

Issue #8



Save The
Crumbs



What You're Reading...

Save The Crumbs is an independent 'zine written, designed, assembled and distributed by a handful of people in Mankato who think they have something to say. We started this publication because we feel 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 anything we want to print. *Save The Crumbs* is 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, advice, or want to submit something... send e-mail to **savethecrumbs@gmail.com**.

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

CONTRIBUTERS:

Dustin Wilmes, John Maiers, Juston Cline, Joe Eggen,
Sadie Arch, Morgan Lust, Britta Moline, Dave Perron,
Dylan Schultz, Monsieur Triste, Sarah Turbes, Melissa Windom



From the Angry Desk of Juston Cline...

Dear Everybody,

What is the deal? Why is it that so many people have decided in themselves that going to a bar, getting drunk, and having sex is the pinnacle of life? I mean, of course there are those who would rather get drunk and have sex at a party than at the bar. Or those who maybe meet someone at a book store and have a date that night and drink a bunch of wine and have sex and not talk to each other for a week?

What I'm trying to get at is, what happened to walks in the park or cuddling or talking about things? Anything? What happened to real, true bonds between people? What happened to not having sex? Have all these bonding activities been substituted by text messaging and instant messaging and blogs and MySpace comments? Aren't you really just bonding with your computer or cell phone at that point? I mean, when someone texts you "im s gld 2 b w u, cnt wt 2 c u agn =)" and you look at it longing for that person, don't you realize that your deep meaningful stare through that person's eyes and into their soul is actually just into your cell phone? That person doesn't really know how you feel about them.

Maybe I'm just too old-fashioned or narrow-minded or non-conforming or something? I guess I'm just interested in more true love happening in the world. The feelings and emotions that go far beyond what any drug, alcohol or sexual position can ever achieve. Those are the things that truly matter. So get out of the bar and into the park. Invite someone you like and proceed to have nice bonding experience that will last a lifetime. Doesn't that sound like a nice way to spend your time?

Your Friend,
Juston

Joe Eggen's Fortune Cookie Quotes

- Job interviews are like a first date. It's all about confidence and being prepared.
- Don't settle, in any aspect. Not in relationships, not in jobs. You deserve to be happy.
- It's not a horrible thing to be single. You will realize this if you don't focus on having another person to validate your meaning in life.
- Open your mind to things you haven't experienced.
- Look, learn and listen.
- Respect your elders, they could teach you much. They've lived a life you probably don't even know one percent of.
- Actually talk with your parents; they have lived life, too. Ask how they met. Ask what they were like when they were kids.
- Take time for yourself when you need it. Clear your mind of garbage and relax.
- Read. All the knowledge of the world and imagined worlds is at your finger tips.
- Always look on the bright side. Good/Bad is all in how you choose to look at things. It's you who controls your thoughts/actions.
- Learn about other cultures besides your own. The world is a diverse place and you should be open to experiencing new things.
- Travel. As stated above, the world is a big and diverse place. Some places can't be described. You have to experience them yourself.
- Discover new hobbies. You have talents no one else does, why not use them? Why not expand on them?
- Keep some keepsakes. A rock from a walk/talk on the beach with your love will be worth the world when you're older.
- Gather (at least) a small network of friends. You'll never know how important friends are until you don't have any at all.
- Create meaningful memories. Become part of a friends life and enjoy your time together.
- Being popular isn't as important as you think. I can't emphasize this enough. Life outside of high school isn't like high school, so be yourself and be true to yourself.
- Think independently. Don't be herded to where "they" want you to go. Be aware of what's going on, and of the bigger picture.
- Stand up for yourself and your friends. You don't have to put up with shit, nor do important people in your life. Standing up will make them see what you're made of.
- Prepare yourself for life, get a game plan, learn careers, get interested... or you will become aimless and make \$9/hr until you're 30.

沃 度 兒



沃度兒牙水
 牙膏。牙刷
 均為歐美人
 士所樂用誠
 以潔牙固齒
 清香爽口有
 益衛生洵摩
 登士女宜必
 備之物也

總經理

德商禮和洋行

各大藥房百貨
 公司均有出售

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

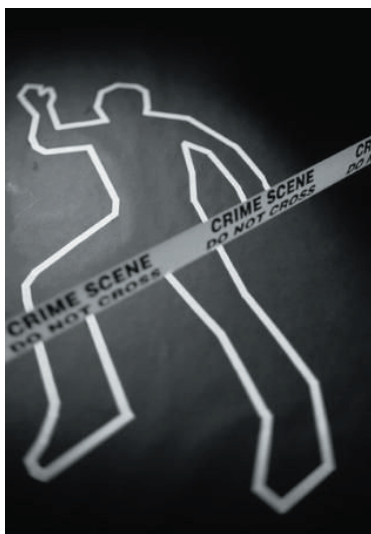
This month... **Crime**

Thieves run rampant in America, but there are ways to thwart them. Most Americans buy expensive security devices that beep or honk when a suspicious person gets too close to their beloved possessions, but for those of us who are too poor to buy security systems there are other strategies to employ.

Don't ever buy the most up-to-date media formats. Eight-track cartridges and cassette tapes are fine. So are VHS tapes and laserdiscs. The key is to have things no one else wants. Case in point: someone smashed my van window and rummaged through the Tupperware of cassettes I keep next to the driver's seat. They didn't steal anything.

If you must have DVDs, stay away from things everyone enjoys like pornography and Adam Sandler. Instead, stick to *Sweating to the Oldies* and *The Postman*—not even Tom Petty's cameo could inspire thieves to steal this steaming pile of post-apocalyptic tripe. Same goes for CDs. Everybody loves Metallica and 50 Cents, so how about buying music that pawn shops overflow with like the Spin Doctors, the Gin Blossoms and the *Dangerous Minds Soundtrack*. Even if a fool stole these, they'd be sorely disappointed when the pawn-shop clerk sent them on their way with a nickel and a firm handshake.

These tactics should keep the hooligans at bay, but if you still find yourself losing possessions to thieves, consider this nifty trick: put all of your possessions in a van (if you don't have a van, rent one) and leave the sliding door wide open. Yep, you heard me. Leave the door open with all your earthly possessions inside. But wait, make sure to park this van next to a two-story building that you have roof access to—see where I'm going with this? Arm yourself. I suggest staying away from real guns, seeing as how killing is considered a crime in most states. Instead, buy a BB or paintball gun. Take your position on the roof and wait. As the miscreants near your vehicle, pop them and watch them scatter. If you're lucky, this will condition them not to steal. Regardless, it's a fun and easy way to enjoy a mild summer evening.



The Eerie Force Mankato has on its Locals

by Melissa Windom

So the other day while sitting in one of the coffee shops (the good ones, not Starbucks) my friend, whose name rhymes with Stan Smutzer, was talking with a long lost friend he hadn't seen in ages. They talked about how Mankato seems to drag people back and how it never really seems to change. When it does do something huge, like a big change, the locals just kind of pretend that whatever changed has always been like that.

An example: The Hilton Hotel. Everybody walks around it with the attitude that it has been there for years, when in reality that sculpture with the ginormous X's was there for years. Listen, Hilton. I haven't forgotten that sculpture. In fact, I had a lot of fun with that sculpture, climbing on it and playing capture the flag around it. It was my team's safety zone quite a few times. Even though you do bring a lot more business to the downtown area and bring more customers to the cheap seats... and bring more people to Mankato. I, uhh... I got nothing. I guess I just do not like how huge it is. I am just going to blame you for all of the Starbucks in town...

Back to Mankato's super-human powers of sucking the native travelers back in. This situation is like a "Twilight Zone" episode, but a good one. I think what people like about Mankato is that this town is like a wise, stoic old-woman who is always there to offer you a look at some pretty neat stuff, like our rivers, ravines, and flourishing parks. Mankato (wise, old lady) offers people the sense of comfort of knowing it will always be the same and stay peaceful if they do want to do some exploring.

Well, come fall, I want to do some exploring myself in a different country with righteous people. I hope Mankato does do some changing. Here are my ideas:

1. Garbage, rocks, and soil will be dumped over the River Hills Mall so when I return, Mankato will have a mountain and then I will not have to travel to Colorado every winter when I want do some snowboarding.

2. A rich, nice person will buy Embers and convert it into a food co-op with a fenced-in outdoor patio where I can bring my dog.
3. Some of those sub-divisions will somehow disappear and we can have another large, beautiful park like Rasmussen Woods in the uptown area.
4. Our bus transportation system will get figured out better so people can have the choice of not owning a car to get to and from their jobs across town.
5. My friend Dave's idea of 'Food, Not Lawns' will actually happen, where people get sick of having grass and just turn it over to those that are interested in growing food, but have no yard.
6. Stan Smutzer's idea of knocking down fast-food joints and replacing them with community gardens will actually happen.

Although I have more ideas, I feel these six ideas are the ones I would love to see happen first. Then, we can look at getting herds of buffalo, start transporting on horses, etc...



Postcard from Belize

by Sarah Turbes

Not too long ago, I came across the postcard that John sent to my parents while he was in Guatemala, way back when I was less than a year old. The card, with the black and white picture of a man resembling a South-American Ernest Hemingway, has survived several moves from one bulletin board to another. This is apparent because there are several thumbtack-sized holes along the edges. As far back as I can remember, the card from John has been part of my mother's extensive postcard collection. While other cards are rotated out for the latest political commentaries or pictures of retro housewives, the "old soul" with the gruff, weathered, yet kind face remains.

The first lines on the card reflect the kind of friend that John was,

"Hola bien Amigoes, Been travelin' hard for a long time now, looking forward to returning to home and friends, it's where it's at. Glad to know yer there!" March 12, 1979.

His words strike me as particularly sweet because he had taken the time, in all of his travels and even in his nomadic spirit, to write from somewhere in Belize. I imagine that John, as a young man, was similar to Christopher McCandless; the young man whose solitary trip to Alaska was most recently portrayed in the film, "Into the Wild." While he writes of the wonderful people he met along the way, John's hints of loneliness are hard to ignore, a feeling that he could never quite get rid of.

As a young man, it is evident that he was never afraid to express his feelings of gratitude, longing, and affection for those near and dear to him. When I was a baby, John had taken two black and white photographs; one of me and my mom and one of me with my dad. He built a frame out of driftwood, inscribed "To two Great People, May You Stay Forever Young", on the back of the picture and gave it to my parents. Although it may seem like the most homemade, '70-ish thing to do (with the Bob Dylan

inspiration and all), the picture, with its frame barely intact, is one of my dearest possessions. I recently found out that John had given me his childhood teddy bear when I was a baby. I vaguely remember the rust colored bear, slightly reminiscent of Fozzy Bear without the hat or tie, with a rattle in its belly to simulate a bear growl. Now aware of its origin, I wish I still had the stuffed toy.

John passed away about six years ago, around this time of year, if I remember correctly. Last time I saw him was about 15 years ago when he was passing through town on one of his many summer vacations from his life in Idaho. His passing continues to kind of haunt me. Not in that spooky, unsettled, terrifying sort of haunting, but there are moments when I expect to see John pull up at the end of our gravel driveway, his van loaded with camping gear and maybe a bicycle strapped precariously to a bike rack. From as early as I can recall, he wore round, wire-rim glasses, which slipped to the end of his nose from time to time. His slightly balding head was surrounded by wild, curly brown hair, accompanied by a full beard and moustache. His soft spoken voice seemed to match the kindness mixed with sadness in his eyes. His appearance was well-kept, but he always sort of looked like he was “roughin’ it.” As a kid, I always thought John resembled the actor, Charles Martin Smith, from “Never Cry Wolf.”

His devotion and care towards friends never waned, even as he was settled in Idaho for the majority of his adult life. He was in a relationship that was close yet complex and which never resulted in marriage, but he did have a son, Luke. Before John settled almost exclusively in Idaho, he lived in the area. His homes were usually rustic and full of character, places that one might expect a nomad to temporarily inhabit. It was important to John to have some sort of homestead so he could provide a home for Luke when he came to Minnesota. All I remember of Luke was when he was four, during one of his visits to John’s. He was bright and beautiful. I recall reading a book on dinosaurs to Luke because he could not read on his own yet. I was in fifth grade, but had not

mastered the proper pronunciations of dinosaur names, at least not like Luke had. He corrected me throughout the entire book. Annoying as it was, it was hard to dislike a kid like him. That same visit, when John and Luke were returning from the park near John's home, Luke ran into the road at the wrong time, was struck by a car and killed. John never forgave himself. Like any parent that loses a child, there's a part of them that dies as well. It was always apparent that there was some part of him missing.

After Luke died, John moved away. Understandably, he could not bear to reside anywhere near the accident. As years passed, we heard from him infrequently and each time my mom worried about his overwhelming sadness and guilt. As I got older, I suppose I forgot about John a bit. I merely thought of him as an old family friend who moved out west and had a hard time forgiving himself. It wasn't until John's passing that I had wished I had viewed him differently. His death was a surprise because he hadn't been ill, but even if he had been, I doubt that we would have known. Apparently, he died of a hereditary heart condition, but my mom believes that the grief he carried for so many years was partly to blame. I've read of people dying of a broken heart and believe it's possible, or at least in John's case.

In my photo album, with the picture of a girl that looks like a "hip" 1960s Holly Hobbie on the cover, holds the only picture I have of John. It was the last Christmas that my parents were together and John is sitting on our couch with his big beard and red flannel shirt, holding the *Mousetrercise* record my mom gave me. In a picture next to his is Luke's mother. I think that was the first time John brought her to meet our family. If John were still alive, I imagine him to look a bit like Allen Ginsburg, or the first man I fell in love with during my early twenties. I believe that if John were still alive, his passions would revolve around injustices at a local to world-wide level, the importance of education, and of course, traveling. And I'm sure at some point in his travels; we would get a postcard from some place far away, reflecting on the importance of friends and how much he loved us, even from afar.

From the Desk of Sadie Arch...

I would like to write a thank you letter to MSU, Mankato for all the life skills I have attained from my last seven years at this prestigious institution.

Dear Minnesota State University, Mankato,

Thank you for introducing me to both the black and the white side of life. Thank you for letting me know that the gray in the middle is not that important and best saved for those pursuing a Doctorate.

Thank you for teaching me how to cut and paste. If an employer ever asks me a question, I will immediately be able to answer him/her with a fill-in-the-blank answer.

Thank you for teaching me that at times, the answer is not a. or b., but instead both a. and b., which is of course answer c., and is rarely answer d. which is neither a. nor b.

Thank you for introducing me to a diverse population of caucasian farm kids from all over Southern Minnesota. I now understand the meaning of diversity. The various cultural events where I was able to partake in both tacos and egg rolls were some of the most stimulating moments of my education.

Thank you for permitting me to feel more important than all of those idiots not spending several thousand dollars a year to attend a center for learning. I can now scoff at the man who delivers my mail and the woman who prepares my morning latte. I am just now beginning to enjoy this sense of entitlement.

Thank you for allowing me to take out loans instead of making me pay for my courses right away. I am sure that for the next twenty to forty years my wallet will be as light as my heart.

Thank you for preparing me for all of the problems I am bound to encounter, I am positive that my BA and MA degrees in English Literature will insulate me from any trials or tribulations that may come my way.

I will miss this great bastion of enlightenment and progress as I make my way through an uneducated world, but I will always have my luminescent degree with its accredited stamp to guide me.

Sincerely,
Sadie Arch

A New Zealand Mix CD

by “Diamond” Dave Perro

Any obsessive music fan has some story to share about following a sort of sonic breadcrumb trail leading them into discovering new artists or genres. At times, some of this curiosity seeking leads to straight-up dead ends (I mean how many emo albums does a person have to hear to get the idea?) Other times, these diversions can have a lasting effect on your listening habits for years to come.

I only speak of this as I reflect on my own on-going fascination with the music that has come out of New Zealand’s independent scene over the past few decades. You see, over the past eight years or so, I have continuously been seeking out music from this country, all of which can be traced back to a Tall Dwarfs cassette I picked up solely because they were name-checked by Robert Pollard of Guided By Voices in a magazine I had read some years prior. Since that initial find, I have scoured record store bins and online music sites to track down more of the music coming out of this remote country that I know little about (though episodes of *Flight of the Conchords* have been helpful.) I have spent as little as pocket change on some titles to ridiculous sums of cash on rare collections.

So what is the attraction? I really don’t have a firm grasp of that myself. There are clearly parallels to be made to much of the independent rock and experimental music that has come out of the U.S. and U.K. in the wake of punk. Perhaps the most appealing aspects of this music is the overall DIY approach that many of the artists embrace and, as the compiler of the New Zealand Underground Archive puts it, a “lack of pandering. . . [and] a purity and enthusiasm for music and art.”

Certainly this doesn’t add much for clarity, so I’ve gone and done what any die-hard music fan would do to state their case: I made a mix CD. Now, this isn’t some glossy British music publication with CDs affixed to the cover, so all I can offer you is a track list. However, with a one-month’s subscription to eMusic and a few special orders from your local independent record store, you could assemble much of this quite quickly. I’m no Robert Pollard, but for those curiosity seekers out there, this may be a diversion worth your time. Happy hunting!

On to the track list...

1) The Clean - “Tally Ho” This song has been referred to as the “Louie, Louie” of NZ music. This band kick started the NZ independent music scene and the legendary Flying Nun record label with the release of this single in 1981.

2) Toy Love – “Sheep” A melodic pop-punk ditty in the same vein as the Buzzcocks. Features Chris Knox and Alec Bathgate, who went on to form the Tall Dwarfs.

3) Pin Group – “Ambivalence” A perfect fusion of Joy Division’s downer post-punk and the early moves of the Velvet Underground.

4) The Chills – “Pink Frost” While the Chills would go on to write mostly jangly pop tunes, this particular song, originally released in 1984, holds up next to any of the standout tracks from the British post-punk era.

5) This Kind of Punishment – “Immigration Song” Peter and Graeme Jefferies have become highly influential figures in the NZ underground music scene, recording under various monikers since the early ‘80s. Here they sound like a caffeinated Spacemen 3 with their throbbing rhythmic pulse and droning guitar buzz.

6) The Terminals – “Deadly Tango” This track sounds like some obscure garage/psych oddity from the ‘60s, though it was released in 1992. The singer’s voice is an acquired taste: think Ian Curtis with the vocal theatrics of Grace Slick.

7) Tall Dwarfs – “Mr. Broccoli” The Tall Dwarfs typically create a stripped-down psych-pop filled with loopy lyrics and percussion loops. Here they wrote a straight forward acoustic pop gem with a clarinet solo to boot.

8) Bailter Space – “Splat” Search the used bins for the Matador records compilation entitled *What’s Up Matador* to track down this Teenage Fanclub-like nugget.

9) The Renderers – “Out of the Forest” This band specializes in a brand of fuzzed-out rock with a blues undercurrent, somewhat similar to the work of Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds. The album *A Dream of the Sea*, from which this song is taken, is a hidden classic.

10) The Stumps – “Track 3 from The Black Wood” Swells of highly processed guitar sounds wash over a sweet low-end groove by this NZ super-group of sorts.

11) Greg Malcolm – “Unknown Rembetika” The left-handed acoustic guitar slinger plays this Middle Eastern-tinged workout over droning textures and plodding percussion.

12) Alastair Galbraith – “Blue Room” Maybe not the most representative of his work, but a beautiful multi-tracked acoustic guitar piece by any standards.

13) CJA – “4:39 from Ironclad” A simple reverbed-out guitar line played repeatedly and recorded to haunting effect using lo-fi means. Also, check out Clayton Noone’s scorching electric guitar work with his band, The Futurians.

14) Antony Milton – “Sirens” Milton’s take on the singer-songwriter genre, which sounds like it could have been recorded with a broken toy-microphone.

15) Pumice – “The Only Doosh Worth Giving” This song offers a perfect summation of the best in NZ independent music. Noisy as all get out, yet melodic and catchy.

16) Kraus – “A Mole in the Middle Distance” Retro-futuristic soundtrack music, of sorts, played on a keyboard that sounds as though it’s malfunctioning.

17) Birchville Cat Motel— “Skies Crimson Tears” For those who find the drome metal of SunnO))) to be too static, here’s something cut from the same cloth that you can bang your head to.

18) Dead C – “Sky” An influence on several of the preceding artists. This song actually sounds like pure pop music when following the 20-minute amplifier destruction of “Driver UFO” on the album *Harsh ‘70s Reality*.

For more information check out some of these sites:

- <http://home.comcast.net/~cassetto/nzarchive.html>
- <http://www.newzealandcds.com>
- <http://www.lastvisibledog.com>
- <http://www.softabuse.com>
- <http://www.emusic.com>
- <http://tunetowncds.com>

OR get in touch with us here at Save the Crumbs ;)

SPINNING IN CONTROL

BY JOHN MAIERS

Sometimes the world spins ‘round in such a blur that we hardly notice its desensitizing absurdity. I know I don’t notice enough. If I did, I think I’d be more frightened than I am. Wasn’t it Miles Davis who said: “If you’re not scared, you’re not paying attention?”

Once in a while though, the absurdity is so thick, so stinkbugesque, so “enough,” that it sticks, - whether you’re paying attention or not – like shit to a wall.

Shit like a politician “staying on message,” or, why in the wide world of sugar highs you can’t get a Coke on the campus of Minnesota State University, Mankato. Admittedly, not the kind of feces that reeks of impending planetary doom, but stinky enough to offend the hairs growing from the walls inside this cynical nose.

I remember a few years back when tele-journalist Tim Russert interviewed a George W. Bush lackey. I forget the guy’s name, but he was one of Bush’s top lieutenants on a mission, apparently, to tell viewers what he thought they should know. At least that’s how it seemed to me, and why I remember parts of the exchange to this day.

Russert introduced a question with the clear condition it be answered simply “yes or no.” I don’t remember the exact question, but the inquiry was about America’s involvement in Iraq. Bush’s boy answered with, “Let me just say...” and proceeded to amplify and exemplify the whole notion of “staying on message” by blathering and jabbering about some aspect of the occupation unrelated to Russert’s question. Russert, to his credit, remained focused and probed again for “yes or no;” Bush’s boy mixed a mouthful of “First of all...” with another dose of “Let me just say...” and viewers got a recipe of overcooked spinshit. Russert tried another tack, rephrasing his question in an attempt to engage the interviewee so as to elicit a direct response; the boy responded as if he was gifted a soapbox from which to pontificate. The frustrated Russert finally looked at the camera and said, “We’ll be right back.”

Since then, I’ve noticed many politicians – democrats as well as republicans – (we rarely hear from those poor slobs – or courageous patriots, depending on your point of view and level of empathy – who

Spinning In Control cont'd...

challenge from outside that dominant bought-and-paid-for two-party system) answer most questions by, well, not answering them. Most often, they respond with a keen awareness that passive viewers – like sometimes me and maybe sometimes you – will care less for a forthright answer to a direct question and care more for the feel-good traction or the fear-factor resonance of the hard-spun “message.” A mostly supine press complies as if their jobs depend on it (and considering who owns and operates most mainstream media, I guess they do) while we – a distracted electorate – scramble for the remote. Watch. Listen. Let me first of all just say you will see and hear what I’m talking about.

Then there is the notion of exclusivity versus choice. Consider: how many brands of potato chips are offered at your favorite grocery store? Three, maybe. How many at the corner convenience store? Two, maybe. Consider those same stores. How many brands of toothpaste can you choose from? Razor blades? Frozen foods? Nuts? Candy? How about soda? At the Hy-Vee supermarket in downtown Mankato, at least you can bypass the multinational megacolas and select a soft drink that doesn’t list high fructose corn syrup as the first and most common ingredient. Not so on the campus of MSU.

After receiving \$8 million from Glen Taylor and \$1 million from Bill Bresnan in 1998 that laid the financial foundation for building Taylor Center, MSU decided to consolidate its beverage operations into a long-term relationship. In other words, MSU wanted to choose an exclusive supplier from any willing bidders to supply and service the vending machines, event concessions and sundry beverage needs of the campus. The local Pepsi distributorship stepped up with a \$2.25 million commitment.

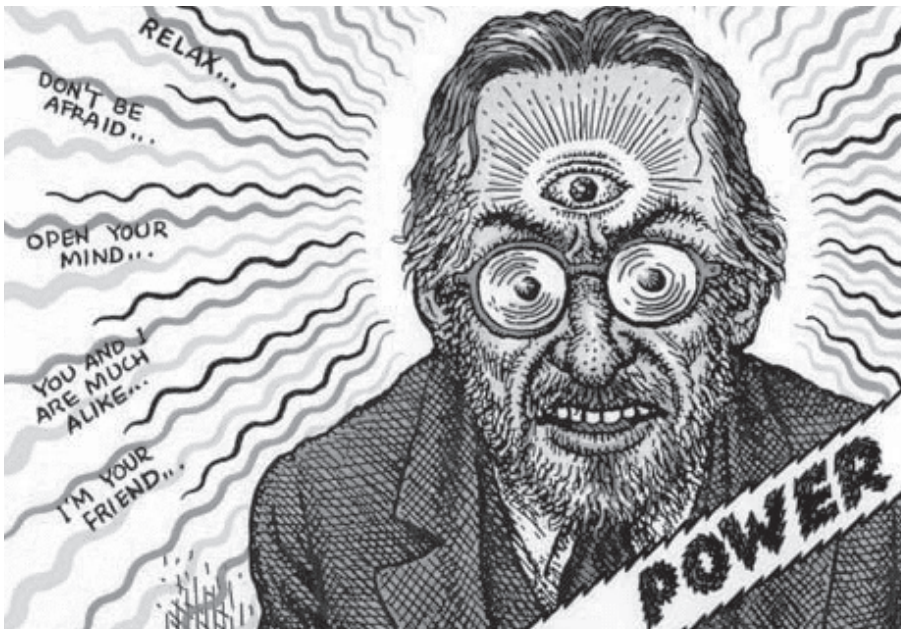
MSU is in the ninth year of a ten-year deal in which Pepsi-Cola Mankato, Inc. paid annual installments of \$140,000 from 2001 – 2008 with a final payment of \$130,000 due in 2009. This, after Pepsi forked over \$500,000 before Sept. 1, 2000. In addition, Pepsi makes substantial donations to the Foundation’s Presidential Scholarships, the athletic department, the Department of Theater and Arts and the Department of Music as well as funding two internships per

year. With an annual operating budget of \$121 million, a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year may seem insignificant, but there is constant pressure to make ends meet, not only for students, but for administrators at MSU. And Pepsi provides, in addition to its traditional colas, a line of teas, juices, and bottled water.

That admitted, if you want quench your thirst with the liquid goodness of a different brand, like say, a Sprecher Brewing Co. Crème Soda or Henry Weinard's Root Beer – or even a Coke - (choices that might be considered reflective of a part of MSU's mission) it's BYOB.

If you're a student at MSU, you're also captive to certain brands. For Pepsi, that's the point. So I suppose you could balance sleeping through the diversity course that's required with taking the beverage business lesson to heart; you could accept the standard operating procedure of institutions of higher learning (St. Cloud State University is a Pepsi campus while the University of Minnesota contracts with Coca Cola) then understand with wisdom – or wonder in amazement – why, years later, you buy one brand over another.

Spin doctoring politicians instead of forthright public servants; highest bidders trump diverse choices. The earth ain't shattering but for some reason, my soul feels a twinge of pain. As for the rest of me, "scared?" A little bit Mr. Davis, a little bit.



The Truth About Suicide

by Britta Moline

This isn't a self-confessional, I just don't have anything else to write about. Frank called me last night, drunk and stoned and bitter, the dogs barking in the background was the only thing grounding his speech in reality. (I'm using his real name because Frank is the only name that fits him. There's no protection for the drunk and bohemian.) It would have been her birthday, today. His voice was barely above a rustle as he spat the words out.

"It would have been her twenty-second birthday", he repeated in disbelief. "Christ, twenty-two. How old are you again?"

"Eighteen—no—nineteen. "

There was silence and, I assumed, some snickering because he always laughed when he was drunk.

"You keep telling me the wrong age."

"I keep forgetting." Christ, nineteen.

"So how's your love life?" He shifted after a moment's silence.

I gnawed my inner lip. After the tense and silent few days I'd had with my girlfriend Sam it had been uneasy. She was sliding again and I hadn't the footing to grab her and hold her up. She was never a peachy girl, but there are things I just can't help her with, and at the same time, cannot ignore.

"The same." I said. Had Frank forgotten I was dating Sam?

"Yeah, well, what is the same? I haven't talked to you for so long," Which was a lie. "I'm out of it. I've been out of it for so long, they changed what 'it' is." Another powerful laugh.

“Oh, good.”

There was more silence, there usually was, but tonight even moreso because it was her birthday. Six months ago when I was just beginning to learn how to love, his girlfriend, a powerful and doomed songbird, had committed suicide, the effects of which seemed to only now manifest in his voice.

Let me tell you about Frank. He's forty-something, divorced for too long, lifetime cynic. Two kids he loves to brainwash and not nearly enough free time, between his job as a political dissident and his real job as a journalist. This girlfriend, a twenty-sum-bed-sheet-lover was his little secret, the pride and joy of a man who marvels at how he can get a girl like her. This isn't to say he didn't deserve her, but in his mind he could never live up to her ideals. I didn't even know he was hers until I learned she was dead.

Even now I have a vision in my mind of Frank sitting in a leather chair, it's probably old and ratty because that's how bohemians do it, smoking a cigarette with a bottle of whisky or something equally foul at his side table. Despite his stature he's elegant, his body almost a perfect curve. Despite his drunkenness, he's meditative. The smoke barely rises, just drifts from his mouth in a cartoon cloud, as pretty little darling takes her pretty little pills and swears off the mortal coil for good. Frank's eyes search the walls but not even the wrinkles on his forehead or the sweat on her cleavage in his memory will tell him what she's about to do.

And what of my girl Sam? Who knows what that beautiful bitch could be doing at any moment. Buildings, pills, knives (even though knives feel far too cliché for her). There's something beautiful and dangerous in her eyes, as if at any moment she could take a gun to her head or sweep you off your feet for an impromptu dance in a supermarket. I didn't know what she was doing right now, but I hoped to God she was sleeping well. That way she couldn't hear the scream that Frank let out when he found her body six months ago.

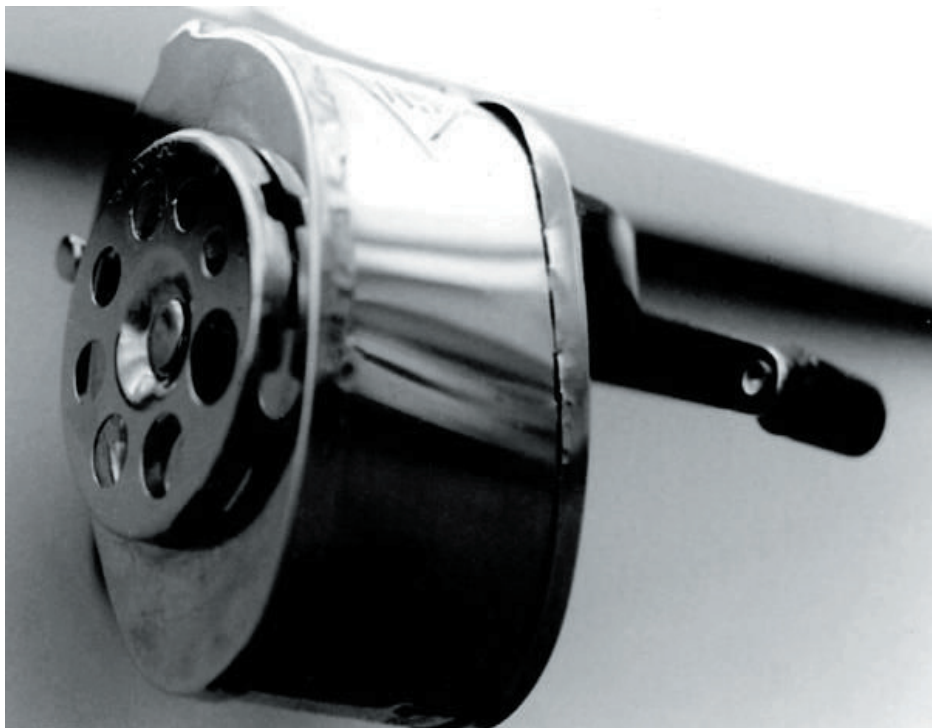
I hope that scream never echoes through Sam's dreams.



Photos:

Above: “After The Fire” by Sarah Turbes

Below: “Polished” by Morgan Lust





Photos:

Above: “Counting Your Sweets” by Juston Cline

Below: “Eat The Illuminated” by Monsieur Triste



