolate donuts and coming back from her beloved Weight Watchers meeting. “No you really don’t,” you might reply after reflecting on whether or not it is a good idea to point out the truth. It might seem appropriate, especially if you run the risk of irritating someone who knows where you sleep, to tell an inoffensive white lie. While the instinct of self-preservation is admirable here, the truth that your friend might want to slow down on the donuts might be more beneficial to her, you and society as a whole in the long run.

In fact, being honest is a quality we all need to develop, as many have forgotten the meaning of it altogether. Society tells us it’s okay to tell “white lies,” but is it? Or as Amy Poehler and Seth Meyers put it on Saturday Night Live, “Really! Really? Really!” Look where it has gotten our society by allowing people to tell white lies. It seems the problem facing our society is a lack of ethical conduct. Just look at all those crying CEOs, asking for the tax payer to bail them out with one hand while giving bonuses to their friends with the other. They may have started out telling white lies, but they lost their ethical compass along the way.

So tell me, is it so innocent now to start off by lying to your roommate about her bottom? If she did not want an honest opinion she would not have asked you, and if she does not like the answer she can refrain from asking you next time. See how good it feels to tell the truth?

But there are harder truths to be told. Those that we need to face in order to keep humanity alive, for example. Can I tell my friend that he does not need the new iPhone, and that yes he can walk to the grocery store a quarter mile away? The truth is: we all need to change our habits and we can do a little to change a lot. The truth is you should tell anyone whatever you want as long as you are respectful. In the olden days they used to call it tact. Associated with the truth it can be a powerful tool.

Your mission is not easy but it could end with good results: you might just save your roommate from embarrassment, or make one small step towards saving the planet. If the truth you have to tell is a bit of a burning issue though, remember that tact can get you a long way. If your issue is to tell your brother that his SUV is the reason we are in Iraq, you might want to phrase it so that he will listen to what you have to say. Telling the truth is not easy but it will get you somewhere if you know how to package it. So, you could tell your Hummer-loving brother the following: “I guess someone as successful as you can afford 10 miles per gallon but I like my bicycle, plus I get a work out.” And add, “I know you would enjoy being part of the solution against global warming.” There are no lies here, maybe a little sucking up, but if your brother has a Hummer, he probably is successful at something!

Telling the truth feels good. It’s as simple as that. Think how much better you would feel if you could tell your friends and family how you really feel. All that is possible if you just use tact! No more hiding your opinions to keep someone happy. No more pretending.

Following these simple guidelines will put you and your loved ones in a better, less frustrating position. Maybe you will start a trend that will reach the most corrupted areas of the world and end world hunger and global warming. After all as Gandhi said “Be the change you want to see in the world.” So go ahead and be that change!
In the age of Smart phones, Blackberries, and iPhones some of us find it difficult to part with our cell phones for more than five minutes at a time. Without the constant guarantee of immediate contact with any one of our friends or family members, we simply feel naked. At this point it’s too late for us to reverse the serious addiction that we experience towards our cell phones, but it isn’t too late to manage it politely and correctly.

No-No Number One: Break-up texting

Come on! Despite the fact that you might not like them anymore, no one deserves to be broken up with via text message. Since you were going out at one point, it’s assumable that you used to like them and this means that they deserve to be treated better. The least you can do is call them, and even that isn’t a great way to do it. The best break-up method is definitely in person, even though it requires more effort than the other possible methods, it’s worth it to the person you’re breaking up with.

No-No Number Two: Conversation texting

So you’re hanging out with your friend and she’s telling some long story that you stopped listening to 3 minutes ago. As your mind wanders you remember that you meant to ask your other friend to go to lunch later today; without thinking you pull out your cell and begin to text them. STOP! It might not mean much to you, but it could be taken as very rude by your friend who is telling the story. If you absolutely can’t wait until after the story ends, then at least let your friend know what you’re planning on doing with a quick, “Hey, hold that thought, I have to send a quick text”. You could save yourself a lot of drama this way.

No-No Number Three: Dual texting

I know that you often text more than one person at a time, and usually end up having to type your message fast while trying to hide your cell phone from your professor, but you should always remember to check who you’re sending it to! Its really awkward when you and one friend are texting about another friend who you’re also texting, and you switch the messages by accident by hitting ‘reply’ to the wrong message and say something like, “ugh, she’s still talking to me! Like I care about her and her stupid boyfriend” to the girl who is talking to you about her boyfriend. Just check the ‘To:’ box before hitting send and you’ll be able to avoid a simple texting mistake.

No-No Number Four: Teacher texting

Although they might have given you their cell phone number and it might seem more convenient to just send off a text message than risking a possibly awkward phone conversation or having to take the trouble of writing them an email, it is not a good idea. In this situation, you should definitely take the extra time to send an email or call them. This will show them that you are responsible, polite, and that you respect them.

If you steer clear of these four taboos of texting, then you should have no problems texting confidently and happily to all of your chosen friends and family members. Now all you have to worry about is going over your allotted text messages per month and having to pay an exorbitant amount of money to your cellular provider.
We’re not sure if anyone else has seen a recent rise in the number of skinny jean-wearing girls and guys, but if you’re fretting over how to fit in with this unique social group, don’t hesitate. We have all, or at least some, of the answers right here.

1) **Start with a handkerchief tied around your neck.**
Preferably, a plaid handkerchief but any will do. Simply wrap it around your neck and tie it loosely. Wear this to class, to the bar (a.k.a. Home Grown), to dance parties and anywhere else you might be in the company of fellow hipsters.

2) **Stop showering. Now.**
Girls might worry about their hair getting out of control, but don’t worry, because a true hipster girl will simply decide to dreadlock her tresses. When your mom freaks out because her daughter’s beautiful blonde hair is now greasy and she’s starting to look like a Gossip Girl version of Whoopi Goldberg, tell her you’re doing it to save water and help the environment. If you start to really get an unpleasant odor and people in your classes are beginning to complain, then you know that you’ve truly become a hipster.

3) **Listen to “obscure” music that no one else but your fellow hipster friends has heard about.**
Examples: The Faint, Of Montreal, TV on the Radio, MGMT, Broken Social Scene, mewithoutYou, The Appleseed Cast, Minus the Bear

4) **Start riding your bike everywhere.**
We’re not talking mountain bike here. Raid your parents’ or grandparents’ garages to find that bike your mom rode in 1977. If you’re a girl and you’re going to need to tote around your hipster messenger bag, then add a fashionable basket to the front. Once you’ve acquired the right bike, be sure to ride it to parties, out to dinner with friends, to doctor’s appointments, concerts, etc.

5) **Become a vegan.**
Don’t do it to stop the killing of animals or for health reasons, just do it so that you can become as grossly skinny as every other hipster. In fact, just stop eating. Learn to subsist off of cigarettes and Pabst Blue Ribbon.
6) **Start smoking.**
As aforementioned, cigarettes will be the staple of your diet. Yes, cigarettes are a vice and terrible for your health, but you are going to look incredibly and unfortunately awesome nonetheless. Inspiration: James Dean, A Rebel Without A Cause.

7) **Glasses. You need glasses.**
In the event of perfect vision, buy a fake pair. The typical style harkens back to the Buddy Holly days. Large, square, black-rimmed glasses are all the rage and pair perfectly with the newsboy caps or beanies also prevalent among the hipster crowd.

8) **Embrace every form of plaid you have ever seen.**
Plaid can be incorporated into any aspect of an outfit: shirts, pants, shoes, and even hair accessories. And don’t be afraid of color- even the “scotch tape” plaid is back (the age old red, yellow, black and white).

9) **Vests go with every outfit.**
Vests provide a perfect combination of casual and classy. It will add a little something to every outfit while highlighting a slender silhouette. Wear a vest with jeans for an everyday comfortable yet chic look. For a more polished look, add black pants (tight of course) or a skirt. If you really want to go crazy, don’t wear anything underneath.

10) **You are not actually a hipster. You transcend labels.**
No one actually classifies themselves as hipsters. Therefore, the hope is that this collage of observations will not offend the hipster subculture of America. The trends have become all the rage these days. Please, carry on. We aren’t making fun; we are just looking forward to what comes next.
To most of us, the terms “organic,” “cage-free,” and “all-natural” mean just one thing: expensive. And unless your parents’ plastic is paying for it, most environment-friendly products won’t make it into your routine. Avoid the costly organic feeding frenzy and follow these tips for a healthier, cheaper way to live sustainably.

1. Use some natty elbow grease. Look in the baking aisle of your grocery store for natural cleaners that don’t contain ammonia, bleach, or other harmful chemicals. Try vinegar (a natural degreaser), lemon juice, and baking soda (a deodorizer). Your hands will thank you!

2. The REAL herbal essence. Both commercial and professional shampoos strip your hair of its natural oils, and ravage it with substances like silica (those DO NOT EAT packets at the bottom of your new shoes), parabens (endocrine disruptors), and benzyl alcohol. Not only are these substances harmful to you, but they end up in our water supply (and hence, in pretty much everything else). Homemade shampoo contains only one part castile soap (made from naturally saponified oils) and three parts brewed herbal tea. Rinse with diluted apple cider vinegar to restore your hair’s pH balance and remove excess oils.

3. Let the strong survive. In other words, ditch the paper and flimsy plastic bottles, but save glass jars, coffee cans, and sturdy plastic containers to fill as needed. Items like rice, flour, tea, pasta, and even honey can be purchased loosely, allowing you to choose how much you want to purchase. (Three ounces of green tea? Why not?) Surprisingly, these items are often far cheaper by the pound or ounce than their brand-name counterparts on the shelves. Check the nearby Newark Natural Food Co-op (www.newarknaturalfoods.com) for local pricings.
4. FOR THE LADIES: buy a Diva Cup! Tampons can cost upwards of $8 per box, which adds up to a lot of dollars and a lot of waste. Made of soft silicone, the Diva Cup ($32) lasts for 10 years, and is far healthier for your body than a bleached-cotton tampon. See www.divacup.com for more details.

5. Get back to your roots. Ready-made products like sauces, soups, and dips can be costly and, for anyone like me, who has eaten an entire tub of hummus in one sitting, not enough. It may take a little extra time out of your day, but a homemade tomato basil pasta sauce will be well worth the effort, for both your bank account and your palette.

6. Double up. The cleaning products above all serve multiple functions, as does shea butter (lotion, chapstick, leather conditioner; must be 100% shea), almond oil (cooking, moisturizer), and cornstarch (cooking, liquid absorbent). Check out www.swansonvitamins.com for more earth-friendly products.

7. Go in for the long haul. Done right, buying high-quality goods should be an investment. Instead of cheap, floppy notebooks and folders, buy thicker, sturdier ones that will last you through a year or more. Avoid thinned-out lotions (they often come in bottles with pumps and contain mineral oil), and look for dense creams that will last longer, such as Burt’s Bees Beeswax Hand Cream. Buy a coffee maker with a built-in filter, or a metal in-cup tea strainer.

8. Be your own apothecary. Without erasing the doctor’s phone number from your contact list, try your hand at some homeopathic remedies. Substances like pseudoephedrine and acetaminophen can elicit that “zombie” feeling commonly associated with allergy and cough medicines, and do not actually help with curing either of these ailments. Try using a neti pot for clearing nasal cavities, consuming immune system-boosters like grapefruit and echinacea supplements, and getting some exercise (sweating out toxins is not a myth). [NOTE: if you are seriously ill, please see a doctor! Forget the neti pot!]
When you think about Seattle, you might think about rain, Grey’s Anatomy, or the Space Needle; but I bet you don’t think about the city underneath Seattle. Yes, when you walk on the streets of Seattle, you are actually walking on top of the remnants of the original city.

Wait, what? Yeah that’s what I said when my parents told me we were going to tour the Seattle underground on our next trip to Washington State. So, a little history: Seattle was founded by two brothers in the 1850s as a logging town. The new city was built at sea level, which proved disastrous. Flooding and mud holes were common and sewage that had been dumped into the bay would come back into the city when it flooded. Toilets could only be used during low tide otherwise when someone flushed sewage would come out of the toilet instead of flushing it away because the pipes were filled with water from the bay. Even worse, some mud holes got so bad that small animals and, in some cases, children drowned in them.

In the summer of 1889, a great fire engulfed 25 city blocks and nearly leveled the city. Instead of concentrating on the tragedy, locals decided to use this as an opportunity to rebuild their city one or two stories higher, depending on the location, in order to avoid the flooding that had been plaguing the city. The streets were raised first, leaving the sidewalks one story or more below the street. People were forced to climb ladders just to cross the street. Some merchants moved up to the new street level while others stayed on the ground level. The reputable businesses that remained underground finally moved up to the new city in the early 1900’s when the underground was condemned in fear of the bubonic plague due to the high rat population. All that remained underground was an ideal spot for various illicit activities and illegal
businesses. Today, the underground inhabits the basements of present day businesses and is only open to tour groups.

We took our trip beneath the city with “Bill Speidel’s Underground Tour”. The tour began in a restored saloon where our guide explained Seattle’s history. Then we took a short walk over to the entrance to the underground. We went down a narrow staircase into what seemed more like a war zone than a former city. If it wasn’t for some of the furniture left over, you could barely tell that businesses used to operate in the abandoned rooms. However, there are some places that contain the remnants of civilization. In one room you can see an old storefront, complete with bricks and window frames. In one corner there is an old toilet and sink still attached to the wall. Some places are filled with debris from the great fire. The tour showcases many parts of the underground in all conditions. Some rooms you can walk around in freely and touch everything while in others you have to explore from a wooden walkway.

As with most creepy abandoned places, the underground is rumored to be haunted. Our tour guide took us into what used to be a bank and instructed us to look down into the old bank vault. Apparently, a clerk was murdered there during a robbery and his ghost haunts the area. Due to the condition of the underground, it can be difficult at times to imagine it as a flourishing city. But artifacts found in rooms along the way help to breathe life into the place. There is old clothing, furniture, a cash register, traveling trunks, a school desk and much more. Interestingly, in order to light the underground panels made of little translucent glass squares were installed into what is the present day sidewalk. If you stand under one long enough you can see the shadows of people walking on the sidewalk above.

The tour ends in a museum that houses even more artifacts and gives you an opportunity to learn more about Seattle’s history. What I thought was just a cold, rainy city way out West actually has a fascinating story to tell. If you’re ever in the Seattle area, be sure to tour the underground. And from now on, when you think about Seattle, don’t forget about all the history that lies beneath the sidewalk.
As a spring semester senior with no real job experience (or any sort of pertinent skills for that matter), the time has come to line up with the few million other college seniors and race to that career-studded finish line. However, with graduation day rapidly approaching, the economy has been turning its besmirched nose up to us almost-recent grads. Since America’s financial system has given a pretty hard steel-toed kick to any aspiring designer/writer/editor (or combination of all of the above) I am forced to reconsider my immediate life goals.

What is a fairly competent, slightly skillful 21-year-old English major to do?

Teach? I think not. Although this very reputable career choice is a favorite suggestion among relatives at each and every family gathering, I feel as if I set out four years ago in my Arts and Sciences education with something different in mind. My semi-lucid Great Aunt Alice is one of the few members of my family who understands my disinterest in the education of young minds. Although in place of teaching she too has ignored my literary dreams. Aunt A. recently suggested that I use my typing skills to go into stenography. Typing skills? Everyone has typing skills Aunt Al. Stenography? Not the creative career I fantasize about. Whenever I ask why stenography, she just looks at me, takes a sip of her vodka and soda, and mumbles something about marrying rich, wonders what my name is and asks for another twist of lime.

Obviously Great Auntie Alice is not a reputable career counselor. However, her peculiar suggestion sparked an idea. Taboo jobs, even in a struggling economy, must still be looking for wacky, offbeat recruits.

Taboo: anything offensive, bizarrely innovative, smelly, ugly, weird and thoroughly objectionable. Although the monotony of stenography is anything but taboo and certainly not innovative, it was Auntie A. that set me off on my search for the perfectly preposterous profession.

My atypical professional choices thus far:

Cheese Sprayer

Sounds exactly like what it entails. I would stand in a room with a very delicate cheese-filled hose and spray perfect layers of cheese (cheddar, parmesan, gruyere…) on gourmet popcorn. I would also be responsible for the thermostatically controlled melting and mixing of said cheese. Really what could be more
perfect than a job that combines my love of gooey, delicious dairy products with the enjoyment of spraying stuff with a hose?

### Odor Tester

B.O., a body-related taboo. Lucky me, I could spend eight hours a day (plus overtime) sniffing armpits to make sure that Arrid XX is working as it should. Before I sign a contract to give up my nose to research, I need to know whom I’m agreeing to smell: out of work Axe models? Or extra sweaty sumo wrestlers? Either way, Odor Tester is my quadruple fall back (hopefully my career in thermostatically controlled cheese works itself out.) A similar job to the regular old Odor Tester is the Breath Odor Tester. I’m not sure which would be worse, working with smelly pits or constant fish breath. Regardless, next time you swipe on that Dove Invisible Solid, think of the down and out twenty-something that sacrificed her olfactory system for your dry (and razor-bump free) pits.

### Licensed Ocularist

Don’t get this confused with Ophthalmologist, a respectable medical profession. I won’t be prescribing any colored contacts, no, I will be painting artificial eyes. Ocularists give a whole new meaning to the term ‘visual arts.’ This career (which includes a hefty salary with benefits) requires a bit more training than the Cheese Sprayer gig. I would be made responsible for the fabrication of someone’s customized ophthalmic prosthetic. If I’m lucky maybe they’ll let me play with color and paint the hazel ones. At least I’ll be utilizing my Fine Art minor.

### Gold Reclaimer

Fancy right? Maybe. I would be checking dead bodies and old teeth for gold fillings, melting them down and preparing them for the sale to jewelers nationwide. Although family members of the corpse hire the Gold Reclaimer, I wonder if Mr. or Mrs. Deceased would have a problem with the postmortem theft of their dental work? Unfortunately for those miserly relatives a gold tooth is not worth as much as it sounds. The gold used in dental work is mixed with other metals for long-term stability and is worth less than 20 bucks. Too bad my reclaiming fee is MUCH higher. That’s karma for you.

### Chicken Sexer

No, not what you think. No chickens are sexually violated while performing this job. I would spend my days on the farm (dressed in a very chic plaid button-down and overalls) sorting through the newly hatched chicks, separating the males from the females. There are two ways to do this. Either I would take the time identifying pinfeather after pinfeather separating the longer (female) feather from the shorter (male) pinfeather or I would simply squeeze the feces out of the chick, opening their anal vent and delicately check for a male-definitive bump. The females, the desired sex, are then put on track for a lifetime of egg production, while the poor baby roosters are disposed of. I would love to spend my day playing with baby animals, however I’m not so sure if I can morally condone the slaughter of adorable little chicks. Suddenly odor testing is looking slightly more desirable.

A few other possibilities: Forest Fire Lookout, Egg Breaker, Condom Tester (not as much fun as it sounds, but does help prevent those sexual taboos: STDs and unwanted pregnancy), Brain Picker (literally, I would be using a sharp pick), or Ant Catcher (not an exterminator, I would dig up potential ant farm residents.)

I understand that this list is a bit far-fetched and realize that it has little to do with my goals to be in the literary field. However, the unemployment rate is at 8.1 percent; I am in no position to be picky. So I am going to think positively and send out my resume and cover letter to all hatcheries in need of a fresh-faced entry level Chicken Sexer. In fact, if I score an interview with the Cheese Sprayers, I shall consider my time spent as an undergraduate a success. As a prepared, knowledgeable Cheese Sprayer I will tip my cheesy hat to the University of Delaware and move up that cheddar career ladder.

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Navigating the Holiday Haze

By Sara Fabryka

Each year, a bunch of PA locals get together and drag a groundhog out of its hole at the crack of dawn. Every March 17th, people the world over drink green beer and wear “Kiss Me, I’m Irish!” shirts, regardless of their country of origin in honor of St. Patrick (patron saint of hangovers?). But what drives people around the globe to celebrate holidays that have seemingly no cultural, historic, or religious significance, especially in America? Who dictates when a holiday should be observed and what should be honored on that day? The mysteries of holidays explained...

The Breakdown

First off, let’s get the facts out of the way. We all know that there is a wide variety of holidays out there for celebrating whatever tickles your fancy. There are actually several categories that these holidays usually fall under – religious holidays (Passover, Easter, Kwanza and the like) are clearly linked to faith and various world religions. National holidays are determined by sovereign nations and territories based on events of significance to their history, like Australia Day down under. Secular holidays are observed internationally, many to mark events or people, but are not strictly holidays, are not associated with a specific faith, and time off work isn’t the norm (think Earth Day). There are ten holidays in the calendar year that merit a day off for workers, as established by Federal law, which are New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. day, Washington’s Birthday, Memorial, Independence, Labor, Columbus, Veterans, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Aside from these, employers tend to stick to the daily grind for their dutiful employees.

Constitutionally, there are no “national holidays” in the United States because Congress only has authority to create holidays for federal institutions. Instead, Federal Law allows the President to declare public holidays, while governors declare state holidays and mayors do the same for their cities. Most holidays fall under the column of “unofficial holidays,” not traditionally marked on calendars and created by groups or individuals primarily to promote a cause or recognize historical people or events. April Fool’s Day, Black Friday, and the increasingly popular “Talk Like A Pirate” Day are just a few unofficial, yet widely-observed holidays. Winter is the most abundant season for holidays, featuring Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Winter Solstice, Hanukkah, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Kwanzaa, New Year’s Eve, and New Year’s Day.
Media Mania

In retail stores, holidays appear to come earlier and earlier each year. Stores sometimes seem to cross the line, putting out Christmas decorations as early as August and Valentine’s candies on the shelves before New Year’s. Sadly, many holidays have become largely materialistic excuses to spend money on presents and decorations, earning them the title of “Hallmark” holiday. Frequently, the only factor keeping a holiday afloat is commercialism and clever retail schemes that consumers are highly privy to fall into. Valentine’s Day, for example, was originally observed in honor of two Christian martyrs, neither of whose stories contain any notion of romantic themes. Nearly every holiday has lost its original meaning and has instead morphed into a greeting-card occasion, often complete with flowers, gaudy dress, silly traditions, and embarrassing celebratory events.

A world without holidays? Sure, it exists. Jehovah’s Witnesses do not celebrate any holidays due to their belief that holidays are “pagan” in origin. They reject national holidays as well because they believe that by celebrating these holidays they are giving honor to man’s governments rather than God’s Kingdom. Religious dogmas aside, it’s nearly impossible to escape the massive media and commercial propaganda that inundates most of society with each passing holiday.

Make Your Own Holiday

If you still can’t find the holiday for you amid hundreds of culturally diverse holidays throughout the year, fear not. March 26th was proclaimed “Make Your Own Holiday” day by husband-and-wife duo, Thomas and Ruth Roy. Historically, the creation of holidays has largely depended on the clever ideas of everyday citizens. Though ideas for possible holidays may run amuck, it is wise to consider what makes a holiday...

What makes a holiday?

1. *An emblem.* Having some sort of mascot or symbol associated with your holiday is a must. What would Thanksgiving be without Tom Turkey, or Valentine’s day without red hearts and Cupid?

2. *Timing.* Timing is key for a holiday. What day, month, and season a holiday falls on is a determining factor in its success. For instance, you wouldn’t have Groundhog’s Day in the middle of June or Cinco De Mayo in March. Holidays that occur on weekdays are always a plus, because they give you an excuse to skip school or work.

3. *Food.* What makes a good holiday is good holiday eats. There’s candy galore on Easter, 4th of July barbeques, and of course, a traditional Thanksgiving feast. Whether it’s chocolates, hot dogs, or green beer, a holiday’s got to have an enticing menu to draw in cautious skeptics.

4. *A purpose?* Hardly. Now-a-days, just about anything can be a justification for celebration (Fat Tuesday, anyone?).

5. *People.* Have you ever celebrated a holiday on your own? It’s pathetic, frankly. So to achieve maximum success in your hand-crafted holiday, get a few friends in on the festivities. You never know – your holiday could catch on!
Until a small crowd of Americans flew into Australia to protest the killing and eating of kangaroos, I didn’t realize that it was such a big deal.

True, Americans wouldn’t eat the bald eagle, but that might be because they are rare and actually quite dangerous to catch. People do eat grizzly bears here occasionally, and that’s the only other uniquely American animal I can think of (many countries have squirrels and deer, sorry).

When in April 2008, the Australian government decided to cull 400 kangaroos in Canberra, some Australians were incensed. Strangely, however, a lot more Americans disliked the idea of killing an Australian symbol. Nobody would kill a koala or a platypus! Why a kangaroo?

Simple fact: there are a lot of them. They destroy farmer’s fences and fields and eat the grass meant for the sheep. They even threaten the existence of other native animals because they overgraze.

And they are delicious.

It’s an interesting meat to eat. Because kangaroos are so tough, you eat kangaroo meat very rare, so it’s practically red on the plate. It’s got a much stronger flavor than beef and goes well with mashed potatoes and peas. It is also quite nice sliced thin, chilled, and placed over Thai salad, an interesting concoction I was served as an appetizer this winter.

Greenpeace actually recommends eating kangaroo. It’s healthy for the environment. Since kangaroos are shot in the wild, they don’t take up pasture space and they are not cruelly bred for consumption. Also, eating the kangaroos farmers shoot to protect their lands mean that nothing is wasted.

The Americans who protested this practice cited Steve Irwin, who claimed that eating such an iconic Australian animal, which is featured on the Australian coat of arms, was wrong. “Killing any wild animal will never save it, no matter what anyone says,” Irwin said in an interview with Scientific American. Although Steve Irwin was possibly the most well-known Australian to many Americans, his views were that of an activist and zoo owner and not that of the average Australian or the Australian government. I think the Americans who protested probably expected more support from Australians than they received, but it is difficult to understand a country’s culture until you spend time there.

In my sojourns to the land down under, I’ve seen my fair share of living kangaroos and eaten a few cooked ones. I’ve also had the interesting experience of eating emu and crocodile. Whereas kangaroo you can get from the average supermarket and is served in a number of restaurants, emu and crocodile are more exotic and can be found in specialty butchers and aboriginal restaurants. My parents, hoping to instill their children with the full Australian cultural experience, took us to a small Aboriginally run place in The Rocks area of Sydney, where we had the opportunity to sample assorted Australian delicacies. Always willing to try new things, I obliged. I found I dislike emu, but it is alright when smothered in a lot of berry sauce. Crocodile tastes a lot like chicken and is often served in tater tot form. As with most meats, I didn’t really think about the animal it came from, other than wrongly suspecting that it would taste fishy from living in salt water so long. With its light and delicious flavor, I wouldn’t mind eating crocodile again.

And before you think all this is too weird, http://exoticmeats.com is the home of Exotic Meats USA, a company that proudly ships alligator, antelope, buffalo, caribou, crocodile, elk, frog, kangaroo, llama, rabbit, rattlesnake, turtle, wild boar, yak, ostrich, and many more to all 50 states. They even offer a plethora of recipes to satisfy any occasion, and a friendly “what exotic meats taste like” guide.

So next time you bite into that chicken or beef, think about all the other possibilities out there. Is it time you tasted something a bit more exotic?
BUFFALO WILD WINGS GRILL AND BAR
Restaurant Review by Jessica Sorentino

An all-American, all-time favorite sports bar/restaurant has just opened so close to campus it could be considered on campus. Buffalo Wild Wings opened in January on Elkton Road, literally, right next to the underpass to the Rodney and Dickinson Dorms.

With big, flat screen TVs lining the upper parts of the brightly painted walls, the relaxed environment provides a great place for students to grab a quick meal and catch up on their sports news and games.

Known for their “Blazin’ Challenge,” Buffalo Wild Wings specializes in different flavored and extreme versions of the typical hot sauce. For any given meal, a customer can choose from Sweet BBQ to Blazin’, or any of the twelve options separating the two.

As far as food goes, Buffalo Wild Wings is another regular sports bar. The menu includes starters, salads, sandwiches, burgers, ribs, and even a few desserts (I totally recommend the chocolate cake…so good and takes the fire away from the taste buds after dinner!) Also, the prices are completely manageable. For the amount of food, quick and friendly service and quality of the food (how exactly could you mess up a burger?) the restaurant does not overcharge.

The bar area is slightly separated from the dining area. The clean and open space does not give off the feelings of a dive sports bar, but follows the color schemes of the rest of the restaurant and even includes a jukebox.

Sadly, I can be called a regular at BWW. Every Wednesday, after classes, my friend Vicki and I go there for dinner. We get the same thing each time: the Sampler, which is so good: nachos (which I eat all of), chicken tenders with sauce of your choice (which Vicki eats), mozzarella sticks and onion rings. We’re usually full from that, but it doesn’t stop us from ordering our usual meals: I love the Honey BBQ Chicken Salad. It consists of chicken with Honey BBQ sauce, over lettuce with tomatoes, cheese, and salsa. Vicki invests in a Pulled Pork sandwich with Honey BBQ sauce and French fries. On the rare occasion that we’re still hungry, well, that’s where that delicious chocolate cake I mentioned earlier comes in.

For all of that food, we usually pay $25.00. That’s like, $12.50 each. Not bad…Buffalo Wild Wings is open Monday through Wednesday 11AM to 12PM and Thursday through Sunday 11AM-1AM. Go in and go wild!
In the 1995 film Empire Records, there is a scene in which the suburban poster child for rebellion peruses record store shelves. He conspicuously slips some CDs into his jacket. When confronted by an employee, he runs, only to be exploited over the store’s PA system. “To your left, you will notice a shoplifter being chased by night manager, Lucas. This young man will be caught and deep fried in a vat of hot oil and served to our first hundred customers. Just another tasty treat from the gang at Empire Records!”

This is how the Recording Industry Association of America, or the RIAA, wants the general public to see music piracy. To the RIAA, music piracy is shoplifting, stealing, something that is definitely morally wrong. However, while the average music consumer would not consider shoplifting a tangible CD from a store, an overwhelming amount of people regularly pirate music. Is the issue of music piracy really black and white?

According to a survey conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, roughly 35 million American adults use file-sharing software, and 26 million share files online. Can this many people really be as amoral as the RIAA makes them out to be?

Music piracy is definitely illegal, but not because it at all resembles stealing. Music piracy is classified as any form of unauthorized duplication or distribution of music including downloading, file-sharing, and CD burning. Ripping a CD onto iTunes? Illegal. That brilliant mix CD you made to introduce a friend to some of the finer areas of your music collection? Illegal. Have you ever searched for a music video on YouTube and found it with the audio muted? That’s because letting the song stream free on the internet without permission from a distributor is illegal. Music piracy is all about copyright infringement. The problem is that with the advent of the internet, we’re all infringing copyrights quite privately. The RIAA is having a hard time pinpointing our transgressions, so they’re panicking. They claim the music industry is doomed, that music piracy is directly affecting recording artists. While some musicians stand by this claim, others are calling the RIAA on their bluff. Apparently, the recording industry is the industry that’s killing music, but simply reducing power that recording industry have over music. With the way the music industry works, most musicians make little to no money from a record.
is often the number one goal of aspiring band or musician, record contracts don’t equal a profit. A record contract enables a musician to record and distribute their music. Steve Albini conducted a study in which he used a real world example to show the profit of a rising band in relation to its record company. According to Albini, the net profit a record company makes off of a record is approximately $710,000, while each band member makes a little over $4,000. It isn’t the record company’s responsibility to ensure that a band makes a living off of a release, only that the record company itself makes a killing.

Internet distribution and other recording technologies are making record companies obsolete, but musicians themselves are actually benefitting from music piracy. In fact, 75% of all artists profit off of piracy. Music piracy makes music more available to younger consumers without a steady paycheck, which has steadily increased an interest in music over the past few years. An increase in musical interest means an increase in concert ticket sales, which is where most of a musician's paycheck comes from. Also, the internet makes it easier for a rising band to get their music heard. Bands like Panic At The Disco and Boys Like Girls wouldn’t have found such success without music piracy and online distribution. Even songs that have become hit singles on the radio, like Jason Mraz’s “I'm Yours” and Sara Bareilles “Love Song” found success on the internet before they reached the airwaves. Music piracy is valuable to musicians because its a form of advertising. Songs and bands spread by word of mouth. People burn CDs for friends, send mp3s through IM clients, and rip CDs onto iTunes to spread the next big thing.

One band that has separated themselves from record industry games is Brand New. After a lot of trouble with their major label Interscope while recording their latest album, The Devil and God Are Raging Inside Me, they broke away and formed their own “label.” According to lead singer Jesse Lacey, Procrastinate! Music Traitors is more of an idea than an institution. The label exists to put out records of Brand New and other musicians they’re close with. For example, when Kevin Devine was dropped from Capitol, his latest album hit a dead end without a distributor. The album Put Your Ghost to Rest was promptly re-released by Procrastinate Records, just to make the album available to fans once again. Devine’s next album is set to release on another friend’s label, Favorite Gentlemen Records owned by Manchester Orchestra. Despite his recent involvement in the business aspect of music, Jesse Lacey still holds no grudges against music piracy. In a recent interview, he admitted to music piracy himself, and promised that as long as kids keep buying tickets to shows and wanting to experience the music with him and his band, that they can have the music for free. About the music industry, he says, “Why keep putting money from the actual piece of artwork into the hands of someone who really had nothing to do with the creativity when we can share it with everyone? And then hopefully make our living playing which we all want to do in the first place.”

Another band that has taken a different approach to distributing music, an approach that is almost in line with music piracy, is Radiohead. Radiohead released their album In Rainbows on the internet and gave fans the privilege of choosing their price. Fans could essentially download the entire album - legally - for free. Also, more recently, when Cursive’s still unreleased album leaked on the internet on March 1, 2009, Cursive quickly took action and made the album available for download on the internet for $1. They rose the price gradually as the release date approached until they reached retail price.

Perhaps if the recording industry makes some serious reforms, people will be more willing to spend their money on music again. Record labels can’t rely on the tried and true methods they’ve been using since they ruled the world in the fifties and sixties. Changes need to be made to the way they approach the music business. Maybe if bands start seeing more of a profit, if labels start being more supportive of the production process, if musicians and labels really start to work cohesively to make music a better industry, fans will be more generous. Perhaps if the RIAA stopped treating “pirates” as convicted murderers, if they stopped picking on poor college students to make an example out of, consumers would concede to their pleas. But for now, if you pirate your music, at least buy yourself some concert tickets instead. In the words of Jesse Lacey, “the idea of being a pirate is a great thing. Steal everything you can! Sometimes I wake up, and I wish people would stop paying for things from the people that own everything.”
If you were a Titanic fan waiting for closure from DiCaprio and Winslet then you might not enjoy Revolutionary Road. But if you want to see a movie about the hidden side of the American dream and way of life in the 50's then you will find it there.

The story is set in a 50's suburb where two idealist lovers settle down and end up living the cliché life that they despise. Winslet's character's idea of moving to France to escape a predictable life of boredom comes as a breath of fresh air for the couple who has to endure the envy of co-workers and neighbors alike. What happens next is exactly what you expect would happen to anyone trying to escape a life of monotony. They either stay or get out. I won't spoil it for you.

As far as the acting goes you will not be disappointed. The fights seem so real that you want to throw something yourself. The highs are so high that you feel the character's joy piercing through the screen. When the lights come back on at the end of the movie you too are left with the haunting existential questions the characters could not answer. What is happiness? Is this the life I am supposed to live? For a movie that is set in the fifties, Revolutionary Road asks questions that still need an answer today, questions that you will definitely ask yourself after watching it.