



ISSUE #30

Save The
Crumbs



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What You're Reading...

Save The Crumbs is an independent 'zine written, designed, assembled and distributed by a handful of people in Mankato. We started this publication because we felt the spirit of "do it yourself" was 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 corporate 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.

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Also, don't forget to join us on Facebook and Twitter.

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Dustin Wilmes, Juston Cline, Sarah Turbes, Jack Kolars, Ashley Birk, Bryan Boyce, A.J. Hakari, Jeremiah Langsjoen, Morgan Lust, Nora Myers, Kyle Nordland, Fondle Sarah, Dylan Schultz, Dan Urlick



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

This month... **Ice Skating**



I hadn't ice-skated in over fifteen years, so when a friend asked me to come with her to skate at Central Park I begrudgingly agreed, because she was beautiful and smart and funny, and I wanted to be alone with her.

When she asked if I had ever skated, I explained how I grew up in Arlington, Minnesota a town of just over a thousand people. Not nearly big enough for a high school hockey team or a proper rink, just a parking lot covered in lumpy ice courtesy of a local volunteer fire truck spraying water from a hose across the cracked pavement. I told her I didn't remember being a strong skater, but that I did play pickup games of hockey and free skate a couple times a week for as long as the ice remained. She said she had gone the week before, and last winter as well.

In the warming house, I was surprised at how excited I became while lacing up my blue plastic rental skates. As a kid, I never even liked skating all that much. It was simply something to do when it was cold and there wasn't much else to keep us out of the house. Still, so many years later, I was far giddier than I ever had been. Of course part of it had to do with the girl, how much I can't be sure, but the remaining part reveled at the challenge of hitting the ice after being away for so long.

Even a year ago I might not have been so excited. I would've been afraid of falling and embarrassing myself, but not this new year. Last year saw the end of a seven year relationship, new apartment, changes at work, countless bad dates, embarrassing strikeouts, and thousands upon thousands of miles on the road. Something along the way changed me. Fear evaporated behind experience.

I stumbled as I walked out of the warming house, not a good sign, but when I stepped on to the ice and kicked out, gliding straight without wavering, all those past years fell away. I was so lost in moment that it surprised me when the girl who invited me called out. I swung back, took her by the hand, and guided her onto the ice. Over fifteen years without skating and I was helping her. I think she was just as amazed as I was. She asked how I did it. I said I wasn't afraid to fall. I wasn't lying either. We both fell. We both agreed it was fun to fall, to brush the snow off of our coats, pull each other up, and fly into the next dive.

Later that night, she told me about the last time she had skated. She was with her boyfriend. Yes, she had a boyfriend. Neither of them had skated in years, and the moment his skates touched ice he fell and couldn't get up. She had to pull him to the wall, and he refused to make a second attempt. He asked her to promise not to tell any of their friends, but of course the story was too easy a laugh to keep secret.

It would've been easy for me to laugh too, and let my ego swell at his expense, but I knew too well how it felt to hit ice with no chance of a graceful exit. My ex ended things and was seeing someone else within months. It was the first time I felt guilty for being alone with this new beautiful girl, and as she slid her cold hands over mine, I knew it would also be the last.

Who Would Win In A Fight?



El Santo

Strength - 8

Intelligence - 4

Energy Projection - 2

Stamina - 7

Agility - 5

Durability - 4

Speed - 5



Ace Frehley

Strength - 2

Intelligence - 5

Energy Projection - 9

Stamina - 4

Agility - 6

Durability - 4

Speed - 6

vs.

El Santo Attributes:

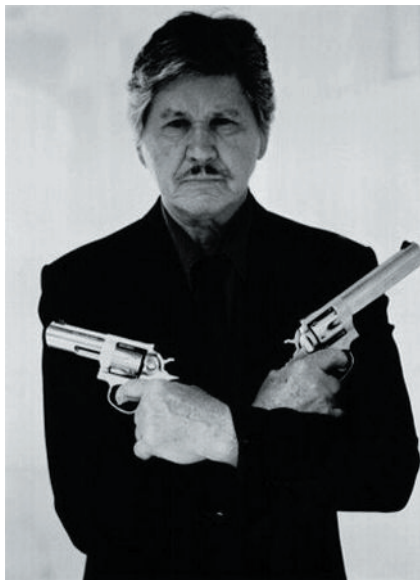
Legendary Mexican Luchador enmascarado, has own comic book series, popularized pro wrestling in Mexico, unmasked Black Shadow in the ring, master of the camel clutch and diving headbutt, father of El Hijo del Santo, appeared in 52 lucha libre films, four-time Mexican National Middleweight Champion

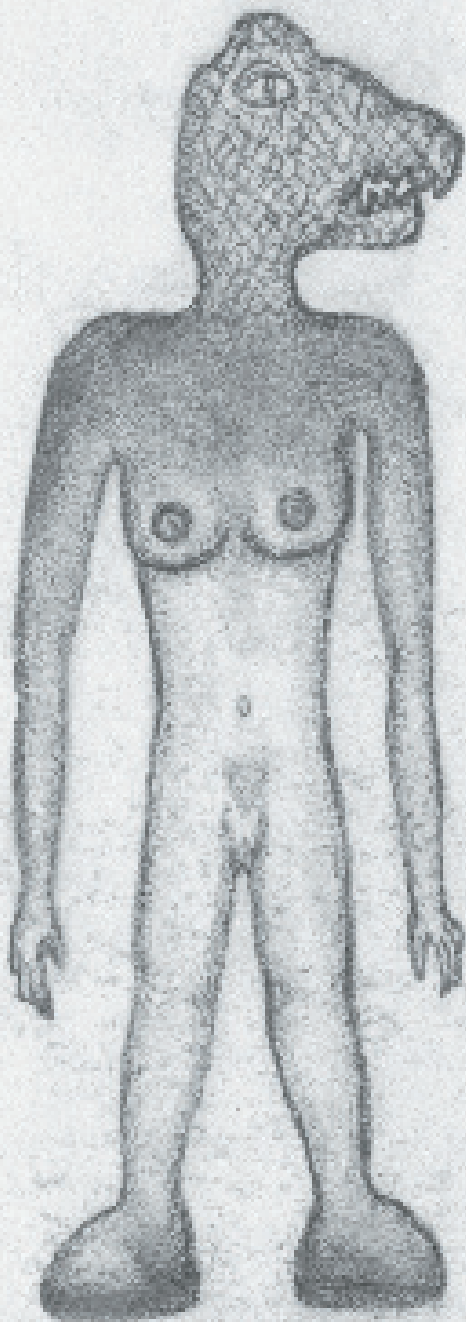
Ace Frehley Attributes:

Co-founder and lead guitarist for KISS, plays a Les Paul that shoots rockets, voted "14th Greatest Metal Guitarist of All Time" by *Guitar World* magazine, has own action figure, can shoot lasers and teleport, album sold the most copies of the four KISS solo albums, starred in the film *KISS Meets The Phantom Of The Park*

From The Vengeful Desk of Juston Cline...

So what ever happened to vigilantes? I mean, do they exist? Did they exist? Recently I have been partaking in extended hang out session with my best mate, watching vigilante-type films from the late '70s and early '80s. What came to mind during one of the films is this: Are there currently people in the world who are systematically ridding it of bad guys without any leadership of government or law enforcement? And secondly, how do I become one of these ultra bad ass dudes?! I have been trying to think about the history of such activities. In America, I'm sure the "Wild West" was filled with all kinds of people who would step up and take out a cheating man at the poker table or someone trying to rob or rape someone on the trail. The difference is they probably didn't realize what it was they were doing. Just a good person with a gun serving justice. But, I imagine this type of activity has gone way back before America was conceived. The Chinese, Japanese, Romans... All most likely had people doing a similar activity. One thing is certain. Since the dawn of sex and currency, there has always been someone trying to take it from someone else, either in force or persuasion. There has also most likely been someone that has the intestinal-fortitude to try and stop that person from taking it. But what about now? People are on high alert about rapists and killers. Always keeping their guard up, not letting the kids out of the fenced in yard any longer. But you never hear of the bad guys getting off'ed in the night by an anonymous do-gooder. I used to think my dad was a vigilante. Like Charles Bronson roaming the city streets with a magnum, doing what the cops wish they could. Maybe our society is sophisticated enough to keep us safe now? Maybe everyone has become soft? Alls I'm saying is, I would follow Charles Bronson down a dark alley any day.





"Milk, Milk, Lemonade"
by Fondle Sarah

You'll Find Out (1940)

by A.J. Hakari

Just when you thought you'd seen every old dark house movie -- well, here's another one. But in lieu of Bob Hope or Creighton Hale prowling about a spooky abode, *You'll Find Out* features Kay Kyser, star of stage, radio, and



apparently haunted mansion flicks. On loan from their College of Musical Knowledge, Kay and his ragtag band are hired to play at the 21st birthday gala of pretty young Janis Bellacrest (Helen Parrish). The shindig is being held at her ancestral home, where the spirit of her eccentric father is said to still roam the halls. But the house has attracted some flesh-and-blood terrors, as an old judge (Boris Karloff), a phony psychic (Bela Lugosi), and a gap-toothed mythbuster (Peter Lorre) have teamed up to swindle Janis out of her healthy inheritance. With all the strength a wimpy wisecracker like him can muster, Kay sets out to brave the Bellacrest house of horrors and keep Janis out of harm's way.

You'll Find Out is a scary movie that normal people can feel good about watching -- which is to say it isn't scary at all. It's more in tune with *The Cat and the Canary*, only with even more emphasis on humorous shenanigans. The spooky side of the story is pushed aside a lot, as *You'll Find Out* was essentially made as a vehicle for the Kay Kyser players. As such, we get a ton of musical interludes that pop up without much rhyme or reason, and this film having been made in 1940, they can be mighty lame (the "Bad Humor Man" number alone sent me into a corniness coma.)

The only things to fear here are Kay's one-liners and the slapstick set pieces, which make Abbott and Costello's schtick look like Bill Hicks material. Even the main mystery doesn't seem to have been given much thought, considering it's not even really a mystery. The bad guys are revealed not even halfway into the movie, and while it's part of the joke that an oblivious Kay puts his trust in the nogoodniks, it's a reach just to make him look like an even bigger doofus.

But in spite of it all, I'd be lying if I didn't say that *You'll Find Out* didn't warm up to me at least a little bit. The humor is campy and dated, sure, but neither your intelligence nor the cast's dignity suffers for it. It has an innocent spirit that's hard to hate, and it doesn't treat its thrill-centric side as a total joke. Karloff, Lugosi, and Lorre are all in on the act, and all three give surprisingly wonderful performances. Lugosi was a treat in particular, playing the role of a self-important psychic straight and getting more laughs for it (there's even a silly seance scene with a few freaky tweaks). Plus, for as many cheesy songs there are, some can be extremely charming, especially the Oscar-nominated "I'd Know You Anywhere" -- it hasn't a thing to do with the story, but it's a good tune anyway, dammit. Kay Kyser himself also carries on a fine tradition of film cowards, playing the part of unlikely hero, who's more liable to throw out snarky quips than battle the forces of darkness head-on.

You'll Find Out isn't terrible funny, and it's even less suspenseful, but I can't rag on it too much. The sentimentality seeps from every pore, and despite the best efforts of that cranky old fart in all of us, we can't help but be charmed by the earnestness of the production. *You'll Find Out* comes in a set with three other Karloff/Lugosi cheese wheels, so if you've got the stomach for some serious saccharine, this well-meaning ditty will be a breeze to watch.

Feel free to holler at A.J. via his Twitter feed: <http://www.twitter.com/madmoviemann>

Whatever Happened To Happy Chef?

by Bryan Boyce

Thank you for your
Patronage
see you next spring

So reads an esoteric sign posted afront the furthest-reaching Happy Chef restaurant I've ever seen, a quiet moldering affair aside the I-90 on-ramp in Kadoka, South Dakota.

"They're not open till the wintertime ends," reported the gas station clerk next door when I inquired. No small amount of suspicion in her eye. "Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend." She seemed reluctant to say more.

Am I the only one who's puzzled over the decline of this once venerable Mankato institution? My childhood memories of letter-shaped fries with a working mom, midnight pancakes after lifeguard duty at the RV park aren't isolated nostalgia. "It's where you go after choir concerts," a young woman recalled when Waseca's Happy Chef closed down six years ago. Nor are these shutterings the only of their kind; I swear I've seen at least one or two more.

How did a restaurant whose very name denotes wellbeing arrive at such a sorry state? Save the Crumbs ventured on a months-long investigation to find out.

Appearing to predate the era of company websites, Happy Chef was, according to a neon display case in the original Mankato location, founded in 1953. When I called to ask about the apparent downturn, the manager said he was "going to go ahead and defer that one to Diane." Her offices were closed.

Such opacity lends an aura of mystery to the Happy Chef story that I don't feel when considering other restaurants. Echoed Leif Gilbertson of rural southwestern Wisconsin, "What are they? To me, they're like . . . difficult to understand." The Chef's most prominent literary cameo, a passage from Charles Baxter's 2001 novel *The Feast of Love* states, "He took me out to



dinner at the Happy Chef . . . [who] himself is outside the restaurant on a concrete pedestal . . . ten feet tall and made out of plastic and wood and glue. He's the symbol of everything that happens inside." Symbol of what?

My only guess is the overarching fondness expressed by almost every customer I talked to on the matter. "I miss it," said a microfilm curator at the Waseca County Historical Society, presumably referring to the diner's unparalleled balance of budget and flavor, grease and tact. "I notice that one in Owatonna closed down too." Perhaps the most joyous variation on this sentiment is found in a regional pop song, artist unknown, whose Talking Heads-like refrain proclaims, "so I went into the Happy Chef and danced around / it's my favorite restaurant/ my favorite restaurant." If anyone has the MP3 I'd trade my entire collection of oversized wooden spoons to hear it.

Ultimately I'm afraid my research has produced more questions than answers. I phoned the Mankato location a month ago to ask about an unrelated bus stop schedule. "The bus?" an employee responded. "That's at the gas station next door." Maybe it always stopped at the gas station. Maybe it left Happy Chef behind in its rising standards. To follow up I checked the schedule online. "Xxx Noservice Mankato (B)," read the bus company's search engine, suggesting that service to Happy Chef's birthplace had ceased entirely. Add it to a long list of trends.

Even south of the Mason-Dixon, the hue and cry over Happy Chef's willingness to go down without a fight rings true. When I told aspiring physicist Patrick Crumley of Austin, Texas about this article he chuckled. "I think the one in Cedar Rapids [Iowa] is still open," he said in reference to his boyhood home. Then he used his iPhone to double-check. I mused over how incompatible the mid-century hamburger-and-milkshake world of Happy Chef seemed with his sleek on-demand internet.

"Oh my God," he exclaimed. The headline, glowing from a Google Maps pop-up window: "This place is permanently closed." As if the device were going out of its way to make known what wasn't welcome. "What could have happened? . . . I[m] indignant," said Crumley.

He's not the only one.

Bryan Boyce teaches high school English on the Rosebud Lakota Reservation in South Dakota. He can be reached at boycebry@gmail.com.

Dumb And Dumber

by Dan Urlick

Now that we've entered the vilest of months, January, I'd like to take a break from the winter riding stories to reflect on a couple not so proud moments from my checkered past. I'll get back to the near death experiences I've had riding this crazy, icy, foggy, slushy, sloggy... sloggy? Sloggy! winter next time. As you'll soon see, I've done some pretty stupid things with my bike.

In our twenties, my brother and I shared a small place together within a large, suburban apartment complex in the concrete jungle known as Edina. We'd both fell on sort of hard times; he had recently endured a change in marital status and I'd just faced a change in employment status, neither of which was really by choice. Perhaps inside we knew our carefree lifestyles were what ultimately lead us to this juncture, but that didn't stop us from further indulging ourselves in self destructive behavior. If anything, it freed us up to make more bad decisions. There are many tales I cannot share with you about this period in my life, some possibly even felonious. A couple, however, may have outlived the statute of limitations.

Of course, we stored our mountain bikes in the living room (where else would we put them?) where occasionally we raced around indoors (did I mention we made some bad choices?). In fact, we formed a circle track out of the wall dividing the living room from the kitchen and dining room, which was open on both ends.

We'd zoom like stockcar drivers in small circles revolving around the wall, right through the whole apartment. It was a dizzying experience to say the least. Couch, chair, dishwasher, table... couch, chair, dishwasher, table... the appliances and furniture spun by faster and faster, our security deposit

dwindling before our very eyes with every dollar sign shaped, tire mark we scraped into the eggshell white walls.

We also owned one of those large, old, wooden, cable spools recovered from the utilities, with carpet nailed all around it, laying on its side serving as a coffee table in the living room (at least he got some furniture out of the divorce). It didn't take long to realize this giant wheel could be stood on edge and, with some practice, ridden around the apartment like a fat tire unicycle. I lost a close race with a friend on the bike when the spool shot out from under me, as my knee cap dented the wall on the way down. The impact gave me a limp for a week and un-secured the last of our security deposit on the apartment.

Perhaps our stupidest decision came one day after most of a case of Corona vanished and three fresh limes had been squeezed dry. I somehow got the notion I could take an automobile in a twenty yard dash with my mountain bike, my logic being the car was faster, but I was quicker. So, we headed to the proving grounds in the parking lot and I ended up drag racing my own 1988 Acura Integra as my friend drove, easily out sprinting me, without even leaving first gear.

I should have known I was doomed against that petite hotrod. She was a snappy little ride until I ended up surfing on her roof top through a ditch north of Lansing, following a series of intense rolls one major, national holiday. Might have sliced a few limes that night too, but ultimately that crash pretty much marked the end of that period in my life.

Anyway, like a middle school, class clown faithfully serving out his detention I've said too much, again. We've grown up some since all that, thank heavens we survived.

Traffic Tip: Defrost your bike over the basement drain following a sloppy, winter ride.

A New Year And A New Day In America! Really?

by Jack Kolars

So here we are in the New Year of 2012.

A year with so much promise. A year with so much doubt. And a year with so many predictions for doom and gloom. But through it all---one thing will remain unchanged:

2012 gives us the promise of a recovering economy. *More tax breaks for rich people.*

2012 gives us the doubt of who the new political leaders will be. *More tax breaks for rich people.*

2012 is the predicted end of the world coming up in December. *More tax breaks for rich people will continue.*

It seems whatever happens in America...the one thing that remains unchanged is the rich get richer...and the poor get poorer.

And in this coming crazy Presidential election year you will hear how this country must cut spending on programs to help poor people...and justify it by cutting taxes to help rich people.

It's a convoluted thought at best.

If poor people have resources to spend money on things like food, clothing and shelter...than rich people who own companies that produce food, clothing and shelter will benefit. But somehow---that trickle-up theory of economics is not fast enough reward for those companies who own politicians in Washington DC. It seems those companies want their pie and their cake up front and first ...with no connection to the middle or lower class of people who out-number them by 99 to 1 in America.

If there is a candidate who presents himself or herself in the 2012 presidential elections who wants to fight "middle class" America...take a look at that candidate. Judge their history and decide on whether they deserve your vote.

And if your candidate for President prefers giving tax breaks to the rich instead of feeding and clothing the poor among us....well there is no advice that you would listen to from me....or from anyone else.

Remember though....count your blessings...because one day you may have fewer blessings and one day you may be in an unemployment line. And one day...you may ask for government help---and there won't be any help to give.

It could happen tomorrow.

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Tonight I Love The Little Things...

by Sarah Turbes

Tonight, I love...

* The way my hands smell after chopping celery. I used to hate celery and always attributed it to being boring. It's more versatile than you think. I love chopping vegetables, in general. There is so much comfort when you stand in a kitchen with someone and prepare food. Synchronized and silent, if you really know someone and it feels incredibly comfortable.

* The sound of the cats rumbling, running, wrestling, tumbling upstairs. We traded some eggs for a small "cat tree" and while the cats were inquisitive yet nonchalant in my company, the sounds above me equal pure joy...or something close to, in a cat's world.

* That my shoulders don't ache from being scrunched up to my earlobes (a common stance that one takes during sub zero temperatures). It's nice to take a casual walk through crunching, melting snow. Not worried about rushing or slipping. Being able to stand and watch the animals happily munch on their food while watching the quick and distinct breaths from the dogs make tiny clouds in the air.

* Giving Runty, the "underdog" pig a loving scratch on her back while she responds with a contented grunt.

* Noticing the moon before the sun has set.

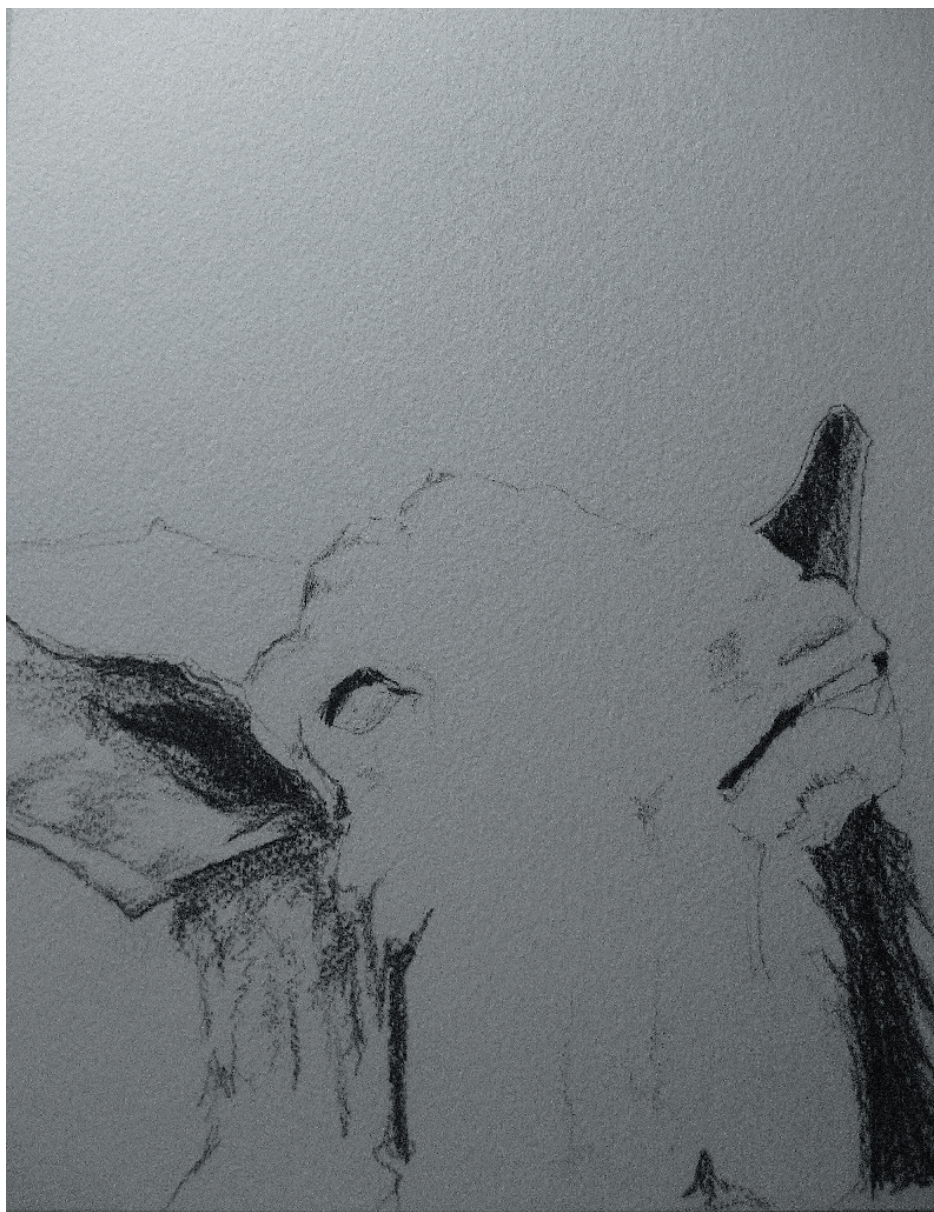
* Trying to remember the smell of Spring. Knowing that it will be hear sooner than we think.

* Remembering that there is still Creme Brulee for dessert.

* Talk of a flower garden.

* And a little Neko Case...

Visit Sarah's blog at <http://stmaria611.wordpress.com/>



"Hail, The Rabid Throat"
Graphite And Watercolor Paper. 2011"
by Nora Myers

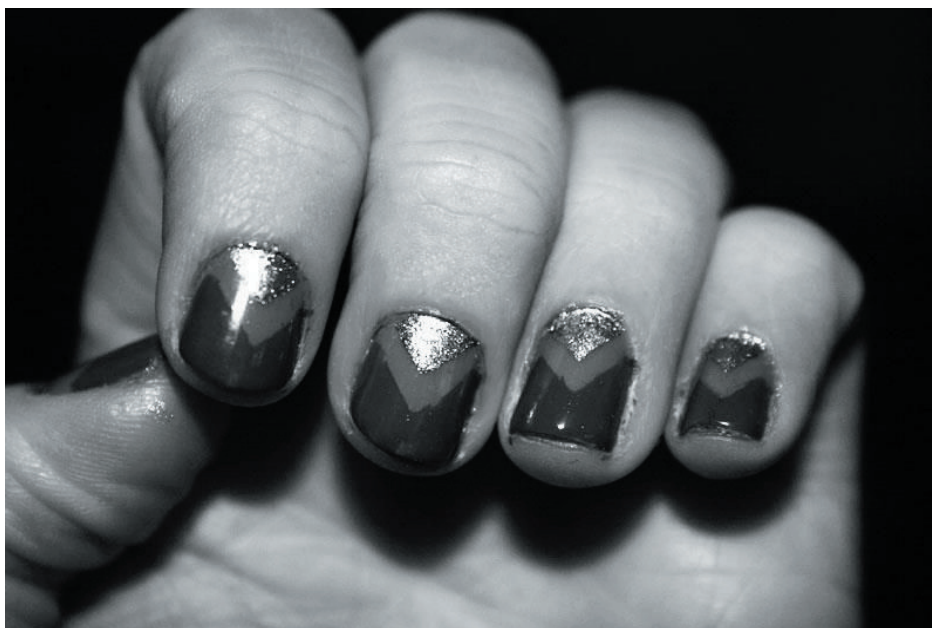


Photos:

Above: “Winter Blues” by Jeremiah Langsjoen

Below: “Grand Crayonyon” by Ashley Birk





Photos:

Above: “Chevron” by Morgan Lust

Below: “Fish Sticks” by Kyle Nordland



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