

Issue #6



Save The Crumbs



"Do they have tea, and biscuits, and big, wonderful parties where you live?" asked the prince.

"I haven't had a proper party in years and years," replied Gus. "I don't get many visitors."

"What about bedtimes? Do you have bedtimes at your house?" asked Sam.

Gus looked down at the prince and smiled. (As much as a dragon could be said to smile.)

"Well, I guess I fall asleep when I feel tired," he said.

"Color The Dragon Above" by Windy Schultz

What You're Reading...

Save The Crumbs is an independent 'zine, written, designed, assembled, and distributed by a handful of folks in Mankato who think they have something to say. We started this publication because we felt the spirit of "do it yourself" is lacking in Mankato and the surrounding areas.

Save The Crumbs is a collection of writings, musings, opinions, reviews, observations, artwork, and basically whatever we feel like printing. It's the true spirit of D.I.Y.

No advertisements. No corporate pressure. No creativity-stifling forces. No "The Man."

So, grab a copy of this thing and show it to your friends. Lend it to people. Make copies of it at your place of employment. Get the word out. Be inspired. Make your own 'zine!

If you have any questions, comments, criticism, or want to donate to the cause... send e-mail to **savethecrumbs@gmail.com**.

If you can't seem to secure your own copy of this issue, be sure to go to www.myspace.com/savethecrumbs to check out the online version.

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410 Project

by Andrew Hoffman

Friday night. A group of bohemian kids sit in the doorway of a store-front, sucking down a quick cigarette. Inside, music plays. An eccentric man is describing his theories on UFOs to no one in particular. A bearded, middle-aged man is discussing art-house documentaries with a stylishly-dressed woman drinking a beer. Children play games of hide-and-seek. Drawings adorn the walls. Welcome to The 410 Project.

A discussion has been raging recently about the future of the Mankato art scene. Committees have been formed, panels meet regularly, and the City Council hopes that, with proper funding, Mankato could be home to a handful of artists by 2020 at the latest. Well, at The 410 Project, the future is now.

Located at 523 S. Front St., The 410 Project is a store-front art gallery that has operated in downtown Mankato since 2003. Over the years, it has been host to art ranging from nature photography to hot-rod drawings, from large sculpture to tiny drawings. Local artists are able to gather monthly, as the exhibitions change, to discuss the meaning of their work or to find inspiration from those around them. All without the bureaucratic hassle of governmental panels and long-term mission statements. Just the time and patience of a handful of volunteers.

So you want a local art scene in Mankato? Then get involved. Have some art of your own? Get in contact with the 410 and talk about setting up a showing. Not artistically inclined? Stop down at an opening reception, on the third Friday of the month, and meet local artists. Looking for your own inspiration? Walk through the gallery at your own pace.

Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Contact **the410project@yahoo.com** to join a mailing list of upcoming events. They also have a MySpace page at **www.myspace.com/the410project**, if you're into that. We can have a vibrant, cohesive local art scene in Mankato, today. We just need your help.



Tit For Tat

by Sarah Hinton

I beat you once
after you beat me.
I pushed you back
away from me.

Away from my soul that you wished to steal.

The soul that i keep tucked behind my ear
like a cigarette waiting to be lit.

How you confused it with my earrings,
thinking that it was just anouther shiny jewel
that you could take away with the rest of your booty.

I supriised you though.

I wouldnt let you take that.

I wasnt able to save everything from you,
but at least that I still have that saved away for my rainy day.

Just anouther bauble to you.

No differnce to you,
my necklaces or my heart.

It was all open for you to steal.

But I wised up.

I fought back.

I ruined you before you could ruin me.
I stole your soul and tucked it next to my own.

Tit for tat.

My baubles for your soul.

You came out on top though.

For your soul,
it wasnt worth the effort it took to snag.

Not like mine.

Your's was already almost dead,
and mine,
mine shines.

I almost wish i could trade with you again,
Because your soul,
its dinginess is rubbing off on to my own.

Once again, Thoroughly Surly is here to answer all your questions and make sense of the many mysteries of the universe.

This month...

Vegetarians

I know vegetarians. They're fine people, on the whole, who don't eat meat. Instead, they substitute vegetables and soy, sculpted into the shapes of hamburgers, hotdogs and chicken nuggets to take up the extra plate space. I've never been a pure vegetarian myself, although I have flirted with the discipline after eating a two pound hamburger, The Duke, and suffering from a severe case of Meat Intoxication* thereafter.

Post veggie, I turned to a new food philosophy. I would eat the meat from any animal that I could master in hand to hand combat. Bear was obviously out, along with: Lion, Moose, Zebra, and even Deer (they're so fast and, from what I've been told, bite). I could still eat: chicken, tuna, turkey (although that may have been a toss-up) and the occasional rabbit. Cuddliness has no place in this vicious existence, so I make no amendments for our furrier cohabitants.

My more recent system was called to the floor after a slip of the tongue (no pun intended) when referring to a meal I was making. Instead of saying I'm grilling a chicken breast, I said, "I'm grilling a chicken's breast." At that very moment I was struck by an honest truth: the meat processing industry has manipulated our language in such a way as to desensitize and normalize an act that can sound rather violent.

Here's an example of the double standard:

- 1) I do enjoy touching a woman's breast.
- 2) I do enjoy touching woman breast.

Okay, now with chicken:

- 1) I do enjoy eating chicken breast.
- 2) I do enjoy eating a chicken's breast.

If you speak specifically of the animal you're devouring it tends to get a bit odd, but by generally referring to the species, you hide the fact that you are eating a specific living creature (now dead, of course.) Specism at its worst.

So...my newest food philosophy is that I can eat whatever I can stomach after declaring, out loud and in mixed company, my intention while referring to the specific animal.

I guess I won't be eating a pig's tender loins anytime soon.



* Nausea, dizziness, heaviness in the bowels, and the taste of metal in your mouth as if you've sucked on a drill-bit for several hours.

Reality TV Rots Your Brain

by Sitha Im

What do old, washed-up celebrities, a boot camp full of fat kids, amateur modeling competitions, rich housewives, and a large cluster of unsupervised kids playing a game of primitive democracy on an ex-Hollywood Western set all have in common? They are all the popular and trashy subjects of what we see in today's "Reality Television."



Face it. Practically any channel on the boob tube contains some form of reality programming, whether it be watching some animal expert narrowly escape a dangerous encounter with a 15-foot croc or some cheesy, formula-driven competition show involving contestants forced to room with one another and deal with each others annoying or beloved idiosyncrasies.

But what is "Reality TV" and how did it consume popular culture so quickly and tenaciously? What compels us to become so fascinated with the lives of others in such a personal, demeaning, and perverse manner?

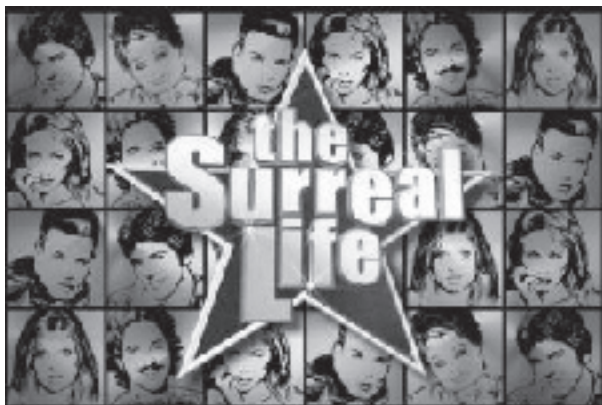
Lately, I've taken a deeper look into this cultural phenomenon and come to a few conclusions about the social psychology that leads us to buy into this filth and nonsense that is plaguing our society.

1. As creatures, who enjoy this worthless tripe, I conclude the cause is a sexually-deprived/repressed, voyeuristic-natured society that is intellectually-stifled by idiots who feed us this illusion of "real life" situations, depicted by those who contain both ideal characteristics we seek superficially (i.e. money, sexually alluring physiques) or possess faults we wish to deny (i.e. morbid obesity). Reality television is a human experiment meant to satiate the desires of our alter-egos and benefit the masterminds who profit from our deficiencies.

2. The true nature of humans as cruel and sadistic beings, who enjoy seeing others suffer emotionally, physically, and psychologically, is revealed by this accepted behavior/practice, in which television is the tool to facilitate this pleasure. Don't tell me you don't feel better about yourself after witnessing a morbidly obese/vertically challenged person struggle to accomplish everyday tasks we take for granted as physically capable people. And you have to admit, there is some kind of unconscious satisfaction in knowing that the stereotypical victim of discrimination is easily trampled upon because of the social status quo. Somewhere in that situation, you can justify some principle or belief you've held about the world. Whether racist, sexist, or otherwise, it is reason enough for you to believe that what you know or think is true is due to the explicit circumstances. This will either drive you to become a passive spectator or a disgruntled rights advocate.

But can we really blame ourselves for indulging in such a morally corrupt cultural exploitation of the nature of humanity? Or are we justifying the use of this media as a diversion from real world problems that we are too afraid to confront, such as the issues that really affect our lives like war, poverty, disease, xenophobia, resource deprivation, global warming, pollution, the economy and so forth. Well, the rational being within us (or what we refer to as our conscience) should acknowledge the fact that these problems don't go away just by tuning them out. By supporting such diversionary activity, we only express the de-evolving state of intelligence that our species is experiencing.

So the next time you consider flipping the channels for some drama, excitement, or a hard-on, just take a look at what occurs in the news, especially outside of your locale, and just think how terribly lucky and insignificant your life really is. Maybe that will inspire you to take on more worthwhile causes and not fill up that empty space in your brain with trivial facts about people you don't even know or will never meet and who don't have any real worth in contributing to a better society.



Let's Get Drunk and Fuck Up Some Lives

by Marshel Rossow

Much has been written, spoken and discussed in recent months in Mankato regarding drinking, especially binge drinking, especially binge drinking by MSU students, especially binge drinking by MSU students that leads to death.

Now, before I say another word about this topic, a caveat: The reader should understand that I am (1) not an alcohol-education expert (although I'm married to one); (2) a teetotaler or prohibitionist; or (3) unbiased when it comes to the topic of alcohol abuse. In fact, regarding the latter point, I am biased as all hell when it comes to alcohol abuse, just as I'm biased as hell against most forms of unrepentant stupidity.

A bit of background: I've always enjoyed an occasional drink, although I've never been a bar-hopper or heavy-duty partier. Hell, if someone offers me a free drink, I'll lap it up as quickly as the next person, although I'm too frugal to spend \$23 on a bottle of booze that's gone in two days.

More background: I had (notice past tense) a younger brother who was a bit over-fond of anything to do with hops and malt. Back in around 1980, he managed to put his Nova into a roadside ditch with a few flips and ended up in the hospital for several days while recuperating. I recall visiting him in his room and cautioning (OK, scolding) him that he wouldn't get away with such automotive antics too many times. As if to prove my clairvoyance, he managed, after a well-oiled lengthy evening at a wedding reception for a friend, to put another Nova into a ditch -- this one a deep drainage ditch -- around 2 a.m. Sept. 26, 1982. This early morning event didn't require a hospital stay -- the left side of his head was too badly demolished to make hospitalization seem necessary. After all, dead is dead.

So am I a bit biased against "overtraining," as my old newspaper editor Gene Thorne used to call it? Damn straight, Jack!

So, that all said, I'll move on to my uneducated, prejudiced thoughts about the drinking that takes place in Mankato, with particular attention paid to my views regarding student drinking, since, as a professor, I see the effects of such activity on a fairly regular basis.

I'm mildly amazed and amused at posters that show up on bulletin boards all around the Minnesota State University campus touting the wisdom of MSU students when it comes to their relationship with Demon Rum. These posters

(now I'm making this one up, but not by too much) say things like, "MSU students get it!," followed by smaller print saying something like, "Only 97% of MSU students have more than 12 drinks a week." Seriously, one fresh poster from Student Health Services says, "Of MSU students who drink, 72% always use one or more safe drinking behaviors." Being a pessimist by both birth and training, if I were to have written that poster I would have said, "Of MSU students who drink, 28% never use one or more safe drinking behaviors." Think about it: Solidly more than one-quarter of MSU's drinkers don't do anything to make their drinking safe. Remind me, please, to stay out of the bar areas on Thursday-Friday-Saturday nights.

As an MSU prof for almost a quarter of a century (i.e., an old fuddy-duddy who struggles hard to remain hip), I've seen far too many promising students piss their lives away behind a bush because they lost the battle to booze. There seems to be this prevalent attitude in the college-age drinking culture that, "Hey, it's part of college life! I'll be able to stop any time I want to after I graduate!" But research shows that it may not be that simple. It's a medical fact that alcohol in any of its myriad forms is as addictive as most other drugs. If you think stopping a habit that began in freshman year or earlier will be a piece of cake, don't pick up a fork for a bite of that cake too quickly. While many students do manage to control, or even quit, their drinking after their rowdy college years, there are enough who can't stop their boozing ways to make it a big concern. The real danger, it seems to me, is a general inability to predict the future. Although I did a pretty admirable job of forecasting my little brother's fate at age 30, I wouldn't want to predict which boozing students will be able to quit and which ones won't. It's a liquid game of Russian roulette.

The university touts its alcohol-education programs and its booze-free leisure opportunities. These gestures are admirable, as far as they go. But the obvious truth is that a large number of students aren't affected by the education attempts, because they can't see themselves as being the ones at risk. And booze-free activities? Again, better than doing nothing, I suppose, but it's hard to compete with the high you can get by drinking to satiation, followed by the instant gratification of puking your guts out in a parking lot or hunched over your toilet in a dignified posture.

Stopping student drinking isn't a possibility. However, there's a better approach than posters, education programs, alcohol-free fun and games in the Student Union, and rationalization attempts claiming MSU, Mankato is doing the best job of any college or university in the known universe at quelling student imbibing.

That better approach is called kicking serious ass.

Let's Get Drunk Cont'd...

I'm not saying the other attempts should be discarded; anything is better than nothing. But if the state Legislature and MnSCU would get together to get tough -- really tough -- on student alcohol infractions, things might change. Yeah, Nazi tactics could be distasteful. But so is notifying a parent at 3 a.m. that a son or daughter has died under alcohol-related circumstances. So why not, within constitutional limits, enact laws and policies that remove the cop-out excuses involving privacy rights and similar crap that prevent parental notification of underage drinking, that prevent on-campus sanctions for off-campus offenses, that prevent the proverbial fear of God from being put into boozers and would-be boozers? I'll bet that if rules were changed so that, let's say, an off-campus arrest for a drinking-related second-offense disorderly conduct charge were to bring university probation for the offender, and a third offense were to bring a one-semester suspension, you'd find more students thinking twice about heavy boozing than they do by sitting at a lecture telling them drinking is bad for them or by attending a bowling party in the Student Union.

Imagine the scene:

"Hey, does anybody know where Harold has been the past few days?"

"Yeah, didn't you hear? He got booted for the rest of the semester because he got charged with public indecency for pissing on a parking meter on Second Street."

"Oh.... Jeez, I suppose I should quit doing that then, huh?"

The reader at this point may be thinking pure Gestapoism, unadulterated violation of this right or that right that gives folks society's permission to drink themselves to death if they are so inclined. But the penalties I'm suggesting could happen, legally, if the best minds in the Legislature and the education community got together and made more than a half-assed effort to go beyond what is now being done.

I've personally seen the lifelong destruction that occurs in parents' lives when they get that middle-of-the-night phone call. I feel quite assured that parents spared that call thanks to some toughening of the current rules and regulations would be most grateful. And unless you, the reader, have personally experienced the kind of life-changing call about which I speak, please don't be too eager to decide my comments are merely those of an old Nazi crackpot.

Alone Again, Naturally

by Dustin Wilmes

So, my girlfriend has officially left the building. She's on sabbatical in New Zealand and Australia for the next two and a half months. She's worked really hard for the opportunity and deserves to go "down under" and cut loose. I'm sure she's going to have a great time...

I on the other hand, have no idea what to do while she's gone. It only took me a few hours to realize that I have no plans. More tragically, I have no friends. Sure, I have all sorts of people that I think are great and am on friendly terms with. Scientifically though, most of those people are, for the most part, people I exclusively "keep in touch with" through MySpace messages and the occasional run-in at the grocery store. They have their own hobbies, their own jobs, and their own lives. My charming personality, coupled with awkward social skills and an inconvenient work schedule, has reduced the actual number of people who would want to hang out with me on a regular basis to a number most three-year-olds can count to in Spanish.

With that being said, I've mapped out the possible avenues and outcomes my life may take in the next few months.

- a) I'll buy a pair of green sweatpants and drown myself in Trans Fat.
- b) I'll be motivated to whittle myself down to the weight stated on my driver's license.
- c) I'll play Guitar Hero less and start playing real instruments more.
- d) I'll play Guitar Hero more and forget how to play real instruments altogether.
- e) I'll be more passionate with my writing and start cranking out some real, top-notch work (excluding this article obviously.)
- f) I'll watch even more professional wrestling than I already do and move up in the rankings from "sad man" to "totally hopeless weirdo" on the nerd scale.
- g) I'll turn into "that guy" who sends text messages to everyone I know every 10 minutes, just to see how they're doing.
- h) I'll have more time to reflect and become more spiritually-whole and emotionally in-tune with myself (i.e. masturbating.)
- i) I'll garner some pity from this "woe is me" article and find myself becoming a social butterfly.

I'm leaning towards a combination of a) and f), with a giant helping of h). Regardless of what happens during the next few months, it'll be a long, strange trip.

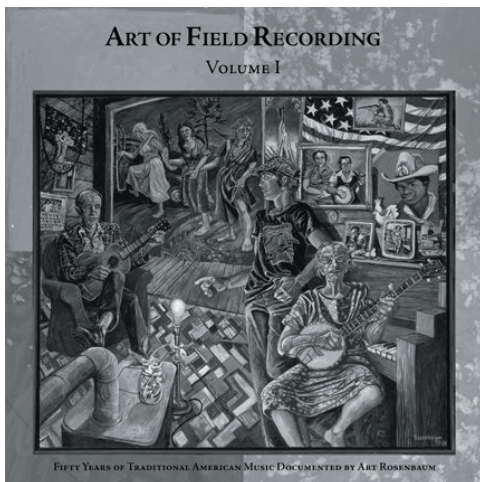
...I hate the Grateful Dead.

Dust-to-Digital: Rescuing Rare Grooves

By Davis Perro

In recent weeks, several national and local news-outlets reported on the latest woes of the music industry. In brief, CD sales continue to plummet, while record labels and stores are left scrambling to stay afloat in the current MP3 era. In light of this, one has to respect the audacity of an upstart independent label like

Dust-to-Digital to release several elaborate multi-disc collections, housed in gallery-worthy packaging, and accompanied with extensive liner notes to boot. If that isn't bold enough given our current context, consider that it did this covering, of all things, old and obscure traditional American folk music.



From its inception a few years back, Dust-to-Digital made its presence known with the release of *Goodbye, Babylon*. This collection of rare, pre-war gospel music earned the label two Grammy awards, one in the category of Best Boxed or Special Limited Edition Package and another for Best Historical Album. Since then, Dust-to-Digital has continued to follow its mission which is “to produce high quality cultural artifacts, which combine rare, essential recordings with historic images and detailed texts describing the artists and their works.”

Dust-to-Digital has again come through in spades with the release of *Art of Field Recording Volume 1*. This 4-CD box set collects 50 years worth of field recording work by Art Rosenbaum, who is an Athens, GA-based professor, artist, folklorist, and self-

described “song collector.” Rosenbaum recorded countless reels of virtually-unknown folk artists across the country, most of which have gone unreleased, sitting in university archives over the years. Dust-to-Digital rescued these recordings and put together a collection that is organized roughly along the lines of Harry Smith’s *Anthology of American Folk Music*, which this set will undoubtedly be compared to. Like Smith’s *Anthology*, each disc in this collection focuses on a particular genre: blues, religious music, instrumental and dance music, and a survey disc that contains a variety of each. What distinguishes *Art of Field Recording*, however, is the fact that through Rosenbaum’s methodology, he is able to capture performances that are intensely personal, yet with an intimacy that is palpable. By leaving in some portions of dialogue between Rosenbaum and the artists following a performance, there is a further sense of “being there” for the listener as well.

As for the music, there are simply too many great songs to comment on individually within the space provided here. Hearing Rev. Howard Finster let loose on his banjo on “Five to My Five” is particularly entertaining, as is Neal Patman’s boot-stomping harmonica playing on “Mama Whoopin’ the Blues.” Deeply moving songs rendered by Bert Hare, Ida Craig, and Brady “Doc” Barnes and Lucy Barnes are also sure to keep the repeat button busy. For those somewhat leery of a full disc of religious music, you’ll be happy to learn that this is perhaps the most interesting disc of the whole collection. The songs are extremely varied, yet all performed with an unmatched passion and verve, that it’s sure to move even the most ardent of non-believers.

For more information on Dust-to-Digital and to hear audio samples from the *Art of Field Recording Volume 1* box set go to <http://dust-digital.com>. Also note, there are two additional volumes in the works, with the next set due for release in 2008.

BITTERSWEET

BY JOHN MAIERS

The mountains jutting from the horizon are actually islands uplifted from the Pacific Ocean floor. From the windswept deck of the ferry, Stikine, they shrink slowly as a grey, formless sky grows. Time seems to slow down as well. Those rainforest highlands, harsh and part of the southeast Alaska archipelago know as the Inside Passage, still appear hard and blue green even as they fade. Occasionally, a few shafts of sunlight pierce the grey, slide from the heights and light up a mountainside, or cut a broad shimmering blanket over a part of the vast ocean. A light rain, whipped by a strong northeast wind, angles out of the low overcast. I'm headed back to Minnesota, back home. The mountains, however, pull at my eyes, tug on my desires and stir my daydreams.

Unlike the land that stands in the distance, the water below rushes by, cut and whooshed into foamy waves and a wake that swirls behind this ferry that purrs diesel, heading across Clarence Strait for Ketchikan, brokering distance in knots and hours and shriveling memories. I want to brand my brain with those mountains that somehow grow Sitka Spruce, Yellow Cedar, Western Red Cedar and Hemlock on their rugged slopes. I want the imprints of blueberries and thimbleberries, bear club and skunk cabbage, alpine meadows, plunging streams and leaping salmon, to seat firmly upon my grey matter, to solidify into lasting memories rather than crumble in decaying images. I want the pleasure of remembering forever.

The day began with an hour-long pick-up truck ride that wound between the mountains of Prince of Wales Island, from Thorne Bay to Hollis where my sons, Trevor and Sean, and I team-hug before I board the Stikine. This is the first of numerous connections that will link me with Minnesota and only the fresh memories and vivid images of two weeks on and around P.O.W. will make this long day bearable.

A few days before, along with Sean's best friend Kristen, we climbed through part clear-cut, part mature forest to a high meadow. Even from this lofty locale, you wouldn't know you are on an island; we are deep within the interior and the sea is nowhere in sight.

We stretch out on a series of rocky outcroppings, refreshing ourselves with peanuts and raisins, water and sunshine, and stare at the great palisades that rise a short distance away. To our left, an eagle glides and rises in a spiral,

riding the currents that swirl along a cliff. I snap some pictures. I don't think about my jobs back home or the pending semester at MSU. I think about how much I will miss Sean's infectious grin and adventurous spirit, Kristen's woods smarts and smart-ass commentary, Trevor's black humor and common sense, and their obvious affection for one another. I care nothing for home. Kristen and Sean live here, on Prince of Wales Island, in a small burg called Thorne Bay, which is tucked along an inlet that juts into this rugged and beautiful land. The Thorne Bay River empties into the bay a half mile to the west. Kristen and Sean are foresters – not quite “timber tramps,” but certainly tree peeps – who, among other duties, “cruise” the woods and establish blocks of mature trees suitable for harvest. Eventually, after complying with the appropriate environmental laws, the block is sold and clear-cut. The island is full of evidence of prior clear-cuts; there are the occasional fresh cuts with only scrub brush growing between the stumps, but more common are areas where the timber was harvested ten, twenty or thirty years ago. Here, the spruce rise relatively quickly to again to claim the mountainsides, evidence, according to Kristen and Sean, that in this environment, the clear-cut method of harvesting the trees is the most practical utilizing the best available science. In any case, the rivers and streams are protected, allowing the salmon – pink, coho and sockeye – to return to their birthplace to spawn, rot and die. That is if they are not caught by anglers, netted by locals or eaten by the abundant black bears.

I had the good fortune to catch a few coho and a few fillets still populate my freezer evoking memories of rubber boots, bruised shins, banana slugs, and drizzling skies. I also remember seeing a black bear, humpback whales, eagles and blue herons, red-breasted sapsuckers and l.b.bs. (little brown birds.) I remember Sitka deer in the ditches, leaping salmon, queuing salmon and rotting salmon in the rivers, salmon that inhaled my “Jim's Silver Getter” spinner bait and salmon that ignored the same lure even when it flashed an inch from their mouths. I remember Trevor shooting video from his digital camera and Sean cleaning fish on a flat rock at the riverside. I pulled shrimp pots and crab pots, chopped wood, rode bike, hiked, overdosed on coffee, pounded beers and read by streaming sunlight with my feet up in the middle of a lazy afternoon, and ate – courtesy of Sean and Kristen, like royalty: venison, shrimp, halibut, crab, rock-fish tacos, wild blueberry pancakes, homemade ice cream, lettuce, peapods and herbs from their small garden and, of course, salmon – smoked, canned, grilled, broiled and possibly prepared in ways I don't realize. I don't remember seeing a television. Or missing one. In Ketchikan, I have to find a taxi-cab.

I've arrived on the other side of the strait - the airport side - after the five-mile taxi ride and another short ferry trip from the town side. Now, in the

airport bar, after humping my two packs and a cooler with 40 pounds of frozen fish, I nurse a beer before a flight to Seattle. From my stool, I watch a barge divide the narrow waters and marvel at the constant traffic of floatplanes. I can't imagine an airport bar with a better view.

In Seattle, we deplane onto the tarmac. After three tram rides and an hour at my connecting gate, I'm on another leg home, to Minneapolis where I arrive at 6:00 a.m. A shuttle gets me to Mankato and a friend plays taxi driver and plops me at my apartment complex front door. Once more I hump my gear, this time, three stories to my hot and quiet apartment. I empty the cooler stuffing the refrigerator freezer with fish. The rest of my gear remains unpacked in the middle of the front room. I miss Alaska already.

And yet, I feel the lure this rich farmland and these hardwood-laden valleys must have held for my ancestors, this place where they settled, uncertain of their place but willing to remain and work the land, raise their families and worship their God. But I cannot deny the pull the mountains and the sea have for me, as if I possess other roots, roots that exist beneath recent centuries in eras long ago, roots situated by high peaks and low prairies, seas and forests, roots now seemingly forgotten. Then again, maybe I just miss Sean, Kristen and Trevor that much that I'd conjure this sentimental nonsense to fill a void and dare to call it sincere. This I do know: after 11 connections over 22 hours, I'd turn around and fly right back there if I could.

I head for the humid darkness of my bedroom to nap, but mostly to toss and turn, remembering...





Spurious Capitalists

by Christopher Glazer

Adam Smith was at the mall at 8 this morn.

Sifting through faux-leather hand-bags,
Dragging cookie face kiddies with the leash.

Santa and his minions gave the buy one get one speech,
Baggy skinned winded hags mall-walk stag, and
Auntie May is up early cooking Kettle Corn.

I sit in my igloo, surrounded
by new-wave formal suits,
as acrid nail-removal chemicals assault.

Prim an' priss Lip-Smackers Patty pouts,
maniacal mothers saunter in groups:
Consolidated livelihood, your purpose compounded.

Perspective

by Joe Eggen

per•spec•tive (pər-spěk'tiv)

n.

1.

1. A view or vista.

2. A mental view or outlook: “It is useful occasionally to look at the past to gain a perspective on the present” (Fabian Linden).

3. The relationship of aspects of a subject to each other and to a whole: a perspective of history; a need to view the problem in the proper perspective.

4. Subjective evaluation of relative significance; a point of view: the perspective of the displaced homemaker.

5. The ability to perceive things in their actual interrelations or comparative importance: tried to keep my perspective throughout the crisis.

I once read a book called *Mans Search for Meaning*. In the first half, the author talks about his experiences in a Nazi concentration camp, all the stuff he had to go through, how they treated him and others, and what he had to do as a doctor. He said, in one paragraph, that when people look at these pictures of all the Jews in the doorsteps, sitting around, they are outraged and horrified. He went on to say that the people in those pictures would be thinking something else, thinking their not getting busted on and have the time to sit down and somehow enjoy the time to relax. I'd quote the paragraph, but I lent the book to someone (don't lend books.)

After reading that book, I learned more about the world and how bad other countries have it compared to the U.S. It seemed at the time like a quarter of the countries out there had warring regimes or guerrilla warfare inside the country, all because people can't get along. Can you imagine living in a country that has landmines? Would you live somewhere you could get kidnapped for being who you are, just to be ransomed back or killed? I could go on with a much bigger list, but it's all these things people don't think about that actually do happen. Quite often really. History is mind blowing when you really think about it because we've had thousands of years of atrocities against our fellow peeps.

When you look back, what really stands out? What's really talked about the most? Wars. I think we live in a pretty humane time when it comes to wars. A bullet in the head and your dead. No hacking, slashing, jabbing,

racking, quartering, burning, or all those other great ones. People still use torture, but not on the scale it once was. When you really think about this stuff, it really did happen. Unless something is controlling our society and writing us a fake history that they want us to think happened... but that's another article.

This stuff did happen through, and each and every instance has some kind of survivor. Could you imagine what they've been through? Probably just for being themselves, that stuff happened to them. I'm pretty sure no one really wants to die, so I'm sure they carried on with their scars of what happened. Hopefully small scars because no one wants to be deformed. I can't speak for them, but I think they may have thought their lives could only get better from that point because it couldn't get much worse. I don't think death is worse than torture. It would just be a sweet release.

I just want people to give it a bit more thought when they talk or think about how bad things are in their lives. When I hear people complain about whatever's wrong (unless its genuine) I lose a bit of sympathy. Because in the big scheme, it's all minor. When people can look at themselves from outside their box, I think they can see all the good in their life. I think people need to do this more to actually appreciate what they do have compared to what they don't have.

What is important in life? Think about that question. What is important in life? Work? The state of the house you live in? I disagree. I'd say family, friends, and being happy are important. If you're not happy, you should change what you're not happy about. Work being a bitch? There's a boatload of other jobs out there. In the past years, when my life has been crap, I have thought about this stuff.

When I watch *Saving Private Ryan* and see all the stuff that happens, especially when they throw the fire bomb on the motorcycle cart, it does affect me because I know people have done that countless times. People have lived and died because of that stuff. It gives me a respect for what others have gone through in their lives and makes me think about the people I meet. It makes me wonder what their story is. All this stuff helps me put my life in perspective. I may not have it as good as 3/4 of the people I know, but I do have have it better then literally 95% of the world.

The thing I've learned in my life, in the recent years at least, is that you can choose the outlook you have on things. When you're alone and life is making you lonely; when you've got worries; all the noise and hurry; you can forget all your troubles; forget all your cares, and go downtown. Things will be great when you're downtown...

It's all in how you really want to see things. You can choose to be positive or negative. Which are you? Which do you want to be seen as?



Photos:

above: “Ultramarine” by Morgan Lust

below: “Frog On My Shoulder Makes Me Happy” by Cassie Eichhorst





Photos:

above: “Ca\$h Money” by MacKenzie Duffy

below: “Dumpster” by Maria Schmitt



