It wasn’t my intention to be particularly morbid when we decided on the theme “Good Things Gone.” I think this issue is not about death as much as it’s about remembrance. People are always saying that you fail to truly appreciate something until it’s gone. Well, this is a collection of those “I remember when” moments, like the luxury of holding a larger-than-average copy of Rolling Stone, the excitement of watching a US spaceshuttle launch, or the convenience of a 3 a.m. cheesefry run.

Sure, some of these subjects may seem more trivial than tragic, but death and its accompanying traumas will always have an element of subjectivity to them. What may be a catastrophe to a five-year old’s astronaut dreams, may be a blessing for someone who would rather have greater attention paid to earthly US concerns. We try to expose the sympathizer in all of our readers by covering a variety of things that are, for the time being, no more.

In addition to the main theme, we also have the colorful patchwork of ideas and opinions compiled within our “reviews” section. We’ve broadened our focus to include everything from school theater productions to inspirational anthologies. We’re not just music and movies anymore. But perhaps that highlights another bright side to our theme this issue: every end signals a change. And who’s to know what changes may very well be for the better? Maybe even the much better?

Either way, without trying to get too obnoxiously optimistic, let’s just say that ends aren’t always bad, especially when it allows us to write some pretty cool articles about them.

Thanks for reading.
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DECONSTRUCTION Winter 2008
A defining force in music journalism is undergoing a facelift.

After almost 40 years as the music magazine with the most unique layout and design, Rolling Stone will now look just like the rest of them. With glossy pages and a cover that is an inch shorter and two inches narrower, Rolling Stone is embracing change.

In its first issue with the new layout, which hit stores on Oct. 30, Barack Obama graces the cover. Continuing with the idea of change, editor Jann S. Wenner writes in the new issue, “Like the man we are featuring on the cover for the third time in seven months ... we embrace the idea of change. Not change for the sake of change, but change as evolution and growth and renewal, change as the kind of cultural renaissance that gave birth to Rolling Stone more than four decades ago.”

Fans of the magazine may yearn for the days of the past when finding Rolling Stone among a shelf full of every magazine imaginable was easy, but with this monumental change comes some perks. The magazine, which was once too big to fit into P.O. box-
es, will now be deliverable to these addresses (this includes dorms!), and each issue will have more pages. A drawback to having more pages, however, is that just like every other mainstream magazine, Rolling Stone will now have more pages to sell as advertisements.

The magazine will also be glued now instead of stapled and will feature more full-page photos, since each will now take up less space, according to an Associated Press article by Anick Jesdanun. And though the magazine has seen other redesigns in the past, none have been quite as drastic as this change in size and material of pages.

In a nation that has experienced every kind of change imaginable within just the past year, including an African-American presidential candidate and a female vice presidential candidate, the shrinking of a magazine might seem obsolete. But when it is a magazine that has given us an all-access pass to our favorite musicians, this change is phenomenal.

What would former Rolling Stone writers Hunter S. Thompson or Lester Bangs think of the magazine conforming to look like all of the other magazines in existence? One would assume they would understand Rolling Stone’s need to change with the times in order to make money, but I’m sure these two writers would also argue that a magazine as iconic as Rolling Stone shouldn’t have to conform to succeed.

As much as some readers of Rolling Stone might accept the redesign as a good thing, others might need time to adjust to it. This is a significant moment in the history of the magazine and, as silly as it may seem, it feels like America is losing something. Though publisher Will Schenck might say, “The size is a nostalgic element but not the iconic part of the magazine,” I believe the unique size and feel of the pages of Rolling Stone are exactly what has made it stand out from other music magazines. Yea, the writing is often controversial and could be argued to be the most important part of Rolling Stone, but it is also how each issue has looked up against all of those glossy magazines on newsstands across the United States that has made Rolling Stone what it is today.

So good luck to all of you in finding the new version of Rolling Stone on bookstore shelves these days among US Weekly and Seventeen and be sure to save your old issues so that one day you can reminisce on what used to be.
We all know somebody who wanted to be an astronaut when they grew up. Astronauts are basically the cowboys of the twenty-first century. They explore the final frontier, venture where no man has gone before, reach up to touch the stars – the clichés are endless. Children who don’t want to be firefighters, teachers, or princesses generally want to be astronauts. It has been this way since Kennedy promised the nation we would put a man on the moon.

Now, the era of the shuttle is over. President Bush has decided to shut down the space shuttle branch of NASA in 2010. Is this the end of American dominance in the space race? The end of many children’s dreams? Hardly. The end of the space shuttle is, in my opinion, one of the best things President Bush will leave us in his legacy.

There is an undeniable dark side to the exciting life of a space shuttle astronaut. Despite being in the career plans of thousands of small children worldwide, space shuttle flights are dangerous. In 1986, millions of schoolchildren watched the Challenger shuttle take off. They also saw it explode, mere seconds after leaving the ground, killing everyone inside. In 1995, the movie Apollo 13 told of ingenious astronauts and engineers who managed to rescue a doomed shuttle just minutes before the crew ran out of air – a very near catastrophe. In 2003, the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated upon reentry over Texas, killing all members of the crew.

That’s not to say I don’t appreciate the work the shuttles have done thus far. The purpose of space shuttle missions is to release communications satellites, probes, floating research laboratories, and space-walking astronauts, and to service the International Space Station. We need satellites for our communication, GPS devices, and military, and the pictures sent from missions have taught us about our world and our universe. Experimentation has shown us what the loss of gravity can do to our bodies, how the ozone layer works, and whether people can live for extended periods of time in space. Technologies such as MRI and CAT scans were invented for the space program, so shuttles promote a degree of technological advancement as well. I am thankful for all of this. But it is 2008. We have enough satellites in orbit for every person on earth to have GPS, satellite radio, and satellite TV. We don’t need to know more about the planets or the stars right now because they are no help to us. It’s nice to know how many rings Saturn has, but that is not worth the billions of dollars it takes to launch a telescope into space on a shuttle. The International Space Station is complete, and it is being run by the 14 other nations who have a stake in it. Why do we need our space shuttle program?

Space shuttles each cost about $1.7 billion dollars to build and $450 million to launch. Because of these high costs, there is little money for innovation, and the technology involved has not changed since the first shuttle flight in 1981. It is outdated, inefficient, and dangerous – better technology should be a first priority of NASA. But NASA is not the first priority of the average taxpayer. NASA is
funded directly from the yearly congressional budget, which means the money for it is either generated by the taxpayers or funded by increasing the national deficit.

Money and safety were factors in President Bush’s decision for the NASA space shuttle freeze but not the main influence. According to his “New Vision for Space Exploration” speech in 2004, the United States needs to return to the moon and use it as a launching point for missions far into the galaxy. In order to do that, we need cheaper, safer, and more modern space vehicles. Five years worth of funding that would have gone into shuttles will now be free for use towards new space technology. Bush wants Americans on the moon again in 2020, but he didn’t put a date on when he’d like the galaxy colonized. It seems very Star Trek. Unless we find another planet with water and air in our immediate vicinity, venturing further afield seems pointless.

The time during the freeze will be used as a chance to extend friendly relations to Russia. The United States will pay for rides on Russian spacecrafts and send inactive U.S. astronauts directly to Russia on a kind of human loan. This was a great idea until the Georgian-Russian crisis rolled around. Now tensions are higher than normal between Russia and well, everywhere else, and the memories of the heated space race are still in many Americans’ memories. The New York Times published an article on October 14th detailing life for the Americans in the Russian Star City. As recently as 10 years ago, the Russian government would spy on the American astronauts and bug their phone conversations. Bush is putting a great deal of faith in maintaining friendly relations with Russia, and I hope his faith is founded.

So, assuming another Cold War does not begin, Bush predicts the new space program will begin in 2015. NASA has commissioned a “Constellation” craft as the prototype of the new fleet. The slimmer, sleeker craft will have built-in safety features to quickly eject astronauts from the main rocket if problems should arise. NASA has also funded two private companies, Orbital Sciences Corporation and SpaceX, which are trying to make cheap, safe space travel possible for the commercial market. This NASA hiatus will give them a considerable advantage in the space business and will be informative and entertaining for those willing to pay several hundred thousand dollars for a bit of space tourism.

Bush said in an address to NASA, “We choose to explore space because doing so improves our lives and lifts our national spirit. So let us continue the journey.” The way to continue this journey is to stop it for a while. From 2010 until 2015, there will be no more space travel, and shuttles as we know them will never leave Earth again. Space may captivate and inspire scientists and capture the dreams of children, but it is also a risk-intensive and expensive endeavor that should not be taken lightly. Rest in peace, space shuttle. You shall not be missed.

Sources:
1. www.nasa.gov
Full Disclosure: All quotes were originally compiled by Jacob Weisberg, contributor to Slate.com and can be found in the Bushism of the Day column on Slate.

It being an election year, much of the focus is on the contending candidates. As we move closer to reigniting in the next president, we at DEconstruction think it is just as important to remember the legacy of one George W. Bush, our 43rd man in charge. But after many brain-storming sessions, we couldn’t agree on one solid approach. And the president himself has stated recently, “I don’t particularly like it when people put words in my mouth, either, by the way, unless I say it.” Then it occurred to us: why try and summarize eight years of Bush with our own words? And with that we bring you, Bush on Bush, in his own words.

What’s admirable about W, is his confidence. He has the look of a natural born leader and has always had a cowboy’s mentality when it comes to being President. On Iraqi militants attacking U.S. forces, he challenged, “my answer is bring them on.” Look at the cojones on George! And as far as the invasion of Iraq goes, he didn’t hesitate to say that “removing Saddam Hussein was the right decision early in my presidency, it is the right decision now, and it will be the right decision ever.” “Ever” is a pretty long time. And in the end he stands strongly by his decisions, emphasizing that, “I know what I believe. I will continue to articulate what I believe and what I believe—I believe what I believe is right.” So you can take your opinion and shove it, pundits!

But Bush is never narcissistic; he remains incredibly humble. As we see here, Bush shies away from the spotlight, modestly commenting that, “Our country puts $1 billion a year up to help feed the hungry. And we’re by far the most generous nation in the world when it comes to that, and I’m proud to report that. This isn’t a contest of who’s the most generous. I’m just telling you as an aside. We’re generous. We shouldn’t be bragging about it. But we are. We’re very generous.” (Not that it’s important, he just wanted you to know... $1 billion. That’s a lot). Besides humility, the other leadership quality he displays is trustworthiness. How many Presidents would let America into their personal lives? George does, revealing, “the people in Louisiana must know that all across our country there’s a lot of prayer—prayer for those whose lives have been turned upside down. And I’m one of them.” Such courage! “This foreign policy stuff is a little frustrating.” Such honesty!
What makes Bush fascinating to watch and listen to is his self-awareness. He is the rare person that is in touch with himself beyond what many of us could ever comprehend. “I’m the master of low expectations.” It’s always good to master something. “I’m also not very analytical. You know I don’t spend a lot of time thinking about myself, about why I do things.” As the President of the Free World, who has time for introspection? That’s what the media is there for.

Much of Bush’s allure is his philosophical, Zen-like manner in addressing the media. His quotes will live on forever on posters, t-shirts and the like. They may even become the mantra of an upcoming generation. “There’s an old saying in Tennessee—I know it’s in Texas, probably in Tennessee—that says, fool me once, shame on—shame on you. Fool me—you can’t get fooled again.” When asked about tribal sovereignty for Native American nations, his response was the following: “Tribal sovereignty means that, it’s sovereign. You’re a—you’ve been given sovereignty, and you’re viewed as a sovereign entity. And, therefore, the relationship between the federal government and tribes is one between sovereign entities.” I defy you to garner any meaning from that response! Any philosopher alive or dead would be in awe. Sometimes, Bush’s brilliance is too much for even him to handle, as witnessed here: “There’s nothing more deep than recognizing Israel’s right to exist. That’s the most deep thought of all. ... I can’t think of anything more deep than that right.” In the words of Keanu Reeves, Whoa.
We here at DEcon would be remised if we only focused on Bush the man, and not the President. So let’s examine some Bush policies.

**Taxes**
“Let me tell you my thoughts about tax relief. When your economy is kind of ooching along, it’s important to let people have more of their own money.” —Boston, Oct. 4, 2002. Hopefully with that money you can buy some cream to soothe that ooch.

**Energy**
“We need an energy bill that encourages consumption.” —Trenton, N.J., Sept. 23, 2002.

**Public Health**
“We’re concerned about AIDS inside our White House—make no mistake about it.” —Washington, D.C., Feb. 7, 2001. Don’t we have the NIH and Homeland Security for that?

**Health Care**
“Too many good docs are getting out of the business. Too many OB/GYN’s aren’t able to practice their love with women all across the country.” —Poplar Bluff, Mo., Sept. 6, 2004

**Homeland Security**
“I remember meeting a mother of a child who was abducted by the North Koreans right here in the Oval Office.” —Washington, D.C., June 26, 2008. Shouldn’t Secret Service have prevented that from happening?

And no Bush policy review would be complete without a look at

**foreign policy:**
“You know, one of the hardest parts of my job is to connect Iraq to the war on terror.” I wonder how many sleepless nights he’s had trying to figure this one out? On the reception
of American forces in Iraq, “I think we are welcomed. But it was not a peaceful welcome.” You know, it was that other, “get the F#$@ out of our country” type of welcome. In addition, “It’s in our country’s interests to find those who would do harm to us and get them out of harm’s way.” And by saving their lives, they’ll owe us and thus won’t harm us? “This notion that the United States is getting ready to attack Iran is simply ridiculous. And having said that, all options are on the table.” Nothing like a little foreign policy psych-out. And what does Bush think about our enemies overseas? “See, we love—we love freedom. That’s what they didn’t understand. They hate things; we love things. They act out of hatred; we don’t seek revenge, we seek justice out of love.” In Bush’s eyes, this is America acting as a parent to an unruly child-nation. This war is gonna hurt us more than it hurts you, Iraq.

All of this and more summarizes the eight years America has had under George W. Bush. It cannot be argued that he didn’t have a vision from the very beginning: “I want it to be said that the Bush administration was a results-oriented administration, because I believe the results of focusing our attention and energy on teaching children to read and having an education system that’s responsive to the child and to the parents, as opposed to mired in a system that refuses to change, will make America what we want it to be—a literate country and a hopefuller country.” And he was always the underdog; “They misunderestimated me.” So what’s Bush’s final word on Bush’s legacy? “I’ll be long gone before some smart person ever figures out what happened inside this Oval Office.” Truer words may never have been spoken.
The Total Demise of TRL

By Danielle Pro

I can still remember the first time I voted online for a video on TRL. It was for an Eminem song (it was a phase I went through in the seventh grade), and I was so proud of my extremely uncreative comment- “I love Eminem ‘cuz I’m the real shady-Danielle, DE.” I was convinced it was going to scroll across the bottom of the screen that day; I didn’t even blink for the entire hour I was waiting. Alas, my hopes were dashed and my moment of glory never came. I thought I was going to be forever scarred by this disappointment. Fortunately it only took a few days to ease the pain, but I will never forget the impact TRL had on my early teen years.

This year marks the 10th birthday of TRL, which is a surprisingly long run for MTV. Executive producer Dave Sirulnick publicly commented that the show is only going on a “break” and that after ten years on the air TRL deserves “a little bit of a rest.” Internet consensus reveals most people think this is a nice way of saying the program is dead and never returning to the airwaves. The last episode is slated to air on November 17 with a two hour send-off episode. Rumor has it Sirulnick is trying to compile a greatest hits show filled with boy bands and celebrity personalities.

I feel old and nostalgic reminiscing about my former years as a “teeny bopper” back when I religiously watched TRL. I remember actually caring about the outcome of the countdown. If my video wasn’t in the top three I would boycott the show for a few days. Oddly enough, looking back it was always the same songs in the countdown, so even if my song wasn’t the top video it was still in the countdown. Originally it took 65 days for a video to be “retired” as TRL coined it, and in those days I was relieved when they would finally stop playing the same videos, how many times could we watch the N*SYNC marionette dolls in the “Bye Bye Bye” music video? However, the show then started retiring videos after only 50 days and suddenly I began to feel robbed, somehow those 15 days made a difference, and I wanted to see more of the videos.

I also remember caring about the people. Carson Daly used to be my main squeeze. We would hang out for an hour each day, he would make jokes, I would laugh, and it was fun. Then there were the other VJ’s who made the show worth watching. Jesse Camp was the coolest person ever. Jesse was the first winner of the contest Wan-be a VJ, and he even beat Dave Holmes, who would later become a VJ anyway. It was the first time I had ever seen anyone with a total reckless abandon of style, particularly in the hair department. I never expected that voice to come from that guy, and I never knew what he was going to wear or say, but I loved every minute of it. I also remember when Hilarie Burton, an NYU student at the time, won the opportunity to interview musical artists on the red carpet of the VMA’s. She was interviewed on TRL the next day, bad mouthed Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, and was then asked to stay on the show full time. As a teenager I remember thinking I wanted her life. I figured I would one day be in college and that could be me.

When I heard TRL was going off the air my first response was shock -shock that the show was still even on the air. I erroneously assumed that when I lost interest in the show it disappeared. While it was years ago, losing Carson Daly
was the start of the demise of TRL. I have no idea where they found Daly, or who he was before he ascended to pre-teen idolatry, but I remember thinking he was a real bad-ass, especially with that one painted fingernail. After Daly left the show to host a late-night program, it never quite felt the same.

Another precursor to the downfall of TRL is the fact that they never actually played music videos. My thirteen-year-old self used to curse the show when I waited the whole hour to watch the number one video and only got to watch fifteen seconds. But then again, when I was thirteen I was not as well acquainted with YouTube. Now, any music video is only a click away, no more waiting through an hour of pointless programming to watch only a snippet of a video. I don’t want to blame the internet for every modern day problem, but it certainly isn’t helping TRL’s ratings.

Speaking of ratings, I propose MTV should change the name of the network and stop masquerading as a television outlet even mildly concerned with music. Today’s MTV programs are staged dating shows and “unscripted” reality shows filled with drama and cliff hangers. Change is inevitable; no one is blaming MTV for going with programs that will get better ratings. Perhaps TRL closing down will allow MTV to see that they are not a music network any longer.

This whole trip down memory lane has been a long goodbye. In a way I am letting go of the teenager in me once and for all. While it is easy to condemn what TRL, MTV, and everything else that made up the teenage culture of my time has become, I can not forget what these things have provided me. TRL introduced me to music that at the time I relished, and it was a constant companion for an hour of my day, everyday. So thank you TRL, thank you for all of the memories you have provided over the years. I’m sorry for your sudden death, but you had a good run and I am glad I was a part of it.
A couple of years ago, the University of Delaware Figure Skating Team joined forces with Korner Diner owner Kazy Tauginas, and started a tradition of successful fundraisers. The night before Halloween, the team got together one last time to dress up, have fun, and, of course, waitress a little to raise some money. All of us, along with other organizations who have benefited from the popular diner fundraisers, will greatly miss the times we have had waitressing and partying with our friends and other customers.

The Korner Diner officially closed for renovations on November 1st, leaving many students concerned about the future of their meals on Main Street. It is undeniable that the Korner Diner has filled a niche on Main Street that renders it irreplaceable. Where else can customers enjoy good music, a wide range of reasonably priced food, and an awesome staff, all conveniently available twenty four hours a day? I am personally very concerned about the lack of late-night milkshakes and grilled cheese available to me for the next few months.

While it seems the Korner Diner will most likely open again, it might never be the same. The current owners of the property will remain, and despite the six apartments added in the back, the dis-
tinctive storefront should be expected to change very little. To someone looking for off-campus housing next year, the addition of six apartments in a convenient location seems very favorable. However, Kazy Tauginas and his beloved staff will be gone. When asked whether they would ever return to work at the newly renovated diner, several employees replied that they would not consider the job. All of the booths, mugs, and stools will be new. The kitchen will be improved, and the diner will be wheelchair accessible. Perhaps some of these superficial changes will be refreshing, but with the change in the ownership of the business, the Korner Diner will lose some of the magic that has helped it retain some very loyal customers. Maybe the spirit of the Korner Diner will survive the renovations, but the sight of the stools detached from the floor and the front door unhinged left me with a very strange feeling when I stopped by one last time right after closing.

The closing of the Korner Diner is only part of the rapid change that has taken over Main Street through the past few years. Although the loss of some popular businesses has been lamentable, the opening of new places like Cosi has certainly given the transformation of Main Street a positive spin. At this point, any protest to the closing of the Korner Diner would be as futile as attempting to block four lanes of traffic with one little orange cone. We cannot know the extent and nature of all of the alterations yet, and whether or not the identity of the diner will be completely compromised. Our only option will be to hope for the best in the reopening of the diner presumably some time next year, and to do our job by dancing on the new tables to restore the old atmosphere.
Magazines used to be one of the best ways for girls to get their fashion, dating, and “girl stuff” news on the go. There were so many different choices that every girl had a favorite and usually, a subscription to one. Now, in the day where everything is being published online and distributed mainly by way of technology, what is happening to the magazines?

After the June/July 2006 issue of Elle Girl magazine, Filippacchi Media Production decided to shut down the magazine. However, the website is still up and running. In the following month, September 2006, Time Inc. did the same with their Teen People magazine. That website closed down in April 2007.

Now, in a statement put out by Hearst Publishing Company on October 10, 2008, it was announced that they are closing down their CosmoGirl! magazine after the December 2008 issue is released to the newsstands on November 11, 2008. Hearst, for those who, like me, don’t know corporations, publishes over 600 different print and media outlets, including Cosmopolitan, O Magazine, Allure, and Good Housekeeping.

CosmoGirl! will no longer be in magazine form; you’ll only be able to get it online. Don’t worry, though, if you’re a CG! fan, the magazine isn’t officially ending. Hearst is just combining it with Seventeen, their other teen zine, which is the number one selling teen magazine in print today. People with subscriptions to CG! will begin getting Seventeen in January 2009.

Here’s how the decision to close a print media works: Advertisers pick where they want their ads by what sells the most off of the shelves of the newsstands. For CosmoGirl!, circulation had dropped 18% in the past year, therefore they weren’t picking up any advertisement deals. The amount of ad pages dropped about 15% because of this, and believe it or not, ads are where the magazines get most of their money. Hence, it makes sense to put the magazine out of print, which is costly and oftentimes not very profitable, and focus on ones that are successful.

The staff of CG! isn’t screwed too badly in this decision. The producer, Vicki Wellington has been reassigned to Hearst’s new Food Network Magazine. The Editor-in-Chief Susan Shulz will stay on the Hearst staff to work in Special Projects.

Word on the street is that if another magazine closes, girls, don’t worry. Judging solely by the fact that issues have gotten increasingly thinner, it may almost be time to say good-bye to…Men’s Vogue.
In 9th grade, I didn't have the heart to break up with my boyfriend to his face (I hate confrontation) so I emailed him one night. Every day after school he would come up to me and hug me and I would know that he hadn't checked his email that day. This went on for a solid four or five days and then he stopped coming up to me. I'm assuming he finally read the email.

*I broke up with my boyfriend days before our one year anniversary...* I said, "I have something important to say to you." He said "Me too!" and pulled out this beautiful silver promise ring for me... I still broke up with him.

I was a sophomore in high school and riding my bike in the park. I saw my ex boyfriend also riding around. He started chasing after me on his bike so I started riding away as fast as I could... I rode past these huge metal trash cans but he slammed straight into them! There was this huge metallic "clang" sound that echoed for blocks. I rode away laughing.

*My boyfriend didn't tell me that he was going to college in Poland. I found out from my parents who heard it from his parents. Apparently he had known for some time and just “forgotten” to mention it.*

Awkwardly Abominable Breakups

My girlfriend of 10 months wanted to dance with lots of boys during the prom, so she broke up with me the day of! Then she went crazy all night, dancing up on guys... and then asked me out again right after the prom so that we’d be together for Senior Week. I said yes, but only after making out with one of her friends as revenge.

My first boyfriend broke up with me via text message. He claimed it was because I’d said I didn’t like the phone. Obviously breaking up with me in person wasn’t an option....

My boyfriend of a year surprise-visited me on Valentine’s day. He decorated my dorm room in red and pink, brought flowers, balloons, chocolates and a homemade dinner. I broke up with him the next day over the phone while he was on the 11:00 Amtrak home. He then angrily stalked me for the following 6 months. Whoops.

I get a call from my boyfriend's best friend, and the conversation went something like this:

"Hey, is this * * * ?"
"Yeah?"
"Hi, this is Chris. Tommi's friend."
"Heyyy..."
"So, um, you know how you're like, dating Tommi?"
"Yeah."
"Well, he asked me to call to tell you that he doesn't really want to anymore."
"Oh, okay."
"He says he's sorry."
"Oh, okay."
"Well, um, bye."
"Bye."

Till then, the most we'd done was slow-danced at a middle-school dance and hugged when the song was over. We were only dating for 2 weeks or so (I told my friends it was for a whole month because he was cute and I figured I wasn't hurting anybody by rounding up). It was 8th grade. These things happen, I suppose.
Holiday gift ideas

by Evie Hayman

It's that time of year again... the holiday season has once again reared its glitter-filled, red and green head. While the holiday season can be a really fun time, it can also be a source of a lot of stress. Worrying about getting the perfect gift for everyone on your list can keep you up at night. Well, no more! The following websites feature a wide variety of gift options that are college-budget friendly. All you have to do is click “add to cart”.

verabradley.com: What girl doesn’t love Vera Bradley? These gifts are always popular among the female crowd of any age. Vera Bradley’s cute designs are always the perfect accessory. If you are looking for something more inexpensive, smaller items such as the cosmetic bag are a good fit. If you are looking to spend more, there are a plethora of quality bags to choose from in a variety of colors and styles.
Price: under $10 to over $100.

allthera-geonline.com: This online jewelry store has hundreds of earrings, necklaces, pins, rings and more to suit anyone’s style. The designs are frequently featured in many women’s magazines such as ELLE and Marie Claire. This is a great gift idea for the jewelry fanatic on your list.
Price: $5 to up to $50.

bathandbodyworks.com: Online or in store, Bath and Body Works has a collection of awesome beauty products in almost every scent imaginable. The collections also come in little themed sets that make great gifts. Sets can include body wash, body lotion, a candle, perfume and more depending on how much you want to spend. You can also purchase individual beauty items.
Prices for beauty gift sets: $10 to $60.

NFL.com, MLB.com and NBA.com: For some of the guys out there, life just wouldn’t be complete without sports. So feed their obsession with some gear to support their favorite team. You can get cufflinks, ties, sweatshirts, jerseys, bedding and even shower curtains sporting his team’s logo. You can also custom design a shirt or jersey just for him.
Prices: $5 and up.
ebay.com: Looking for something really specific and just can’t find it? It’s probably on eBay. This website basically gets you whatever you want at the lowest price. This is a great place to look for unique or antique items or just to get a lower price on a new item. You can either bid on a gift or in some cases just buy it outright. You do have to register to use eBay, but it is easy to use and it’s totally free for buyers. Definitively bookmark this site on your favorites list for the holiday season. Price: $0.01 and up.

moviesunlimited.com: A good movie is generally a fail-safe holiday gift. This website has pretty much every movie you could possibly want in any genre. Movies are also available for pre-order. Current popular films, old classics, and even some obscure titles are there for the taking. There are also concert DVDs and kid’s movies. Price: $8.99 for DVD’s on sale to over $100 for DVD collections, with most current movies costing around $20.

thingsremembered.com: Girlfriends are always tough to buy for. With this website, you can choose from a wide variety of quality pieces including jewelry, picture frames, keepsake boxes and more and have them personalized. Some items can be personalized with a message and others with just her name. Either way, it is a unique gift that she will definitely be happy to receive. Price: $5 to over $100.

magazines.com: If someone on your list has a favorite hobby, like knitting or fishing, there is a magazine out there just for them. This website offers discounts off newsstand prices for subscriptions. They offer magazines in categories ranging from telecommunications to farming. The recipient of this gift will be happy to see that you know them so well and even happier that a magazine exists dedicated to their hobby. Price: $5 to over $50.

So take a deep breath, there is nothing for you to worry about this holiday season. You know just where to get your gifts and all you have left to do is celebrate. As they say, it’s the most wonderful time of the year, so go out and enjoy it!
You will need:
- Assorted Metal Silverware
- Fishing Wire
- Scratched or otherwise worthless CD
- Hot Glue Gun or thick double stick tape

Optional:
- Beads
- Hammer
- Pliers

1. First, alter your silverware however you would like now. Most silverware will easily bend just using your hands, but a hammer and pliers may be necessary if you want to bend the prongs of a fork, for example.

2. Now, cut various lengths of fishing wire (these will be what your “chimes” hang from).

3. Run a small line of hot glue or piece of double stick tape (about 2 cm) on the back of the silverware handle. Next, wrap one end of a length of fishing wire around the top of the silverware and your adhesive. Repeat with all your pieces of silverware.

4. Now that you have your chimes ready to go, attach them to the CD, which will be your base. You can do this by threading the ends of your fishing wire through the hole in the center of the CD and around the sides, and then tying them. Experiment with tying the chimes at different lengths until you get an effect you like.

5. Your basic wind chime is now completed. At this point, you can decorate or embellish your wind chime using beads or other objects of your choosing.

6. Hang up your wind chime using the fishing wire, preferably in a location that needs some beautification, either visually or musically.
There used to be a small cauldron in Kent filled with like 50 mints by the card swiper. A boy on my floor walked out with the entire cauldron. We were eating them for months.

On one of Russell’s infamous cultural nights at the dining hall, there was a huge ice sculpture of a palm tree. One of my friends suggested aloud that it would be great to ice lounge off of, to which a dining hall worker responded, “It’ll be out back for you in five minutes.” It was.

My old roommate and I accidentally acquired a huge jug of Teriyaki sauce from Pencader Dining Hall. We opened it one night to taste it and it tasted awful so we just let it sit in the room for months. We debated taking it back to the dining hall, but we had already opened the bottle so that was out of the question. Instead, we dumped it into the toilet we shared with our suitmates. It was disgusting.

I found a big, beautiful button on the floor of the dining hall, and I loved it so much I decided to take it and save it, maybe to sew onto a hat or shirt. A few weeks later I visited home and my mom asked me when I wanted her to resew that button I had lost on my coat. I realized the button I was saving all this time was my own.

For our first drawing project, all the freshman art majors were assigned to draw fruits and vegetables. We all took the standard apples, oranges, and bananas, but it was tough not getting caught smuggling an entire cabbage out of Pencader!
Unlike most students at UD, I spent almost every weekend in October canvassing the streets of Pennsylvania, and more specifically those of West Philadelphia, for the Barack Obama campaign. Along with a small group of College Democrats, I walked countless miles and knocked on thousands of doors, not knowing that my steps would actually mean something come Election Day.

I began volunteering for this campaign before the primaries had even been decided and before Barack Obama was selected as the Democratic candidate for president. For some reason or another, Obama appealed to me more at the time than my own fellow Delawarean Joe Biden, and my family has yet to understand why I would have chosen any other candidate over Biden.

But I feel there’s something special in Barack Obama. I have incredible faith in this man’s ability to bring us together as a nation and move us forward. Obama believes in the 200-year-old ideals that shaped this country. Those timeless ideals that define the United States as a nation not of many people but of one people and ensure us that with the right leader our country can unite and prosper. America was created on the basis that those who seek liberty, justice and freedom would be welcomed with open arms, and Obama represents all three of these American values coming to fruition.

It’s difficult for me to express just how much faith I have in Barack Obama. I’ve never been one to embrace a presidential candidate, or really any politician, in the way that I have supported Obama. Maybe it’s his good looks. I mean, have you seen his smile? But good looks can only get one so far. There have been millions of articles and blogs about Obama, but I think Nas sums it up best with, “I think Obama provides Hope- and challenges minds/ Of all races and colors to erase the hate/ And try and love one another/ So many political snakes/ We in need of a break/ I’m thinkin’ I can trust this brotha.” And, you know what, Nas? I’m thinking I can trust this brotha too.

As Election Day loomed over our heads, I signed up with over 100 other UD students to travel to Philly that day and volunteer with the campaign once more. I must have walked to at least 1,000 homes just in the seven hours I was there, but the people I met and the stories I heard make it all worthwhile. Starting with the lady whose door I knocked on only to find out that she had stood in line at 7:00 that morning to vote to another woman who repeatedly thanked me for coming into her neighborhood to “Get Out the Vote”, I felt something special in America that day. Not only were UD students getting together to unite this nation, but Americans of all ages were doing their part, even if it was just touching that button in a voting booth.

By the time it was announced that Barack Obama had won Pennsylvania, I was in a state of shock. And after he won Virginia and those words crawled across the CNN marquis: “Barack Obama is elected the 44th President of the United States of America”, I lost all control and wept like a baby. After a grueling campaign filled with times of uncertainty in our nation’s ability to accept a black man as president, the United States had done something extraordinary.

Now, a couple of weeks later, as the excitement of his win begins to taper off and the anxiety about our economy is reinstated, all eyes will turn toward Obama. I cannot guarantee that this man will make the United States a better place, but if my time spent in West Philly is any indication, I can ensure you all that America really is ready for change and that this man is exactly the kind of change we need.
I would first like to start out by saying congratulations to Barack Obama and his win in the presidential election against Senator John McCain. It was evident from the beginning of this election, that Barack Obama’s appeal to all aspects of society was enormous. The record amount of money raised by Obama was a telling sign that Americans wanted change. Obama was very successful in reaching a hand to those in red states that made for an easy Electoral College win. To understand this election, it is important to address where John McCain went wrong, the president he would have been if he was elected, and finally how the Republican party moves forward from here.

After the pick of Sarah Palin to be McCain’s running mate, there was a sign of fresh air in the campaign. The Vice Presidential pick of Sarah Palin brought newfound energy and enthusiasm to the Republican ticket. For a short time, McCain surged in the polls as the excitement of Governor Palin took hold. Being the Governor of Alaska for only two years, Sarah Palin had more executive experience than Senators McCain and Obama combined. Her speech the morning of her nomination in Dayton, Ohio was very electrifying. However, as McCain’s early attacks on Obama dealt with his lack of experience, many started to realize that Palin was a heartbeat from the Presidency and she too lacked experience, especially on foreign affairs.

John McCain and Sarah Palin toured the country together, with a major focus on Pennsylvania. This was a state that President George W. Bush lost by only two percentage points in 2004. Thus McCain being more centrist than Bush felt he could win. McCain spent much time in Pennsylvania, which left out precious time that he could have been spending in must-win states. In the end, Pennsylvania did not pan out for McCain. At the same time, McCain lost states such as Ohio, Florida, Virginia, and North Carolina that went for Bush four years earlier. Perhaps too much time in Pennsylvania was McCain’s ultimate downfall because vital states were ignored, but you cannot fault the Senator for seeing the importance of winning the state.

McCain publicly announcing the pullout of Michigan was a deep blow as well. This was a state McCain was probably not going to win, but the decision to move resources out did not sit well. It seemed McCain gave up; this is not something the Maverick was known for doing. Sarah Palin publicly disagreed with the pullout of Michigan, which showed divergence between the two.

Moving on, I would like to focus on the president McCain would have been. McCain is the type of man who would truly reach across the aisle for the betterment of America. He loved this country dearly; serving honorably in Vietnam and spending over 5 years in a concentration camp, he knows what sacrifice is. McCain’s foreign policy experience would help to restore America as a powerful country that had the respect and admiration of other nations. He was right about the surge, and he was the candidate to work with the Generals on the ground to successfully win in Iraq and the overall war on terrorism.

Where does the GOP go from here? I believe the Republicans must look to a younger yet experienced candidate to take on Barack Obama in 2012. Republicans have not fared well with nominating Senators in the past, so my guess is the Republican nominee of 2012 will be a Governor. Some potential names to look forward to in 2012, obviously Governor Sarah Palin will be the leading female candidate if she chooses to run, but Governor Charlie Crist of Florida and Tim Pawlenty are strong possibilities. Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal is considered by many conservatives to be a rising star. The success or failure of Barack Obama’s first term will decide what candidate the GOP chooses in four years, until then; let’s unite as Americans to keep this the greatest nation on earth.
Tommy Barranca (center), a junior English major, dispenses sage advice every Friday on The Green.
There is no doubt that the University of Delaware is a large institution. There is also no doubt that going to a large university has many benefits, including more class variety, more opportunities, and more organizations. However, the vastness of our school can sometimes make it hard to relate or connect to individuals on a more personal level. What do you really know about the boy you pass everyday on your way to calculus? What about the girl who lives down the hall? Many of us get to know a few people and then, whether consciously or not, stop caring about everyone else. We talk on the phone on the way to class, or listen to our MP3s. I’m not against technology; I text and wear my headphones just like everyone else most days.

However, it’s refreshing to know that there is at least one person on campus who, although he doesn’t know you, is more than willing to take the time, not just to talk to you, but to actually give you some good advice without expecting anything in return.

That person is Tommy Barranca, a junior here at the University, whom I had the chance to interview this October. Chances are you don’t know his name, but you probably already know who he is. Known universally as the “free advice guy”, he sits on the Green on Fridays from 11 to 2 with a huge poster that simply reads “FREE ADVICE”.

If you’ve stopped by for some advice or just to talk, you already know that Tommy is just a level-headed guy who happens to give good advice. But who is the man behind the sign? Well, let’s start with the basics. He is twenty years old and hails from Staten Island, New York. He is majoring in English and plans to become a writer of some sort, though he is not sure what kind.

He first began offering free advice last year in the elevator of Thomas McKean, as a sort of social experiment in order to see people’s reactions. However, Barranca is quick to assert that he really does enjoy giving advice to people. He decided to move his advice sessions to the Green in order to reach more people. He says that about ten people come by each Friday, though of course the number varies. There are a lot of regulars, many of whom just stop by to say “hi”.

Barranca finds the sessions very rewarding, and he says that even if he is only able to help just one person, then it is worth his time. When asked about his advice-giving abilities, he said that it is “almost like it pours out of my mouth” and that it is just an “innate ability that I possess”. The “free advice guy” doesn’t adhere to any particular religion, but when asked about his philosophy of life he gave this piece of advice, “Enjoy your life while you’re here. Try to be as happy as you can. Be yourself.”

When I set up my interview with Tommy Barranca, I wasn’t quite sure what to expect. However, I can honestly say that he seems to be a very rational and chill guy who genuinely wants to help other people out however he can. So if you ever need some advice, or just someone to talk to, I would highly recommend stopping by the next time you see his sign because you just might find that the old saying is true: the best things in life really are free.
I have an all too common confession: **I have an issue with prioritizing my time.** Sure, I’ll write stuff in my planner and cross it out to make myself feel better. But when it comes down to it, what I’d much rather do is crack open a can of Fresca and watch re-runs of Sex and the City. It’s not like Facebook helps make matters any better. Before I know it, two hours have gone by and I’m on page 500 of the bumper sticker application. Honestly, what the hell is wrong with me?

The problem with all this fantastic entertainment is that it doesn’t lighten my workload. It’s like indulging in the brownie sundae at TGIFridays…delicious while you’re demolishing it, and sickening afterwards. The sundae’s satisfaction is parallel to the satisfaction I receive from procrastinating: it’s temporary. Afterwards, I’m more stressed than I was before. It’s not because there is an increase in work, but because there’s a decrease in time to do it.

So…Rather than staying in the library till 2 am, drinking multiple blue Monster drinks the night before the exam, I’ve decided to start preparing for the stress early this year.

Instead of freaking out like Miley, I want to have some sense of reality going into finals. My goal is to be calm, so I thought: what better way is there to feel centered, than Yoga?

Balancing like a flamingo with its tongue out, it’s clear that I’m a rookie. I don’t even own a yoga mat, so I’m using my dorky beach towel instead. I’m told to put my hands in the ‘prayer position’, and I have to ask myself whether I’m praying for this to end or just praying not to fall over. Next is ‘downward dog’ position. Enough said.

Waking up the next morning was rough. Yoga may not have cleared my head, but my muscles sure felt it. I definitely have to take a break from ‘downward dog’ for a week or so if I want to be able to walk from the Towers to class without waddling in pain. Still, the soreness does not beat the pain of a pounding headache from exam stress.

Whenever I get super stressed it brings out the worst in me. Bad habits I didn’t know existed develop, and before I know it my fingernails are bitten down to raw skin.

What better way to prevent this recurring event than to get a manicure? Manicures, according to dozens of girly magazines, are supposed to help de-stress. However, it was more distressing than de-stressing when the woman who worked there wouldn’t stop pestering me to get my eyebrows waxed. My blonde eyebrows hardly exist in the first place, but for some reason she just wouldn’t let it go. Rather than accepting my denial, she went around ask-
ing every customer in the nail place, whether or not they think I should get my brows waxed. I’m just trying to relax, but it’s pretty hard when ten strangers are scrutinizing my face. However, as creepy as it may sound, the hand massage was enjoyable! If I wasn’t broke, I may consider getting a real massage to de-stress, but let’s face it - I am a college student. I don’t have the resources to afford some kind of luxurious treatment.

I decided to work with the resources I do have - my friends and other students - to get a couple additional suggestions on how to de-stress for the upcoming finals. My hope is that with their insight, I’ll be able to test their methods for myself and find a couple that work for me.

My first inspiration came from one of the most relaxed people I know - my brother. He may only be seventeen, but I admit he is much better than me at staying calm. He could be pissed off at one of his friends, or he could fail a big test, but as soon as he picks up his guitar, all of his worries float away till all that is left is the peaceful chords of his Fender Strat. Personally, I don’t know how to read music but I have always wanted to learn. However, at this stage in the game of studying, more reading is the last thing my glazed-over eyes can take. Listening to music on the other hand, is definitely doable.

I usually just put my iPod on shuffle, but I figured since I want to relax, it’d be safer to make a playlist than to have ‘Baby got back’ come on unexpectedly. I picked a variety of artists whose music relaxes me, made a half hour playlist, laid back on my bed and pressed “play.” Mission accomplished.

I felt more relaxed and even managed to catch up on some much needed sleep. Waking up, on the other hand, was another story. That’s the only problem with napping - I wake up suddenly unaware of where I am or what time of day (or night) it is. Naps can be addictive and embarrassing if you happen to have one in public. Trust me, I’ve fallen victim to the soft leather chairs in the library one too many times.

It may seem like a no-brainer, but the next de-stressor I tried worked like a charm. I went home to Baltimore for a weekend. Seeing mom and dad may not seem like the most fun, but it pays off to take a break from college life once in a while. Everytime I go home it zaps me back into reality. When I’m at college my world is so small - classes, friends, activities, nothing outside in the larger scheme of the real world. When I go home it brings me back down to earth, and helps me remember there is more to life than good grades and good parties. Not to mention, sleeping in my own bed eliminates the possibility of drooling in public, and the possibility of a broken door alarm going off at 4 am.

Sometimes as many times as I tell myself to relax it just feels hopeless. Too much energy is wound up inside, and it’s like an endless spiral downward till I feel like I reach the brink of insanity. I think the best way to lessen this anxiety is to remove myself from the situation entirely. If it’s upcoming finals I’m stressing about, sure it would help to start studying early to avoid cramming, but I think what would help me more is taking a break from it all. Finding the ability to simply let myself go, let myself be human, and let myself be imperfect. Sure, I’ll study the best that I can, but I’m not going to study till I’ve lost all sense of reality.

This year I’m going to do something I enjoy to lessen my stress, like taking a break to go out to Panera with friends, or taking an energizing kickboxing class at the Little Bob. No matter what it is-it will be something that is entirely putting sloppy study notes aside, and allowing myself to just breathe. “Just be. After all we are Human-beings not Human-doings.”
Dear Dr. DEcon,

I am not a morning person. I don’t know what it is, but I just can’t seem to get myself to class in the morning. I wake up and Purnell seems so far away from my warm bed on Cleveland. In the past it hasn’t been a problem, since all my classes began after 2:15, plenty of time to sleep off my two-keg Tuesday hangover. This semester though I have an 8 AM! I just can’t make it there, and I am now in danger of failing because I have missed so much class time. What can I do?

-Sleepy Failure

Dear Sleepy Failure,

Lucky for you modern day scientists have created a wonderful substance to solve this very problem. I don’t know if you have ever heard of it before, as it is very high-tech. Coffee, brainiac, is the solution to your problem. A quick cup of joe before your 8 AM will have you in class on time and the extra energy will cause your participation points to soar.

Can’t wake up early enough to turn the pot on? Easy fix: Dunkin Donuts on Main Street brews fresh coffee daily for all those lazy college students wandering around Newark half asleep. Don’t have time to drop by the donut shop? You have two options.

1. UD sells hot (though maybe not so fresh) cups of coffee in Smith, only seconds away from your morning destination.

2. Energy drinks. Keep a stash of Monster in your fridge and enjoy one on your sleepy-sprint to class.

Also, in my professional opinion, lay off the midweek, all-night drinking binges Cleveland is known so well for. Hangovers and 8 AMs do not mix.

Dr. Kathryn Santora, who operates under the pseudonym Dr. DEcon, did not graduate magna cum laude from Harvard Medical School, was not a surgical intern at Seattle Grace and in fact has no real medical knowledge. Send Dr. DEcon your Health and Beauty Questions! derridevil@gmail.com
Dear Rabid Republican,

I’m not entirely sure you understand the whole election process. Everyone in America has the right to vote, not just the Republicans. Unfortunately for you, Obama was able to capture more than twice the amount of electoral votes as compared to old-man-McBush. I know the elephant-sized ego you possess, so I see where you could have been confused.

As for your mental health, I may not be able to help you (elephants are known for their teeny-tiny brains). However, for the sake of CHANGE, I will give it my best shot.

1. Take some headache meds (in my opinion, prescription work best), sit back and reflect. Did you really want to live in a country where elk hunting and skeet shooting became the newest national pastime? McCain and Palin would have said “Sayanora baseball, Hello Duck Season.”

2. Monetary policy a concern? No worries, two words: Tax Cuts. The tax cuts the size of an elephant’s ass. Who wouldn’t want that? Maybe now the economy won’t look as dishevaled and have to hide under the table at future U.N. meetings.

If you really feel the need to express your ideals, I am sure the Review is more than willing to take you on as an intern.

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Dear Dr. DEcon,

I have a serious problem. I am the president of the local Republican Club. This past election I exercised my rights as an American and sent my vote via absentee ballot. I clearly checked “McCain” and sent my ballot on its way. Much to my surprise, on November 4th that Obama guy was named president! Do you think my ballot was lost? I am very distressed over this entire thing and the just the thought of Obama’s future monetary policies are severely effecting my mental health.

-Rrabid Republican

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Dear Forced Triple,

I understand you situation really sucks. However, there is little you can do without hurting your roomie’s feelings. I can though, offer you some tips on staying sane around your roommate’s new beau.

1. He shows off his nasty wife beaters? When you get back from the gym hang around in your sweaty spandex and sports bra for a while. If your sweat and filth doesn’t gross him out, the fact that you are half naked will definitely freak out your inconsiderate roommate.

2. This is your chance to make friends with the girls and guys down the hall. Roommate and Pit-stains want some alone time? Head to your neighbor’s room for a quality girls-only night.

3. Try to think of the perks of having a boy around. Late night Dominos, someone else who appreciates the sophisticated humor of Family Guy, and best of all—a whole new posse of wife-beater wearing friends for you to enjoy.

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Dear Dr. DEcon,

I’m a sophomore living in Russell. I love my room, and my roommate (usually). Recently though, she has become quite attached to this boy who hails from George Read. I understand that he lives all the way across campus, and walking there daily would be a hassle, but he is IN MY ROOM constantly. I have seen more of him and his ugly pit-stained wife-beaters than I ever would have cared to. HELP. What do I do to preserve my sanity (and my eyesight)?

-Forced Triple
Dear No Longer Dainty,

Here’s a quick suggestion: Sneakers. I don’t know what goes through your ‘no-longer-dainty’ little head at 9 a.m. but stilettos should absolutely not be a part of it. Sneakers not your style? Choose Uggs. They may be ugg-ly, but they will help with the swelling.

Now we must move to a more pressing problem. Why in the world would you straighten your hair and put on makeup (and I have a hunch that you are caking on a couple of layers) everyday before class? No one wants to see you like that. You might as well be wearing a prom dress because you are going to evoke the same reaction. You don’t look pretty; you’re just annoying.

Please, please, please put the MAC eyeliner down. You’re too good for that. Throw on a sweat shirt and jeans and save the stilettos for Friday night. They will make much more of an impact then.

If you closet the boots and turn off the hair straightener before class I promise people will like you oh so much more.

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Dear Dating an Ape,

First off, gross. There is nothing more disgusting than a personal soundtrack of the human digestive system. Where did you find this clown? In all honesty, my first piece of advice would be to dump the monkey, but I have a feeling you’re in this one for the long haul.

You are going to have to open up to your new boy about this one. Hopefully he will understand, and if not he can hightail it outta here and spend Christmas with his pack eating raw moose or whatever else wild animals serve on holidays.

If you can’t bring yourself to tell him that he sounds like a camel when it comes to eating Christmas stew, you could try a couple of things.

1. At your family dinner make sure all of his food is cut up into tiny pieces. While cutting up your baby cousin’s dinner, slide some to your beau. Less surface area=less chew time.

2. Limit his liquid intake. You don’t want to support any excess saliva that could possibly intensify the soupy, slushy noise.

3. Pull your mother out of the room just as he is served his meal. Complement her on her dress, the food, her beautifully maintained perm. Anything. Just don’t allow her back in the dining room until after Tarzan finishes his food.

4. Bring an extra bottle of wine (or two or three or four). If your rent’s ears are ringing from that fuzzy wine headache, there is no chance that they will be able to hear the ape’s mastication.

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Dear Dr. DEcon,

I am in a brand-new relationship and I couldn’t be happier. I am bringing my new beau home to meet my family for Christmas but there is one little problem. As wonderful and handsome as he is, he has the most atrocious table manners. He chews with his mouth open and sloshes his food all around. Sometimes he even drools a little. It’s not so bad here at school because the noise of the dining hall overpowers the disgusting sloppy noises coming from his mouth, but at my intimate family dinner he may give my mother a conniption. Help.

-Dating an Ape

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Dear Dr. DEcon,

My feet really hurt. They are swollen to almost five times their normal size. I just don’t understand. I first noticed yesterday morning when I was getting ready for my 9:30 a.m. class and slipping on my favorite pair of stiletto black leather boots. It hurt so bad I didn’t even have time to put on make-up or straighten my hair!! What can I do so my feet go back to their normal size?

- No Longer Dainty

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Review: No one belongs here more than you. Stories by Miranda July

“Life is just this way, broken, and I am crazy to hope for anything else.”

Anyone familiar with the work of Miranda July, such as her film “You, Me and Everyone We Know” or her internet art project, learningtoloveyoumore.com, would expect her short story collection to be funny, touching, interesting, and most of all, to provide insight on the human condition. No one belongs here more than you fulfills all of these expectations and more. The slim volume contains sixteen stories, all of which focus on not-quite-average individuals. The book is utterly devoid of happy endings and normal characters, and instead contains strange situations and even stranger sexuality. The stories won’t exactly cheer you up, but they will make you feel less alone. If you’re looking for a book that will not only entertain you, but stimulate you intellectually and creatively, then look no further than No one belongs here more than you.

Review: How to be An Explorer of the World: Portable Life Museum by Keri Smith

How to be an Explorer of the World is one part activity book, one part philosophy, one part ethnography, and lots of others things besides. One might mistake the book for a children’s book at first glance with its handwritten text and numerous references to “playing” and “exploring”, but the book isn’t exactly juvenile. Many of the ideas and quotations are from well-respected poets, composers, writers, and philosophers, including Walt Whitman, John Cage, Bertold Brecht, and Anaïs Nin. Explorer of the World is the latest project of Keri Smith, a prolific artist and writer. Her personal philosophy seems to emphasize fully living in the world around you, observing and documenting as you go. If this book had a thesis I think it would have to be the expression scrawled on the top of page 9 in all capital letters: “Everything is interesting.” This theme is central to all the “explorations” enumerated in the book (there are 59), as well as the photography and quotations included. One of the best features of the activities included is that many of them are actually particularly well-suited to the college environment. The book is a great source of inspiration and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in more fully participating in the everyday world that surrounds you.
Where can you find a giant stone horse, cozy steakhouse-style booths, fantastic service, and more Chinese food than you can possibly poke a chopstick at? P.F. Chang’s, located in Towson, White Marsh, and Baltimore City, MD.

Despite the distance, this restaurant is well worth the trip. Although Chinese food is a staple of the average college student’s diet, this is more than just your average chicken and broccoli. The ambiance alone adds a whole new level to the Chinese food experience. Walking up to the restaurant in Towson, diners are greeted by a fourteen foot high, Mongol-style stone horse, complete with a saddle and braided tail. Inside, the restaurant is very dark, with quiet soft rock playing over the speakers and Chinese-style lamps hanging from the high ceiling. Fake Chinese tapestries adorn the walls, while American steak-house style booths and tables are closely packed across the floor. This contradiction actually works well together and fits into P.F. Chang’s description of itself as a “China Bistro” – Chinese food served in an expensive-feeling American bistro setting.

Also playing into the “China Bistro” theme, P.F. Chang’s menu sports grill items, an extensive wine list, and a vast selection of traditional and reconceived Chinese dishes. We all ordered traditional Chinese chicken dishes, but each one had unique elements to them that were surprising and, for the most part, delicious. I recommend the Ginger Chicken and the Cantonese green beans, both of which had a subtle kick to them that was surprising and addicting. Order the Crispy Honey Chicken or Lemon Chicken if you enjoy sweet food, but they were overly sauced for my liking. The rice and assorted vegetables that came with each dish were perfectly cooked and seasoned. Everything was high quality and you could taste it.

I went on opening weekend, so the restaurant was very crowded, hectic, and busy, but because we had a booth table it felt private and calm. I strongly suggest making a reservation because it will eliminate any wait for a table, which can be up to two hours. Request booth seating because it is well worth being out of the way of the dozens of wait staff on their way to the tables.

The lettuce wrap appetizers were amazing- crisp, fresh, and delicious. The waitress mixed a special sauce for us directly on the table, explaining what each ingredient was and how it contributed to the overall flavor of the sauce. Our waitress was incredibly friendly, chatting with us and accommodating our every request with a smile. She took the liberty of ordering us some additional vegetables without charging us for them, which was a nice touch, although probably just an opening weekend promotion. Service was fast and the servers all appeared well-trained, although there were some confusions about our orders. The pricing was much cheaper than expected, especially if you don’t order wine, with dishes averaging about 12 dollars.

I would definitely return to P.F. Chang’s next time I get a chance. We did not order dessert, although the selection of dessert shooters looked irresistible, and next time I will definitely try a few. Perhaps I will even branch out beyond the chicken dishes, although the lettuce wraps are going to be a staple of the P.F. Chang’s experience. This is more than just Chinese food. This is Chinese-American heaven.
Cabaret is an HTAC production, one of the two main theatre groups on campus. The play ran on the weekends of October 17 and October 24 in Pearson Hall on Academy Street. The running time was two hours, with a fifteen-minute intermission.

As a quick summary, Cabaret told the story of an American English teacher trying to make a living in pre-Nazi Berlin, Germany. It is about his life, the Kit Kat Klub and their Cabaret girls, how he and the lead Cabaret dancer try to make a life together, and the threatening idea that Hitler would soon come into power.

Cabaret was very well-casted for their lead roles. Student Brian Shahwan played the role of the Master of Ceremonies, and put on an incredible performance. His fake accent did not slip up, even as he sang, danced, cried, and stripped throughout the play.

Kahlin McKeown had the female lead role of Sally Bowles, the head Cabaret girl. Kahlin had three singing solos and awed the audience with her abilities. She did an impressive job playing a gin-addicted Cabaret dancer changing her lifestyle and living with the English teacher.

The cast also did a very good job with their songs, and whenever they sang, they had the full attention of the audience. People were leaving Pearson Hall singing “Willkommen,” the play’s theme song.

From the rest of the cast, the acting seemed very unbelievable and forced, and the quality of the microphones was unacceptable, allowing more static to be heard than words. I know the Cabaret dancers were supposed to appear trashy, but I couldn’t help but wonder if the extra holes in the fishnet stockings were supposed to be there. The end was abrupt, and the crowd seemed to be puzzled, wondering if the cast would reappear to finish the play.

There were some good aspects of Cabaret. For example, the cast did a very good job moving from scene to scene quickly, without a flaw. Also, the orchestra did a fine job playing melodies throughout the play that complemented what was happening on stage. The orchestra and the singers were very coordinated with tempo, timing, and pitch.

Cabaret had two important props for their finale. One was an old fashioned wooden radio that played a clip of Hitler giving a speech and the crowd cheering. The other was a $75 (as a cast member told me after the show) Swastika projection light. Even though the ending didn’t really make sense, these props helped instill fear and confusion into the audience. Yet they also added to the list of reasons as to why the play shouldn’t have ended at the point it did.

It was clear that a lot of time, money, and effort were put into making Cabaret. It was a fun experience, but the play itself could have been better. I would rate it a 3 out of 5. I would still like to give a lot of credit to the production staff and cast. Acting is not easy and takes courage and talent.

Another HTAC performance to look forward to is UDis, a medley of Disney songs from our childhood. UDis is showing throughout the month of November, and we expect to see the same effort put into it as was for Cabaret.
Standing a measly five feet six inches tall, Clifford Joseph Harris Jr., or as he’s better known to his legions of fans, T.I., has never had the physical prowess to intimidate rival rap stars or anyone else for that matter in a world dominated by tough guy machismo. Regardless, T.I. remains arguably not only the most popular rapper in the world, but the most self-assured. And with good reason.

Paper Trail, his sixth album, is T.I.’s third straight to debut at number one on Billboard’s top 200 list. Accomplishing something not too many rappers have been able to do, the Atlanta MC has managed to transform himself from a convicted felon to an internationally known superstar. This time out T.I. goes back to the basics, playing the part of a scribe, physically penning his words onto paper (hence the name “Paper Trail”). It is the first time he’s attempted this since his first album, “I’m Serious,” seven years ago. The glaring difference between this and his last couple of albums is obvious. His lyrics are better prepared, flowing melodically over the bass-heavy synthesizers produced by the up and coming Druma Boy, his long running partner DJ Toomp, and superstar heavyweights Swizz Beatz, Just Blaze and Kanye West.

What makes T.I. so remarkable is his ability to outshine the greatest. On “Swagga Like Us”, a track that cleverly manipulates a verse from M.I.A.’s summer smash “Paper Planes” and places it in the hook, Jay-Z, Lil Wayne, and Kanye all drop verses, but the best is saved for last with T.I. spitting “You kick it like me, no exaggeration necessary/ Living revolutionary, nothing less than legendary/Gangsta...
shit hereditary, got it from my dad/ Flow colder than February with extraordinary swag.”

Probably the most outside the box song recorded in the hip-hop world since West’s “Stronger”, “Live your life” takes the hugely popular techno jam “Dragostea Din Tei” by O-Zone, and throws in a surprisingly worthy Rihanna to sing the hook.

What makes “Paper Trail” the best rap album of 2008 is his ability to display such a mixture of emotions. On the John Legend assisted “Slide Show”, a reflective T.I. counts his blessings as a man who clearly doesn’t take anything for granted (the poignant piano loop in the background doesn’t hurt).

Former rival Ludacris makes a somewhat surprising appearance on the impressive “On Top Of the World”, a bubbly track that could headline any dance party. Obliging with the albums synthesizer dominant instrumentals, this song leads the pack.

But T.I.’s saves his most dazzling performance for what has to be the album’s most powerful song, “No Matter What”. Here he sends a strong message to all those who have been, shall we say, less than nice. The instrumental’s organ lets off an eerie feeling, as if you’re eavesdropping on a eulogy being recited to everyone who has doubted him and his well deserved success.

By the time you hear him out shine his star studded cast of guest entertainers (Usher and Justin Timberlake), vocally ride bass-heavy beats with the consistent ease of a metronome and methodically drop rhymes that force you to put the track on repeat, T.I. will have you feeling your money was well spent.

He’s sure of it.
The New Kids on the Block: Live! reunion tour hit Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on November 5, 2005 like a whirlwind. Just over 21,000 people, mainly females, packed into the Wachovia Center in anticipation of seeing one of the most popular boy bands of the twentieth century. Once through the front gates, six different renditions of “Oh, Oh, Oh, Ohhhh... the Right Stuff!” could be heard at any given moment, at any location in the arena projected by the fans at the top of their lungs.

With the recent release of their new album, “The Block”, drawing the 20-somethings to the concert, and the guarantee to hear the classics from the albums released earlier in their career attracting the 30-somethings, the crowd was an interesting range of people. Side pony tales, neon off-the-shoulder shirts, and bright colored hoop earrings could easily be spotted all over the arena.

Despite the pouring rain, cars all across the Girard Point Bridge could be heard blaring the same type of music. The noise only rose louder as those same cars took Exit 17 in the direction of the Sports Complexes. Once in the parking lot, if someone didn’t know what was going on then they weren’t raised in the 1980’s.

Of the members of the male sex that were present, most were clearly there under coercion or force. With the exception of the few who seemed to be actually enjoying the show, they appeared to be in more amusement of their significant other dancing and singing then anything else.

Opening first for NKOTB, Lady Gaga got things started with tracks from her first album released, “The Fame” including her hit single “Just Dance”. Following shortly after, Natasha Bedingfield brought the crowd to their feet with her top tracks “Pocket Full of Sunshine” and “Unwritten”. With the completion of the openings acts, the energy in the arena was almost tangible.

Fifteen minutes later, the house lights go down, the fans start screaming. The stage lights come on, flashing “NKOTB” in neon white over and over again and the fans scream louder. The first note of the opening song, their latest Bill-
board hit, “Single”, strikes as the fans go crazy. When the five members of NKOTB finally take the stage, it’s all over.

Jordan and Jonathan Knight, Joey McIntyre, Donny Wahlberg, and Danny Wood rocked Philly with over two and a half hours of songs from their older albums including “I’ll be Loving You”, “Cover Girl”, “You Got It (The Right Stuff)”, and many others with the original dance moves. From their latest album “The Block”, in addition to the opening number they kept the crowd on its feet with “Summertime”, “Grown Man”, “2 in the Morning”, and more. Fans swarmed the center of the floor when they came up from underneath on a circular platform in the middle of the audience and performed three numbers, including a fan favorite, “Dirty Dancing”. Only once in a lifetime does someone get to see a 38-year-old woman screaming at the top of her lungs while desperately reaching out to touch the hand of a member of a boy band dancing two feet away from her.

Impeccably dressed and fit, each member appeared to be focused more on the interaction with the crowd rather than with special effects and lighting. The concert included a pose off after singing “Click Click Click”, where NKOTB all struck a random pose then decided whose was best. Directly after was a dancing competition, where cameras singled out different groups of people dancing in the audience and NKOTB voted who was best.

After coming back out to the stage for the first encore, NKOTB returned a second time to close with “Hangin’ Tough”, and anyone in the audience who hadn’t yet lost their voice did then. A concert to top all concerts, this one will surely go down as one of the greatest reunion tours in history. If given the opportunity, go see New Kids on the Block: Live! The boys are back, and in full force!
After their first independent album, The Dust of Retreat, found its way into every indie rock enthusiast's music collection in 2006, the band of eight friends was signed by Epic Records the following year. But once Epic Records viewed the list of tracks Margot anticipated to be on the new album, which emerged from a recording session with Brian Deck (Modest Mouse and Iron & Wine) they deemed it unmarketable. Torn between the record company's pressures to produce a profitable album and releasing a record that illuminated their changing direction and unique sound, the band decided to make two overlapping yet distinct albums available to the public. The first, Not Animal, is an album released version of the songs Epic Records thought would be the most acceptable to their listeners. Animal, the counterpart, is produced only in vinyl and as an online download, a mixture of tracks from the Not Animal album and some brand new songs that Margot simply couldn't let go.

As far as the Not Animal album goes Margot seems to settle into their original display of a multitude of various instrument jam sessions and fuzzy yet loveable song lyrics as the tracks progress. By the time you're halfway through, you've fallen for the swell of keyboard, harmonica, violin and guitar that elevate such basic sentences to the most profound of heights.

Even the tracks towards the end of the album which aren't on the Not Animal version fall short of disappointment. "The Shivers (I've Got Em)" finds its allure in a killer bass line, a random catchiness and, of course, a graceful descent into Margot's infamous lyrics that say the same thing but apply to each listener differently. "Your spine cracks like a wineglass/Evelyn your spine cracks/I was a lonely captive of your silhouette." Even "Pages Written on a Wall" one of the band's more composed and subdued songs isn't short on lyrical content. "How we gonna warm if you're stealing our logs?/Who's gonna love when all the liquor is gone, gone, gone?" And of course the most notable tracks like "As Tall As Cliffs" and "Hello Vagina" reside on both albums. Thus assuring the listener they haven't been cheated by any particular album, and that the band still remains the crazy Margot and the Nuclear So and So's that emerged with their fresh acoustic sound and lyrics that speak to the masses of fans even when we resign to not knowing exactly what they're supposed to mean.

Sell-out. It's one of the dirtiest words in the music industry. An insult of epic proportions, and the very last label alternative/rock band Margot and the Nuclear So and So's would like to be associated with. The great lengths they would go to avoid this exact brand is displayed by the controversial release of their new albums Animal and Not Animal.

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