OUR STAFF

PUBLICATION DIRECTOR
Joshua D. Lanz

ADVISOR
Dr. Patricia Murphy, D.A.

STAFF WRITERS
Andrew Hookway
Daniel Vidny
Christina Hallatt
Anthony Esposito
Lamija Alagic

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Teresa Washburn
Keith Johnson
Kevin Bertholf
Anthony Ford

PHOTOGRAPHY
Aron Pobuda

LAYOUT & DESIGN
Justin Palmer
Joshua Lanz

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Michael DeCicco
Robert Jones &
the SUNYIT Print Shop

Publication Guidelines
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UNLEASHED

by Anthony Ford

Jet Li is unleashed, and it hurt so good. I recently viewed the unrated DVD of Jet Li’s curious canine romp Unleashed, and it was a movie that sized up to something more than the promotions gave it credit for. As they say, it’s not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog, and this movie follows that idiom to a T (or should I say T-bone?). Jet Li’s performance is well acted, but is drastically out shown by Morgan Freeman’s rendition of a blind piano tuner who saves Jet from himself.

Synopsis

Jet Li plays Danny, the diminutive strong arm for his striving mob boss “uncle” Bart (played by everyone’s favorite Mario, Bob Hoskins). Danny’s lot in life is simple: Bart brings him to a place with lots of stunt men (or thugs, one of the two), Uncle dearest removes Danny’s collar, and Danny makes the thugs wish that uncle Bart was more of a ‘cat person.’ High body counts, but strangely few dog treats involved... Bart must have a great trainer.

While ‘on the job,’ Danny meets Sam, a blind piano performer that introduces Danny to the joys of music. After a car accident, Danny escapes from his crimin-uncle, and makes his way to Sam. At this point, the movie transforms from a typical martial-arts action flick to the more involved tale of Danny reclaiming his humanity with the kind help of Sam and his adopted daughter, Victoria (played by Kerry Condon). People looking for a 103 minute pound-fest (no pun intended) will be surprised by long intermission in that action. Don’t worry, I won’t spoil the ending, but the butt-kicking does re-ensue.

Acting

Jet Li’s performance as a reluctant hit-man (or is that hit-dog?) is well played. Mr. Li’s face shows genuine inflection, and his reactions in breathing and motion display his psychological conditioning very well. His stillness and un-involvement with the scenes around him show Danny as a ‘dog’: passive, pensive, detached, and waiting only for explicit orders from his master, Bart, without genuine concern for anything. As Danny remembers what it is like to be human (rather than canine), his mannerisms and vocal inflection follow a well-played ‘child-like state.’ The character matures throughout the film, which is reflected well in his performance.

Morgan Freeman’s performance as Sam hits a definite high-note in the film. His sagely manner, kind voice, and soft rapport with Danny are all well-played, and fit perfectly into his function in the film (recoup Danny). Mr. Freeman’s ability to portray a blind man is also right-on; he wields the
Bob Hoskins' performance as Bart shows us some true acting chops. Bart, as a glorified street thug of a mob boss, captures the bravado of the character. Bart would never back down, and always be arrogant, although underneath it all you know he is shivering without Danny kicking tush on his behalf. Bart even has a few philosophical moments in the film, as he examines his own greed and selfishness in terms of Freud (well read and wear white suits, two things that seem to often coincide). Bart's relationship to Danny is also well played, as Bart uses the same dynamics a master would use with his dog to interact with Danny. Sometimes Bart acts sweetly, and promises Danny rewards for compliance. At other times, Bart threatens punishment to get what he wants. All the while, Bart carefully reminds Danny that he is his and his alone. Hats off to Hoskins for making me afraid of 'mob-boss Mario'.

**Action and Effects**

The movie was very well choreographed, with masterful fight scenes we have come to expect from Jet Li. Danny uses speed, power, and relentless ferocity to dispatch his foes. Often Danny can be seen striking a foe in the same place over and over and over again, much akin to an animal clawing at its prey. Danny's ability to use his own weight to climb on top of and around foes was also reminiscent of a frightened animal lashing out.

The fight scenes themselves were light on special effects, which is refreshing (especially after enduring Romeo Must Die.... Ugh... yes, he must). However, some interesting camera effects are used during several dream sequences throughout the film. Interesting freezes, and minimalist colors suck the viewer down into Danny's mind in a subtle but effective way. As we see these dreams, the viewer is challenged to piece together Danny's past, in a desperate attempt to make sense of his present, and give this tortured boy the benefit of a future.

**Pros**

This movie was well-acted, and had a skilled lineup for its cast. Jet Li shows us more of his ability to act as well as fight, and Morgan Freeman shows us he can still at least make an appearance in an action film, even if he's getting a bit too up in years to go around fighting all of the time. The conflict between Bart and Danny seemed real, and Danny's growth away from that dynamic was believable, if quickly executed.

**Cons**

This action film, strangely, could've been pulled off without a single fight scene. The plot was interesting, a hit-man's break away from years of psychological abuse with the help of a blind piano tuner. In reality, the fact that this film had any fighting in it seems entirely dependant on the fact that Jet Li was starring in it. While the fight scenes were very well pulled-off, all I'm saying is that they were totally unnecessary; the plot stood on its own two (or four) feet. A related side-effect of this beef is the under-utilization of Sam as a sagely caretaker for Danny. He has his moments, but by the end of the film, he becomes little more than Danny's 'Jiminy Cricket.' This movie could've been expanded, sucked dry of fight scenes, and been a film entirely dedicated to the dynamics of a family formed not of blood, but rather of trust and circumstance. However, if this were the case, it would not be a 'Jet Li flick,' but rather something possibly greater.

**Recommendations**

If you like seeing Jet Li kick the snot out of mobsters in England, see this film. If you like to watch Morgan Freeman kind-handedly lead a man from trauma to normalcy, see this film. Beware however; you only get half a film of each. Finally, if you like to watch Bob Hoskins' giant elf-like ears flop around while he yells, see this film.

**The Score**

Since the world is built upon numbers, here is my final verdict of the film:

- **Plot:** 7/10
- **Acting:** 9/10
- **Action (and Effects):** 10/10
- **Music:** 7/10
- **Popcorn eat-ability:** 8/10

**Total Score:** 41/50

**Verdict:** 82%
Brennan wanted to go. He needed to leave. The walls seemed to be closing in on him. The chamber was shrinking, shortening the distance between him and the writhing darkness. He was suffocating.

Again he tried to move himself. He tried to turn away. Nothing. He tried to move his legs. Nothing. His arms. Nothing. His hands, his toes, neck, head. Nothing. He was frozen in this madness. He was helpless. He was alone. And death had come to claim him.

Is this how a life ends? He asked himself. Must everyone be left to face death alone?

At that moment he felt to the point of giving up. He was exhausted; he hadn't had a restful sleep in weeks. He was frightened almost to the point of incomprehension. And he felt as if he was being consumed little by little, as if he was losing himself. He felt like he was just a shell; like he was no longer in control. Almost as if his soul were being destroyed. He was broken. I'm already dead, Brennan suddenly thought. What would it matter if I surrendered now?

Almost before he had realized what he had done, he surrendered himself to the darkness. The world went black to him.

Brennan awoke with the sun in his face. But the sun was not as intense as it had been in the desert. It was hot, but pleasantly so. The sun felt like it hadn't felt in ages. The sun's heat calming his skin, and slowly his muscles began to loosen. His body began to relax from the wound-up mess it had been. The weight upon his shoulders was no longer there. He began to feel sane again.

Memories of the desert crept up on him. Memories of the long trek over the sand. Memories of sleepless nights. Memories of the stone mono-
A sound came to his ears; faint and indescribable. As the sound grew heavier it reminded him of people yelling. Slowly the sound grew more distinct and he recognized it as the wail and crash of the ocean. And then he knew where he was, and his heart was at ease.

Brennan tried to remember what Juren looked like, but he couldn't seem to focus. He could remember individual things vividly; like Juren's hair, the way he acted. But his face was gone; lost in memory. It scared Brennan, that he could forget something so important to him; something he wanted to remember forever, something that would be lost to him forever.

He wasn't willing to accept that. He concentrated harder; trying to remember. Every time he felt he was getting close, it would slip through his fingers. Distinctions began to merge into other features. Memories that were as clear as day, suddenly were beyond his grasp. He felt like he was drowning in his own memories; falling into a myriad of senses.

The effect was dizzying. He shook his head to clear his thoughts. He was breathing heavily and his heartbeat was pounding in his ears. Brennan noticed the sun seemed brighter than before. Perhaps it is getting toward midday, he thought. He tried to shield his eyes but his hand wouldn't lift. It seemed weighed down by something. Suddenly, he could sense the familiar feel of a sword hilt in his hand and he wondered why he had drawn his sword.

He was sweating now. He raised his left hand to wipe the water from his brow. His hand felt rough on his forehead. Why am I wearing gloves? Something was not right. The uneasiness in his stomach made him want to retch. He realized he was kneeling, doubled over. Everything was so confusing, nothing made sense.

THE MARAS CHRONICLES
EPISODE TWO
FALLING INTO ECHOES

His consciousness was jumping from one minute to another. It was making his head spin. It was almost as if he were flitting in and out of time; darting in and out of his body. Brennan fought himself, trying to regain control as his mind spun around. Finally he began to remember.

The chamber was silent, and he stood where he had left himself, but he was not himself. He was apart. He was like a stranger looking in, spying upon his body. He hovered in mid air. He looked at his body, standing there, unable to move. Nar was there, Arolo and Pikar too. Everyone was staring into the darkness as if mesmerized.
The darkness writhed and roared as if it were barely able to contain the evil it held within.

Nar was the first person to move. He drew his sword, but did not move forward. He ran backwards at Brennan shouting over the din. Brennan still did not move; he did not seem to hear. The other men began to stir, moving at the Swordmaster's orders. Nar was screaming right into Brennan's face now. Still no response.

The push Nar gave Brennan nearly knocked him back into the maze's entrance. Brennan fell on his back and slid. As Brennan watched, his body moved and he could hear the Swordmaster's words like a whisper on the wind. "Get to safety! Go warn the others, tell them of the danger!" And then Brennan watched as he began to move. Pikar was there helping him along. As they left the chamber, it plunged into darkness.

They followed the beacons that lit the path and Brennan watched as they were snuffed out one by one. The darkness was following them; nipping at their heels. At last they burst into the far chamber. Most of the men were roused already, hearing the squealing and whining of this dark enemy echoing through the chamber.

At a dead run, Pikar followed Brennan into the chamber. As he entered
The movement sent his head throbbing. "Arise, arise! Summon your strength men, death follows on our heels." And then there was a rattling of shields and an unsheathing of swords as all the men prepared themselves for this unexpected threat.

But Brennan’s body was not among those in the chamber for he had never stopped running. He ran right through the room and into the hallway beyond, unnoticed by the men inside. Up the long stairway, into the sunlight and among the dunes.

And so, Brennan knew why he was in the desert. And also why he was doubled over in agony. His exhaustion had returned and the safety he had felt in his small reverie was gone; evaporated into nothing. He was back in the world of the living, in all its senses. But at least he was free of the darkness of death. In that, he could breathe a small sigh of relief.

He began to take inventory. His headwrap was on; his other clothing was present as well. His sword was in his hand, the tip lay in the sand at his side. Quickly he glanced around for his pack. It didn’t appear to be anywhere near. He couldn’t remember where he had left it, but his mind still seemed a little cloudy.

The movement sent his head throbbing. He tried to steady himself with his left hand. With his eyes closed, Brennan was much more disoriented. He felt like he was falling back into darkness. No, he screamed inside his mind, and he forced his eyes open. His breath was harsh and ragged as he stared at the ground in front of him. He began to regain his bearings.

Everything appeared as it had before, but there was one difference; everything seemed darker. The sun seemed less intense. The sand seemed less bright. It was as if something was blocking the sun. Like a cloud. But out here in the desert there is no rain, no clouds, no...

Suddenly it occurred to him what was blocking the sun. He felt the wind picking up slightly. There is only one type of storm out here in the desert, a sand storm. Random gusts of wind, coming seemingly out of nowhere began to buffet Brennan. It was not helping his dizziness, or his anxiety.

Sand storms are another danger of the desert, Brennan reflected. Most storms occur in the deeper desert; those were the deadlier ones. But there were reports of occasions where the storms came up to the Long Wall. People had died from just being outside during one of those storms. They were powerful beyond belief. Men had been reduced to just bones; sometimes even the bones weren’t left. The smallest pieces of sand, harmless on their own, suddenly become weapons a man could not hope to withstand.

He would not survive this storm. There was only one place that would offer any protection, and he had just escaped that place. There was no way around it, he would have to go back and take his chances with the darkness.

Taking care not to move too fast he began to raise himself up off his knees. All his strength reserves were gone; he was running on sheer will. Brennan gritted his teeth together as he used the sword to balance himself. One step at a time he made his way up the dune, going back the way he had come. The way he hoped he had come; he wasn’t sure. There were not even footprints to follow; the wind had taken care of that. Each step was harder than the last; but Brennan was determined, he was focused. He needed to get to the top of the dune.

Finally, he reached the crest of the dune and his heart sank, for the sand was so thick he couldn’t see anything in the distance. He was hopelessly lost. Then the feeling came again. He could feel death stalking him. His body went rigid. He was helpless in the middle of a sand storm. He was alone. It was like he was reliving the madness in the maze.

Before Brennan had any time to think about his situation a sudden gust of wind pushed him off his feet and sent him tumbling down the face of the dune. Over the pounding of his heart he could hear his ribs snap and pain shot up through his chest. He kept rolling until finally coming to rest within a valley of sand. His foot was twisted at an awkward angle. He tried to scream but his throat was so parched no sound came.

He lay on his back facing a swirling, twisting, roaring, screaming mess of wind, sand, and pain. He knew he had to move to survive, but he was paralyzed and broken. He couldn’t move, even if he had the strength. He was about to give up again, to submit to the darkness; but something stopped him. He remembered his true purpose. His shared a linked fate, such was his mission. It was not only his fate that would be decided here; the fate of the entire Kingdom swung in the balance. The fate of everyone he had ever known, everyone he had ever cared about, was being decided right then. His Kingdom’s fate. His father’s fate. His brother’s fate. Could he give up their lives too? No.

He felt a strength emerging within him. A strength where there should be none, where just one second ago there was only weakness. His body cried against him, but he moved himself, slowly at first, to his feet. The sword was still in his hand. How it had stayed there through the fall down the slope, he had no idea. But it was something he had time to be concerned about. He knew what he had to do.

His body screamed again, Danger. He could sense it behind him. All his pain was forgotten, his fear, his inability. He acted with instinct, with training, and with necessity. Death approaches. Now was the time to strike. He spun toward the darkness, sword held at the ready.

To be continued...
"It's going to suck."

"It won't be good. Not bad, but not good."

"I think, if I watch it, I'm going to cry."

These people, if they enter the theaters with open minds, will be proven wrong.

I will not call DOOM a great movie; I did not feel uplifted as I exited the theater. I did not feel as though my life suddenly had more purpose.

What I felt was the burning of a smile plastered across my face.

If you want me to use the adjective "great" in association with DOOM, then I can say the following. DOOM is a great video game movie. It has renewed my faith in the concept of turning a video game into a movie. (For some, this was Advent Children, but having not seen that, I cannot comment.)

The first note that it starts out on is that the universal logo has the words "Universal" in front of Mars, instead of Earth. Nice touch there! Maybe a bit cheesy to some... but let's face it. What movie is without cheese? DOOM, for one, lives up to having just the right amount. Sarge's "Game time" line was actually well delivered, and might have been cooler if I wasn't sitting there going "This is it," because of its overuse in credits. Reaper, the main character, has a personal stake in the mission, and Sarge tells him that he can opt out. "We all have to face our demons sometime," Reaper replies. See? Cheese. But it's good cheese. I can't help it that I'm a fan of that.

Many of the characters in the eight man squad are flat stereotypes. The Kid is just that, the new kid in the squad, still idealistic and nervous. Destroyer carries a big gun and kicks ass. Duke is a lady-killer. But as a whole, they rise above the stereotypes and serve well to back up our slightly more rounded main cast. Reaper is the main character, and it is with him that most of the ethical center of the movie rests.

Don't get me wrong. The movie is full of violence, full of special effects (wonderfully integrated into the environment most of the time too), and full of stuff that is not for the squeamish. (To be quite honest, I didn't enjoy some parts in the middle because of my slight squeamishness with needles, guts, and the like. Wasn't too bad, but it was still there, and only in parts. Anyways...) The movie also does deal with some human issues. I won't say too much, out of... continued on next page
fear of spoiling it for those who want to go watch it themselves, (which I recommend).

The sound in the movie was great. Very engrossing, and works very well for what it's supposed to be an enhancement of the scene. It doesn't pop out at you and say "Hey, I'm good sound!" Sound is one of those things that is only noticed when it's done wrong.

Visuals however, pop out at you right or wrong. And I have to say, the visuals in DOOM were right. The BFG is awesome in so many respects. I want the prop, even if it can't make the pretty blue goopy stuff that gets ALL OVER and looks AWESOME OMG-

Rock Solid, the DOOM Movie Avoids the Reaper

**Andrew leaves, takes a geek tweak, spends his energy, and returns.**

Where was I? Oh, yes. Visuals were stunning. There is a sequence that... I'd have to watch it again. I am convinced that it is some wonderful steadicam work, while others believe that it is all computer graphics.

I had one overriding gripe on the visuals. It might just have been me... but it seemed that a lot of shots were slightly off focus. Film cameras have an extremely tiny depth of field— that which is in focus- and an amateur at the focus can ruin a shot. I'm not saying that it detracts from the movie, but there were a couple shots- quite possibly second-unit, but I would have to take a second viewing to see if that theory is sound.

Will I watch it again? Probably. In theaters? If I was the type to do so for any movie, then yes. But I'm probably going to wait until the DVD comes out. (Then snap it up like a rabid demon.)

Did I say demon? Yeah, I said demon. Demons abound in DOOM. But I bring bad news for purists- it is not from Hell. That is the only thing I could really see dragging down this movie. Purists won't like it for the exclusion of Hell. Not being a purist, I loved the alternate reason for the demons, and it actually makes for a better movie all around.

But there are demons. And a chainsaw. Whee!

One other complaint is the character of Sarge. There is a change near the end that isn't quite explained... and had me scratching my head for a bit. This one actually worries me more than the lack of Hell. Sarge comes off as reasonable, if blunt, and the shift near the end is anything but reasonable.

One last note before I try to wrap things up here. The soundtrack was, again, great. On the way to the theater, I listened to the DOOM soundtrack- the original, DOOM 1 soundtrack, burned onto a CD (for more information on that, see the DOOM game review elsewhere in this issue). And, long and behold, the movie has a lot of DOOM-esque music in it. There is a certain style of music that I've come to associate with DOOM, and only a few pieces of music outside of the franchise remind me of it. This newest addition to the DOOM franchise comes in fully stacked with a soundtrack that keeps exactly the same feeling, and had me squealing with joy at points. (Did I just say that? Yes I did. Hmph.)

There is a great duet near the end of the film. Not a "quick" one-minute fight, but one that lasts... well, I wasn't timing it, because I didn't want to rip my eyes away from the screen. But long enough to take place in multiple arenas, with multiple types of weapons, and with a tension so overwhelming, you will be on the edge of your seat.

Oh, also- stay for the credits. They come in fairly fast, so there's not really a chance that you'll miss what I'm talking about. It is most certainly the most amusing credits sequence that I've seen in a long time.
Plot- Fairly predictable at points, but still engrossing. Like any good movie- and DOOM is certainly a good movie- there are some unexpected twists added onto the storyline that keep you on the edge of your seat. Ethics, though not the central base of the movie, also play a large role. It moves along smoothly and seems to be just the right amount of time- not too abrupt at the end, nor too slow. 16/20

Acting- “OMG, it’s gonna have The Rock in it, it’s gonna suck!” Not really. Karl Urban takes the lead here, and The Rock has enough sense not to steal the show. Urban’s acting is impeccable. The Kid, who is the newbie in the squad actually seemed the worst acted to me, though it might be because how he was acting- nervous, shifty- corresponds with what newcomers to the screen do. It’s a tough line for a director and an actor to walk, and unfortunately, it feels like they fell just on the wrong side of it. And I have to compliment a minor character’s face when he says “There’s something behind me, isn’t there?” 18/20

Cinematography- Great camera work- both in the action, and far shots when they’re needed. I noticed none of the Bourne Supremacy syndrome, where the director thinks it’s cool to have the camera shaking around inside the fight to make the viewer feel like they’re there. Even the first-person sequence (come on, you have to have heard about this) is done very steadily and smoothly. The slight focus problem is the only detraction here. 14/15

Soundtrack- Perfectly fitting for the newest entry into the DOOM franchise, the soundtrack also does a great job of heightening the emotions that the characters- and audience- are feeling. 10/10

Effects- By “effects” I speak of both practical, on-site effects and that done after the fact. ALL CG is wonderfully integrated, giving me absolutely flawless suspension of disbelief. I, as a viewer, was flawlessly wrapped up in this assembly of computer graphics and practical effects, especially the creature effects. Amazing. Only a bit of wire-work pulled me out; and even then for only the briefest moment. 14/15

Suspension of Disbelief- Oh, I was there. I didn’t feel like there was anything that the casual viewer would see and be pulled out saying “Hey, this is just a movie.” 19/20

(If you feel like I missed something for the criteria, feel free to e-mail me at hookwaa@sunyit.edu with suggestions.) 91%
Seasonal Affective Disorder: more than just the moody blues
by Christina Hallatt

We've all experienced the blues, usually in response to a specific event. If you're one of the millions of people who experience a depressed mood at this time of year, you may be suffering from SADS, or Seasonal Affective Disorder.

SAD is defined as "a mood disorder associated with depression episodes and related to seasonal variations of light." The depressed feelings are a physical response to the lack of light in the winter months. Said another way, the gloomy sky is reflected in our thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

As seasons change, so do sunlight patterns. In fall and winter, we experience darkness for a larger portion of our waking hours. This causes a shift in our circadian rhythm, the biological internal clock that controls the sleeping and feeding patterns of all animals. Our biological clocks become out of synch with our daily schedules.

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Many victims of depression fail to seek treatment because of the stigma attached to the disease.

It's no wonder then that SAD is much more prevalent in people who live in wintering climates. In addition to geography, a hormone imbalance contributes to the problem. SAD involves two hormones, serotonin and melatonin. Serotonin, which creates feelings of well-being, is produced when the body is exposed to sunlight. Conversely, melatonin in produced in darkness and makes us feel sleepy. Less sunlight and more darkness cause an imbalance of the related hormones, creating the biological conditions for depression.

SAD can result in symptoms of depression such as excessive eating and sleeping or weight gain during the fall or winter months. However, the symptoms must be noticeable over time. It's common to put on extra pounds over the holidays, but it isn't necessarily related to SAD. Watch for the other symptoms, especially if they last for over a few weeks.

It is sometimes hard to diagnose SAD because the symptoms are the same for other illnesses such as thyroid disease and mononucleosis. Many people get depressed for other reasons around the holiday.

days, which can trigger memories of loss or regret. An incorrect diagnosis of SAD can prevent the victim from getting proper treatment for the real illness. Treatments for SAD include phototherapy therapy and antidepressant drugs. While many SAD sufferers have responded well to these treatments, they may be unavailable on a student's budget. A cheaper solution is to allow more natural sunlight into your living space by opening curtains or blinds. In addition, spending just an hour outside in the daylight can dramatically improve your mood. Now when you throw snowballs you can say it's all in the name of good mental health!

Whether related to SAD or not, depression is a legitimate illness. Yet many victims of depression fail to seek treatment because of the negative stigma attached to the disease. If you feel depressed for longer than a few weeks, don't try to diagnose yourself. For assistance, you can call any of the following:

SUNY IT Health & Wellness Center  
(315) 792-7172

National Crisis Help Line  
1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

Lifeline  
1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

Students who are covered under a parent's insurance plan may have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Many EAPs provide service to employees and covered family members, including free consultations with mental health professionals.

This time of year doesn't have to be all gloom and doom. Bundle up, get outside, and make SAD a thing of the past.

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by Andrew Hookway

Last semester, some of you might remember me having reviewed the game Descent II for PC, which came out in 1996. Well, this time around we’re going to go deeper into history. Boys, open up your history books and video game bibles, boys, we're heading into the First Person Shooter's Genesis.

So maybe I hyperbolize a bit. Wolfenstein 3D came out before DOOM did (1992 and 1993, respectively), and is often considered to be the first modern First-Person Shooter. But DOOM, the second such game to roll out of id Software, introduced science fiction into the fledgling genre, paving the way for games for a decade ahead, and into the future.

DOOM is, quite obviously, dated. But at a dozen years old and counting, it still holds a special place in the hearts of gamers everywhere.

First off, let's get you the game. Take your web browser of choice and head on over to http://doomworld.com/pageof­­doom/doom95.htm l to download Doom95, which allows you to easily play DOOM on any windows machine. My review will be based on this, and while it isn’t the earliest version of the game (it now supports resolutions up to 640X480!), it is certainly the most easily accessible by today's gaming population.

Weapons in the game were simple but fun. Taking a page out of the "Evil Dead" series, you can have fun blasting the crap out of anything with a shotgun, and carving up demons with a chainsaw. Your pistol sucks, but you quickly get the shotgun followed by, then the chaingun. The rocket launcher comes later... and its lack of splash damage is disconcerting by today's standards, but a direct hit can still wreak havoc on any fleshy thing in its path.

Enemies are simple but yet still fun. They come towards you, usually in a slow zig-zag (with the pinky demons being a notable exception, rushing you and scaring the crap out of you), stopping to fire at you with a pistol, shotgun, or an easily dodgeable fireball.

Levels brought an added dimension to what had before been a 3D maze. Now, with stairs, extra levels, and the like, DOOM made players look up, down, and all around. It's not something that would be perfected until the late nineties with the likes of Half-Life, but it started games down that path. (Though you can't actually look up and down, you can fire straight ahead and still hit something above and below you. There's a certain charm to shooting in a window ten
feet above the people on the other side and hearing them getting hit.)

Sound is basic. Weapons have kick, and enemies make unnatural growls/groans/whatever you want. Music is actually where I find that DOOM shines. Even today, I hear something and say, "Hey, this belongs in DOOM." It doesn't happen much, showing how unique it really manages to be, especially considering that they were MIDI files.

But I'll do you, my loyal readers, a favor: you can download the entire soundtrack at http://www.sirgalahad.org/paul/doom/ in .mp3 format; someone took the MIDIs, ran them through a good processor that makes the percussion in particular more realistic sounding, and exported them into everyone's favorite format.

Controls are, by today standards, unintuitive. Without mouse support, you move with the arrow keys. There is no jump, which is just as disconcerting to today's gamer. But compared to today's games, they are quite simple (if just different) because of the general simplicity of gameplay and you can run. Really, you don't need a lot to shoot stuff, grab keys, and escape.

I don't really know how much more I can say. DOOM is still a wonderful game, aging well but nevertheless aging. So, without further adieu, the ratings!

**DOOM**

**Developer:** id Software

(First score is relative to when it came out, second is for today.)

**Gameplay:** One of the first games, if not the first game, to implement the colored key search idea. There aren't really too many puzzles, though it took some thinking to get to the secret areas that were on each level. Nowadays, it is a bit too repetitive, and the controls are awkward, but still good for mindless fun. **39/40 31/40**

**Sights:** Fairly good atmosphere, though it certainly doesn't look like Mars (or Hell, for that matter). Nowadays, we're spoiled by our graphics and the low resolution might give you a headache when you try to see more. Sprite-based enemies are also an oddity to us now. **17/20 13/20**

**Sounds:** Guns! Who doesn't like guns? The chattering of a chain-gun, the FWOMOP of a rocket launcher? Today, we still love them, but we like them bigger and better than they were then. Music is still great, though. **17/20 11/20**

**Originality:** Adding new dimensions to everything it could, DOOM helped pave the way for a genre. Now, looking back, there is nothing new about it. **9/10 2/10**

**Addictiveness:** I'm playing it. Twelve years have passed, and I still go back to it. That's a testament, right there. (And, in 1995, it was banned from workplaces for decreasing productivity. Let history speak, for once.) **10/10 8/10**

DOOM gets 10 bonus points for being a classic, and for still being fun to play after a decade has passed, and for truly ushering in the games of today with its bold tactics.

Then: 92%
Now: 65+10 = 75%
by Andrew Hookway

The Postal Service
Give Up

No, the guys and gals who deliver your mail haven’t made some music to open your mailbox to. Well, not really. Not directly. The Postal Service is an indie band that, for the most part, works without ever meeting face to face. It is made up of Jimmy Tamborello and Ben Gibbard of Death Cab for Cutie, from Los Angeles and Seattle, respectively. Tamborello composes electronic beats, and mails them to Gibbard. Gibbard, in turn, takes that and adds guitars, vocals, and all that jazz. The result is so much greater than the sum of its parts.

The first song I heard from Give Up, their only album (so far, more are planned), “Nothing Better”, is a very interesting take on what could otherwise be a breakup song of fairly standard fare. Though no song truly embodies the whole album, “Nothing Better” serves as a good introduction to the Postal Service’s style. Including guest vocals by fellow indie singer Jen Wood, it is a well-written song of heartbreak brought up against catchy beats that remind me, personally, of early video games. The result is, quite frankly, beautiful. The first time I heard it, my mouth was agape at the audacity of the dichotomy evident in its creation, and simultaneously at how right it sounded.

I’m going to be honest here, that’s always difficult to do. The Postal Service isn’t for everybody. That’s always difficult to do. But it’s something that will make most people will at least stop for a moment and listen to, at least because of the unique music. And that, in and of itself, is an achievement.

The songs on Give Up range from the lighthearted “Such Great Heights” (“When you... are out there on the road/For several weeks it shows/And when you scan the radio/I hope this song will guide you home”) to the dreary “This Place Is A Prison” (This place is a prison/And these people aren’t your friends/Hailing thrills though $20 bills/And the tumblers are drained and then flooded again and again”). The variety is mind blowing, for a relatively short list of ten tracks. Just because it’s electronica doesn’t mean that it has to have a constant *thump**thump* in the background, and the Postal Service realizes this. (Strong Bad Techno, anyone? Yeah, didn’t think so.)

Lyrics on the album manage to stay in the same track as more mainstream songs as far as the general message goes, but the execution is something else that sets the Postal Service apart from others. “My heart’s been shattered,” is an old one; why don’t you try, “Will someone please call a surgeon/Who can crack my ribs and repair this broken heart,” instead? Sort of puts a new spin on an old them, doesn’t it?

One last, amusing side note. In 2004, the United States Postal Service issued a cease-and-desist to the Postal Service because of the name (which they had chosen because of how their music was created, mailing CDs back and forth). After a short legal battle, a settlement was reached, and not only does the USPS now allow Tamborello and Gibbard to use the name “Postal Service”... but the CD is now for sale at the USPS store at http://shop.usps.com for $13.98. Enjoy!

continued on next page
The Postal Service

Track List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track Title</th>
<th>Length</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The District Sleeps Alone Tonight</td>
<td>4:44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Such Great Heights</td>
<td>4:26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeping In</td>
<td>4:21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nothing Better</td>
<td>3:46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recycled Air</td>
<td>4:29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clark Gable</td>
<td>4:54</td>
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<tr>
<td>We Will Become Silhouettes</td>
<td>5:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>This Place Is A Prison</td>
<td>3:54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand New Colony</td>
<td>4:12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Anthem</td>
<td>5:07</td>
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</tbody>
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Length

4:44
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4:54
5:00
3:54
4:12
5:07

Listenability: Give Up has some truly inspired music on it. I can only think of one track, "Natural special. Because, let's face it, they have. 28/30

Addictiveness: A great album all around. Unfortunately, for some reason, I can't seem to listen to it for more than two or three repetitions of its just-over-40-minutes running time. (I've previously been known to listen to a single song on repeat for hours on end, to put this in perspective.) I won't even say that it gets annoying after a while, but after the second repetition, you'll probably want to change the CD to something different. 8/10

Listen to when you are: Opening your mailbox? The music is, once again, so varied that it doesn't aim to take advantage of one mood. Let's say when you're feeling like something different- because if one word

Anthem", that I don't like, and that might be more personal preference anyways. The cd It's not very fast paced for the most part, and lends itself to background music as well as listening music. 27/30

Quality of...

...Music: Holy, moly. Some of the tracks sound like someone took an Atari and a guitar and went wild. It's the good kind of going wild, though. The glorious electronica blends with acoustic instruments to create something that is truly rich with... well, almost everything you could want. 29/30

...Lyrics: Though their meaning follows the same vein as many other songs, the actual words themselves are used in refreshing ways to really make the listener feel as though they've discovered something describes what Give Up is, that is, indeed, "different".

Listen for: The clicking at the start of Nothing Better is a bit offputting, but it's in time with the music, and it grows on you very fast- despite the fact that it makes the beginning of the song sound like a bad .mp3. (Don't worry, though, actual audio quality of all of the tracks is top-notch.)

92%
THOUGHT-PROVOKING CONVERSATION
INDEPENDENT MUSIC
NO BULL.

Bloodthirsty Vegetarians

WE'RE SO RIGHT, WE'RE LEFT...SCRATCH THAT. REVERSE IT.

AD-FREE, PROGRESSIVE CONTENT DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO YOU

Visit our blog or SUBSCRIBE to our weekly podcast
WWW.BLOODYVEG.COM
Speaking Out!

by Tammy Martin
How many of us know that the words we use can be just as harmful as a double-edged sword? How many of us are willing to take a step outside of ourselves to see that the person we are in a relationship with has been verbally abusing us, or we are the ones that may be verbally abusing the people in our lives? What makes it ok to force ourselves and our opinions and insults on someone else?

There are several reasons why I am writing this article, having lived with a father who is an alcoholic, I am also a victim of emotional and verbal abuse. My father would become very belligerent when he was drunk and insulted and abused me verbally and emotionally. He would belittle and degrade me by yelling and insulting me. I am not revealing all of this to gain sympathy from those who are reading this article, I am writing this in an attempt to stop the abuse that you are either a victim of, or are dishing out to others. I also believe the importance of communicating effectively is important for everyone’s well-being, just as it should be to you. If you are lucky not to experience this kind of abuse hopefully you may be able to help someone who is in this situation. It is not ok to live with the torture, you can get help! Realize what the problem is and be strong enough to take that step to get the help that you need.

To clarify, just as there are millions of women out there who suffered from abuse, there are men who suffered as well. Also, just as there are men who have abused someone in their life, there are women that have done the same. There are even children out there who are learning this negative and damaging behavior and abuse other children and adults. We have to stop the cycle!

What I would like to focus on in this article is the verbal abuse that is taking place in people’s lives. I feel that because I am a writer, and I am dedicated to making a difference somehow, it is a part of my responsibility to make people aware of what verbal abuse is; and how to stop it from reoccurring. So how do we stop the cycle? The answer to that question is both simple and complex. We must first define what verbal abuse is. According to www.dictionary.com, verbal abuse means to assault someone with contemptuous, course or insulting words. Many of us do not realize just how powerful our words can be to others. Even the power of suggesting something to someone can make that person react in a negative or positive manner. Human beings tend to take what is said to and about us to heart. We are hurt when others insult us and call us names. Words become a wound that festers for those whose skin isn't thick enough to repel them. Abusers know that the insults they are berating us with may be manipulates others to act according to their terms, regardless if it's in a negative or positive way. Others verbally abuse someone to establish power over another person in order to feel better about themselves.

One of the reasons why I chose to get my Bachelor's in Communications was because of my belief that in order to succeed and thrive in today’s world, good communication is essential. Verbal interaction is our main form of communicating if you want to survive in this world. How we choose to use words is our responsibility. They are essential for maintain healthy relationships that we are involved in, as well as succeeding in the business world.

On a more personal note, Patricia Evans’ book "Verbal Abuse Survivors Speak Out-Our Relationship And Recovery" was a very good catalyst in writing this article. She explains that “verbal abuse can subtly, but increasing consequences, undermine a (person’s) self-esteem almost without them knowing it.” When I read that I began to wonder how many people realize that this may be happening to them? I became angry at the thought of others being manipulated and having their confidence shattered.

In Evans’ book William J. Sherman, the Director/Facilitator of the Napa, California men’s program points out that verbal abuse is a form of violence and verbally abusive relationships appear to be very common. Ad-
ditionally, Patricia Evens explains that “abusive people stop at nothing to squelch, put down, correct, criticize, belittle, trivialize, ignore, snub, sneer at, and when all else fails, put on displays of rage in order to dominate and control the people they are romantically and emotionally involved with.”

To go more in depth with this topic, this book also iterates that verbally abusive relationships identify three different actions of power which are dominance, control and oppression. Oppression? What is oppression? For those of you who are not familiar with this term, oppression is the desire to control another, which is justified in a prejudice against another. This prejudice can include race, sex, and age, along with hair and eye color depending on how anal another person chooses to be. Patricia Evans tells us that verbally abused people suffer not only tremendous pain of verbally abusive rejection. They also suffer from frustration of being confused by oppression. They are unable to express their creativity in order to make their way in the world, and to become which they were most capable of becoming. I found that to be very sad. Don’t we all have the right to express ourselves, be creative and make our own way into the world and be successful?

Evans’ book goes so much more in depth, that I recommend that you simply read the book if you wish to learn a lot more about this form of abuse. Patricia Evans also has a website that you may visit to learn more. On her site, www.verbalabuse.com, Patricia addresses verbal abuse in general, in relationships and yes, even in the workplace! There are also other areas that Patricia Evans lists on her site where verbal abuse can take place.

There are several self-help books such as the one written by Patricia Evans, for you out there who are feeling the need to stop the abuse and break the cycle. Starting at your local library is just one step that you can take. If you feel that you or someone else you may know needs more help than what can be found in a book, there are a plethora of psychologists out there to help. If funding is a problem, there are non-for-profit organizations and charities out there that are willing to help, such as Catholic Charities. They have experienced and trained professionals on hand, along with a 24-hour hot line for those who need help right away. I know this because once in my clouded past I utilized this service myself. If you are a student here on campus the most obvious direction for you to take is by stopping by to see one of the counselors at SUNYIT. If they are not sure how to help you, they will definitely steer you in the right direction.

Even the Internet is a source of help! There are several sites dedicated to abuse and where to go to find help that people need. And who said that computers were evil? So my plea to you is that if you are a victim or know someone that is a victim of verbal abuse or any other form of abuse for that matter, break the cycle and speak out!

VERBAL ABUSE SURVIVORS SPEAK OUT

On relationship and recovery

Patricia Evans
Author of The Verbally Abusive Relationship
Whose Face Is That On Your Shirt?

by Anthony Esposito

Everywhere you go today you see the above pictured man on merchandise. Whether it's shirts, belt buckles, or other kinds of apparel, many are wearing it for the wrong reasons, that being a fashion statement. They "support" this man without knowing the real meaning behind him. People don't realize the hero he was, the man he was, and most importantly the revolutionist he was.

Dr. Ernesto Rafael Guevara de la Serna, better known as Che Guevara, lived from June 14, 1928 to October 9, 1967. He grew up in a middle class household and had leftist leanings, which he would use for his future dynamic and radical perspectives. He had always suffered from asthma, and yet as a kid he excelled as an athlete and would be an avid rugby player. In 1948, he entered the University of Buenos Aires to study medicine, and completed his studies by 1953.

Guevara's best friend Alberto Granado, who himself was a biochemist and a political radical, convinced Guevara to go on a trip around South America. They rode a 1939 motorcycle nicknamed La Poderosa II, meaning "The Mighty One" throughout the leper colony in Peru in 1951. Guevara would narrate his journey's in what would be called "The Motorcycle Diaries." On his travels, Guevara would receive a first-hand view of poverty, oppression, and powerlessness of the masses. Seeing people who could not afford to pay for medicine and were dying, he would treat his patients for free. Seeing how the country's government let his people die, Guevara had felt it was time for a revolution. When he returned to Argentina, he continued his learning in medicines so he could provide more future help in South and Central America.

When he graduated in 1953 he moved to Guatemala where President Guzman held a populist government and attempted to bring about a social revolution. In 1954, the CIA-backed coup d'état overthrew the democratic Abrenz government, because they believed it had communist ways that closely resembled the those of the Soviet Union. This changed Guevara's views of America as an "imperialist" nation in that they would consistently oppose governments attempting to address the socioeconomic inequality endemic to Latin America and other developing countries.

In 1956, Guevara met up with the Castro brothers and they later formed the 26th of July Movement, symbolizing the date Castro was exiled from Cuba. Their group would be based in the Sierra Maestra Mountains and would grow day by day, in which they were fighting the dictatorship of Batista. Batista was a

continued on next page
dictator and tyrant who ordered the murder of hundreds of innocents. In 1958, the troops began their offense; and by Jan 1, 1959, Batista fled to the Dominican Republic. The revolution succeeded and took over the government. One of the first policies by the newly formed Cuban government was eliminating illiteracy, implementing land reforms, and raising living standards. On August 6, 1960, Castro also nationalized all United States and other foreign-owned property in the nation. Large companies owned by upper class Cubans were also nationalized, including the plantations owned by Fidel Castro's family. The United States in turn, responded by placing a blockade on Cuba, which is still in place after the 40 years. One major thing that Guevara stressed was the use of him in advertising merchandise. He had once seen his face on an advertisement for alcohol and demanded to be removed from it. He did not want to be associated with big businesses, but rather those who he fought for; those that weren't well off.

On October 9th, 1967, Ernesto “Che” Guevara was put to death by Bolivian soldiers, trained, equipped and guided by U.S. Green Beret and CIA operatives. Thirty years later, the circumstances of his revolutionary war, helped those in poverty. His capture, murder, and burial are still the subject of popular discussion around the world. Today, I wear his shirt, in celebration of Guevara, who fought for those that were abused, murdered, and mistreated, and not because it's what's popular.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_revolutionary_war#Triumph_of_the_Revolution
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Che_guevara
http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB5/

The Evolution of Console Gaming
by Daniel Vidny

If you know anything about video games, then you know that they are constantly changing. From the Sega Genesis to the Dreamcast, from 8 to 16 to 64 bit graphics, the bar is always being raised. Consoles have been evolving for over 30 years, constantly improving the experience that players have when playing the games. As of late, though, most gaming innovations have become less dramatic and more subtle and more of a refinement in the performance than a completely new concept.

When the Super Nintendo turned into the Nintendo 64, it was a leap from two-dimensional play to total 3D. The change from the Playstation to the Playstation 2 did not introduce any new gaming mechanic that didn't already exist in the previous system, but it was a revolution in the gaming industry. The improvement of graphics, load times, resolutions and artificial intelligence within the games has become the center of gaming innovation. With that in mind, I would like to enlighten those who are unaware of the new revolution in the gaming world.

Codenamed “Next Generation” or Nex-Gen for short, the new wave of improved gaming consoles is preparing to invade the consumer market later this year or early 2006. The current rulers of the interactive entertainment realm are the Playstation 2 from Sony, the X-Box from Microsoft, and the Nintendo Gamecube by Nintendo. These consoles have been competing and cooperating for the past several years, vying for customers and gaming licenses. With the fan base that the three competing consoles have generated, Sony is preparing to release the Playstation 3, Microsoft is about to let loose the X-Box 360, and Nintendo is readying the mysterious Nintendo Revolution. Three titans of electronics marketing will soon battle for succession of the gaming throne, but their histories are as intriguing as the appearance of their heirs.

The Sony Corporation is a global Japanese consumer electronics company based in Tokyo, Japan. One of the world’s largest producers of consumer electronics and one of the largest corporations in the world, it was for a long time best known for Sony Walkman, a portable cassette player small enough to clip onto a belt. The term walkman nearly became generic due to the flood of imitators (a “walkman-style” tape player). Expanding and turning into a global monolith in defiance to many Japanese critics, the company now encompasses a multitude of industries. As of late, Sony has been putting high quality digital, audio and video equipment, the Sony Playstation series being known around the world for having the most innovative games and being first in the biggest breakthroughs. The PlayStation was launched in Japan on December 3, 1994, USA on September 9, 1995 and Europe on September 29, 1995. The Playstation 2’s development was announced in April 1999, and it was first released in Japan on March 4, 2000. The U.S. version was released on October 26, 2000. Following a slow first year due to a lack of units built and ready, the PlayStation 2 has grown to become a popular gaming console,
with over 90 million units shipped. This current system is to be succeeded by the Playsta-
tion 3, which is a 3D graphics capable machine like its predecessors, but in a much flashier manner with a mindbog-
gling frame rate and. It is anticipated that the console will be launched in Spring 2006.

Microsoft needs no introduction, but we’ll give it a shot anyway. The world’s largest software company, the corpora-
tion has global annual sales in the tens of billions of US dollars and nearly 60,000 employees in more than 90 countries. The company’s headquarters are in Redmond, Washington, USA, where Microsoft develops, manufac-
tures, licenses, and supports a wide range of software products for computing
devices. The company was always successful with computer gaming, but realization of possible success with
consoles. In a radical move, Microsoft entered the multi-billion-dollar game console market dominated by Sony and
Nintendo in late 2001 with the release of the Xbox. As of 2005, the console ranks second to Sony’s PlayStation 2
and ahead of Nintendo’s GameCube in market share in the United States (although behind the two worldwide).
The second console to be released by Microsoft is the X-Box 360 which follows in the footsteps of the first: Doing
what everybody else does, but better. This beast will hit shelves as soon as November 22nd of this year.

The last of the three is Nintendo, the longest running gaming console franchise in the world. Starting off as
a playing card manufacturer in the 1880’s, with their mascot Mario leading them to victory for the past 22 years,

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a playing card manufacturer in the 1880's, with their mascot Mario leading them to victory for the past 22 years,
Everything you Didn’t Think You Needed to Know

by Teresa Washburn

You've heard about it. You act like you know what it is when you're in a group of people that mention it. You have this pull to "blog" with everyone else. The only problem is, you have no idea what it is or where to go. I'm here to help, my friend!

The blog, which is short for 'web log', is a web-based log that is updated on a regular basis. Some blogs are online journals, some blogs are academia-focused, and others can be news-based. That is the very beauty of a blog: its versatility. You may be wondering what the difference is between a website and a blog, since you can share thoughts on a plain old website in the same way. Blogs typically have a user-comment area, which helps link audience and producer. The "audience" of the blog (producer) can sometimes turn into the contributor (remember, we live in what they call the "Information Age" nowadays...).

There are numerous blog-hosting sites, if you don't have your own website domain. When shopping for a blog site, keep the following in mind:

Categories
A blog with categories makes it easier for those who've jumped on your blog band-wagon to catch up faster. It also helps you, the blogger, to see what you post about the most, and what you maybe have already yammered on about enough. Kidding. Categories would fall into the category (get it) of organization. The more organization the better, especially if your blog has grown in leaps and bounds. A substantial blog without categories is sort of like... the Internet. There is a lot of information in one big lump, without a way to easily sort through it.

Public Comments
A great blog-hosting site will virtually always allow, and even encourage, public comments. You can usually decide who can comment on your blog, and if you want to only allow certain readers to post, via a membership portal.

Privacy Settings
Do you want anyone and everyone to be able to see your blog, or members only? It may depend on the nature of your blog. If you treat your blog as a place to let off steam about your workplace or home life, you may want to restrict access so that only a select group of subscribers can read your blog. One would then have to ask ....what is the point of a blog if you aren't allowing the greater mass public read your wisdom? It depends on how versatile you want your blog to be.

Inter-linking to Other Blogs
Can you link to the blogs that you read, so as to encourage the growth and substantiate the other blogs in the blogosphere? Unless a blogger has set strict
privacy settings which could limit growth, you want people to read it. A blog-hosting site that allows bloggers to list a list of links to other blogs is a great way to propagate the growth of the blogosphere. And that's what we all want. We think.

RSS Feeds
Speaking of propagating the growth of blogging, using RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is XML based technology that enables a site to share a short summary or the first few lines of another blog or information site. A reader of your blog can click on the RSS feed of the other blog, and be instantly transported to the entry in the other site. RSS feeds are often used for popular sites that are updated frequently.

Online Community: A One-Stop Shop
Some online communities put it all in one place. You can blog, catch up with friends, share a picture stream, and post comments from friend to friend. Myspace.com is one of these popular communities, as is Yahoo's new 360 website. These communities link friends and friends of friends of friends in to one huge online community that can be grouped by interest. Since online communities such as friendster and my space are not blog-only sites, they lack some of the features we've examined here.

Yours truly has a blog at Yahoo 360 (http://360.yahoo.com/teresa_washburn) and I've recently become a virtual card-carrying member of my space: (http://www.myspace.com/teresawashburn).

Why Blog?
Let me put my writer hat on for a moment to say (oh wait - I have the writer hat on already...) that by blogging your writing can only get better. The more you write, the more practice you get at communicating ideas and concepts (hopefully). Remember the saying "practice makes perfect"? It does. Many times a blank slate can be very intimidating, and if you get out there and write fairly regularly via a blog you'll be able to scoff at the blank slate, and instead look forward to it.

So now you know. Get out there, look around, and pick a place for yourself. Settle in, link, and be happy. Someday maybe you, too, can write a column about blogging and plug your very own blog space.
Understanding Ramadan
by Christina Hallatt

According to an article printed in the Utica Observer Dispatch, there are close to 6,000 Muslims in nearby Utica. Many arrived as refugees who decided to settle in Central New York. Muslims are currently celebrating Ramadan, one of the most important Islamic holidays of the year. To better understand our neighbors, let’s take a look at the religion of Islam and the holiday of Ramadan.

People who follow the religion of Islam are referred to as Muslims. They believe that around 610 A.D., a caravan trader named Muhammad heard a voice call to him from the night sky. It was the angel Gabriel, who told Muhammad he had been chosen to receive the word of Allah. In the days that followed, Muhammad spoke the words that would later be transcribed as the Qur’ân, the holy book of Islam.

Unlike Christmas, Ramadan occurs on a different date each year. Ramadan begins on the ninth moon of the Islamic calendar, which is based on a lunar year. Months begin with the first sighting of a crescent moon, so Ramadan begins on a different date each year. This year Ramadan begins on October 4 and ends on November 3.

During Ramadan (also spelled Ramadhan), Muslims practice fasting and are prohibited from eating, smoking, drinking and engaging in sexual intercourse between dawn and sunset. The absence of food and drink helps Muslims concentrate on prayer and appreciate what they have.

The Ramadan fasting begins just before dawn with eat a light meal called Suhoor (SOO’-hor). The fast ends at sunset with a meal called iftar (IF’-tar). The end of Ramadan marks the beginning of Bajram (BY’-rum), a three-day period when Muslims exchange gifts and gather for meals.

To find out more about Ramadan, I spoke with Vasva Rekic, a former Bosnian refugee who arrived in the United States in 1994. Vasva looks forward to celebrating Ramadan with her husband Muhammed and their children, Leila, age 12, and Nelly, age 7. When it comes to fasting, Vasva and Muhammed leave the choice to their daughters. It is customary for Muslim children postpone fasting until they are a bit older.

Vasva is proud that Leila has chosen to fast, as it shows her maturity and discipline.

As Vasva spoke about Bajram, her face lit up with the wonderment of child. She is already planning the meal she will make: burak (pita with meat), sarma (cabbage rolls), and baklava and hurmasica for dessert. Vasva says that Bajram is like the “Bosnian Christmas”, where everyone exchanges gifts and enjoys spending time together. To that extent, the holidays are the same in the United States as they were in Bosnia.

Yet Vasva can’t help but feel a bit sad about the loved ones she left behind. Like many refugees, Vasva misses those with whom she would have spent this time of year. A plane trip to Bosnia for one person takes 12 hours and can cost thousands of dollars. So for now she will save her pennies until her family can visit relatives in Bosnia.

The similarities between Islam and other religions are striking. Many religions are based on the teachings of a divine being and refer to those teachings in written form. In addition, many require periods of sacrifice and fasting. Yet despite these similarities, Muslims face negative stereotypes, such as extremist or suicide bomber. It is important to remember that, like most people, Muslims just want to live, work and worship in peace.

Certainly, this time of year is a time of joy and celebration. But it is also a time to appreciate the differences and, more importantly, the similarities between others and ourselves. You will find that family, happiness, and tradition cross boundaries of country and religion.
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Dear Sleepless in Rome,

That is certainly an interesting situation. I suppose I should start by asking if things have been "great" between you and your girlfriend, assuming you were going steady, why you would ask if you should take the mother up on her offer? Furthermore, I feel that what the mother has done in this situation is gravely disordered. What loving mother would make passes on their daughter's significant other? I would be extremely skeptical of this whole situation and investigate the mother's intentions, as well as ensure that the girlfriend hasn't inherited any sort of similar quirks. However, this comes from the stable, steady, traditional side of me - in my own little world, where gasps would be elicited in this sort of situation.

Now, from an entirely unbiased standpoint: while the mental state of the mother may be in question - if for some bizarre and unlikely reason, it was the case that you, your girlfriend, and her mother, were all for the idea of "taking the mother up on her offer," then... why not? While I would at the very least question the psychological foundations of such a relationship, if that sort of thing fulfills some fantasy of yours, then let me put it this way: as far as I am concerned, you only live so long and your life belongs to you, to use in a way that is pleasing to you. So, as long as you aren't hurting others by your practices, you might as well enjoy yourself. There's no rule I'm aware of saying that if you, your girlfriend, and her mom are all for the idea of you getting with both your girlfriend and her mom, that you can't. With all that said, doing such a thing would carry great risk in my eyes and would be entirely without my personal endorsement.

My personal, bottom line advice: it depends on what you're looking for. If you just want to have fun, and this means fun to you - then by all means. If you're looking for something stable, then you might want to question what's running through her mother's head - and even your own for having to ask some of the questions you did. Either way, proceed with caution, and use common sense - situations which seem too good to be true often are, provided this sort of situation appeals as such - if it doesn't, then get yourself away from it already!

Sincerely,

Sharon
Dear Sharon,

I am an off-campus junior who commutes with two other students. We come to campus two days a week. We had agreed to split the cost of gas three ways each time we got gas. We put in 10 gallons once a week as it was decided that this amount would get us to and from campus both days.

My problem is that the owner of the vehicle benefits more than either of us, because it does not take the full amount for the week and she gets whatever is left. The ten gallons is easiest to divide piecewise, but I am finding myself resentful.

How should I deal with this issue?

Thank you,
Troubled Traveler

Dear Troubled Traveler,

My advice to you is rather simple. I would recommend not worrying about the driver benefiting from the excess gas. Why? Well for one thing, they are doing the work of driving — but if that’s not enough, there happen to be two important costs which that extra gas is slightly deferring. The first cost is the driver’s insurance and the second, even more appropriate cost to be assisted with, are the maintenance costs of the vehicle which such constant travel will eventually result in. Don’t sweat it, you’re doing a good thing for a friend who probably deserves it — and further more, it truly does balance out in the end. And, if for some reason things do not balance out, in the worst case scenario, your friend would be partially indebted to you. Or, in retrospect, it’s surely possible that between maintenance and insurance costs, that your left over gas does not contribute a significant portion to these expenses, and that you are in fact getting a bargain.

Sincerely,
Sharon

Dear Sharon,

I have a professor who picks favorites. Those students who she dislikes are publicly humiliated, brushed off, or ignored. I am one such student. My questions are unanswered or blown off, when I ask for clarification she responds by either giving me a dirty look or walks away. Is there anything I can do or am I stuck.

Thank you,
Publicly Humiliated

Dear Publicly Humiliated,

Let me start by saying something I’ve said many times in my life and even in another response as Sharon: in college, you are the customer. That being said, there is certainly no excuse for mistreatment, discrimination, bitterness, etc. However, before getting into what you can do, we should attempt to examine what motivates this professor to treat you as she does. When you say “dislikes”, could that word be substituted with the phrase “does not feel are putting forth adequate effort?” If so – while any actual mistreatment should not be tolerated - it is possible that the professor is simply trying to elicit discipline in her students. Needless to say, if this, or something like this, is not the case – then perhaps some action should be taken.

First, I feel you should approach your professor in calm, rational, and respectful manner and express your concerns to her. If this is met with malice, lack of concern, or causes discrimination in the classroom — I would make one last attempt to communicate with the professor, and then I would go over her head.

So, the second step, is to talk to another professor about the problem. Fill them in on the entire situation, get multiple perspectives, maybe talk to the problematic professor through your unproblematic one.

If the previous step fails, I would go and talk to the department chair about the problem (I’m not even sure all departments have one, but assuming they do). The chairperson can often give good advice and/or quickly resolve disputes.

If your chairperson cannot help you, the next person to talk to is your department dean. Remember that the further away you get from the problem in the chain of command, the more professional you need be, and the better developed your case need be.

Finally, as a last resort, the vice president of academic affairs is capable of arbitrating such matters, if I understand correctly.

If all of the above venues fail, an audience with the president may be possible, but at this point – it looks like you may need to move on to taking another class. Formal complaints might be best filed at this point if you feel they are in order — and to be honest, I am not sure how one goes about doing that, if its even possible. In all honesty, unless this professor is truly wicked, simply giving her bad PR on “ratemyprofessors.com” or just in person to other people, would be the most effective at making your point and the most effective to those who might also have to suffer through that class. In all cases, be sure to remain factual, rational, and level headed - acting out of anger never solved anything; well, maybe some things – but I still don’t recommend it.

Good luck with all of this and please, before acting, consider the motivations of your professor, or that perhaps that she was just having a bad day, or series there of. However, the conduct you describe if serious enough and pronounced enough in nature is not very conducive to learning, and no excuse would cover that for very long - do stand up for yourself!

Sincerely,
Sharon

Thank you,
Do you feel that SUNY is preparing you enough for the future?
Dave Loomis
"I like the opportunity the school gives us to achieve goals in order to prepare them for the business world and leadership positions."

Noelle Niznik
"Yes, because I'm networking with the professors and learning a lot about my field."

Christina Redner
"It could but doesn't. Teachers are telling me that whatever I learn here I will not use in the real world. Offering more Internship's would be beneficial."

Jasna Kulovac
"I feel that it does. I am in my final year and my final class Com 499 prepares me well with job searching strategies as well as opportunities for networking."

Geoff Berger
"I feel that my program is too broad. Almost all of the skills I'll be using in the workforce will be skills I learned on my own, rather than what I learned in school."
The World of Today's Black Men as We Should See It

by Keith Johnson, Student Association President

Good evening, this is Katie Muldern and welcome to the 11 o'clock news program, Nightwatch. Scorns of police were involved in a demonstration with over 1 million black men in the nation's capital. These men, described as young, hardcore members of the community, were assembled due to years and years of brutality, injustice, and false media portrayals. Police say that the subjects were calm and peaceful and respectful of the law. Their chants resonated with the peace movements of the 1960s.

Wait......hold up! Is this really the 11 o'clock news? An actual piece about black men that is devoid of violence, criminal mischief and death? To hear of such a thing is almost an irony in the current scope of media attention towards African American males. Often ridiculed for being misogynic, ob-scene, and savage-like, this newscast was actually a step in the right direction for depicting blacks, men, and American, in general.

The Million Man march, started some ten years ago, set the precedence for healing race relations in America. Orches-trated by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, this movement was a way to heed the initiative of peace and understanding. No longer were black men (and women) going to tolerate the discrimination brought down by politicians, law enforcers, and the economy. This dichotomy between two images of black men is what the recent anniversary demonstration was all about.

In honor of the decade-long struggle to reinstate positive images of black men, millions gathered upon the steps of Capital Hill to challenge the nation (and the world) to elevate, instead of eliminate, multi-culturalism. Led by Brother Farrakhan, once again, this rally was just as peaceful, if not more poignant, than the first one. It was a mark by which we measured what progress was made from the early 1990s to this new millennium.

One of SUNYIT's very own was involved in this historic event. Jeremiah Edwards, the current President of the Black Student Union, a student club on campus, was "ecstatic" to join members of the Utica community on this journey. Mr. Edwards was contacted by local community leader and National of Islam aficionado Brother Courtney Muhammad to represent student attendees from the area. Mr. Edwards felt it was his duty as the BSU President to go because "a lot of groups are not recognized on campus.....and we need to get together."

The following interview is as much a lesson for me as it will be for you:

KJ: What made you want to go?

JE: I wanted to go to get in touch with more colored people; I wanted to learn how they go about fixing problems.

KJ: How many people would you say were there?

JE: I'd say well over one million people were there. It was literally as far as the eye could see. I went along the actual steps of the monument and all I could see, as I looked out into the crowd, was a stretch of shades and color.

KJ: Were women there as well?

JE: Yes, indeed. In fact, there were a lot more women there than there were men. There was also a lot of media there; independent journalists could be seen, going around, and asking people to tell their story... One such person came there, from Utica, to tell a story about his brother who was killed and murdered by police for something he didn't do. Those were the stories that were told as they almost never get told through the media.

KJ: Go on!

JE: People were there to share their pain, their struggles. Some of these stories were tales of triumph, others were tales of disaster; but they were bounded together by a common theme---sacrifice.

KJ: How did you feel about being there?

JE: I felt as though I was a part of history. Most many people can't say that they were a part of this; I can. It felt phenomenal! People weren't cursing, shooting, or anything like that. They were polite. Imagine a world where mere strangers were polite to one another. That was the world of a few hours at this rally.

KJ: Do you think it was affective?

JE: It had an effect...it focused on individual stories. It also encouraged a lot of attention on reparations for black people. Blacks never get reparation and the government needs to admit their wrong doings and step it up. However, people know that they never will. It also showed how important fam-
ily is. Minister Farrakhan is a powerful speaker and he was able to engage everyone there. People would literally stop what they were doing at the mere sound of his voice over the loud speakers.

After awhile, this interview went longer than I had expected. But, as with even many of your classes, you don't notice the time when the subject is inspiring. Mr. Edwards and I became more candid with each other as time went by. We even watched an MTV "Crib's" special, featuring rappers Lil' Wayne, Lil' John, and Lil' Bow Wow.

The irony of it all was that these images, today, of male rappers are only a small part of the black man. Sure, he has his bling. Yet, as we sat and watched this program, we saw that these young men worked for their wealth. These men are entrepreneurs, leaders of their community, and fathers. These are images that aren't seen everyday. As Edwards so eloquently put it, "It comes down to the person; every person must take action."

So, imagine the news reporter who comes across your screen and says: "Good evening, another successful story today, featuring a black male who commandeered his community into action." Not only can I imagine it, I can see, along with Louis Farrakhan, and Lil' Bow Wow, Jeremiah Edwards being that man who leads us during this new millennium.

"People were there to share their pain, their struggles. Some of these stories were tales of triumph, others were tales of disaster; but they were bounded together by a common theme -- sacrifice."
Get Your Program Approved
by Anthony Esposito

Are you one of the many students here that are bored with what is going on program-wise? Before you start blaming those that are responsible for it realize that they say they are open to suggestions. You can go to several organizations, such as CAB and Student Association, but the least complicated approach would be going to your Hall Council.

If you got an idea for a program, take them up on the offer, they would be more than happy if you go to them since they always say no one ever shows up to their meetings. If an RA hasn't met his or her fulfillment for programs, you can suggest it to them and they can take care of whatever paperwork needs to be done for you.

If it's not expensive ($150 or less) and doesn't involve alcohol (unless it's a trip to the Saranac Brewery) you can go to the dining hall on Monday nights at 10:00 to Hall Council meetings. There are some things however you should know prior to attending the meeting:

- Make sure you know exactly what it is you will be proposing at Hall Council and have full confidence in yourself. Don't go up nervous or thinking automatically that your program will be shot down, have faith in what you are bringing to the table!

- Make sure you are able to explain all key points and be prepared to defend your idea if someone or several people are against it. Don't expect to go there and just wing it. Prepare your speech and research what you think people may not like about it and how you would respond to it.

- Next, there is paperwork you are going to need before you make your proposal if you are not giving your idea to an RA. You can easily ask your RA or speak to your RD (Either Joyce for those in Adirondack or Lou for those in Mohawk), for required paperwork you exactly need depending on your proposal. Don't expect to fill out the paperwork during the meeting and be able to propose it the same night.

- Hall council is broken into several segments during the meeting. One during which they will ask if anyone has any program proposals. This is your cue to speak up and propose your program.

- The most important thing you will need is people. Remember, without people voting for your program, you may not get it approved. I can't stress enough how important it is to do this. Two years ago, I brought 20 people with me and it definitely made a difference. Last year, I brought 10 and fortunately everyone liked the idea and it was voted on. You might get lucky and get your program voted on if it's just you there however, it's better not to risk it and just bring people with you.

As a student, you pay a student activity fee as part of your tuition. If you are upset with the programs that go on, remember this is your money being spent. Stand up for yourselves and get your money's worth. You have nothing to lose by speaking your mind and it's almost guaranteed that if enough people are with you you'll get your way. However, be realistic and original. Let's not abuse the system and propose some whack job idea like Acid Tripping night. Think about what you heard your other friends do at college, or even an idea that you think would go over great here at this school. Two years ago, my friends and I came up with the idea to do a carnival day here and now it's a SUNY IT tradition. Now, unless you get off your computer chairs things cannot happen. Plus, why just speak about things negatively? Actions speak louder than words. So make a difference, you never know what could happen!
Before attempting this recipe, make sure that your microwave is large enough to handle the bird. Also, this recipe originated using a 650 watt microwave, but other wattage ovens can be used as long as you consider the duration of cooking that should be used. Timing is based on the 650 watt oven and needs to be adjusted for other wattages.

Wash the turkey thoroughly inside and out, let drain well, and pat dry with paper towels. Reserve the neck and gizzards for gravy, or discard, as desired. Season the turkey generously inside and out as desired with salt, freshly ground black pepper, granulated garlic, onion powder, and lemon-herb seasoning. Remember the rule of thumb that it's better to under-season than over-season. You can always add salt and pepper, but removing it from a cooked turkey is nearly impossible.

Stuff and truss the turkey. If you do not want to stuff it with dressing, be sure to stuff it full with coarsely chopped onions, celery, oranges, apples, parsley, and sage stems. This onion mixture is for the flavor and to ensure that cooking time is correct; timing is based on a stuffed bird.

Pour 2-3 tablespoons of flour into a large plastic baking bag, and shake bag to coat the inside. Place turkey in bag (for which you will probably need help), and loosely close the bag opening with a plastic tie. If you close it tightly, the bag will probably explode due to steam buildup about half way through cooking, which isn't very pretty.

Place the bagged turkey, breast-side down, in a 9"x13"x2" microwave-safe baking dish, or a larger or smaller one if your microwave can handle it. Although the dish is not necessary, it sure makes it a lot easier to handle the turkey later and can compensate for a leaky baking bag. Leaks do happen: ask the CIA and FBI if you don't believe lil'ol' me.

If the turkey is stuffed with bread dressing, microwave on HIGH for 50 minutes, rotating 180 degrees after 25 minutes. Again, this is only if your microwave doesn't rotate contents automatically.

Return turkey to the oven and microwave on HIGH for an additional 50 minutes, rotating 180 before this cooking turn again after 25 minutes into it (again, if not automated). If turkey is stuffed with veggies instead of bread dressing reduce times from 50 minutes to 45 minutes.

Do not rely on the pop-up indicator that might have come with the turkey or on the timing cited above for final doneness. Use a thermometer instead. Take into consideration that the temperature of the turkey will rise another 5-10°F while the turkey rests.

Remove the turkey from the microwave. Drain juices from the baking bag, degrease, and use to make your favorite gravy recipe. You can either let the turkey stay in the bag or remove it to a serving platter and tent with foil. In either case, allow the turkey to rest for 15-20 minutes before carving. Enjoy with any accompaniments you desire!

Not all microwaves are made equal, granted, so consider the following: all recipes can be made bigger, smaller, or different. Never think of a recipe as a rule or mandatory procedure when preparing food. A recipe is a guideline. If you want a smaller turkey or only a couple of pieces, then work with what you would prefer. I personally never cook turkey in flour because, in my opinion, that's just silly. Try melting butter with some parsley, oregano, dill and garlic powder and baste the dang bird with the mixture before and during cooking. Even without flour it'll cook very nicely, even more nicely because the meat is directly exposed to the heat.

Do not discard the possibility of using this recipe in tangent with turkey breast or turkey slices or turkey patties or anything else that is turkey (except a rubber turkey). Simply monitor the cooking with a check on the meat every so often so that it doesn't burn on you. If preparing a precooked or smoked turkey, it should take a lot less than two hours to prepare. If raw, the turkey will take between 45 minutes to an hour and a half, depending on the portion that is being cooked, maybe more or less. If you aren't experienced, I suggest cooking smaller, individual portions at a time. That way you can have it finished in ten minutes or so without the worry of burning or undercooking.

Thus, bon appetite and enjoy the recipes! For more ideas like this, visit www.recipezaar.com or search keyword "Microwave Recipes". I wish you luck in you culinary experiment and will see you next time on Dormroom Cuisine. Ciao!
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